

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 27 AUGUST 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 27 August, 1886.

Petitions.—Separation of Northern Queensland.—
Adjournment.

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

PETITIONS.

Mr. BROOKES presented a petition from the minister and various members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Fortitude Valley, praying for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; and moved that it be read.

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

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

Mr. BROOKES also presented a petition from the associated congregations of the Primitive Methodist Churches of Brisbane, praying for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; and moved that it be read.

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

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

The ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) presented a petition from the various religious denominations of Ravenswood, praying for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; and moved that it be read.

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

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the petition was received.

SEPARATION OF NORTHERN QUEENSLAND.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the debate on the motion of the Hon. J. M. Macrossan—

"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 December, 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."

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—When the hon. member for Townsville placed this motion upon the table I scarcely thought that it would receive an affirmative vote, and I imagine that a great many hon. members in the House are of the same opinion. So far as I can see in the history of this separation movement, and every other separation movement, there is no reason why it should not receive an affirmative vote, dealing with it as sensible men, and men who have the interests of the whole colony at heart should do. I fail, myself, to realise why they should not take that position, and give their almost unanimous support to a motion which is conceived in such terms as this, and is so worded as to deal with the future and present prospects of what is now the whole of Queensland. However, Mr. Speaker, whether the vote is in the affirmative or in the negative, we have this consolation: that the matter will not be decided by the vote of this House—that it is taken out of our hands by the Imperial Parliament, who will decide in this matter as they have decided upon previous occasions, in what they consider the best course to pursue under the circumstances.

It is, I suppose, the function of the Imperial Parliament to decide whether the colonies should be divided and when they should be divided, so that local self-government shall be carried out to the best advantage. The hon. member for Townsville, in introducing this motion in his speech, which I think has been unequalled since I have been in the House, deprecated any party spirit being introduced into the debate. I heartily agree with that, and I hope that hon. members will agree with me that there is no occasion whatever for any party spirit being aroused over it. It will neither put off the inevitable day of separation nor do I suppose it will hasten it. Before separation does take place party lines may be so changed that party spirit of to-day will be quite forgotten; so that I think hon. members who discuss this motion may do so in a fair spirit, and without referring to anything that will call up ill-feelings afterwards. The history of separation in the past in the colonies is being repeated in our case, so far as it has gone. From the very first separation from New South Wales—when Tasmania was separated in 1825, and was partitioned off from the older colony, and again ten years afterwards, when South Australia was partitioned off, and then also when Port Phillip was separated, and between that time, when New Zealand was erected into a separate colony—the history of those separation movements was much the same as the history of this, so far as it has gone. When the colony of Port Phillip was separated from New South Wales, the separation was effected pretty much in the same manner as the separation of North Queensland is being effected. The members for Port Phillip in the New South Wales Assembly, five in number, moved a resolution, very similar to that before us, in the New South Wales Parliament, then composed of nominee and elected representatives. They moved a resolution much in the same manner as this, affirming the desirability of separation from New South Wales. When that motion came to a division the only members who supported it were the five members for Port Phillip, and they received only one vote from other electorates; that was the vote of the gentleman who is now Lord Sherbrooke, but who was then Mr. Robert Lowe. He was the only gentleman in the House who accorded it his support. The next year those five members for Port Phillip sent a petition to Her Majesty on the same topic, and their request was granted forthwith; but so many delays were placed in the way, in the matter of red tape and officialism, that it was several years afterwards before the petition was given effect to, and Port Phillip erected into a separate colony. Following on the same lines, it is well known how the separation of Moreton Bay from New South Wales was effected. The members from Moreton Bay attending the New South Wales Parliament received no support, and the matter was subsequently taken completely out of the hands of the New South Wales Parliament and settled by the Imperial Parliament on the lines of the petition presented from the inhabitants of Moreton Bay. So far we are running on the same lines as those on which the disunion or disruption of the other colonies from New South Wales has taken place. The separation petition which has gone home to Her Majesty from the inhabitants of the North of Queensland has set forth what they consider their just and right claims to be allowed the privilege of governing themselves. It has met with much opposition in the southern parts of the colony from the Press assigning improper motives to the supporters of separation, and casting aspersions upon the whole movement; still I think the members who have

