

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 20 AUGUST 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 20 August, 1886.

Grammar School Statistics.—Printing Committee.—
 Petitions.—Questions.—Formal Motions.—Employers
 Liability Bill—third reading.—Separation of Northern
 Queensland.—Adjournment.

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

GRAMMAR SCHOOL STATISTICS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) said : Mr. Speaker,—I beg to lay upon the table of the House an amended return of the Grammar School Statistics. There happened to be some errors in the figures when I first laid them on the table, and I now bring forward these in their place. I move that the paper be printed.

Question put and passed.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

Mr. FRASER said : Mr. Speaker,—On behalf of the Speaker, as chairman, I beg to present the second report of the Printing Committee, and move that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

PETITIONS.

Mr. HAMILTON presented a petition from the residents of Cairns, praying that immediate steps be taken for the dredging of the channel into Cairns harbour; and moved that it be read.

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

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

Mr. W. BROOKES presented a petition from the directors of the Metropolitan Tramway and Investment Company, Limited, protesting against the power proposed to be given, by clauses 187 and 188 of the Divisional Boards Act of 1886, to local authorities, to regulate the traffic upon tramways, to prescribe the form and construction of tramcars, and to impose so-called "reasonable fees" upon car drivers and conductors; submitting that that would be wholly repugnant to the 71st section of the Tramways Act of 1882, which, *inter alia*, gave the company power to make by-laws for the control and regulation of its traffic, and would be a breach of faith with the shareholders and debenture holders of the company, and praying for relief in the premises. He moved that the petition be read.

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

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

Mr. PALMER presented a petition from residents of the town and district of Hughenden, stating that owing to the severe droughts to which the interior of the colony is liable, and to the uncertain state of affairs existing under the Land Act of 1884, relief is required, and praying for an amendment of the Land Act of 1884 by giving pastoral lessees thirty years' leases at a fixed rental and on a much lower scale than at present being fixed. He moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. HAMILTON asked the Colonial Treasurer—

1. When he expects to have a dredge available to send to the port of Cairns?
2. What is the name of the dredge he intends to send?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) replied—

1. Government intend to improve the harbour of Cairns (at present superior in natural facilities to many of the Northern ports) as early as practicable, but having no dredge immediately available for the purpose cannot state the precise time when the work will be commenced.

2. Consequently I am unable to give the hon. gentleman the information he desires as to the name of the dredge intended to be so employed.

Mr. HAMILTON asked the Minister for Works—

What is the date of the termination of the contract for clearing the second portion of the first section of the Cairns to Herberton Railway?

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

There is no special contract for clearing the second portion of the first section of the Cairns Railway, the clearing being included in the general contract for construction, the time for which contract terminates in December, 1886.

Two contracts are let for clearing from 8½ miles to the 20-mile peg, the period for completing the first contract ending in March last, and for the second contract in December next.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to :—

By Mr. HAMILTON—

That there be laid upon the table of this House the last report of Mr. Hannam, the Chief Engineer for Northern Railways, on the railway route from Cooktown to Maytown.

By Mr. DONALDSON—

That there be laid upon the table of this House a return showing the amount of duty collected at the port of Brisbane upon products of Victoria, New South Wales, New Zealand, and Tasmania during the years 1884, 1885, and until the 30th June, 1886.

EMPLOYERS LIABILITY BILL—THIRD READING.

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

SEPARATION OF NORTHERN QUEENSLAND.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said : Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move—

That in consequence of the increase of population, the difficulty of administration, and other circumstances, in the northern portion of the colony, this House is of opinion that the time has arrived which was contemplated by His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, in his despatches of the 18th August, 1859, and 14th Decem-

ber, 1861, and therefore resolves that an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty the Queen, praying that she may be graciously pleased to cause the northern portion of the colony to be erected into a separate and independent colony endowed with representative institutions.

In considering, Mr. Speaker, the motion I have just read, I think that hon. members should approach it, as far as they possibly can, divested of any feelings of party. Of course, to a certain extent there is a party connected with the question; that is the party we call in this House and the country at present the Northern party; but as far as the division of parties in the House is concerned, this has no aspect whatever of a party question, so that hon. members on both sides of the House—as far as parties are concerned—are free to consider it in whatever way they please. I think it is the most important question that has come before the House since Separation. We have had Land Bills at different times; we have had Bills extending the franchise, or regulating the basis upon which the members of this House are elected; but these measures in my opinion pale into utter insignificance compared with the importance of the motion I have just read. It is one which will affect, I believe, the destinies of at least one-fifth of the population at present in Queensland, and more than one-third of the territory of Queensland. Therefore I consider that, looking at the motion from all sides, it is one which we should debate thoroughly in this House, and without any party feeling whatever, and if it should be our destiny to part, that we should part as friends. There is no necessity, I think, for having the same feelings—the same ill-feeling—which existed in New South Wales when Queensland was separated from that portion of Australia. At any rate, the agitation so far that has taken place in this colony has been divested of any such feeling; and I do not think that any such feeling will be shown by the members of this House, more especially by the members of the Government. In dealing with the question, I must refer to the separation of Queensland itself from New South Wales, so as to bring under consideration the ground which I take in saying that the Imperial Government of England, which was represented by His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, at any time contemplated the separation of any portions of Queensland into separate and independent colonies. All hon. members know, I believe, that the question of the separation of Moreton Bay, as it was called in the early days, was considered for several years before separation actually took place. There was a long course of agitation in Moreton Bay, and a great many despatches were written by the then Governor of New South Wales and the Secretaries for the Colonies to each other on the subject. Petitions were sent from different parts of Moreton Bay at different times, both for and against separation. The same arguments which have been used against the separation of the northern portion of Queensland were used then against the separation of Moreton Bay from New South Wales. It was said that the Government of the colony had always dealt fairly and justly with Moreton Bay; that the people of Moreton Bay, if it were erected into a separate colony, would not be able to maintain the expense of government; that the inhabitants of Moreton Bay, the leading agitators in the demand for separation, were actuated by bad motives; that their ulterior object was to obtain a supply of convict labour, which they could not possibly expect so long as they were attached to New South Wales. These, or similar arguments, with the exception of the convict labour one, have been used with respect to the separation of the northern portion

of the colony. The Government of Great Britain, after viewing the question from the petitioners' point of view and from the objectors' point of view—the objectors being the Government of New South Wales, speaking through the Governor of the colony—came to the conclusion that the experiment was desirable. It was an experiment—a very hazardous experiment as far as population was concerned, and a very hazardous experiment also as far as the revenues of the Moreton Bay settlement were concerned. In reply to a despatch sent by Sir William Denison in the early part of 1859, the Duke of Newcastle—when intimating to Sir William Denison, in a despatch written on the 18th August, 1859, that the Government had issued letters patent for the establishment of the colony of Queensland, and entering into a great many details as to the debt and other matters in connection with the separation—stated distinctly that the Government of Great Britain would not give up the right which it held of separating into a new colony the northern portion of the territory about to be erected into the colony of Queensland, whenever it thought fit to do so. I shall read that portion of the Duke of Newcastle's despatch. It is contained in the New South Wales "Votes and Proceedings" for the year 1859-60, volume iv. The despatch begins at page 961. It discusses the question of boundary and the Civil list, and states that Sir George Bowen would bring out the instruments which the Privy Council had issued on the separation of the colony, and appointing him its first Governor. It then goes on to say, in the last paragraph but two:—

"In the meantime—as, according to this project, the separation must take place by publication of the instruments, and the Legislature of the new colony must be convoked before the division of the debt can be effected—there can be no serious difficulty in a temporary arrangement for the repartition of the interest of the debt, during the short period which may elapse between that separation and the passing of the necessary law, whether that be ultimately done by the Colonial Legislature or by Parliament. It is to be desired that the separation should take place with no further delay than may be actually requisite for the completion of necessary preliminaries. It will be desirable that the Crown should possess the power of subdividing further the territory now erected into the colony of Queensland, by detaching from it such northern portions as may hereafter be found fit to be erected into separate colonies."

The declaration there made it plain and distinct enough, and I think there can scarcely be any doubt that had there been at that time a population in what we are now pleased to call the northern portion of the colony, or even considerably to the southwards of that, Her Majesty's Government would have erected that portion into a separate colony, as well as Queensland. At any rate, that despatch contains abundant proof that the Imperial Government contemplated at some day, distant or otherwise, the erection of another colony out of the colony which was then to be called Queensland. To that no exception was taken. Of course, there was no Government in existence in this country at that time to take any exception, so that no exception could be taken; and the Government was established in Queensland under that condition—that condition being that Her Majesty, at any time she thought fit, should separate the northern part and make it into a new colony. The separation took place. A legislature was elected, and met in Brisbane under the instruments brought out by Sir George Bowen. But a portion of the territory of Australia which had been, or was supposed to have been, attached to New South Wales—lying between 26 degrees north latitude northwards to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and from 141

degrees to 129 degrees east longitude—was practically unattached to any portion of any colony in Australia, and when Queensland was separated from New South Wales it became a kind of no-man's-land. Representations were made by the Legislature of Queensland, through the Governor, to the Imperial Government, that this territory would very likely become a refuge for desperadoes and others flying from justice, and would become a sort of Barrataria; also that Queensland was very much inclined to settle that portion of the country, but did not wish to do so unless she was assured that she would have some guarantee for reimbursement of the expenses she would be put to in the settlement of it. Sir George Bowen, in deference to a motion passed by the Legislature of Queensland in 1860, asked the Imperial Government to attach that portion of Australia to Queensland. That was at first refused, Mr. Speaker, but on further consideration it was assented to by the Duke of Newcastle, the same Colonial Secretary whose despatch I have just read. He consented not to give Queensland the whole of that territory which I have mentioned, but to give her as much as would include the whole of the country on the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria, from the 26th degree northwards, and from the 141st degree of longitude to the 139th. That territory included the whole of what we call the Gulf country, with Normanton and the other towns that are there. After announcing that decision of Her Majesty's Government to the Governor of Queensland, the Duke of Newcastle made another statement with regard to the erection of northern colonies, confirming and strengthening his previous statement. Previous to that, I may state, some doubts had arisen as to the power of the Crown to separate and erect more independent colonies, and also a question had arisen as to the apportionment of the debt existing in New South Wales at the time of the separation of Queensland. The apportionment of that debt is a question with which I have no concern at present, further than merely to say, in passing, that whatever the amount of the debt owing by Queensland to New South Wales was, it has never yet been paid. Whether anything was owing or not, I cannot say, but a reference to authorities in the Parliamentary Library shows that over 8,000 immigrants had been carried to Moreton Bay by the New South Wales Government, and whether the new colony owed anything for that it is not for me to determine. The despatch from the Duke of Newcastle, as I have said, was still stronger than his previous despatch, and emphasised, if possible, what he had written in August, 1859. The despatch is contained in the "Votes and Proceedings" of Queensland for 1862, page 231. In it, after stating the question that he had been asked to decide—namely, the annexation—the temporary annexation, I must remark, of the territory in Queensland—I shall not read the whole of the despatch, although it is a very short one, but only two paragraphs of it—the Duke of Newcastle goes on to say:—

"With regard to your request to be furnished with instructions for your guidance as to the course to be taken in the event of a settlement being formed on the Plains of Promise, which you anticipate will be a probable result of the recent explorations, I have no objection to your proposal that this territory should be temporarily annexed to the colony of Queensland, and I shall accordingly cause letters patent to be issued for giving effect to this arrangement, in pursuance of the powers conferred on Her Majesty by the recent Act of Parliament, 24 and 25 Victoria, cap. 44.

"It must, however, be distinctly understood (as I gather from the 14th paragraph of your despatch it is understood) by the Legislature of Queensland that the annexation of this territory, which will be revocable under the terms of that Act, will probably be, in

fact, revoked when the growth of population or the circumstances shall, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, render separation desirable for the interests of the new territory. For although, as you are aware, I do not feel myself at liberty, without the strongest grounds, to alter the boundaries of colonies once fixed with the consent and acquiescence of the inhabitants, I am not prepared to abandon definitely, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, the power to deal with districts not yet settled as the wishes and convenience of the future settlers may hereafter require."

The Act to which His Grace refers is the 24th and 25th Vic., c. 44, and is one which was passed to settle a doubt which had arisen as to the power of the Crown to erect new colonies from territory which belonged to another colony, or to take from a colony any territory and annex it to another colony; and also to show the manner in which the apportionment of the debt belonging to the colony, or the portion of the colony which had been severed, should be made, and to determine to what extent a territory should be responsible for any debt in the event of its annexation or erection into an independent colony. It is dated the 22nd July, 1861. It has a very long preamble, as is usual in the English Acts, and I must say that it is not so nicely framed as our own Acts of Parliament are. The 2nd section is the one which gives the power to annex to existing colonies territories now part of New South Wales, and the 5th section makes provision for determining or altering the boundaries; and provision is also made for separating other portions of the colony and annexing them to other colonies. The 6th section is a very important one in regard to the question which I am now discussing. As it is so important I shall read it, although it is a little lengthy. It is as follows:—

"In the event of any territory being hereafter separated from any Australian colony and either erected into a separate colony or annexed to any other colony if the Governor of the colony to which such territory belonged before separation and the Governor of the colony to which it shall belong or which it may constitute after separation shall represent to one of Her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State that a question has arisen between the Government of the two colonies as to the proportion to which the public debt of the colony from which such territory has been separated should be borne by the two colonies respectively after separation or as to the division of the public moneys in the Treasury of such first-mentioned colony at the time of separation it shall be lawful for Her Majesty through one of her principal Secretaries of State to require the Governors of the two colonies with the advice of their respective Executive Council each to appoint a commissioner and it shall be lawful for Her Majesty to appoint a third commissioner not being a resident in or employed in the public service of either colony and to fix the time and place of the first meeting of the commissioners and such commissioners shall determine the proportion in which such moneys or debt shall be divided between the two colonies and the award of such commissioners or of any two of them when confirmed by Her Majesty in Council shall be final and conclusive against both colonies. Provided always that nothing herein contained and no award as aforesaid shall in any way prejudice or affect the security of any debentures which may have been issued before the separation of any territory by the Government of the colony from which such territory may be separated or the absolute right and claim of the holders thereof to demand and receive payment of the amounts thereby respectively purporting to be secured as well out of the revenues of the colony from which such territory has been separated as out of the revenues of the colony to which such territory shall belong or which it may constitute."

That, Mr. Speaker, gives full and ample security to the debenture holders against the revenues of both colonies for the whole of the debt. I have quoted that from the "Imperial General Statutes for 1861."