taken this matter up have done so in a proper spirit, and I do not believe that any member in this House who has taken up the separation question has the slightest sinister motive whatever in doing so. On reading the speech of the Premier, I notice that he also has not refrained from attributing the same motives to the movers in the question. I may refer to the fact that on his tour up north he adopted the same tactics. When he was in Cairns I do not think he referred to the question, but he did when he got to Cooktown. Going up north he stated that he was anxious for information on the subject—eager to find out how the people in the North felt as regarded the separation question; but so far from waiting to find out whether they were in favour of it or not he at once came to the conclusion that it was against their interests to have separation, and so he entered into a sort of war against the whole question. From Cooktown to Normanton he followed the same plan, and also right through from the Cloncurry to Townsville. He never acquired any further information than that he started with; if he did he started with the information ready prepared, as the figures before us show, and he condemned it from the first before he went up at all. The objection taken by the Premier of the colony to the separation of the North is so similar to that which was taken by the then Solicitor-General of New South Wales when the separation of Moreton Bay was before the New South Wales Parliament that I will just take the liberty of making a small quotation from the speech of that gentleman on that occasion. That gentleman was Mr. Darvall, and he denounced in very strong terms what he called the amputation of the colony of New South Wales. The feeling on that occasion was very bitter, and that is a reason why I say we should discuss this question free from all party bias. The feeling there was very bitter, and so much so that Mr. Darvall was induced to say:—

"Millions of acres of some of the finest land in our colony have thus been torn from us, while we have incurred all the expense of finding, surveying, settling, and rendering them valuable. To my mind never was there so weak, so mischievous, so insane a measure as this proposed separation. Then again, look at the expense that must be incurred from the necessary government staff that will be required! At least £100,000 a year will be required to cover this, and this will entail a burden of taxation of at least £5 per head on the whole population. And all this at a time when the revenue from Moreton Bay, at the present time, is hardly sufficient to support a corporal's guard in a watch-house. It appears to me a most wicked and most mischievous act to cut off from us a thriving settlement that has cost us so much to bring to its present state of prosperity."

Those are the words used in those days, and is there not a very similar feeling being got up about the question here, and perhaps with just as little foundation, for no one will deny now that it has been of immense advantage to Moreton Bay to be separated from New South Wales? The Premier also stated in his speech that the North were very much indebted to the South for their settlement and the progress they have made. These are the words he used:—

"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?"

Well, it may be a matter of dispute whether the North is beholden to the South or the South to the North; but I believe the North can thank her own right arm and her own wonderful resources for any advancement she has made hitherto. So far as I can see, any enterprise that has been introduced into the North has been from the southern colonies. It is capital from Victoria and New South Wales

that has promoted the settlement of the lands up north—buying up stations and improving them to an enormous extent. It is to that and to her unequalled mineral resources that the North owes her rapid development, not to anything the Government may lay claim to. I would also call to mind that when there was a motion before this House fraught with great opportunities for the North—the establishment of the Torres Straits mail service—it met with very great opposition from the party now in power. I think there is nothing that has so advanced the interests of the North as that Torres Straits mail service. The Divisional Boards Act also, I believe, received their very strong opposition; that is another measure that has been of great importance in developing the North. The proposal also for financial separation was opposed in what I might call a very virulent manner. I wish to bring forward some figures to show that my statements with regard to the resources of the North are not without foundation; that those resources are visible substantial assets, in opposition to the argument that the northern part of the colony would not be able to pay their debt now owing or their debts in prospective. I say they have every chance of being able to develop those resources if they are allowed to govern themselves. In the first place, the gold yield is a very substantial asset. From the report of the Minister for Mines, I find that the whole gold yield of the North to the end of 1885 was 3,516,422 oz., which, at an average value of £3 10s., was worth £12,307,477. The whole yield of gold from the Southern districts during the same period amounted to only 1,333,799 oz., with a total value of £4,668,296. The miners employed in the North during 1885 were 3,061, and in the southern parts of the colony, 2,429. There is another asset that will help this young colony in the day of small things, and that is the enormous timber wealth in the North. In Mr. Hannam's report on the railway route from Cairns to Herberton, he spoke of the wealth of timber. In counting up the loads that would come through by train, he reckoned that it would take 100 years to carry down the timber that was then available along that line, at the rate of twenty loads per week, with fifty tons per load. The estimate was 4,000,000,000 superficial feet, and the weight of cedar 5,000,000 tons. That is another very important asset the North has to help carry on the government of the country whenever such duties are imposed on the people there. But in looking up these statistics nothing surprised me so much as the amount of shipping there is in the North. I was quite surprised to find that the number and tonnage of vessels entering inwards and outwards, and the number of men employed, was greater than in the Southern ports. In 1884 there were 1,360 vessels with a tonnage of 1,075,922 tons, and crews numbering 60,381. In the South, as against that, the figures are 1,206 vessels, 743,488 tons, with crews of 41,331. That shows that the shipping interest in the North—a matter of vital importance to a young colony—is of a most progressive nature. The returns for 1885 were very similar. For another available asset, after the mining and shipping, I may refer to the pastoral interest, which is one of very great importance, and one which will be well able to hold its own when the day comes for the North to be set adrift. Through the courtesy of the Minister for Lands, I obtained the other day a statement of the total amount of rents received for all runs in Queensland lying north of a line running west from Cape Palmerston to the western boundary of the colony. Those rents amount to £60,981. The last Treasury returns show that the rents of all the pastoral lands in the colony amount