The PREMIER: The provision is in our statute—in our Constitution Act.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Having now cleared the ground, as I believe, of any doubt that may have existed in the minds of hon. members as to the power of the Crown to separate any portion of Queensland and erect it into a new colony, and also of any doubt which may have existed as to the intention of the Imperial Government at that time to do so when the necessity should arise and the inhabitants should demand it, I shall go on to show what took place in Queensland after separation was granted, the new colony established, and the Government of the colony called into existence. And I must say, from my knowledge and experience, that although the people of Moreton Bay exclaimed very loudly against the way in which they were treated by the Government of New South Wales, the strongest expression that I can find in any petition which was sent for separation is in one that was sent from the inhabitants of Ipswich and the surrounding districts. The strongest expression there is one charging the Government of New South Wales with being an "impolitic and extravagant" Government. And for the reason that New South Wales had an impolitic and extravagant Government Moreton Bay was separated and erected into a separate colony. I believe it was well that that was done, just as I believe now that it will be well if further separation takes place. But in spite of the experience which they had themselves of the centralising system of government which existed in New South Wales, the people of Moreton Bay began in exactly the same way, and followed in the footsteps of those from whom they had been separated. So strongly did the centralising tendencies of the Government of Queensland become thus early in its history that a movement for separation began in the North of Queensland in 1864—within four years after Queensland was erected into a separate colony! And the movement attained very great proportions. At that particular time the extreme northern portion of the colony was not settled; there were a few squatters certainly in the Gulf country on the Plains of Promise. Townsville was just established, I believe, but there was nothing further north except a settlement of about fifty or sixty people at Rockingham Bay. The agitation at that period extended throughout the whole of what is now called the Central district, or the southern portion of what we call the Northern district; and so strong was the feeling against the unfair distribution of the revenue, and in regard to the difficulty that was felt of administering the Government from Brisbane, that the people there actually petitioned for separation at that time. What became of that petition I cannot say. Whether it was sent home or not I do not know, but I do know that a petition was got up. At any rate the agitation, as far as the Central district was concerned, subsided. I believe the Government of the day met the people there with some gift in their hand, and that was the end of the demand there for territorial separation. But the feeling never subsided in the more northern portion of the colony. The separation league which was established at that time had agreed, I believe, to ask for separation for the territory north of Dawes's Range, making Bowen the capital of the new colony. Whether that aroused the ambition of Bowen or not, it seems, at any rate, that the people of that district never forgot the demand for territorial separation, and through all the agitation which existed afterwards for years in the more northern portion of the territory, for what was called "financial separation," the people of Bowen still maintained an independent cry for territorial separation, and contended that financial

separation would not bring about the benefits which its advocates expected it would bring about. I say this simply to show that the present demand for territorial separation is not a new thing in Queensland, although many people are apt to think it is. Then there was another party in the northern portion of the colony who did not believe in territorial separation, who were inclined to stay attached to Queensland if they could get anything like what they believed to be fair play in the government of the country. That party, or the leaders of it, was composed of Mr.—now Sir—Arthur Palmer, and many men who were associated with him in the far North—Mr. Fitzsimmons, Mr. Fitzgerald, and others who strongly advocated financial separation—and they had, I believe, the great body of the people at their back. Efforts were made at different times to establish a system of financial separation, and I think myself, looking back at it now, that if it had been established upon a fair basis it is very likely that the demand for territorial separation would not now be in existence, but that if any such demand ever did arise it would be many years hence. I think if the scheme suggested by the Hon. John Douglas in this House in 1877—who was not a financial separationist; who was, to use his own words, a believer in territorial separation—had been adopted—that is, to draw a line west from Cape Palmerston and establish financial separation with two portions of the colony only—that it would have been found to work well, and would have been the means of establishing a better system of government than has existed since. At any rate, the efforts of the financial separationists were always frustrated. Mr. Palmer, in the year 1872, introduced a Bill to bring it about, but it came to nothing. In 1872 the Bill was introduced, and it came to nothing, and the demand, as far as Mr. Palmer himself was concerned, then ceased. It was taken up in 1874 by Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Hodgkinson, and myself, and we advocated it for two or three years. In 1875 I introduced a motion on financial separation into this House, which was carried without division; and in the beginning of 1877, the Government—the Hon. John Douglas being Premier, the present Treasurer being then Treasurer, the present Premier being Attorney-General of that Government—I think the Minister for Works was a member of it also—appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the best means of bringing about an equitable distribution of the revenue of the colony in accordance with the idea of the financial separationists. That Royal Commission sat a considerable time, and did a good deal of work. I believe that the work which they did then, although it bore no fruit at that time, was really the foundation of the agitation afterwards for territorial separation. At any rate, the recommendation of the commission was that a Bill should be brought in establishing financial separation upon certain principles pointed out in the commissioner's report, establishing four districts—Southern, Central, Northern, and Wide Bay and Burnett. A Bill based on that was brought in by the present Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Dickson; and it came to a second reading in this House. It was pretty well debated, and it was then the Hon. John Douglas declared himself always a believer in territorial separation. But I must say that, although the Bill was introduced by the Treasurer, he did it in such a half-hearted way that nobody believed he wished to carry it. At any rate, after going into committee, and four or five clauses being passed, it was withdrawn by the Government without any intimation of the reason why it was withdrawn. I think myself that it

was withdrawn at the instance of their supporters—that although the Treasurer himself was perhaps not a very ardent financial separationist, some of his colleagues were inclined to give the scheme a fair trial; but the majority of the supporters of the Government were against it—dead against it, I may say. I cannot blame the Government for withdrawing it, because, from my own experience afterwards in the Government, I am convinced that it is utterly impossible for any Government to convince the great body of their supporters, who represent Southern constituencies, that the North has any grievance whatever to complain of, more especially when we have the Treasurer himself stating in this House, and publicly outside this House, that the grievance is on the part of the South and not on the part of the North. It is therefore impossible for any Government to be able to establish a scheme which will give an equitable distribution of revenue to all parts of the colony. I am giving this short history just to show that those who are demanding territorial separation have not done so until all constitutional means of obtaining redress for what they believe to be substantial grievances have utterly failed. On the second reading of the Financial Separation Bill, I made a speech, of course; and to show that territorial separation was not a thing that was not contemplated at that time, I shall just read a portion of what I said. It is contained in vol. xxiii. of *Hansard*, page 743, August 6, 1877. I may say that some members on the Government side of the House maintained that the South was giving a very great concession to northern parts of the colony by consenting to read this Financial Separation Bill a second time, and I contended that there was no concession in it. I said:—

“It is no concession, as has been stated by an hon. member. I will never admit that the dealing of even-handed justice to all portions of the colony is a concession—it is what we have a right to demand; and so far from being a concession it should be looked upon by this House as a boon and a privilege that it can be the means of binding this colony together and preventing territorial separation. I maintain that if financial separation is not carried this session a demand will arise for that territorial separation which some hon. members—in fact, I believe, the majority—are not favourable to granting, and which, I believe, it will not be wise to grant as long as financial separation is untried or there is any hope of attaining it. But once let that hope be done away with—once let that hope die out of the people of the northern districts—hon. members may depend upon it that a cry will arise for territorial separation that must be attended to. And I for one, as a representative of a portion of that district, say that if financial separation is not granted in such a way as to do justice to it and the other parts of the colony, I for one will join in that cry, even if it should be at the expense of making the North a separate Crown colony instead of a representative one.”

Now, sir, that plainly proves what I have stated, that the people who advocated territorial separation do so because they despair of obtaining justice. Having exhausted all constitutional means of obtaining justice or of obtaining any form of redress for their grievances, they have been compelled and are justified in demanding territorial separation. I say that I did not agree altogether with the principle of the Bill that was introduced by the Colonial Treasurer; still, although I did not agree with it, I accepted it as a compromise and would have been willing to accept it as a final compromise. I, as one of the members of that commission, and other members with me gave up our ideas. We tried, to conciliate as much as possible, so as to obtain anything like a fair share of the distribution of revenue which we did not get then and which we have never got since. But I gave up what I considered to be one-half, so as to be able to obtain the other half; and although the Bill gave

so little, the Colonial Treasurer and the Southern representatives objected to it so much that the Government were compelled to withdraw it. Now, it may be asked why the demand for territorial separation did not arise immediately after. Well, I think I can give a satisfactory explanation of that. It took some time for the work of the financial commission to get settled in the minds of the people of the northern districts. They always believed that they were not fairly dealt with as far as revenue was concerned, and the work of the financial separation commission was the means of producing proof which took time for them to digest and understand. But very shortly after the end of that session it was seen that the then existing Government would not exist much longer, and the people had expectations from the Government which was likely to succeed that Government—of which the Hon. John Douglas was the Premier—of obtaining something in the way of justice. Well, that Government came into existence under Mr. McIlwraith, and we found what I have stated already, that it was impossible for any Government to think of or attempt to do what they believed was fair and right as far as the distribution of the ordinary revenue of the colony was concerned between the North and South, because the Southern people believed that the North was pampered; they believed that they had been the means of settling the people in the North and had borne the expenses of that settlement; they believed the statements of the Colonial Treasurer and others outside of this House—that the North, so far from having any grievances, was a leech which had fixed itself on the South, and was sucking the blood of the South for its very existence. That is the reason why no Government can exist in the House supported by Southern members, if it attempts to do justice to the northern portion of Queensland. Now, it may also be said that the territorial separation agitation did not begin until after the present Government came into existence, and therefore it is more or less a party move. That I know has been said, and it is believed by a great many, although evidence to the contrary has been produced time after time. The territorial separation movement which has now come into existence sprang up in the beginning of 1882—that is, it took a proper form in the beginning of 1882, nearly two years before the present Government came into existence, and during the existence of the McIlwraith Government, from which the people expected to get so much. It began in Townsville in February, 1882; so that those who believe and assert that the movement is connected with Mackay and black labour are utterly mistaken. It began in Townsville, and has spread from Townsville to other portions of the northern part of the colony, both north and west, and it has taken in all the leading centres of population, and also all the agricultural and pastoral districts. Now, the result of that agitation has been seen in the petition which has been sent home to Her Majesty the Queen, asking for territorial separation. That petition was signed by over 10,000 people, and was the largest petition that has ever been sent from Australia to Great Britain. The petition sent home from Victoria was as nothing compared to this—the petitions from Moreton Bay were mere fragments. Why, the number of signatures obtained to the petition in one town of the North alone were twice as many as the number of signatures attached to the petition from Moreton Bay. There are 12,000 electors on the rolls of the northern portion of the colony, and there are 10,000 signatures of male adults attached to the petition.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Are they genuine?

Mr. SMYTH: All electors?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Hon. members laugh, and ask whether the signatures are all genuine. Well, I believe they are. The gentlemen connected with the getting up of that petition were not guilty, and I know would not be guilty, of obtaining bogus signatures. The signatures were examined by a committee specially appointed by the Separation Council for the purpose of scrutinising them, and the petition was not sent home until all the signatures that had been repeated twice were struck out. Then, again, the work of those gentlemen was verified by affidavit, and I say that those men were no more capable of doing anything immoral than any member of this House. All the signatures were revised after they had been verified, and all those, as I have said, which were repeated twice struck out, and the number that remained was 10,006. The petition embraced not only one class of people but all classes. It embraced clergymen, clerks, professional men, bankers, merchants, sugar-planters, agriculturists, miners, tradesmen, artisans, labourers, and every other class. Then the petitioners are divided again into the occupations of the people; and out of the number there were 2,130 freeholders, 537 leaseholders—who, I presume, are squatters—242 selectors, 713 residents, and 84 non-residents with an interest in Queensland. The total number of signatures was 10,330, and the total number expunged 324.

The PREMIER: A much larger number than that were expunged. Probably your gross total is too small.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I think the hon. gentleman has a copy of the figures I have just read. When we come to consider the difficult circumstances under which the signatures to this petition were obtained, I think the unanimity of the people in demanding separation is wonderful. First, there is a great number of people in every country who may be called neutrals, who care nothing for any policy or system of government, or any government at all, as long as they can get work and wages. The French, in a very expressive way, term them "the political belly"—people who do not care for politics. Then the advocates of separation were under the disadvantage for a long time of being supposed to be actuated by party feeling. The supporters of the present Government, therefore, would not approach it; they looked upon it as a move to injure the party at present in power; but I am happy to say that delusion has been to a large extent dispelled, and the supporters of the present Government are now as ardent in their support of territorial separation as they are in their support of the present Government. Another disadvantage in the way of obtaining signatures is the fact that the large majority of the people of Northern Queensland do not believe in the increase or introduction of coloured labour. They held aloof from the movement for a long time, the miners especially, until at last they were convinced also, the same as the supporters of the present Government, that they were under a delusion. They then came forward and signed, and are now as ardent territorial separatists as the sugar-planters of Mackay themselves. Then, again, there is that jealousy which unfortunately exists, I must say, in all parts of Queensland—the jealousy fostered by the work of all Governments. I do not blame this Government more than any other, because the very system we have established for the distribution of the public revenue fosters that jealousy. That was a great obstacle to the success of the petition, because Cairns, Cooktown, Normanton, and even Mackay, regard Townsville as being the selfish

party that wished simply to displace Brisbane from being the capital of Queensland, and to become the capital of a new colony. As an instance of that feeling, I may mention what was said to me by a very intelligent gentleman who was asked to support the movement. He said—"Why should I be a separationist? I certainly do not believe in the mode of distributing the revenue as it is distributed at present; I believe we suffer a great deal; but why should I become a separationist simply for the purpose of letting Townsville, instead of Brisbane, gorge the northern portion of the colony?" I pointed out that such was not the case—that the people of Townsville do not desire that town to become the capital.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: Oh, oh!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I pointed out that if they did desire Townsville to become the capital there was sufficient public spirit in the northern portions of the colony to prevent it being done; that we had already seen the evils resulting from one little town in the south-east part of the colony being the capital of such an immense territory—the evils of centralisation; and that we were impressed too strongly with the evils of that system to allow another system of centralisation to spring up in the new northern colony. I can tell hon. members of this House that there is not the slightest or remotest chance of Townsville being the capital of the new colony of Northern Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: Oh!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I say there is not the slightest or the remotest chance of it. I do not know whether the Imperial Government takes upon itself to determine the seat of government or not in establishing a new colony; but if it does, the work will afterwards fall to the representatives of the new colony, and their work will be—if Townsville is made the capital—to make the capital somewhere else, where there is no town—where there is no land sold already—so that no one will be injured, and there will be no feeling of jealousy in any part of the country. And not only will that be the result, but a further result will take place. The sale of the lands of the new capital will be sufficient to pay for all the public buildings required for the purposes of government. Hon. gentlemen may take that as the settled policy of the people of Northern Queensland when separation takes place, so that those who are under the delusions I have spoken of—regarding Townsville as the capital, and the party appearances surrounding the present movement—are entirely mistaken. I must say that the great majority of the people have come to their better senses and are now with us, though most hon. members of this House seem not to have come to theirs just yet. I say this: that I am as strongly in favour of territorial separation as I was in favour of financial separation eight or nine years ago, but sooner than allow Townsville to become the capital of the new colony, and commence the same evils that existed and will always exist in Queensland owing to the position of Brisbane, I would give up territorial separation altogether. And I believe that is the feeling which actuates nine-tenths of those who are in favour of the movement. Let us see what the petitioners urge on the Imperial Government as the reasons why they ask for territorial separation. The first thing that they say is that they have a sufficient population for the beginning of a new colony, and for carrying on the work of government, and that the revenue is large enough also. They also say that the distribution of the revenue

in Queensland is not, and never has been, fair and equitable; that their revenues have been taken from them in excess and spent in Southern Queensland; and that a fair distribution of money has not been made. Now, sir, I shall examine into these questions and see whether there is any truth in them or not; and first I shall begin with the population. I think it will be admitted that 61,000 people are more equal to the formation of a new Government in a portion only of Queensland than Queensland itself, with 26,000, was when separation took place from New South Wales in 1859. We are 61,000 now, according to the census. Victoria, one year after separation took place in that colony, had only 77,000. I make bold to predict that, one year after separation takes place in Queensland—if it takes place within the next year—we shall have more than 77,000. At any rate that is beside the question. What I say is that the population of the northern portion of the colony is now quite sufficient for the purpose of establishing a separate and independent government. Then as to the revenue. I maintain that from our revenue returns we are thoroughly qualified to carry on the expense of a separate system of government and to take over all the debt to which we are justly liable, not leaving one single penny behind us for immigration or for anything else; not starting free from debt as Queensland did in 1860, but starting with a fair share of debt, whatever the apportionment may be; and if the two colonies cannot agree between themselves, then the apportionment will be carried out by the commissioners appointed under the Act which I have just read. I assert that positively, and I believe it can be proved plainly even from the documents which the Government are continually laying upon the table of this House. Now I shall prove that we have never received at any time our fair share—a fair distribution—of the consolidated revenue; and I will not go into a great many figures to do so. But I must go back at least some time to show that we have never received it, and we are not receiving it now. In the Separation Bill that was introduced by Mr. Palmer, now Sir Arthur Palmer, I have in my hand the report of the Royal Commission, on the apportionment of the revenue general and local, and expenditure general and local. According to the provisions of the Bill I must here premise that this Bill did not account for the excess of Customs which is received from Northern Queensland into the general revenue in Brisbane. Our contention has always been—a contention which I can prove very easily—that our Customs revenue is far in excess, relatively, of the revenue obtained in the South. But Mr. Palmer in bringing in this Bill did not acknowledge Customs to be local revenue. He made Customs general revenue, and by doing so, of course, he deprived the North of a very large portion of the credit which it ought to have received from Customs revenue; and, according to that Bill, leaving Customs revenue out of the question altogether, the adjustment of accounts stood in this fashion: In 1871, which is the year of which I am treating, the credit balance due to the North on that Bill, without Customs revenue, was £14,646 and some odd shillings and pence.

The PREMIER: Of loan revenue?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No; of consolidated revenue. This was the amount due to the North, after paying its fair share of general expenditure from its general revenue, and paying all its local expenses. This was the share that should have been to the credit of the North, and spent there as the Northern representatives might

apportion, quite independent of the general expenditure of the Government in Brisbane or the local expenditure of the North. That is beginning with the year 1871—as far back as I can go—because I have no documents, which can establish the position which I have taken up, further back than that year.

The PREMIER : What are the Customs ? Do you credit the North with the whole Customs ?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : No ; I have already stated that Mr. Palmer in his Bill did not allow Customs to be local revenue. He said the whole of the Customs was general revenue. Local revenue was revenue derived from gold, land, and railway receipts ; but as we had no railways, there were no railway receipts. General revenue was Customs, excise, stamp duties, postage, commission fees, fees of office, pilotage, light dues, superannuation fund, electric telegraphs, and surveys. The general expenditure was for the general government and interest on loans, and the local expenditure was for interest on local loans—that is, loans for harbours and rivers, railways, roads, bridges, water supply, public works, botanic gardens, hospitals, goldfields, and grants to municipalities and other grants to local authorities ; so that after defraying all this local expenditure, and defraying its fair share of general expenditure, there was still a balance of £14,646. That was in 1871. In 1872, under the same heading, there was a balance of £27,266, and in 1873, under the same heading, the balance was £11,278.

The PREMIER : Was that a surplus ?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : It was the balance remaining to the credit of the North.

The PREMIER : On the year's transactions ?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : On each year's transactions—in the years 1871, 1872, and 1873. This Bill did not become law. Therefore, this is only the apportionment which would have taken place had it done so. But it did not ; so, of course, these balances which were due to the North became a portion of the general revenue, and were spent by the Government as they pleased. Our contention has always been, that this has been going on from the very beginning of government in Queensland. In 1877, when the Financial Separation Bill of the then Government—I might almost say of the present Government, because four members of the Government were members then—was introduced, it was upon a different basis. That Bill came nearer the demands made by the North. It established the principle that Customs should be local revenue, thereby giving us the benefit of the excessive revenue per head of the population which we pay to Brisbane, or to the general government of the other parts of the colony. That was the principle I contended for in the financial separation commission debates ; but, of course, I could not carry it. I had to give way upon it, and I gave way for the purpose, as I said before, of getting half of what I contended for. Our contention has always been that there was a very large amount of revenue credited to Brisbane which actually belonged to North Queensland upon duties paid upon goods in Brisbane which were transhipped to the consumer in the North. That has been our contention always, and will be to the end. It is a contention which is proved, but I gave that up in order to have the Customs made local revenue. I have the figures here, but I think I can give them from memory. The credit due to the North on the basis of that Bill for the year 1877 or 1876—I am not certain which—was £25,000 ; that was, making the Customs local revenue. That was one of the objections I know which the supporters of the Government urged against that

Bill, but it was one of the strong points of the Bill so far as we were concerned, and is now one of our strong points in contending that revenue is not fairly distributed. I do not mean to go over the years that have elapsed from 1873 to 1877 or from 1877 up to the present. I will take last year as a basis upon which to show the inequitable distribution of the revenue. By the *Gazette* returns to the beginning of July—and it will also be found in a return laid on the table of the House the other day by the Colonial Treasurer—the actual receipts for Customs in the North were £242,157. Then there are other items which I am not able to pick out from the returns, but which I have taken equitably on the basis of population. At the present time the population in the northern portion of the colony is 61,000. The population of the whole colony being 321,000, the population of the North bears the proportion of 19 per cent. to the whole population of the colony. I have therefore taken exactly 19 per cent. of excise, stamps, and licenses, which gives the sum of £42,669. I have used the same principle in taking out the revenue for postage, telegraph receipts, harbour dues, and escort fees, and that gives a sum of £38,267.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : That is for the whole year.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : Yes ; for the whole year. Other receipts—there is an item in the *Gazette* termed “other receipts”—other receipts, dealt with on the same basis of 19 per cent., give £31,900. I have taken the actual receipts from railways, because that is an item I could actually get, and there was therefore no necessity to go into the population basis for it—the actual receipts from railways is £99,989. The territorial revenue from the North is £194,921, nearly one-third of the whole ; 32·33 per cent. of the whole of the territorial revenue came from the North of Queensland for that year, the year I am taking as my basis. I have got the percentages, which I will give hon. members. The percentage of Customs is 24 per cent., and the population being 19 per cent., therefore 19 per cent. of the population pay 24 per cent. of Customs revenue. The other receipts, of course, I have taken, as I said, on the population basis, with the exception of railways, which is about one-sixth of the total railway receipts of the colony. The percentage of territorial revenue, as I just stated, is 32·33 per cent. ; that is to say that 19 per cent. of the population pay 32½ per cent. of the territorial revenue. Now I come to the debated point of the revenue which is paid in Brisbane on goods consumed in the North. I know I shall have to make good my position in claiming that. I failed to do it, as I pointed out, on the Financial Separation Committee ; but I am quite prepared to make it good upon the floor of this House, or anywhere else in fair debate. I do not suppose that any hon. member would say that, if there is any duty paid in Brisbane upon goods consumed in the North, the North is not entitled to it. They will not say that ; but what they will say is, I have no doubt, that there is no way of arriving at it. There is certainly considerable difficulty about that, but if the principle is once admitted that it should be done, then there is a way of arriving at it, and it may be arrived at. There is a very large commerce carried on between Brisbane and Northern ports ; there are three large steam shipping companies continually running vessels from here to the North, and there are outside vessels independent of these which run regularly also. All those vessels carry cargo, and carry cargo upon which duty has been paid here and of which duty no account is kept at the other end. What I contend for is this : that taking the estimate

of the population and the large carrying trade that is going on between Brisbane and the Northern ports, I maintain that there is about 20 per cent. of the dutiable goods consumed in the North upon which duty is paid in Brisbane. Twenty per cent.—that is one-fifth of the dutiable goods—are paid for in the Northern ports, and four-fifths in Brisbane. Therefore I contend that there is £60,000 in addition to the sum of £242,000 I spoke about due to Northern Customs. That is my contention at present. That would make the Northern Customs £302,157, taking, of course, a corresponding amount off the amount credited to Brisbane revenue, which would leave the Customs revenue for Brisbane at £702,000. That would raise the Northern Customs per head to 30 per cent. of the total—that is to say that 19 per cent. of the population are paying 30 per cent. of the Customs revenue, making a total revenue for the year of £710,442, or 24·77 per cent. of the total revenue of the colony; so that 19 per cent. of the population of Queensland are paying 24 per cent. or we might say one-quarter—as it is only a small percentage less than a quarter—of the total revenue of the colony. That is the basis upon which I contend that we in the North do not get our fair share of revenue. To prove that my stand is a proper one, I shall show it from outside authority—that is to say, that the principle is correct, that the adjustment should be made, and that an account should be kept of revenues paid in Brisbane for Northern ports. That was one contention made by Moreton Bay in its agitation for separation from New South Wales. The Legislature and the Government of New South Wales, of course, took an opposite view; the Governor of New South Wales took the view presented to him by his Ministers, and made representations to the Secretary for the Colonies at that time, Mr. Labouchere. But Mr. Labouchere did not agree with him. Here is what he says on the point—it is in the New South Wales "Votes and Proceedings for 1856-7," vol. iii., page 1089. That was four years before separation took place:—

"3. The Division of the Debt of the Province.—I am in correspondence with the law advisers of the Crown on the subject of the legal method by which this division may be effected. But whatever their opinion on this point may be, there can be no doubt that the basis of arrangement should be an equitable division according to the several contributions to the revenue of the two portions, and the benefits which they respectively derived or expected from the public services to which the loans thus contracted were appropriated."

That is plain speaking enough—an equitable division according to the several contributions to the revenue of the two portions, and the benefit which they respectively derived or expected from the public services to which the loan thus contracted were appropriated. Now, the New South Wales Government after that, seeing that they had no good ground to stand on, actually admitted the principle that an allowance should be made for the duties collected in Sydney on goods consumed in Moreton Bay. But the question never came as far as that. As I have stated before, the apportionment of the duty never took place; but the principle was admitted by the very people who objected to it after this despatch was received by Sir William Denison. But I have a stronger argument still. Of course, the New South Wales people did not establish any basis upon which the apportionment of the revenue could be made, but, as I have said, they admitted the principle; and later still, in this very year, in the Imperial Parliament, Mr. Gladstone, when introducing his Government of Ireland Bill, admitted and emphasised the same principle in the strongest manner, with regard to the adjustment of revenue and expenditure between Ireland and

England. I shall read to the House what he said. It is rather lengthy, but it is very important, and I think it should be on record. It is well that hon. members should understand the question thoroughly. I am reading from the *Times* of April 9. After Mr. Gladstone had gone into the whole question of revenue as between the two countries, and the degree of apportionment, and the liability of the Irish exchequer for certain sums, he went on to say:—

"There is another consideration which I think it right to mention. It is this—that this Imperial contribution would be paid by Ireland out of a fund composed, in the first instance, of the entire receipts paid into the Irish exchequer; but that, sir, is not a true test of the amount of taxation paid by Ireland. There are goods which pay duty in England, and which are exported, duty paid, to Ireland, which are consumed in Ireland, and upon which, therefore, the duty is really paid by Irishmen, while the receipts go into the Imperial Exchequer."

There is the very principle I am contending for, and have contended for all along in this House. Now, sir, I say that there is £60,000 of our money paid in Brisbane in Customs. Mr. Gladstone goes on to say:—

"But there is not only a corresponding movement the other way, but there is a movement very much larger and more important. More than one million of duty—I think, £1,030,000—is paid upon spirits in Ireland that are exported to Great Britain. Every shilling of that duty is really paid by the Englishman and the Scotchman, but at the same time the whole receipts go into the Irish exchequer. The same thing holds with respect to the porter brewed in Ireland. The same thing holds with regard to the very considerable manufacture of tobacco carried on in Ireland. We have made it the object of our best efforts to ascertain how much money Ireland loses to England by the process which I have described—and which I have no doubt is accurately understood by all members of the House—how much money Ireland loses to Great Britain by the flow of duty-paid commodities from Great Britain to Ireland, and how much Great Britain loses to Ireland from the flow of such commodities from Ireland to Great Britain. The result of this investigation is—I state it with confidence—not actually as if it were to be demonstrated in every point by Parliamentary returns."

That is the point I wish to impress. I know we cannot demonstrate it by Parliamentary returns, but still we can demonstrate it in such a way as to arrive at a fair conclusion.

"But I state it as a matter of certainty, with regard to a far greater portion of the sum, and as a matter certainly subject to very little doubt, that the Irish receipt gains from Great Britain, by the process I have described, more than Great Britain gains from Ireland; and more to no less an amount than £1,400,000, paid by the British taxpayer, and forming part of the Irish receipt. If you maintain this fiscal unity of the Empire, if you do not erect—which I trust you will not erect—custom-houses between Great Britain and Ireland; if you let things take their natural course according to the ordinary and natural movement of trade, £1,400,000 will be paid to the benefit of Ireland as a charge upon the English and Scotch taxpayer, and will form a portion of the fund out of which Ireland will defray the Imperial contribution which we propose to levy upon her. If this amount of Imperial contribution to be paid by Ireland, which I have described as one-fourteenth, comes to be reduced by subtracting this sum of £1,400,000, the portion which Ireland will have to pay will be not one-fourteenth, but a fraction under one twenty-sixth. That is a very great change. It is a benefit she gets, not only in the state of the law, but owing to the course of trade. We cannot take it away without breaking up the present absolute freedom between the two countries. I hope this will be borne in mind by those who think this charge of one-fifteenth is a heavy charge to be thrown upon Ireland, and by those who think, as I certainly do, that in a case of this kind, after all that has occurred, when two countries are very strong and very rich compared with a third, of far more restricted means, the pecuniary arrangement ought to be equitable and even bountiful in some moderate degree."

Now sir, the pecuniary arrangement which we wish to establish ought to be equitable. We want no bounty, we want no moderation; we want simply fair play. I contend that the

principle which I have always maintained in this House—against, I may say, almost every member of it—is the correct one. A certain amount should be credited to the Northern Customs on goods which pay duty in Brisbane, but which are for Northern consumption.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Why did you not maintain the system when you were in office?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I have explained that already. Now, by that I make out that the Northern revenue was £710,000 for the year just past—the year ending 30th June, 1886—one-fourth of the total revenue of the colony. Let us analyse now the figures supplied to us by the Government. Immediately before the meeting of Parliament the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer made a very long tour in the northern part of the colony. It took them over five weeks, with the aid of steam—a steam vessel taking them all round the coast and a railway taking them about 250 miles—to go over a very small portion of the colony—over a portion which no Minister, as Minister, had ever seen before; thus proving beyond all doubt that this colony is too large to be administered as it ought to be from this little corner in the far south-east. The Premier admitted while in the North that there were great difficulties of administration to be encountered, although he said that those difficulties were not insuperable. Certainly they are not, and no doubt the hon. gentleman will do his best to get over them; but I am sure he will not be able to get over them in such a way as to meet the desires of the people of the North. During that tour the Colonial Treasurer and he made certain statements, and as they have been put in print I will just see what they are worth. I have analysed several papers put on the table lately, and, like all the papers that the Colonial Treasurer has produced, they are a disgrace—Mr. Speaker, they would be a disgrace, with regard to bookkeeping, to any greengrocer in Brisbane. I will begin with this glaring statement which the hon. gentleman made when he was up north—namely, that the North owed between four and five millions of loan money.

The PREMIER: I never said anything of the sort.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: You are reported to have said it, anyway.

MR. NORTON: And he took his own reporter with him.

The PREMIER: What I said was £2,500,000.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is not what the newspapers say. However, I am not going to discuss the question, for it really is not worth discussion. He is also reported to have said that the Northern revenues were not sufficient to cover the expenses of government—that it would cost as much to govern the northern portion as it cost to govern the whole colony—thus making the part equal to the whole—which I leave him, as a mathematician, to explain. I will refer first of all to page 2 of the Treasury Return, which purports to be a statement of the public debt of Queensland, showing the deficits on the various loans apportioned to the respective services. It states that the total public debt of the colony is £26,550,850, whereas our actual indebtedness is somewhere about £20,000,000; and that the total expenditure therefrom has been £17,390,950, leaving a balance of £9,249,891. There is a clear mistake there of £90,000. That may be a trifling sum to a Government that deals with millions every year, but it is no trifle, I can assure the hon. gentleman, to the people in the North, whose only desire is to have fair play. The

balance should, of course, have been £9,159,891. The next statement on the same page of the returns shows that immigration is debited to Northern Queensland at the rate of one-sixth of the total cost of immigration. That is put down at £350,000, making the total loan expenditure on that account £2,100,000. We have several returns, Mr. Speaker, on this question, and, as usual with the Treasurer's returns, they all disagree. How is it possible for the Government to make a fair account between North and South, when they cannot make a fair account of their own returns in the Treasury? The expenditure from loan for immigration, according to a return moved for by the hon. member for Mackay, is put down at £2,659,436.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is the amount of the loan, and includes the deficit on immigration account of £558,000.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The amount the North is said to be indebted for that service is £350,000, or one-sixth of £2,100,000. Those two sums do not agree. Now, let us see what the Treasurer's tables say—the tables which he gave us on Wednesday afternoon. According to those tables the amount is £2,042,000, and I believe that that is the correct statement.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The deficit has to be added to that.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The North is charged with one-sixth of £2,100,000, whereas the actual total is £2,042,000. In the same returns, obtained on the motion of Mr. Black, railways and railway surveys, Northern division, are put down at £3,248,707. Let us compare this with a return table, in response to a motion by Mr. Palmer, respecting the figures quoted by the Colonial Treasurer. The amount actually expended is put down in that return at £1,290,000, and the amount unexpended on those railways at £1,937,000, making a total of £3,228,000. That is a difference of £20,000. Let us now take the figures for harbours and rivers:—Jetty at Bowen, £30,769; jetty at Townsville, £80,500; jetty at Port Douglas, £10,000; and harbours and river improvements generally, £348,677; making a total of £469,984. Now let us see what the other paper says, from which the Colonial Treasurer quoted when up north. In that the amount expended in harbours and rivers in the North is put down at £245,107, and the amount unexpended at £171,893, making a total of £416,000, as against £469,000. Now which is correct? Will the Colonial Treasurer tell me which of these statements is correct? Again, let us look at public buildings. The amount expended for that purpose is put down in this return at £56,000. Let us now see what is the amount in the return quoted by the Colonial Treasurer. There the amount expended on public buildings in the North is stated to be £100,309, and the amount authorised and not yet expended £2,031, making a total of £102,000, as against the actual expenditure of £56,000. Which of these is correct? Will the hon. gentleman tell us that? Now I will analyse this third table in the return referred to by the hon. gentleman up north, item by item, and see what the statement is worth. The first item in the table is immigration, and the amount said to have been expended in the North for that purpose is £350,000, or one-sixth. Will the hon. gentleman tell me why he apportions the North one-sixth of the debt for immigration? Has the North received one-sixth of the immigrants introduced into the colony? Has one-sixth of the amount expended on immigration been incurred in respect of the North? Can the hon. gentleman say so? Dare he say so? I believe the total debt incurred under this head on account of the North is not more than £200,000

instead of £350,000. According to a return furnished by the Under Colonial Secretary, Mr. Drew—now the Auditor-General—to the Financial Separation Commission, the total number of immigrants who arrived in the colony from the date of Separation to the 31st of March, 1877, was 82,376, of which the North received 2,830, or about one thirty-fifth of the whole number of immigrants introduced up to the date, and yet the Colonial Treasurer now debits us with “about one-sixth.” The total expenditure on immigration for the North up to March, 1877, was £40,356. Now we are debited with £350,000. That is, the difference between £40,356 and £350,000 has been incurred within the last nine years.