to £256,273; so that about one-fourth of the whole pastoral rents of the colony of Queensland at the present time are contributed by runs lying to the north of Cape Palmerston. We have a return of horses, cattle, and sheep, furnished also by the Registrar of Brands, which shows that there are in the North 56,722 horses, 1,311,466 cattle, and 788,550 sheep. I admit that the returns of sheep are not very enormous, but taking into account that the whole of the northern country has only been very recently settled, and that there are immense opportunities for developing it in regard to sheep-grazing, I have no doubt the number will be trebled before many years are passed. The country has been proved to be very suitable for sheep. Ten years ago there was very little occupation at all over this country which is now returning these large rentals, and is held by all this stock. I may mention that in the North there are twenty-two cattle per head of population, as against fourteen per head of population for the entire colony. In New South Wales the number is only one and a-half per head, while, strange to say, it is even less in America, where they export enough meat to glut the markets of Great Britain; the number in America is less than one per head of the population. So that in respect to stock we are in a very fair position. If we add the contributions to revenue we find that there need be no cause for alarm that the debt of the new colony will be repudiated, or that it will not be able to pay its share of the interest of that portion of the present loan which may be allotted to it, or upon any which it may have to make in the future. The condition of the producing industries in the North also tends to confirm the ground taken up in the petition that the North is wealthy, that it has ample means for carrying on a Government of its own, and that it is able at any time to take up its portion of the general indebtedness and deal with it successfully. From a comparative statement of the Customs duties received from that part of the colony of Queensland and paid into the Treasury, at Brisbane, during the quarters and years of 1885 and 1886 up to the 30th of June, I find that in 1886 the North contributed £242,157, and the South £762,596—less than four times as much—to the Customs duties collected in the colony. In 1885 the result was about the same. Taking into consideration all these material prospects, Mr. Speaker, there is not the slightest doubt that the new colony will maintain the character it has always assumed and borne—that of being thoroughly solvent and thoroughly prosperous. In the papers that have been laid before us, I notice a few discrepancies between the figures given in them and the figures which the Colonial Treasurer quoted when he was in the North. In the return of expenditure on Loan Fund in the Southern, Central, and Northern divisions of the colony, laid on the table on the motion of the hon. member for Mackay, we see that the railways and railway surveys in the Northern division of the colony cost £3,248,707; but in the return furnished nearly at the same time by the Colonial Treasurer there is a difference of £23,309 in the same item. That may not be much, but discrepancies of that kind show that the returns are not so reliable as they ought to be, and it is hard to say what construction we may not put upon any other of those returns. There is a difference also in the item of water supply—a difference of several thousand pounds. One of the returns puts the figures down as £52,242, and the other as £38,607. With regard to immigration, I find from the report for 1885 that there were 11,620 immigrants brought into the colony. Of that number the North received 1,795, and the South 9,825, whereas had they been distributed on the basis calculated in the

returns—one-sixth of the whole—1,936 should have been received by the North; and if a proportion of one-fifth had been taken—the actual and proper proportion—the number landed in the northern portion of the colony should have been more than 2,300. If further proof of the vitality of that portion of the colony which it is proposed to disconnect from this were needed, I might point out that of all the railways of the colony the Northern line was the only one which showed any substantial increase. The increase on that line was £18,161, whereas on the Southern and Western line there was a decrease of £20,000. Some returns have been laid on the table with regard to the duty on machinery, and the subsidy for deep sinking in mines, from which we learn that the only money expended for deep sinking—£1,150—has been spent in the southern part of the colony. That shows that the Government have not been so solicitous to increase the mineral wealth of the North as they have been of the South. I will now refer briefly to the charge that is being continually brought against the separation movement—namely, that it has been from the first, is, and always will be, a movement for nothing else than to provide the sugar-planters with a supply of coloured labour. That is the cry that has been taken up and continued to the present time—that there is nothing else in the movement but a desire to obtain a supply of coolie labour for the planters. That is exactly the very ground that people took up who opposed the separation of Queensland from New South Wales. Indeed, so familiar did the cry become in those days that it took the form of the three C's—"coolies, convicts, and Chinamen." It was said then that the squatters wanted separation, because they desired to secure a supply of cheap labour for themselves at the expense of the rest of the country. The Premier has taken up the ground that in the interest of North Queensland, and of Australia generally, separation is objectionable, and he contends that it should be opposed for that reason. Will the hon. gentleman consider for a moment what is to become of the other portions of Australia lying to the westward of Northern Queensland, where the climatic conditions are similar to those which prevail in the north of this colony, if the present divisions of territory are continued? Who will provide for and protect their interests? There is a vast extent of country to the west of North Queensland right round to West Australia, and the same conditions of climate prevail there as in the northern parts of this colony, so that the question is a great deal larger than the one immediately connected with this petition. The hon. gentleman also stated that it is not compatible with our representative institutions that separation should be allowed to take place on account of this labour question. But I contend that if representative institutions exist in the North, as I have no doubt they will, the people will take care that they are governed according to their own ideas. They ask for nothing more than the right to govern themselves, and in governing themselves they will take very good care that their interests are attended to. With all due deference to the hon. gentleman, I think they will be well able to take care of themselves. But the whole ground of objection against separation seems to be that the movement has been got up by the sugar-planters, as if the other industries—mining, pastoral, and various other industries—are not able to hold their own.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The miners do not want separation.