The PREMIER : Nearly the whole amount has been incurred during the last nine years.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : Up to the period of which I speak the total amount expended on immigration was £1,174,000. That included the sum of £842,000 from loan. It has not all been expended within the last nine years. Up to March, 1877, no less than 82,000 immigrants were brought into the colony. Have there been 82,000 brought in since? Why does the hon. gentleman continue to make such statements? I will now take the next item—railways. The Colonial Treasurer debits the North with £1,290,000 for railways, while, according to the Auditor-General, the actual amount expended up to July, 1885, was £1,014,000. Since then up to the 31st of March last £222,000 has been expended, making a total of £1,236,000, or an over debit of £54,000 on railways. The next item is electric telegraphs, and it is a rather strong one. The hon. gentleman has actually debited the North with one-third of the total expenditure. Every hon. member knows that one-third cannot be by any possible means debited to the North. There is one long line which goes to the Gulf country. That certainly cannot be debited to the North; yet the hon. gentleman has charged it to the North. Then there is another long line being made now to Thursday Island. That is also a national line and cannot be fairly debited to the North. Only a certain portion can possibly be so debited. I have no means of arriving at the exact amount expended in the North, and I do not know whether the hon. gentleman has or not, but I very much doubt it. I shall, however, take the population basis and put it down at one-fifth. What does that come to? It amounts to £119,000 instead of £184,000, and that is a great deal nearer the truth. Of course, I cannot be exact, but I give the basis on which I make my calculations.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : The amount in the return is £184,000.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : I know that is the amount given in the return. I am traversing the items in the statement, and proving some of them to be erroneous. Next, we have the item of harbours and rivers, for which the sum of £245,000 is stated to have been expended. I cannot deal with this matter as I would wish to deal with it, for the simple reason that I have not been able to get the necessary return. At my last inquiry at the Government Printing Office as to when the report of the Harbours and Rivers Department would be ready, I was informed that it would not be published till next week. I suppose when it is ready it will be like the other returns, unreliable. The next item in the table is lights. That is a very small matter, and I will pass it over. Then I come to public buildings, which I have dealt with already. In regard to buildings, I am giving credit for the total amount expended for that purpose in the North, and for the total amount unexpended, according to the Auditor-General's statement, which I think is the more correct one, and I am

giving the Government credit for £62,596 instead of £100,300. In doing that, I am giving actually more than I should. Then we come to roads and bridges. And what is the amount set down as having been spent on roads and bridges in the Northern district? The Auditor-General gives the total amount expended on roads and bridges in the North, from the foundation of the colony up to the end of last year, at £139,323. There is also a vote for main roads to goldfields—namely, £20,000. He does not distribute that, and show how much has been spent in the North. But I know that a large portion of that has been spent in the North, because I had the expending of it while I was Minister for Works. Put down the proportion for the North at, say, three-fourths, or £15,000. I think that if the Minister for Works inquires into the matter he will find that that estimate is not far from the truth. It rather overstates it than otherwise. The expenditure on roads and bridges, then, was £154,323, instead of £182,904 as stated in this return by the Colonial Treasurer. As to the other items in this table, I would ask, what business have they here as a debt against the North? What have the amounts for water supply and loans to local authorities to do with the debt of the North? When separation takes place and we take over all, we will take over those. As to the amount set down for loans to local authorities, that is a revenue-producing item—it is not a debt. Those two items are paying 5 per cent. interest to the Government.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : No.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : Yes; and yet we are debited with both of them.

The PREMIER : You get credit also for the interest.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : Credit for the interest! It is not a debt at all. In the first place, the cost was only 4 per cent., and in the second place the Government are receiving 5 per cent.

The PREMIER : You get credit for that.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : We do not get credit for that.

The PREMIER : Yes, you do.

Mr. BLACK : Where is it given?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : I will total up this, as I make it out, public debt. I have given very liberal allowance, and the total debt due on the 31st March was £2,044,812.

The PREMIER : You take off half-a-million.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : I take off half-a-million, and we will take off a great deal more when we get separation.

The PREMIER : When you get separation! No such repudiation as that, I hope.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : I will tell you what we will take off when we get separation. Every year's revenue will be adjusted year by year, a debtor and credit balance struck between the two parts of the country; and I am very glad to say that neither the present Government nor the Government of the new colony will have the sole arbitration of that, so that we may expect some little fair play. That will be struck year by year, and when it is found in any one year, or series of years, that our contribution has been in excess of the expenditure for all legitimate purposes in Northern Queensland, so much of the debt for roads and bridges, public buildings, and other matters will be struck off the general account owing by the North. That means the adjustment of the debt. Any schoolboy can pick out the items which have been put down to the North in Loan Bills; but that is not adjustment.

That is the Treasurer's style of adjustment, but that will not be the style of adjustment adopted by the commissioners appointed by the Imperial Government.

The PREMIER: That is what is commonly called repudiation.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No, it is not repudiation. It is simply paying what is honestly due and no more. No more than what is due will be paid, but every penny due will be paid. Now, let us see how the hon. gentleman deals with the ordinary revenue—the consolidated revenue. He told us just now that we get credit for something, but we do not see it here. But I will tell you what we are debited with, Mr. Speaker. We are debited with £122,023 interest upon the public debt, and it is calculated upon the somewhat ingenious basis of one-sixth, the same as the immigration debt is. It is a very simple way of keeping books, and a very efficient way as far as Southern interests are concerned. I hold, sir, that that £122,023 is in excess of the amount which is due by the North as interest upon the public debt. Even allowing it to stand as it is, allowing every item debited against the North as having been expended there in the year ending the 30th June, 1885, the total expenditure is £514,421, as against £371,932 of revenue. The year just passed has, as I have stated, produced £710,000 revenue.

The PREMIER: Estimated.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The only estimate is the one taken on the basis of population, and I take the Customs that have been paid in Brisbane. The actual return of Customs, as I pointed out, is one-fifth, nearly one-fourth—24 per cent., and then there is the territorial revenue, which the hon. gentleman has overlooked in these figures. The whole territorial revenue of last year was only £600,000, and out of that £194,000 is credited to the North. I suppose the hon. gentleman is aware of that. That is nearly one-third, so that I do not think he will find I am far out in my calculations. But, taking his return here, as I find it, £541,000 against £371,000, leaves a large margin. Now, I believe that if I took a series of years—four or five—say the last five years, I could show an equally large margin year by year. If I take it upon the same basis of Customs as I have taken the one just passed, it will show equally as large a margin, in proportion, as that does. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that, although the cost of governing is more expensive in the North—in police especially—still, I make bold to say that there was a margin between £80,000 and £100,000 last year which properly belongs to the North. That will give £600,000 for the expenditure. I admit, as I have said, that government is more expensive in the North, but it is far more expensive than it ought to be. I am not going to enter into any accusations of extravagance at present; we will have time enough next week to do that; but I will point out that that was the chief accusation of the people of Moreton Bay against the people of New South Wales—that the Government was extravagant; and I say, without hesitation, that the Government here is extravagant, and always has been extravagant to an extreme degree. A great deal of that extra cost arises from the fact of the seat of government not being in the proper place. Ministers have not the control over the expenditure that they would have if they had the knowledge of the country that they should have. They are obliged to depend upon officials and subordinates, some of whom know as little or even less than they do themselves. They are under the influence of red tape and routine, and are obliged to take the advice of

those officials, and the consequence is that the government of the colony is far more costly than it ought to be. That comes, as I said before, from a circumstance that cannot possibly be altered, because, as far as I am concerned, I would never consent to the seat of government being removed. That can never be altered, no matter what takes place. It has been said—I do not know whether the Premier has said it, but I believe he has intimated as much—that a remedy can be found for the inequitable distribution of the revenue which exists. I do not know whether he is willing to admit that it does exist in provincial councils.

The PREMIER: I never said anything about provincial councils.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Well, I know that remedy has been proposed by people in some parts of the colony which are suffering very much in the same way that we are, only perhaps not in the same degree. I say that provincial councils will not be of the slightest use to us. If the Government of the colony at present is prepared to grant a fair adjustment of revenue on the basis of giving Customs to the North which are collected in the South—giving fair adjustment of the debt owing by the North to the colony, and upon that basis establishing a fair and equitable system of reckoning afterwards—if there is a surplus, giving it to the North, and if there is a debit, putting it against the North—then, I say, if they do that they would place the northern part of the colony in the same position as if we had separation, but that would not do away with the difficulties I have enumerated—distance from the seat of government, the great difficulty resulting from the general want of knowledge on the part of members of this House of the wants and requirements of the people of the northern part of the colony, and there would still be wanting a local legislature which would have for its first object the development of that portion of the country immediately under its control. Now, that can never be done by members of this House. I say it is utterly impossible, because even Northern members themselves have not got sufficient time to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with all parts of the North, and we cannot expect Southern members to do so. The only remedy in the estimation of the people who are suffering from the evils that I have enumerated—the greatest evil, be it understood, not being the inequitable distribution of public revenues, but the greatest evil being the want of sympathy and encouragement in developing the resources of the North—I say the only remedy for this is absolute separation. Look at the difference in Queensland since its separation from New South Wales. Has it not increased and flourished in threefold proportion to what it could possibly have done had it remained attached to New South Wales? And the same thing will take place if the northern portion of the colony is detached. We have everything that is required to make a colony. We have great mineral resources; we have millions upon millions of acres of the finest agricultural lands in Australia; we have tens of millions of acres of good pastoral lands, and these cannot be developed under the present system of government. Why, even at the present time, under the present system of discouragement, we contribute actually 42 per cent. of the total exports of the whole of Queensland. Hon. members, no doubt, may have wondered why it is the North contributes so much revenue and can pay so much. I will tell them. The reason is because the people are a wealthy people, and it is wealth alone that can bear the burden of inequitable taxation and expenditure. Had we not been a

wealthy people we could not have borne it, and had we not been we would not have borne it so long. Had we been a poor people we would have rebelled long since. I say that is one of the greatest evils for which this House can by no means point out a remedy—the non-development of the resources of the whole of the northern territory. No proper attention can possibly be given by this Legislature to the development of the resources of mining alone in Northern Queensland, or at any rate the Legislature as it is situated now; and the same with the land. In fact, there is very little encouragement to go on the land, and there is no encouragement given to the development of the resources that are in the land when the people do go on it. Now, sir, let me not be misunderstood in saying, and let not the House misunderstand in thinking, that the revenue difficulty is the greatest difficulty, although I am prepared to point out, and shall point out just now, the difference in the Customs per head of population in the North and the South. Still I do not take that as a grievance at all equal to the one I have pointed out—the difficulty of administration and the want of local encouragement in fostering and developing the resources of the country. According to the Customs returns, the total Customs revenue is £3 2s. 7d. per head. That is the general average; whereas the proportion paid by the North is £3 19s. 4d., and by the South £2 18s. 8d. There is the difference in the Customs returns. There is actually a difference of £1 in the actual receipts; but take the basis which I have contended for, and the Northern Customs amount to £4 19s. 3d. That is the duty we pay in Customs, while the South pays £2 14s.—that is to say, we pay £2 5s. per head more in Customs than the southern portion of the colony does, and still I say that that is not the greatest grievance we have. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think I have said all it is necessary to say upon this motion, and I think I have done something to prove the difficulties of administration, especially as the hon. the Premier has himself admitted them, and as previous Governments have by their acts admitted them. That admission was first made when a separate Supreme Court judge was appointed for the North. Then the present Government have gone so far in acknowledging the same difficulty by appointing a separate Engineer-in-Chief—one of the very worst things that could be done; but it simply shows they recognise the difficulties. I say it is one of the worst things that could be done, because the Government loses all control over him. The Minister for Works, I know well from experience, can have no more control over the Chief Engineer, distant 1,000 miles away, than any man in Queen street can. That is one of the evils that results from the seat of government being here, and the colony being so large. I think, Mr. Speaker, I have now proved the case I have undertaken to prove, and I really do believe that the time is not far distant when the latter portion of this motion will be carried into effect—that the time will shortly arrive, which was contemplated by His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, and that a separate and distinct colony, with representative institutions, will be erected north of Cape Palmerston.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I have had some hesitation this evening as to whether it would be desirable to move the adjournment of the debate on the conclusion of the hon. member's motion. But although there are some matters that the hon. member has referred to, particularly relating to figures, to which, of course, it is quite impossible to give immediate answers without further time than I can possibly have had to-night, still I think it will be convenient that I should follow the hon. gentleman at once on the

general question; and, as far as relates to a good many statistics also, I am prepared to say something. The hon. member for Townsville (Mr. Macrossan) may be congratulated upon the fairness with which he brought forward his motion. To a very great extent he traversed the whole ground from the time of the separation of this colony from New South Wales to the present time, and from his point of view he made out a case which would commend itself to some persons as a strong one. However, it depends very much upon the point of view from which the question is regarded. I am quite prepared to admit that if a very large and preponderating proportion of the population of the North desired to be separated from this colony, and erected into a separate colony, they would have very strong claims for consideration; but I think the hon. member signally failed to prove that that is the case. With respect to the reasons for separating that part of the colony at the present time, he gave four reasons: first, that the present population is sufficient to justify separation; second, that the present revenue is sufficient to justify the establishment of a separate Government; third, that the distribution of the revenue in the past has been unfair; and fourth, that there has been an unfair distribution of the moneys raised by loan. Now, I shall deal with these reasons separately by-and-by, but I may here remark that with respect to the last of them he brought forward no arguments. He merely stated that was one of the grounds he would urge, but he forgot, I presume—at any rate, he omitted—to give any arguments in support of the view that the distribution of the loan moneys has been unfair. I was rather surprised when he used no arguments; I was wishing that he would, because I think I could have answered him very conclusively on that point.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: If the hon. gentleman gives me two minutes I will do it now.

The PREMIER: Possibly the hon. member who follows me may have something to say on that point. Now, sir, the hon. member began by quoting from a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1859—the Duke of Newcastle—intimating his intention with respect to the future history of the new colony to be established, and suggesting that the colony might itself be subsequently divided. Then the hon. member proceeded to deal with the legal aspects of the question as to whether the colony can be divided. I am not prepared to deny that the Imperial Parliament has power to divide the colony of Queensland; but I do not think that, under the existing laws, Her Majesty can do it without the intervention of the Imperial Parliament. I may point out here that the circumstances of Queensland at the present time as a subject for division are very different from the circumstances of New South Wales in 1859—that the circumstances of the north of this colony are very different from the circumstances of Moreton Bay when it was a part of New South Wales. It would be a very extreme course for the Imperial Parliament to take now to divide a colony at present united, having a large burden of debt and large and complicated administrative arrangements—to say without consulting the Parliament of this country, which has been given the full right to manage its own affairs, to say that in future it shall be divided into two—that the whole of the liabilities of the colony shall attach to both separate colonies; and that, too, without very ample provisions such as have never yet been suggested, for determining not merely the amount of liabilities each ought to bear, but how those liabilities are to be adjusted; for under the clause in the Act of 1861, which the hon. member quoted, each colony would be liable

for the whole burden of the debt. That is a very serious thing to begin with, and how the credit of each separate colony would be affected is a matter that it would be hard to predicate. Since each colony would be liable to the public creditor for the whole of the public debt, until some new kind of international tribunal were provided for the recovery by one party from the other of any amount they might have been unfairly called upon to pay, a very serious difficulty might arise. Suppose one of the new colonies was in difficulties—able to pay its fair share, but no more, and the other colony in greater difficulties—not able to pay its share; what would happen then? How would the claim of the public creditor be met? I am afraid the credit of both might suffer very materially. That difficulty is probably not beyond the reach of human ingenuity to settle; but it is a very serious question, and I am sure the Imperial Parliament would consider it seriously before they dealt with the matter. Again, it is a serious thing for an outside power to divide a country in two—because for this purpose the Imperial Parliament is an outside power—to override the Legislature of this colony and say, “We do not care for your wishes; you represent the whole country, but we will divide you in two; you shall be two separate countries.” Let us recognise the fact that it is a matter that will not be disposed of by the Imperial Parliament merely by considering the number of names on a petition. I am sure that if those who guide the deliberations of the Imperial Parliament are called upon to do so they will want sound and satisfactory arguments before they take a course of that sort. I do not propose at length to traverse the arguments used by the hon. member with respect to the legal aspect of the question, but I will say a few words on the point, because he assumes that it is quite competent for Her Majesty, in exercise of the power conferred upon her by statute before separation, to divide the colony in two. My opinion is that no such power at present exists, and I believe that the Imperial law officers have formally advised the Colonial Office to that effect. The point is a short one, and hon. members will follow me if I point out briefly how that question arises. It was provided by the 7th section of the Act of 1855—the Constitution Act of New South Wales—that it should be lawful for Her Majesty by letters patent to erect into a separate colony or colonies any territories which might be separated from New South Wales, and by such letters patent to make provision for the government of any such colony. And the form of legislature was to resemble as nearly as circumstances would allow the form of government and legislature established at that time in New South Wales. That referred to a previous section of the Act authorising Her Majesty to alter the northern boundary of the territory of New South Wales, and constitute one or more new colonies. About that time a settlement had been established at Port Curtis which, it was then thought, would form the nucleus of a new colony, and it should be remembered that nearly all Australia belonged to New South Wales then. It was no doubt contemplated when this power was given that instead of one colony called Queensland there might be two or more colonies. There is the following provision in the 2nd section of the Act of 1861, quoted by the hon. member:—

“It shall be lawful for Her Majesty by letters patent to annex to any colony which is now or may hereafter be established on the continent of Australia any territories which might have been erected into a separate colony.”

Now, the better opinion is that the power of altering the boundaries of New South Wales

and erecting separate colonies was exhausted by the establishment of the colony of Queensland. After the establishment of Queensland, the question arose whether it was possible under the power conferred by the section I have just quoted to annex to any colony established any of the parts that might have been severed from New South Wales. When Queensland was established, all the part west of the 141st meridian was not included in Queensland, and under the power mentioned Her Majesty was advised to include the Gulf country, and it was in connection with that request that the Duke of Newcastle used the expressions the hon. member quoted. He said:—

“Although, as you are aware, I do not feel myself at liberty, without the strongest grounds, to alter the boundaries of colonies once fixed with the consent and acquiescence of the inhabitants, I am not prepared to abandon definitely on the part of Her Majesty’s Government the power to deal with districts not yet settled, as the wishes and convenience of the future settlers may hereafter require.”

That related entirely to the portion of the colony to the west of the 141st meridian, and to nothing else. That power may still exist, but I doubt very much whether it does. It is not, however, a matter of much consequence whether the power can be exercised now or not, but I think the hon. gentleman, and others who expect that the colony is to be divided in a summary manner, are mistaken, and that the power will not be exercised without the serious consideration of the Imperial Parliament, and full provision being made, not only for the ultimate adjustment of the liabilities of the separate colonies, but also for their immediate adjustment; for I am quite sure that the Imperial Parliament would never dream of throwing the finances of Queensland into utter confusion, as would be the case if—to quote the figures used by the hon. member—they were suddenly deprived of £600,000 or £700,000 of revenue a year, and called upon for an indefinite period to bear the whole burden of the public debt of the colony. I am quite sure that no such power would be exercised. That, sir, however, has really very little to do with the merits of the matter. Justice will prevail, whatever that justice may be, and no matter what form has to be observed in bringing it about. The hon. gentleman then went on to refer to the agitation for the separation of Queensland. They had at that time a population in this part of New South Wales that was almost unanimous as to the necessity for separation. I doubt if anybody has disputed that. The population of this part was almost unanimous. There were a few persons who objected to it, but their objections were on what might be called purely selfish grounds. They were people who had, to a limited degree, such a limited degree as was possible then—not limited so far as their efforts to make it unlimited went—a monopoly of the advantages of this part of the colony. They desired to keep themselves attached to New South Wales. They did not desire to see any large population in this colony. They desired to keep it as a close preserve for themselves, and used to tell the British public and everybody else who listened to them that this part of Australia was not fit for a white man to live in. Those were the arguments used with regard to Moreton Bay. I can remember, later than that, that in New South Wales and Victoria, people entertained the same view that Brisbane was a place where white men could not live, and they were surprised to see healthy people coming from this part of Australia. Moreton Bay was then very little known, just as little as the northern part of Queensland is known now to many people. All those who were

here, with the exception of those would-be monopolists, were unanimously in favour of separation; and the circumstances were irresistible, and the Imperial Government did what they might then justly do—they granted separation. There was no difficulty about adjusting a large debt. It was said that there was some debt; but New South Wales owed very little money; I am not sure that she owed any. It was certainly not for public works constructed in Queensland.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The debt was £3,000,000.

The PREMIER: It was not for public works constructed in this part of what was then New South Wales, and if they claimed anything for immigration it was not persisted in very long. Certainly, since I have been able to take an active interest in the affairs of Queensland—I may say, perhaps, about twenty-three years—I have not heard of any claim by New South Wales for any debt owed by Queensland to her. Then the hon. gentleman went on to say that after separation it was not very long before an agitation was started in Queensland for the separation of the northern part. We know that there was. The hon. member, speaking about the year 1864, when the agitation first began, said that there were at that time scarcely any inhabitants to the north of Rockhampton except at the Gulf and at Rockingham Bay. He forgot that Bowen was an important town in those days; more populous than it is now, and it certainly had a larger trade than it has now. I believe they were all in favour of separation there; it may be said they have been so traditionally. Ever since it has been Bowen they have thought there should be separation, and that Bowen should be the capital. But that agitation was begun in Rockhampton, and there it was principally continued. Indeed, the inhabitants of the colony north of that were not numerous enough to count in an agitation of that kind. The reasons that were urged then were, of course, much the same as are urged now, and the same that will always be made use of in a new country. In a new country settlement cannot progress all over at once; it must progress from centres, and I believe the outside districts will always say, "We do not get the advantages of good government that you have in the centre." That is inherent in the nature of things. We cannot help that. So long as a country is sparsely populated, it cannot have the advantages that thickly populated centres have. The inhabitants of Normanston, for instance, cannot have the same advantages of municipal government and police supervision, and many other things that are enjoyed in Brisbane, and in Rockhampton, and in Townsville, and so on, only varying in degree. Moreover, as a new country progresses, the construction of public works becomes necessary, if we adopt the principle as we adopt it here, that it is the duty of the Government to construct public works, which I fully admit, although I believe some people dispute it; it has been disputed within the walls of this House. Assuming that to be a right principle, and I believe it is, those public works cannot be constructed everywhere at once. They can only be constructed where the population is such as to justify the expenditure, and there is a reasonable belief that the expenditure will bring in corresponding returns. For a long time necessarily, owing to the sparse settlement of different parts of the country, those public works cannot be constructed, and during that period the inhabitants of those parts, if we adopt the rules the hon. member lays down, will be able to say, "We are being robbed to contribute to the benefit of the people in the centres of population."

Why, unless you utterly abolish the system of governing the colony as a whole altogether, and say that every man is to get back to himself individually the contribution he makes to the State, that objection must always prevail. The fact will always be so. No man can get back to himself individually the benefit of the contribution that he individually makes to the country—that is, directly. Nor can any one town get back directly the exact amount of contribution it gives to the general revenue; nor can any aggregation of three or four towns. That is a state of things that cannot possibly be. When the settlement of a country is to a certain extent homogeneous, as in the older settled countries, then it might be quite easy to apportion the expenditure in proportion to the contributions, because they contribute, then, upon the same terms; and, if under those conditions the expenditure were grossly uneven or unfair, a good ground of complaint would arise. But the complaint of the hon. member, and to a great extent the complaint of the agitators in favour of those views, rests upon an objection to a state of things that is inseparable from the settlement of a new country. If hon. members will bear that in mind they will see that a great many complaints which have been made, especially in those earlier periods, lose a great deal of their weight. I think that if that state of things, which I say is inseparable from a new country, is continued after the inexorable necessities have passed away, there will be fair ground for complaint. If the hon. member had not complained that long ago injustice had been done to the North under the circumstances which I have pointed out, when what he calls "justice" could not possibly be done, then he would have had a stronger case; but the hon. member did not, as you, sir, will observe, and as hon. members will observe, endeavour to show that any injustice of that kind had been intentionally continued after the circumstances of the colony had changed. The hon. member then proceeded to refer to the history of the agitation for separation. The agitation from the Central district ceased, and he says the Government of the day came to them with gifts in their hands. But the circumstances of the Central district had altered; the population had become greater, and settlement west of Rockhampton had also become greater, and the circumstances of the colony justified the construction of a railway from Rockhampton to meet the trade that would conveniently and naturally go there. As soon as Parliament saw that, I believe not longer than a year—and a year is not very long in the history of a colony—had elapsed after it first might have been said, with any degree of probability, that the construction of such a railway was justified, when its construction was authorised. Justice having become possible—I am using the word "justice" in the sense in which the hon. member used it—what they call "justice" having become practicable and possible, it was done, and the agitation ceased. Then it gradually moved northwards, and for a long time we heard nothing about it. Then the hon. member passed on to an agitation which can scarcely be called a public agitation—a parliamentary agitation in favour of what was called "financial separation," or the division of the country into financial districts. I, for one, very much regret that a system of that kind was not adopted at that time. I was a member of the Government, as the hon. member said, that brought in a Bill for the purpose, and I was in favour of it, although I did not then see the importance of it as fully as I do now. But I am fully prepared to admit that it would have been a great advantage if the system introduced at that time had been adopted. I do not mean to say for a

moment that I think the different districts ought to have been treated as if they were entirely separate communities, but it would have been of the greatest advantage, if, not injuring the colony as a whole, the divisions being, of course, natural—divisions which might fairly be said to be homogeneous within themselves—a final attempt had been made to apportion the revenue and expenditure. That Bill of 1877 was not passed, for reasons it is not necessary to advert to. The hon. member says, and perfectly fairly, that the Government could not carry it. It was perfectly obvious when in committee that the Government could not carry it, and had no chance of carrying it, and it was withdrawn. The Government, however, continued to keep the accounts on that system up to the time of their going out of office at the beginning of 1879. Then—a matter I have ever since gravely regretted and still regret—the succeeding Government, of which the hon. member for Townsville—the foremost champion of this system of financial districts—was a member, discontinued the system; and the result was that now it is almost impossible, without enormous trouble, and taking probably two or three years' work of competent persons, to ascertain what would have been the result of keeping the accounts in that way. At any rate the material has gone from us. So long as we were in office and kept the accounts—up to 1879—the materials were available; from that time to the present they are not available, and we are left to the same resource to which the hon. gentleman was compelled to have recourse—to conjecture, to ascertain whether the different parts of the colony have been treated fairly or not. Therefore I say now that I do not think it is a fair thing for the hon. gentleman, who may be charged more than anyone else with this blame, to complain that this system was discontinued. I do not think it is fair for him to come down now and complain that the North has received injustice from the want of a proper record of Northern revenue and expenditure. We have not now the materials before us to say how far, if at all, the expenditure was unfairly apportioned during the tenure of office of the late Government, but we have the materials before us, and know what was done during the previous tenure of office of the present Government. We know also that from year to year, during the time the present Government have been in office, the proportion of expenditure in the Northern portions of the colony has been steadily increasing, and not diminishing, so that it cannot be said for a moment that the present Government have shown any desire to act unfairly; and if there had been any unfairness done to the North, no instance of it has ever been pointed out in detail up to the time the party of the present Government previously ceased to hold office. If there is any unfairness, therefore, it must be laid to the charge of those who did it, and it has not occurred during the term of office of the present Government. I am quite sure no member of the present Government, and no member on this side of the House, ever had any other desire than to give the fairest of fair play to all parts of the colony. The hon. member says when that system of keeping separate accounts was dropped the agitation for separation revived. I think it is a great pity that the Government of which the hon. member was a member did not devote some attention to that project of financial separation to which they attached so much importance when in opposition, rather than to the great schemes which they propounded during their tenure of office. The hon. member then said the agitation began again during the tenure of office of the previous Government. That is so; but how did

it begin, sir? It was started by a few landowners in Townsville, who thought they saw great profit arising to themselves if Townsville were to be the capital. That is my opinion of it clearly. Up to that time, in Townsville, and in the North generally, this agitation for separation had practically gone out of existence, though it still smouldered in Bowen. It was smouldering there for many years, but it was again forgotten in Townsville, and everywhere else in the North. It next came on the scene in Mackay. Now, I have not the slightest doubt that the agitation was got up in Mackay because the people there could not get black labour. That may be denied as often as some hon. members please, but it is as clear as that the sun shines in the daytime; there is no doubt about it. Well, the agitation was next started in Mackay, and it was an agitation because they could not get black labour. Do hon. members forget the petition prepared and signed by a great number of persons in Mackay, backed up in London prematurely and maladroitly by Mr. Davidson and Sir John Bennet Lawes, in their celebrated letter to the Colonial Office, pointing out the great injustice the North was receiving at the hands of the South who would not give them the black labour they were burning to introduce? Do hon. members forget that? I think not; nor will it be forgotten. Since that time those engaged in the agitation have done their best to hide that petition, and put it into the waste-paper basket, or out of sight anywhere. It is a fact, I affirm, that cannot be disputed, that the separation movement at the present time is supported without a single exception by every man in favour of black labour.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No doubt of it.

The PREMIER: There is not one man in the North who believes in black labour who is not among the supporters of the separation movement. I am coming now to the signatures to the petition. The hon. member, in speaking upon the subject, said that at first a large number of the people were frightened at this aspect of the question. So they were. A very great number were frightened, and they are still. But the hon. member says that the majority of them have changed their minds. On that point I venture to differ from the hon. gentleman. I am prepared to admit—and I have already admitted it in the House this session—that a great number of people in the North, who are not in favour of black labour, are now in favour of separation; but they are mostly to be found in Townsville, notwithstanding the disclaimer of the hon. member for Townsville, that Townsville is never to be the capital. I am quite certain that the supporters of separation not in favour of black labour, and who do not reside in Townsville, make an extremely small number. I have a tolerable acquaintance with the North from various visits I have made there, and I affirm, without hesitation, that separation in the North is supported by all the advocates of black labour—ardently supported; and is supported by a great many people in Townsville who are not advocates of black labour. Beyond that I do not think that separation has a great many supporters in the northern part of the colony. The hon. member referred to the large number of signatures to the petition—10,000—and said it was the largest number of signatures to any petition ever sent home. I will take this opportunity of correcting an interjection I made as to the number of names struck off the petition. He said there were about 300 names struck off the petition, and I was under the impression that there were a great many more; since then I have had an opportunity of examining the list, and I believe the hon. member is right. The

hon. member also said that there are about 12,000 electors in North Queensland; that, I believe, is also correct. But how many of the 12,000 electors are to be found amongst the 10,000 signatures to the petition? That information I have not now; but I hope to have ascertained it by next week, and then I will place it before the House. It takes a long time to examine 10,000 names, and see how many of them are to be found on the electoral rolls. I have preliminary information upon the subject, but until I have had an opportunity of having it checked I do not think it advisable to state it to the House. I am waiting with some interest, I confess, to learn what proportion of the 10,000 signatures to the petition are to be found on the electoral rolls. It must be remembered that there are 19,000 adult males of European extraction in the North; how many of the 10,000 are amongst those and actual residents in the North we may discuss afterwards. There will be plenty of time to go into those matters. The hon. member said that a large majority of the miners in the North have come round to separation views. I do not think so. He said a great number of the supporters of the present Government have; some of them have, principally in Townsville.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Charters Towers.

The PREMIER: Very few in Charters Towers, very few indeed. So far as I know, the population in Charters Towers is about equally divided. There is a large minority there, bitter opponents of the present Government, and they are all in favour of separation; and a small number of the supporters of the present Government are in favour of it also. This I may say that almost every man in Charters Towers who is in favour of separation agrees with the hon. member for Townsville that Townsville ought not to be the capital of the new colony. But if we take from the number of those signing the petition the number of men who would never have signed if they thought Townsville was not going to be the capital, I am afraid there would be but a small number left. The hon. member said Townsville would not be the capital, and that the people of Townsville did not desire that it should be the capital; and he said that no town in the North at present established would be the capital. Well, I do not believe that any particular advantage would be gained by taking a spot in the wilderness to start a new capital in. It is a big enterprise to start a new town. Who will be the inhabitants? the ministers and public officers? It will be a sort of Government residency. I am afraid, sir, that very large salaries would have to be paid to Ministers to conduct business in a place like that. They would not be able to do any other business, and there would be a strong probability that the Government would fall into the hands of political adventurers. I admit that I do not believe that statement about Townsville not being the capital. I believe that if separation were to take place now Townsville would be the best place for the capital; but I do not think any advantage would arise to the rest of the North beyond what they have at the present time with Brisbane as the capital. That reminds me that the hon. member said that many of the evils connected with the present system of administration arose from Brisbane being in a corner of the colony. I think the objection, if any, arises from the size of the colony, not from the position of the capital. I think if the capital were at Bowen, the inconvenience of administering the government would be infinitely greater than it is at the present time. More than two-thirds of the population is south of Bustard Head. Would it be any more convenient to administer the affairs of two-thirds of

the colony from a capital 800 miles away than to administer the affairs of one-sixth of the colony from here? The objection is not to the position of the capital, but the magnitude of the colony.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Divide it, and make it smaller.

The PREMIER: That is the real argument—that the colony is too large, not that the capital is in the wrong place. Now, sir, all these are only preliminary matters—the history of the question and of this petition. I shall pass now to the reasons the hon. member gave why separation should be granted at the present time—that the population is sufficient, the revenue is sufficient, and that the North has been unfairly treated. Now, let us treat those reasons separately. The hon. member says the population is sufficient. Well, sir, that is a very small step in the direction of its being desirable to separate. The population at the present time, the hon. member says, is about 61,000, but how many of those are coloured? The total population, I see, of the northern part of the colony is 62,172. Of those the alien population is 12,994—indeed, more than that. I am only giving those above twenty-one years of age, and kanakas under twenty-one employed on plantations, who may be counted as men. The net white population of the northern part of the colony, and including all alien children—all aliens under twenty-one, except kanakas employed on plantations—is 49,178; take it as 50,000. I am not prepared to say that 50,000 people are not enough to set up business for themselves under some circumstances. Of course we had much less than that when we started housekeeping on our own account. But that is not everything. These 50,000 are scattered over a much larger area than those who were about Moreton Bay when this colony was formed. And are they homogeneous? Would any particular advantage be derived from starting a new colony? Consider this further, Mr. Speaker. That population is scattered practically over the whole of the Northern territory; and there is a great difference between the present circumstances and those of Moreton Bay when it was separated—between governing from a town in the centre of a populous district, and governing the whole of that territory from one particular spot which must be selected somewhere—Townsville, or Herberton, or the new town—I do not know what it is to be called.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Eden.

The PREMIER: Wherever the new capital may be, its distance from a great many parts will be not much less in comparison than their distance from Brisbane at the present time. Now, sir, what would the inhabitants of a town in the Gulf country gain from the government being administered from a capital on the eastern seaboard 700 miles north of Brisbane, instead of being administered from Brisbane? Practically the capital would be just as far off, and they would be in the same position as they are now, with the exception that the capital and the districts round the capital would have a larger preponderating influence in the government of that country than the districts round Brisbane have at the present time. So far from gaining, they would be worse off for the change; and that, Mr. Speaker, is their opinion. I have no hesitation in saying that the whole of the Gulf country would very much rather be governed as at present, from Brisbane, with a perfectly unbiassed Parliament to deal with them, than be governed by a Parliament where the preponderance of authority and weight would be in the representatives of the eastern coast, whose interests might be seriously adverse to theirs. Moreover, so far as different ports on the northern coast

are concerned I am quite certain that a great number of people in those ports would very much rather be governed from Brisbane, that has no interest whatever adverse to theirs, than from some place close to them, whose interest would be adverse to theirs. Looking at the circumstances of that part of the colony, the way in which population is scattered over it, and the adverse interests at stake, I believe we should be handing them over naked to their enemies if we were to allow them to form an independent colony. I know, sir, that that is their opinion. I said on a previous occasion, that, being at Cairns the other day, I did not discover anything like a preponderance of opinion in favour of separation; and that view has been borne out since by a meeting which took place there. Notwithstanding a remarkable report I saw in one newspaper, there is no doubt that a majority of about four to one of the people at the meeting were strongly opposed to the separation movement.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Not at all.

The PREMIER: I have had information, sir, which leaves in my mind no room whatever for doubt.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It was the navvies and the second section of the railway.

The PREMIER: The second section? The people interested in the railway extension? The hon. member reminds me, sir, that they might have been influenced by self-interest. Possibly so. They may entertain a not unfounded fear that the prosecution of their railway might be seriously prejudiced. Now, sir, the hon. member has been appealing all through his argument to self-interest—local interest—selfish local interest as against the general interest of the country. Can we wonder, then, at the opposition the movement receives from other people of this district, whose self-interest has led them to conclusions different from those which have been arrived at by other persons equally self-interested, in the same portion of the colony? Were it established—and I think that so far it has not been established—that there was a real unanimity of opinion in the North—of course, I do not mean an absolute unanimity, but a greatly preponderating consensus of opinion—we should feel that it was a very serious thing to oppose their wishes. I do not believe anything of the kind. I believe the very opposite. I do not believe that the separation movement, except in certain localities, has really found favour in the minds of the Northern people. The hon. member says the revenue is sufficient. Perhaps it is; it will depend very much upon how it is spent. But if they think they would get much more money than at present, I am afraid they would find themselves woefully mistaken.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: They would get more.

The PREMIER: I am coming to that directly. The hon. gentleman says the distribution of revenue has been unfair. Now, sir, that may or may not be. The figures the hon. member gives do not prove it, as I shall show. It is so easy to say that the revenue has been distributed unfairly. As I pointed out before, in one sense the distribution of revenue must always be unfair, because the outside settlers can practically get nothing returned to them for a considerable time. But there is this fallacy underlying the argument about the unfairness of the distribution of revenue, that the comparison is not made between things under the same conditions. You cannot compare the expenditure in an absolutely settled country with the expenditure in an absolutely unsettled

country. You cannot fairly compare, for instance, the expenditure in a municipality with the expenditure in a district like, say, the Warrego. There are many things which may be done and which ought to be done by the Government in a municipality, such as that of the city of Brisbane, for instance, which they could not do in the district of Warrego. It would be simply wasting money. But you cannot therefore say that the district of Warrego is unfairly treated. People who go there do so for reasons satisfactory to themselves; they lose the advantages pertaining to centres of population, but they have other advantages which, in their opinion, compensate for them. In exactly the same way, you cannot compare the outside fringe of civilisation with the populous districts. What date does the hon. member start from? If he goes back to 1863, any large expenditure in the north of the colony would then have been money wasted.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: There was none spent then.

The PREMIER: If there had been it would have been a scandalous waste of public money. When did the change commence; was it in 1865, or 1866, or 1867? You are dealing with a vanishing line; you cannot follow it; you think you have it here, and you follow it a little distance to find that it has gone. You cannot lay down any period and say, "From this moment there has been injustice done." It is impossible to lay down a hard-and-fast line, and say that from that 30th June, or from that 31st December, the expenditure ought to have been in direct proportion to the contribution. We will come to the year 1870, which the hon. member began with, and with respect to which he quoted some figures. I have not had the opportunity of looking at all his figures, as I have of looking at these, and with regard to them the hon. member is labouring under an extraordinary delusion. In 1870, Mr. Palmer brought in what was called the Financial Districts Bill, on a certain basis, by which the Customs revenue was to be treated as a part of the general revenue of the colony. Let me say here, in passing, Mr. Speaker, that that arrangement was in favour of the North, not of the South, because at that time nearly all the Customs duties were paid here, and they got the benefit of them in proportion to their population. At the present time it is the other way.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Many articles were imported direct from Sydney to the North.

The PREMIER: That may be so, but it is entirely by the way. The hon. gentleman says that in 1871 the rest of the colony owed the North £14,000; in 1872, £27,000; and in 1873, £11,000, on the basis of that Bill. But the hon. gentleman is labouring under an hallucination. Those figures represent a debt due by the South to the North in exactly the same sense as they represent a much larger sum due from the North to the South. It did not mean that that amount had been unjustly taken away from the North. Those figures simply represent this: in those three years there happened to be a surplus revenue, and in making up the accounts as if that surplus were to have been divided between the different parts of the colony introduced by the hon. member for Townsville, in proportion to their population, the North would have got those amounts, and the South would have got the balance. Indeed, the £27,000 really includes the £14,000, and the £11,000 really includes the £27,000.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Nonsense!

The PREMIER: If the hon. member will only look at the figures he will see that he is

entirely under a delusion. He obtained them from page 188 of the "Votes and Proceedings for 1877," vol. 2. That table shows the revenue and expenditure of the year 1871 apportioned in accordance with the proposed Financial Districts Bill of 1870. There was at that period a balance to the credit of the South of £14,792; of Wide Bay and Burnett, £22,100; of the Central districts, £7,700; of the North, £18,700. That does not mean that those amounts were owing to the several districts. It is merely an adjustment of a surplus divided on that principle. It is the same in 1872. The figures for that year show a credit in favour of the South of £57,000; Wide Bay and Burnett, £40,000; Central, £18,000; Northern, £27,000. But the South no more owed the North £27,000 in that year than the North owed the South £57,000. The figures for 1873 show a credit to the South of £40,000; Wide Bay and Burnett, £26,000; Central, £19,000; Northern, £11,000. But those are not real balances or real debts, but only an apportionment of a supposed surplus arrived at according to certain calculations between different parts of the colony. According to that, in the year 1872 the Northern division was treated in a most extravagantly unfair manner, and got a great deal more than it was entitled to. But those figures prove nothing.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What became of those balances?

The PREMIER: They are purely imaginary balances; they do not represent a sum of money. Does the hon. member suppose that the rest of the colony was owed £115,000 by the North in that year? If so, who owed it? If we were to go on that principle we could get up for the South a credit balance of £1,500,000. But that is not the case; these are purely imaginary balances—simply a matter of bookkeeping. The North may have suffered an injustice, but these figures do not go any way to prove it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes, they do.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member thinks so, I cannot help it. I suppose that each year the balance was carried forward to the next, so that the last year shows the result of the three.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Each year is separate.

The PREMIER: Of course each year is separate.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Take each year separately.

The PREMIER: Very well, take each year separately. Add them together, if you like. The result will be that the South is entitled to claim from somebody or other £120,000. Who is that to be claimed from?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: From the general revenue.

The PREMIER: From the general revenue? Exactly. Then the South is entitled to claim £120,000, and the North is entitled to claim for the same period the sum of £50,000. But those amounts do not represent any real transaction. They merely represent a division of accounts, and it is quite clear from that way of keeping the accounts that up to that period no injustice had been done to the North. If the accounts had been equal there would have been perfect fairness, but the balance was in favour of the South; so that these figures prove nothing for the hon. member's argument. The hon. member went on to say that in the year 1876 the sum of £25,000 was due to the North, and he referred to the question as to whether Customs should be treated as local or general revenue. My own impression is that it should be regarded

as local revenue. Certainly, under the existing circumstances of the colony, where so much trade is done locally, and the trade of the North is greater and more important than it was formerly. The hon. member says that, taking the Customs as local revenue, the North was entitled to be credited with £25,000. But I will read the title of the table from which his figures are taken. It is a "Statement showing the apportionment of the revenue and expenditure to the 30th of June, 1877, in accordance with the proposed Financial Districts Bill of 1877." That is the scheme based on the report of the Financial Separation Commission, of which the hon. member was a most active and energetic member. There the apportionment was made in both ways—first, with the Customs treated as local revenue, and second, with the Customs treated as general revenue. On the first basis—that the Customs should be treated as local revenue—the Northern district was entitled to be credited as against somebody or other with the sum of £25,000. But the rest of the colony was entitled to be credited with £32,000. Where, then, is the injustice to the North?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The South got the lot.

The PREMIER: It is nonsense to say the South got the lot. It did not get the lot any more than the North. It is purely an arbitrary division. The North did not get the £32,000, in exactly the same sense as the South did not get the £25,000. But the hon. gentleman says that if the surplus was divided on a particular basis, the amount due to the North was £25,000, and that the North suffered an injustice to that extent in that year. If that is so, then in just the same sense the South was wrongfully deprived during the same period of £32,000. But the South did not get the £25,000 any more than the North got the £32,000. I do not know who stole it, but nobody got it. On the other basis, that the Customs should be treated as general revenue, for which a great deal was to be said at that period—for then the greater part of the Customs was collected in Brisbane—the South suffered an injustice to the extent of £73,000, and the North got £5,700 too much. Of course, they did not get anything of the kind. This is the same table from which the hon. member quoted. These figures prove nothing. To get any arguments from these figures we should have to go on an entirely different basis. We must first of all ascertain what is the local revenue, and what is the local expenditure, and what is a fair principle for division under all the existing circumstances. Ought we to say that a particular district of the colony is entitled to a certain amount of expenditure because it contributes so much revenue? Of course not. It would be perfectly impossible to carry on the Government on the basis that all parts of the colony shall receive just that proportion of expenditure which they contribute to the revenue. It would not do to maintain that the people of Thargomindah ought not to contribute to the cost of a necessary work because it happens to have to be carried out at Sandgate. That would be entirely opposed to the existence of our institutions of Government, and would resolve us into families. That system cannot be adopted at all. To argue upon the matter in this way is like arguing without defining the terms. The proposed Financial Districts Bill attempted to lay down rough principles which, I believe, would have been very good as things were then, and that system would have been continually improving up till now. I mean that the rough justice that that scheme provided would have been improving from year to year. I believe if such a scheme had been introduced at the time the hon. member

first suggests it would have been monstrously unjust; but, as the country gets more and more uniformly settled, a scheme of that sort becomes more equitable. As for the arguments, therefore, based upon imaginary balances and imaginary surpluses, showing that an injustice has been done to the North, they are entirely beside the question. If I maintained the view that the South has been unjustly treated, I could, from the same tables for the same period, and upon the same bases as those upon which the hon. member has based his arguments, show that in the year 1871 the South had suffered an injustice to the extent of £14,000. These tables cannot be refuted; they are the tables of the commission of which the hon. member was a member. Suppose I were now maintaining the argument that the South has been unjustly treated all along—scandalously, unjustly treated. In the year 1871, according to these tables, the southern portion of the colony was unjustly deprived of £14,000; in 1872 it was unjustly deprived of £117,000; and in 1873 it was unjustly deprived of £158,000. These are the same tables that the hon. member quoted from. The very tables he used to prove that the North has been unjustly treated, in exactly the same way show that the South has been unjustly treated during the same period. Of course that is absurd; nothing of the kind happened.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Every farthing was in the Treasury.

The PREMIER: Who got it?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Ask the Treasurer.

The PREMIER: I say, sir, the scandalous injustice that was done to the South during those years passes belief. At least, it would if anybody believed it. Of course, we know that these figures do not prove anything of the kind, or help the question. Let us deal with figures that do. The hon. gentleman passed from that period—we do not know what might have happened in the meantime, we are all in the dark as to that—to 1885-6. Now, on the basis of the hon. gentleman's calculations he can prove anything. I am not prepared to say that the Treasury tables are strictly correct, but the first error the hon. gentleman called attention to is clearly a clerical error in addition. It had been corrected in the Treasurer's own copy of the return, but not in the copy laid on the table of the House. The balance is correct, but one of the columns is added up incorrectly. That is a matter of no consequence whatever.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No!

The PREMIER: Nothing turns upon it as it happens. It is not an item that counts for anything, because it was simply an amount of money unexpended. The hon. gentleman then proceeded to deal with the statistics of last year. According to the basis he laid down, the revenue of the North—of the northern portion of the colony—I do not like using the word "North"—was £649,000, while the calculations made in the Treasury make it something less, about £640,000. I think he made a mistake in the items of excise and postage.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I took 19 per cent.

The PREMIER: According to the Treasury calculations the proportion would be something less. He makes it about one-fifth, Mr. Speaker, but what are we to do with the 12,000 aliens in the northern portion of the colony? If we leave them out the proportion will be only one-sixth, and that will make a good deal of difference in the calculation. I do not think these 12,000 aliens should be calculated for all purposes of revenue. They do not contribute much to

excise, stamps, licenses, postage, or "other receipts," or to railways. Railways, of course, is a fixed amount. Then, when you divide the amount, leaving these aliens out—

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It makes it better per head for the North.

The PREMIER: It makes the total less also. I am quite prepared to admit that the Northern people pay more Customs duties than any other people in the colony.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Double.

The PREMIER: Well, sir, is it not natural that they should, when you consider that so large a proportion of them are adult males? Is not that a necessary incident of the state of civilisation there? When that part of the country begins to be settled—when it is settled, as I hope it will be, by a European population, the same as the rest of the colony—it will contribute about the same amount per head, I suppose. Supposing you take men, women, and children, and reckon two women and children as equal to one adult male, which you might fairly do so far as customs are concerned—at any rate with regard to the principal items, such as wines and spirits, and similar articles—I fancy the expenditure would come to very much the same thing all round. Perhaps there may be a little more due to the North in those articles; perhaps the fiery climate of that part of the colony makes the consumption of spirits and ardent liquors larger than down here. However, I think we may take the revenue of the North at something over £600,000—between £600,000 and £700,000. Then the hon. gentleman proposes to add one-fourth to the Customs revenue. He assumes that 20 per cent. of the total Customs revenue is paid in Brisbane on goods consumed in the North. I do not think it is so much. That is certainly a matter of opinion—of conjecture. We know that very large quantities of goods are now imported direct to Townsville and other Northern ports; and that steamer from Sydney and Melbourne take very large quantities there. I venture to assert also that a very large quantity of dutiable goods are sent up north in bond. There is no doubt about that, and I am satisfied that the proportion of duty paid in Brisbane is comparatively small.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What proportion is paid in Brisbane?

The PREMIER: I think, very little. The hon. gentleman says 20 per cent.; I believe it is a great deal less. I am not sure of the amount, as I have not sufficient information. I do not propose now to go into the particular discrepancies the hon. gentleman pointed out in the Treasury returns. Most of them are explained at once by the statement at the head of the table to the effect that the deficits on the various loans are apportioned to the different items. That, of course, increases the amount for each specific work, and nearly all the discrepancies the hon. gentleman pointed out are covered by that.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No.

The PREMIER: Yes; nearly all of them, as can be seen at a glance. At any rate a discrepancy of £10,000 in a question of millions will not settle the question of separation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. BLACK: It is all on one side.

The PREMIER: I do not care whether it is all on one side or not. I will make the hon. member a present of all he can get. The question of separation will not be settled in that way; it is a much larger question than that. If mistakes are made in tables the remedy is not to divide the colony into

two parts, but to correct the figures; that is the obvious remedy. The proposal of the hon. gentleman is very much like cutting off the limb because a man has a sore toe. The proper way is to correct the figures, and I should be very glad to see them corrected thoroughly, so that everybody will admit them to be correct; but that, sir, is a thing which I am in despair of seeing. The hon. member proposes to cut down the £2,500,000 in the Treasury tables to about £2,000,000—a little over £2,000,000. I am not prepared to say, nor can I be expected to do so without the opportunity of comparing information, how far this reduction can be justified, nor do I think it makes much difference. The question is not how much money has been spent in the North. As I pointed out before, we do not borrow money and distribute it at per head of the population; that is not the principle we act upon. We borrow money for specific public works, and endeavour as nearly as we can to apportion it fairly to the different parts of the colony. The hon. gentleman complains of unfairness in the distribution, but certainly of late years I cannot see anything which the hon. gentleman can call unfair. Certainly, within the last two or three years it cannot be said that the northern part of the colony has had any complaints to make with regard to expenditure. On the contrary, there has been a continually increasing proportion of expenditure in the North.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: During the last two or three years there have been serious complaints.

The PREMIER: There may have been complaints, but there has been a continually increasing proportion of expenditure. That cannot be denied. A larger proportion of the total expenditure of the colony has been made in the northern portion during the last two or three years than in any previous period, and it has been increasing year after year. Whatever may be said as to complaints about particular items, that cannot be disputed, because, leaving out the interest on the public debt, all other items have been continuously increasing. The only object of the Government is to do what is fair. I am sure nobody desires to do what is unfair, and I am satisfied that no unfairness has been done. And yet, as I pointed out, the hon. gentleman comes down after having himself held a leading position in the Government for four years, and been a prominent member of the party for another year, and tells us it is impossible to expect fair play. Why? The hon. member says that when he was in office it was useless to expect that justice and fair play would be done to the North, but we do not think it is so now. We are desirous and anxious to give fair play, and I have never heard of any one place or any one instance with regard to which pressure has had to be put upon the Government to act in a fair and just manner. That pressure, I believe, no one desires should be necessary, and I think it unfair for the hon. member, who is himself to blame as much as anyone else, to come down here and tell us that the only remedy is to divide the colony. We have been always anxious to treat the North fairly, but the hon. member says it has not been treated fairly in the past. If this was really so, would it be unfair to suggest that the hon. member, having a conscious desire to make out a good case for separation, therefore, during the time he was connected with the late Administration, treated the North unjustly? I do not say for a moment he did. I do not believe the hon. member failed to point out to his colleagues what was a fair expenditure to be made in the North, so that he could come down afterwards and say, "Look at the unfairness with which we have been treated." I do

not believe that for a moment; but the hon. member tells us that after the experience of the past it is useless to hope for fair play, and I say that if the North has suffered injustice in the past then he is as much to blame for it as anyone else. But the hon. member says now, "Give us separation, for without that we cannot get justice." I pass now to the fourth argument of the hon. member, a point that he was going to urge, but which he failed to bring forward facts to substantiate. I refer to his assertion that there has been an unfair distribution of loan money. I answer that by saying that there has not been any unfairness, or, if there has been, it has not happened during the last three years. Nobody will attempt to deny that, surely. If they do, I say that, considering the sparseness of the population in the northern district, and that necessarily loan money cannot be expended with the same profitable result as further south—I say that is necessarily so—taking that into consideration, the people of the North have had a great deal more than their share. But even upon the strict basis of population or revenue the amount apportioned to the North in the Loan Acts passed by the present Government has been absolutely fair, and more than fair. Of course, I know what answer the hon. member for Mackay has to that. He will say, "What is the use of apportioning loan money to the North, if you do not spend it?" Well, the hon. member knows as well as anyone in this House that it is one thing to pass an Act providing for the expenditure of money in certain districts, and another thing to spend it. We cannot make a railway by saying on paper, "We will make a railway from here to here." There are such things as surveys to be made, and many other things to be done before that railway can be made. If, of course, any undue or unnecessary delay takes place there is a fair ground for complaint, but I challenge any hon. member to assert that there has been any unreasonable delay in the construction of works in the North. I challenge anyone to point to any specific instance where there has been any great delay that was not absolutely necessary.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about Bowen?

The PREMIER: Yes, we will take Bowen and deal with it separately. That is a different matter altogether. The question there is whether the money should be expended at all. That was all, and up to the present time the Government have made no proposition to the House with regard to the expenditure of the money at Bowen.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: There is no question about the money.

The PREMIER: There can be no question as to the fairness of the apportionment of the money, but there may have been questions as to administration, and I will come to that. But I affirm without fear of contradiction that taking any basis you choose—taking the basis of population, including kanakas and Chinese, if you will—that the amount per head appropriated upon the population of the northern portion of the colony has been fair and equal to the amount appropriated elsewhere.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No.

The PREMIER: I say yes, it has been so. £4,800,000 is the amount of loan money apportioned altogether to the North. Multiply that by 5.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: And multiply it by 4, which is the revenue.

The PREMIER: What do you get? £24,000,000 out of £26,000,000. Is that unfair?

I say it is unfair to the South if you go back to the first foundation of the colony. What was there then to expend money upon? The hon. member goes on the purely local notion, that at any given moment the amount of money spent must be in exact proportion per head of the people of the North and the people in the South. That the amount of money expended in one portion of the colony should be in exact proportion to the amount expended in other portions of the colony; but he must know as well as I do that no government can be conducted upon such a principle as that. There must be portions of the colony where no money is expended. Take the case of the Cape York Peninsula for instance; no money has been apportioned to it. Then, according to hon. members, the people there are suffering an injustice—a scandalous injustice. Take the cases of Burketown and Normanton. No great amount of money that I know of has been expended on those places, but surely it is idle to say that they have been treated unjustly. The Government, no doubt, will make railways to those places as soon as it can, but the injustice does not come into existence simply because those towns happen to be where they are. The injustice does not occur until the proper time has arrived; when it does arrive, and no action is taken, then the injustice and neglect begin. The hon. member's argument dealing with figures and injustice are therefore really outside the question. There is no desire or necessity to do injustice, but the hon. member says "We must have separation," simply because the time has not arrived for doing what he calls justice to certain portions of the North. Again, he says that the size of the colony is such that it cannot be administered from one centre. That is a question of opinion, and it is a question whether the administration would be improved by having two centres. Many people think that having two centres, both of the same nature, may tend to the injury rather than the improvement of the colony. Then he says, "Look at the rapid advance of Queensland compared with what it would have been if it had remained attached to New South Wales," and there I quite agreed with him. The advance of Queensland has been simply wonderful since the connection was severed and Queensland ceased to be a dependency of New South Wales. But I would say, in reply to that, look at the advance of the northern part of Queensland since it was made part of Queensland; and has not its progress been as great since as the progress of Southern Queensland has been since separation from New South Wales? Can anybody point to one instance of more rapid or more wonderful advance in any part of Australia than the advance made by the northern part of Queensland since the Government sitting in Brisbane undertook to do their best to advance it? Look at the railways and telegraph lines which we have constructed. Is there any part of the world where there are such facilities for telegraphic communication compared with the cost of it? Is there any place in the world where you can send telegrams for the price and for the distances that they are sent in North Queensland, and is all that to be overlooked and to go for nothing at all? The hon. member will tell us that we are not to count that; that the telegraph lines are not for the benefit of the North, but for ours; that we are to be debited with the cost, while they are to be credited with all the receipts; but we do not see that, and we cannot look at it in exactly the same light as the hon. gentleman.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I did not say so.

The PREMIER: No, the hon. gentleman did not say so, but that is the drift of his argument. I say that the strides that have been made by the colony as a whole, and the more sparsely populated portions of it especially, are unequalled in Australia, or indeed in any other part of the world. Will it be seriously suggested that things have been systematically neglected, or has there been one suggestion that has not been promptly attended to? Every part in the colony has not got a dredge! That is the kind of complaint. We know that that is what the complaints really amount to. It is generally small matters of that kind that make the people imagine that they are being unjustly treated; but to come back to the hon. member's argument, there is certainly no comparison between the change in the condition of Moreton Bay since its severance from New South Wales, and the condition of Northern Queensland since it has been attached to Queensland. The greater part of the administration is conducted by telegram, and I venture to say that no Ministry that has ever been in power in New South Wales knew as much about that colony as the Government of this colony know about the various parts of Queensland. When a Minister in New South Wales went out west the other day it was thought to be a great feat. I think someone went lately out to Bourke, and then down the Darling, and that was considered an enormous feat.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why, Sir John Robertson went to Dubbo.

The PREMIER: Yes, and I am aware that Sir John Robertson went out to the Gulf as early as 1864 or 1865. I say the Governments of Queensland have taken a great deal more trouble in endeavouring to develop the resources of the northern parts of this colony than the Governments of New South Wales ever have taken to develop the interior of that colony. The hon. member says that if the people in the North had not been so rich they would have been ground down to the dust, and must have rebelled long ago. They pay the same taxation as the rest of the people.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: They pay twice as much.

The PREMIER: They pay twice as much because they drink twice as much grog. In that sense they pay twice as much, because, the majority being adult males, they consume more dutiable goods per head. They do not pay any more duty on the goods they consume than the rest of the people in the colony. But because they contribute more to the revenue in consequence of the greater consumption of luxuries, that does not prove that they are ground down by taxation, or that they are in a state of incipient rebellion. Then the hon. member said—and that is what the whole of his argument comes to—that injustice exists. It sounds very well to talk about injustice to the North; but has the hon. member forgotten the great argument he used when stumping the country before the general election of 1878, when he spoke of the pearl of great price, something better than a diamond, better than the Koh-i-noor, belonging to the North, which he was going to obtain for the North? I heard a once ardent supporter of his referring to the speeches made by him about the scandalous way the North had been robbed. "There is £800,000 of solid money belonging to you," said he, "and when we go down the Northern party will get it for you." The hon. member was in power four or five years, but he never got the money. The existence of that money belonging to the North was based upon such grounds as the report on financial separation to which I have referred.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : I was never in the Treasury.

The PREMIER : The hon. gentleman was a member of the Government. He says that a legislature sitting here cannot develop the resources of the North. That is a matter of opinion, and more than assertion is required to convince anyone that such is the case. I say the history of the past shows that we have done a great deal to develop the resources of the North.

Mr. BLACK : In what direction?

The PREMIER : If the hon. member will point out any other direction in which they could have been developed I shall be glad to hear it. But there is only one thing the hon. member can point out—that nothing has been done for the sugar industry. Upon that opinions differ. We have tried to develop the resources of the North in one way by making railways ; and one railway that has been made, I am sorry to say, is likely to be a non-paying line. I mean the line which was constructed to carry sugar to Mackay.

Mr. BLACK : It is badly managed.

The PREMIER : I believe the principal complaint is that we charge rates for carrying goods. To carry them for nothing would be one way of developing resources, but it must be borne in mind that it is not the function of the Government to give bonuses for everything. All that the Government can be expected to do is to give facilities for the development of industries and to make laws for the good government of the country. Our laws are not perfect, but both sides have tried to make as good laws as possible. If they were not defective, we should not be here to amend them. We have shown that we are able to do a good deal, and I am sure that if we continue together long, as I hope we shall, that we shall succeed in doing a great deal more. I am sure, at any rate, that any serious proposal to develop the resources of any part of the colony will receive the most ready attention of both sides of the House ; I say that this House and the country generally ought to regard Queenslanders as one people, and not separate people. Of course, the argument that we cannot attend to the different parts of the colony is a matter of opinion. I say history shows that we can do a great deal, and that we have not refused to attend to any matter that has been brought before us, with one exception—the hon. member for Mackay's pet scheme of introducing black labour. I am not prepared to say that our system of government or our administration is perfect. They both have their defects, but those defects are being removed. As I said on a previous occasion, we may do much to decentralise administration. I believe there may be established branches in the more important centres of population for carrying on the departmental business of the Government under officers holding positions analogous to those of Under Secretary, who would have the opportunity of visiting different parts of the colony and bringing themselves more *en rapport* with the people ; and under those circumstances, especially if Ministers frequently visited those branches, a great deal more might be done to remove the objections at present existing. But, considering, as I may affirm, that the whole of this Parliament is anxious to do what is just, that the Government is anxious to do what is just in administration, and that they are anxious to decentralise as much as possible, I think it is premature to say, as the hon. gentleman affirms in his resolution, that the time has arrived when a separate colony should be erected. The hon. member's reasons for separation, as set forth in his notice of

motion, are "in consequence of the increase of population, the difficulty of administration, and other circumstances." I have endeavoured to show, of course not to the satisfaction of hon. members opposed to me, but I have given some reasons for holding my own opinion—namely, that the increase of population does not necessitate separation—that the difficulty of administration is not insuperable, and that the other circumstances principally exist in the imagination. Under these circumstances, I hope the motion will not be carried. I do not suppose it will be ; nevertheless it ought to be fully and fairly discussed, as the matter is an important one. If a large majority of the people in the North desired to separate, I am sure I reciprocate the wishes of the hon. gentleman in saying that we should separate amicably ; at the same time, I believe in the interests of Australia generally that it is not desirable that there should be separation at the present time. I believe it is not desirable in the interests of Queensland, and I believe it is not desirable in the interests of the North. I believe that if we were to separate at the present time one of the first things that would happen—I am now treading on dangerous ground—one of the first things would be to establish a system of what is called up there "reliable labour." That is what a very large number of supporters of separation desire. I know it, and so does everybody else. I believe that would be brought about, and I consider, for reasons I have given in a paper with which hon. members are familiar, that such a thing would be inconsistent with the continuance of representative institutions. I am sure that representative institutions could not long continue to exist in a country where there was a large proportion of servile labour ; in fact, it is inconsistent with the very notion. Now, sir, some hon. members, we know, hope that this state of things will be brought about. A very large proportion of the supporters of separation earnestly desire that ; but a considerable minority of them earnestly deprecate it. But when we consider the present condition of the northern part of the colony—consider who are the influential persons there and the kind of influence they can exert, the probable constitution of the first legislature, and the probable history of the first two or three years of the colony—I have no hesitation in saying that I am perfectly convinced that before two or three years elapse those domestic institutions which we as a colony and as a whole are determined not to encourage or introduce will be introduced there. I consider that that would be a most unfortunate thing for that part of the colony, and a very great misfortune for the whole of Australasia. So that on all grounds, in the interests of Queensland as it is—in the interests of the northern part of the colony, for which I hope and anticipate a brighter future, and in the interests of Australasia—I trust that if separation should come, it will not come, at any rate, until the northern part of the colony is in a different social state from that in which it is at the present time.

Mr. CHUBB said : Mr. Speaker,—I make no apology for standing here in my place and supporting this motion, because if there is a constituency in the northern part of the colony, or in any part of it, which has not received the justice it is entitled to, it is the one that I represent. But I will refer to that presently. In the meantime, I will say this : that the keynote of the speech of the hon. Chief Secretary was contained in the last few words, when he pointed out with as much force as he was able, that this is an insidious attempt to introduce black labour into the northern part of the colony. For myself and all those with whom I am identified, I deny that, and I say this : that the motion introduced by the hon. member for Townsville

asks that we may have separation and representative institutions, and if the petition that has gone home to the throne be once granted in regard to representative institutions, I will challenge any man to say that they will ever be surrendered. In a free country representative government will never be abandoned. It may be taken away by the Imperial Government, but the people will never give it up voluntarily. No hon. member can quote an instance of that having been done. The hon. gentleman said that the desire of the Government was to give fair play to everybody and to the North, and further than that, the hon. gentleman said that the Government up to the present had been giving fair play to the North. But those are only words. We don't want promises; we want performances: but I am not going to discuss this question upon the point as to whether the North has or has not received its fair share of loan expenditure. I do not take that ground at all—I take a much broader ground than that. I do not deny that of late the loan apportionment has been more reasonable. I do not say it is fair, because the hon. gentleman who moved this motion showed the North would be entitled to a much larger sum; but I am prepared to admit that so far it is sufficiently reasonable. However, appropriation is one thing, and expenditure is another. The hon. gentleman says the loan expenditure has of late years been increasing in the North. No doubt it has. It has been increasing considerably; but so it has in the South. And works that were sanctioned before the passing of the last Loan Bill have been left in abeyance, while works sanctioned under the last Loan Bill are now under construction. But more than that, I am entitled to ask—having reference to the tables which the Colonial Treasurer placed before hon. members the other night—by what authority the Government have taken upon themselves to set aside the provisions of an Act of Parliament? I see in Table B, under the heading of “Loan Balances,” that a vote of £150,000, passed in this House some four years ago for railway construction in the North, has been swept away; it has been transferred, and by what authority I do not know. It has been transferred to another purpose altogether. I see down here a vote in Table B for a railway from “Bowen to Coalfields, £250,000.” This House never voted that money. This House voted £100,000 for “Bowen to Coalfields,” and £150,000 for a railway from Bowen to Haughton. Whatever has been done since has been done without the sanction of Parliament. A session or two ago we were informed that Parliament might be asked to transfer that vote; but up to the present time it has not been asked. So far as that vote is concerned it has been transferred without Parliament being asked at all. If this is a specimen of fair dealing with the North, I am inclined to think that hon. members perhaps may agree with the Premier when he says that the North has had fair treatment. The grounds upon which I take up this question are two. I say the North has sufficient population and has sufficient revenue to enable it to go alone. I think the time has arrived when the northern part of the colony is entitled to be trusted to mind its own business and manage its own affairs. I am old enough to recollect this colony when it was separated. I was here in 1861, shortly after the time when the traditional 7½d. was found in the Treasury. What do we find now? In twenty-five years the revenue of the colony has arrived at £3,000,000, and the expenditure has equally increased, with a debt of £20,000,000 actually incurred, and a contingent debt of £6,000,000 more, while the annual charge for interest nearly amounts to £1,000,000.

When I see this colony, which when it started contained under 20,000 souls—and the city of Brisbane, which now has 30,000, had less than 5,000—I ask, if it could do with separation what it has done, what could not the North do if it had separation—a portion of the colony which has far larger natural resources in mineral wealth and products, and facilities for trade and commerce? I say that the condition of the North would be far ahead of this portion of the colony. I remember Brisbane when the grass was growing in the streets, when there were two wooden hotels between George street and Petrie's Bight, when you crossed Queen street down by the Queensland National Bank by a footbridge, and there was a dirty muddy creek running across it in which cattle got bogged two or three times a week. Would Brisbane be in the condition it is now in if there had not been separation? It would not. In those days we had not a mile of telegraph or a mile of railway. Communication with New South Wales was once a week by steamer, and not always that; and now look at what we have. Look at the number of steamers coming into our ports every day. Look at the communication by rail which we have, and the communication by telegraph. There is no comparison between the facilities for separation now and what there were in those days. We are far riper for separation now, even than Moreton Bay was from New South Wales. We are far better able to take care of ourselves, and go our own way, and conduct our own business. I have no intention whatever of following either the mover of this motion or the Premier in the question of finance. I am quite satisfied that the figures advanced by my hon. friend the member for Townsville have not been answered. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government in a pleasant way attempted to laugh off, to a certain extent, the arguments which were adduced by the hon. member for Townsville; but I say that he did not succeed in doing so—at any rate to my satisfaction, nor I think to the satisfaction of those who heard him. Now, with regard to the grounds upon which I base the claim of the northern portion of the colony to autonomy—that there is sufficient population and that there is sufficient revenue—it has been pointed out that the population of Northern Queensland now is more than double what it was in Moreton Bay when separation took place from New South Wales. The evils were pointed out in those days in the Legislature of New South Wales in remarks made, I think, by Mr. Darvall, that by choosing a port like Brisbane at the end of the colony as the capital it would lead to centralisation. We see now that that is so, and that the prognostications made by that gentleman so many years ago have come true. The capital being at the southern end of the colony makes it extremely difficult for the colony to be fairly and properly governed. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government discussed the question as to whether there was a sufficient population or not in the proposed new colony, and that 50,000 or 60,000 people were enough to commence business on their own account. With regard to the revenue, it has been sufficiently shown by the hon. mover of the motion that we have at present in the North a revenue of three-quarters of a million—a quarter of a million of Customs, and the rest from land and other sources of revenue—and that is a much larger revenue, we know, than Queensland had for many years after separation from New South Wales; so that on these two grounds, population and revenue, we have ample reason for undertaking our own Government. Then, again, there is the difficulty of administration.

The hon. gentleman himself admitted, during the recent tour of Ministers in the North, that the difficulties of administration were very great, but he contended they were not insuperable. Well, if there are difficulties to be anticipated, as he suggested, in governing the colony from a point further north, are they not greater in governing it from a point a thousand miles further south? The nearer you go to the centre the more complete means you have of governing and administering. It is a fact that we have connection by telegraph with many centres of population in the colony, but the delay that still takes place is inconvenient and in many cases leads to an absence or denial of justice. The Premier was rather rough on the suggestion made by the hon. member for Townsville as to the site of the new capital. That, however, is not a question for us to consider; it is merely by the way. Certainly the hon. member's suggestion is sound policy—that the capital should be chosen in some place where the land could be sold to provide the money for the construction of the public buildings.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Who would buy it?

Mr. CHUBB: Who would buy it? I will ask the hon. gentleman what about Washington, the political capital of America? How was it founded? It was a city taken out of the State of Virginia, a city in the wilderness; and how many inhabitants has it got now? Nearly 200,000. That is a case in point, and I can tell the hon. gentleman that if the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville is adopted I have no doubt he will be amongst the purchasers at the first land sale. I am quite satisfied it would be successful, judging by the prices recently paid for land at Townsville at a land sale there which realised nearly £10,000 about a fortnight ago. I say that that is an indication of the price that would be paid for land. We know what prices are paid for land within ten or twelve miles of Brisbane—£500 or £600 an acre has been often paid—and there is no difficulty in calculating what prices would be given for land in the proposed capital of the new Northern colony. I ask, why should we fail if we separate? Is there an instance in Australia of a colony which has separated having failed? We commenced with the colony of New South Wales, Victoria left her, and then Queensland, and both have been successful, and so will be the colony which separates from this, if success attends this motion and the efforts of those now struggling to obtain autonomy for the North. Undoubtedly there is no instance of failure. What do we see in the other hemisphere? We learn that the States of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are trying to separate themselves from the Dominion of Canada because their interests are not those of the Dominion. Surely if our interests are not the same as those of this colony we have a right to take the same course as they are taking there. Another difficulty that may be referred to under present circumstances is that of administration. Look at the administration of the law in the North. No doubt something has been done towards remedying the inconvenience that arose there in that respect, by appointing a judge to reside in the North; but that has not entirely obviated the inconveniences and difficulties. Look at the absurd processes that have to be gone through there now; although there is a judge placed there to deal with Northern legal affairs, the great bulk of the legal business is brought to Brisbane.

The PREMIER: Why?

Mr. CHUBB: Why, because the North is not separated into an independent colony; but as

soon as it is, there will be a complete and capable tribunal there, and the North will not require a change of venue to Brisbane. The hon. gentleman said if he could be satisfied that a large preponderance of the population of the North demanded separation, and if he could be satisfied that the debt could be properly and fairly apportioned, he would be prepared almost to concede their right to go. As to the demand the hon. gentleman simply makes an assertion. He says he is of opinion that there is not a preponderance of the population of the North in favour of separation. We say there is, and we say that the petition is evidence of it. There are 10,000 signatures to the petition; and a week or two ago the hon. gentleman was challenged by the hon. member for Mackay, when he called the importance of the petition into question, to get up a counter-petition and have it sent home against separation. That challenge has not been accepted. Last session I think the Attorney-General presented a petition from some residents of Charters Towers against separation; since then he has visited his constituents, and I believe he found they were all in favour of separation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. CHUBB: I believe the hon. gentleman found that they declared themselves in favour of separation, and he had to tell them that they put him in rather an awkward position by sending him to Parliament with a petition against separation, and then turning round. He says he would be bound to concede the demands of the North if he were satisfied that there was a majority in favour of separation; and the hon. gentleman could not do otherwise, nor could any other honourable man. We think the time has come for dissolving the partnership which has hitherto been one only of convenience. When we were separated from New South Wales we were not given our area to last unaltered for ever. As has been clearly pointed out by the hon. gentleman who moved this motion, and as has been admitted by the Premier, the right of the Imperial authorities to cut off a portion of this colony and erect it into another colony is undoubted. The legal right is clear. The hon. gentleman says he is of opinion, and the legal officers of the Crown have advised, that an enabling Act would be necessary to give the Queen the necessary technical power to declare a new colony. Well, let that be so; it is only a matter of detail. That the reservation of the power was contemplated is clear from the section of the Act which was read by the hon. member for Townsville: I will not read it again. It is the 6th section of the Imperial Act of 1861, 24 and 25 Victoria, cap. 44. It is clearly contemplated there that at some time or other the power might be exercised. If it is necessary that an enabling Bill should be introduced, there will be no difficulty about that. Indeed, I have been informed that a member of the Government at home, Lord Dunraven, has undertaken to present the enabling Bill. Be that as it may, the moment Her Majesty is of opinion that separation should take place, the enabling Bill is a mere matter of form. It will be passed through without much difficulty. Now, sir, with regard to the apportionment of the debt, the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government seemed very apprehensive that if separation took place there would be a difficulty, not in apportioning the debt, but in dealing with the public creditor. Well, sir, ever since the present Government have been in office, the hon. gentleman who has charge of the Treasury chest has said that the credit of Queensland never stood higher, that there was no difficulty in borrowing money. Well, surely the separation of the colony will not affect the

credit of Queensland, nor will it affect the credit of the new colony. The immense resources possessed by the entire colony are such, according to the utterances of members of the Government, as to make the debt a mere fleabite. I think, sir, the difficulty of apportioning the debt is a mere bugbear. As soon as it is fairly apportioned there will be no difficulty about the payment of it. It would be open for the new colony to raise a loan to discharge its portion of the debt at once, and get rid of its responsibility to the other colony. Then, sir, the hon. gentleman said it was an extreme course to divide a colony once established and going on prosperously. I admit it may be an extreme course, but it is not an impossible course, nor a course that may not be justified by circumstances. No doubt before this colony is divided the very greatest consideration will be given to the subject, and the partition will not take place unless the Imperial authorities think it would be for the benefit of the northern portion of the colony, and not to the injury of the southern portion. But why is there so much complaint about the desire of the North to separate? The hon. gentleman said that this colony would at once lose £600,000 or £700,000 of revenue which she gets from the North, and it would be unfair to put such a difficulty in her way. But the hon. gentleman forgot to point out that she would immediately save the cost of governing the northern portion of the colony, which, according to the statements from the Treasury benches, exceeds the revenue. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government has been trying all the evening to show that the North has received not only her fair share of expenditure, but a great deal more. Therefore why should he complain of the loss of £600,000 of revenue, when the expenditure, according to him, has been much greater than that? Then, sir, the hon. member said he was of opinion that many of the northern districts would prefer to be governed from Brisbane, which was disinterested, to being governed from a more northern centre, which was interested. Now, I must point out an inaccuracy in his statement. Brisbane is not the centre. It is the political centre and legal centre, but it is not the centre of the colony; so there was an inaccuracy in the hon. gentleman's statement that the North would rather be governed from Brisbane as a centre than from a more northern part of the colony. But, sir, when the northern districts are not receiving the treatment that they are entitled to and expect, how will they be any worse off if handed over, as the hon. gentleman said, to the tender mercies of a northern centre which is interested in depriving them of just consideration? If they are neglected from Brisbane and not attended to from the North, the result is the same. I maintain, sir, that the more centrally we place the seat of government, the more likely we are to have a fair and equal division of the revenue, and fair expenditure of the public funds. The hon. gentleman went on to say he was of opinion that a large majority of the people of the Cairns district were opposed to separation. Well, sir, I take the liberty of saying that I do not agree with him. The hon. gentleman says he has had information; so have hon. members on this side of the House. No doubt some of the people of Cairns are very anxious to impress on the Government that they are opposed to separation, until their railway is a settled fact. As soon as that second section of the railway is an accomplished fact, and cannot be diverted or changed in any way, we shall see then what are the true sentiments of the people of Cairns in regard to this question.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is very complimentary to them!

Mr. CHUBB: I say, many of them supporters of the Government—some, but not all. The whole tenor of the Premier's speech was this: that the North could not be expected to have the same amount of expenditure that the South has got, because it is not so well settled, and that the time has not yet arrived for our expecting to be treated in the same way that more closely settled portions of the colony have been. But I would point out that that is an evil that will increase. There are ten members here representing about one-half of the colony in area, and most of them sit on this side of the House. What could they effect against the forty-five other members who represent the other half of the colony? I grant that the latter represent the larger proportion of the population, but it is impossible for the former to do any good work for their constituencies if the members representing the other half of the colony do not give them the slightest assistance towards it. I will illustrate this by what has happened in my own electorate: More than four years ago a sum of £150,000 was voted by the House to be spent on railway construction in that district, and nothing has yet been done. The present Government have declined to go on with the work, and they have withheld from that Northern district its fair share of loan expenditure.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is still held in trust for you.

Mr. CHUBB: It is still held in trust, no doubt—on paper. I daresay it is like some of those figures in the returns referred to by the hon. member for Townsville—its locality would be hard to find. It may have been spent on the duplication of the Brisbane and Ipswich line. At any rate, I am entitled to assume that it has been quite swept away; and that is a fair ground for complaint. More than that, I say that the Government have unduly pushed on Southern works. That is quite natural, and I know the reason of it. The gentlemen interested in those Southern works sit on that side of the House, and no doubt they bring a certain amount of local pressure to bear. It must also be remembered that gentlemen who represent the constituencies nearly around Brisbane are always in Brisbane, and have many opportunities of bringing concerted pressure to bear upon the Government. It is much easier for a Government to see the works which are being constructed near the capital than those which are a great distance away. Take railways as an illustration. Railways sanctioned by the House for localities 50, 100, or 200 miles from Brisbane are much more easily looked after and set going than railways 1,000 or 2,000 miles away. Lines are shorter in length and more members are interested in them. The hon. gentleman also found fault with the hon. member for Townsville because when he was a member of a Government he did not carry on the account-keeping of the Northern expenditure in the same way as it had been done before; and blamed him for the result which followed. But it does not follow that because the late Government failed to keep accounts in a certain way, therefore the North has received its fair share of revenue expenditure. I do not say it has not; I do not base my argument on that ground at all. But two wrongs do not make a right, and because the late Government did not keep its accounts as they had been kept before, that is no argument why the North is not entitled to separation. It only shows that it may be more difficult to ascertain the proper amount to be apportioned when separation does take place. The hon. gentleman has himself admitted that the difficulties in the way of administration in the North are great, but he claims that they are not insuperable, and that

the remedy is not separation, but a more efficient system of administration. That there is cause for complaint may be seen from consulting the various newspapers of the colony. Even the Southern newspapers, those of Brisbane and Rockhampton especially, are advocating, if not separation, at any rate a system of provincial councils. They admit that the North has fair cause for complaint; but they say that the remedy is not in separation but in provincial councils. But although that may be proposed as a remedial measure, it would not work. It has been tried in New Zealand, and has failed, and been abolished. I am not conversant with all the reasons which led to the abolition of that form of government. I believe the chief reason was that they did not have the whole control of their expenditure, and the cost of administration was found to be far in excess of that of a single central government. I believe the cost of the provincial system of government would be far greater than the cost of the central system. The entire machinery of administration would be required in each district, and that would absorb an amount of money far beyond the value of the efficiency that would be thereby obtained. As I said before, I do not intend to refer to the figures quoted by the hon. gentleman who moved this motion—that will no doubt be done at length by other hon. members—nor will I refer to the history of the separation of Moreton Bay from New South Wales, an exhaustive and admittedly accurate account of which was given by the hon. member for Townsville. He gave a sufficiently accurate account for present purposes, and the Premier has admitted that there is only a technical legal difficulty in the way of separation. If separation is to come the difficulty can be got over. The right to separate is conceded, subject to such enabling Bill as may be passed by the Imperial Parliament. There is no doubt whatever that the North, as I have already said, has a sufficient population and a sufficient revenue to enable it to undertake the responsibilities of self-government. I say if separation takes place there is a great future open to the new colony. I do not for a moment believe that the 19,000 adult males now in the North are at all likely to be different from a similar number of adult males in the South. The question of the labour trade is one that has to be settled by the working classes. If the 19,000 adult males in the North are against "reliable labour," as the Premier calls it, or any other class of labour, they will have the power of determining what shall be the policy of the colony on that subject. If they have representative institutions, as we ask and desire, they will be able to declare how they will be governed. The time has now arrived that they should have them. The money is there, and the men are there. Notwithstanding that it was said in this House a session or two ago that the North had neither money nor brains, the figures quoted by the mover of this motion show clearly that the North has money, and anyone who heard the hon. member deliver his speech can have no doubt that they have brains also. There is an old proverb that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, and necessity will create supply. As soon as the North gets separation the men to guide the helm of State will be found, and I daresay they will be as good men as guide the helm of State in this or any other colony. They have precedents—they have the experience of this and other colonies to guide them—and will be in a position to lay well the foundations of a great and prosperous colony. If we separate I hope we shall separate from this colony in a friendly manner. I was glad to hear the Premier say that this question need not be debated in an

unfriendly tone, nor be made the subject of a quarrel, nor be made a party question. But although in his Northern tour he said the question might be debated fairly, still I think the hon. gentleman acted somewhat disingenuously in proceeding at once to set all the Northern towns by the ears by suggesting that they each wanted to be the capital. That was an ingenious but a disingenuous argument.

The PREMIER: Is it not true?

Mr. CHUBB: No; it is not. But, supposing it is true, what has that got to do with the question of separation? It has about as much to do with it as some of the arguments which the hon. member addressed to the House when he said, "this by the way," before coming to the real issue whether the North is ripe for separation, whether it has revenue sufficient, and whether also other circumstances are sufficient to entitle it to separation. I contend that the growth of population and other circumstances that have been stated are such as to entitle it to separate, and I feel assured that when we do get separation we shall be as loyal, as prosperous, and as great a colony as any other in the Australian dominion.

Mr. PALMER moved the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed, and, on the motion of the Hon. Mr. MACROSSAN, the resumption of debate made an Order of the Day for Friday, the 27th instant.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: I move that the House do now adjourn. It is proposed on Tuesday next, first to consider the amendments made by the Legislative Council in two Bills—the Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks (Amendment) Bill, and the Pacific Island Labourers Bill; and then to proceed with the second reading of the Settled Land Bill and the Gold Fields Act Amendment Bill. The next order on the paper will be the Gold Mining Companies Bill in committee.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at half-past 9 o'clock.