MR. PALMER: But, not to take up too much time, I maintain that when this separation

question has been solved it will be to the advancement, not only of North Queensland, but of the southern portion of the colony as well—that the two colonies will advance on equal lines, and will be mutually stimulative to each other in their endeavours to progress and prosper. I think it would be to the advantage of all if there was a chain of colonies around Australia. There may even be inland colonies, and nothing will help these colonies to advance in prosperity so much as a thorough reliable self-government, coupled with representative institutions. It does not matter whether there are eight, ten, or twenty Australian colonies extending right across the continent, they will result in time to come in the federation of Australia. I suppose that in a few years, or whatever time separation takes place, people will wonder what objections could have been made to separation when they see how prosperous both the North and South are become; they will be surprised that such strenuous efforts were made to prevent what must result in mutual advantage to both parts of the colony. I think that, to accomplish such a consummation, nothing will help so much as to allow the people to govern themselves in the best way they can, and to their own advantage.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think I should have taken the trouble to make any remarks on this motion of the hon. member for Townsville if it had not been that my name has been very freely used by the separationists in London, who have stated that I am in favour of separation. I do not know whether they are likely to help the cause in any way by making use of my name, but my object in rising now is to set myself right on the subject. On several occasions when I have been visiting the North, when the question has been put to me, "What is your opinion about separation?" I have answered, without the slightest hesitation at all, that whenever the time arrived that the majority of the white population desired separation, I would not stand in their way, but they could rely upon me to protect them against the sugar-planters flooding the colony with black labour. That contains about all the statement I have made on the subject, and I am prepared to adhere to that. I stick to what I said—that whenever the majority of the white population of the North desire to separate from the southern portion of the colony I will not stand in their way. Now, what is the result of this petition? It purports to be signed by 10,000 people. Those names have been gone over carefully, and comparing them with the names on the electoral roll, the number dwindles down to 3,500. That is the whole of the genuine signatures to the petition according to the electoral rolls. Under these circumstances, I do not mean to abandon the white population and allow the North to be flooded with servile labour. Everyone who knows anything at all about those countries where servile labour abounds, knows that they are miserable and poor in the extreme. The hon. member for Burke, who has just sat down, tried to drag a red herring across the trail, but it is no earthly use for anyone to come into this House and attempt to persuade us that it is not black labour that the promoters of this separation movement want. Black labour is what they want. The hon. member for Townsville (Mr. Macrossan) has put forward as a reason for separation the argument that the North has been treated with gross injustice, that the Southern Government will not spend money on the North. Now, it is a most extraordinary thing that the hon. member was a member of the Government who suspended the harbour works at Townsville the moment they came into office. I ask him to deny that if he can. What is more, it was the

Liberal party who forced the Government to go on with those works, and now the hon. member gets up here and cries out about the gross injustice that has been done to the North, the want of expenditure in that part of the colony! The Government of which he was a member never expended a single shilling on the North. All that the North has in the shape of public works and buildings it got from our party.

Mr. LISSNER: No.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will ask the hon. member who it was that commenced the Northern Railway? It was the Liberal Government; and only for shame the hon. member for Townsville would have opposed it. Now he comes forward and rests his claim for separation on the ground that the North has not had its fair share of public expenditure. I think that hon. member has done more to prevent the North getting its fair share than any other member of this House. Under the circumstances it would have been better, in my opinion, if the hon. member for Mackay had taken charge of the motion.

Mr. BLACK: There is plenty of time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know you are coming. But it would have looked too much like black labour for the hon. member for Mackay to take charge of the motion, so they put forward the hon. member for Townsville to move it. The whole of that hon. member's speech from beginning to end bristled with repudiation. Give them separation, and they will repudiate. He disputed all the figures which showed how much had been expended in the North—everything was wrong. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am the last man in creation that will use coercion. I do not believe in coercion. But I will tell you this—and I do not think it is high treason for a Minister of the Crown to hold the opinion. Settle the boundary between the two colonies; settle that finally and apportion their share of the public debt, and then, I say, let them go in God's name. I for one would be glad to get rid of them. I have had some experience of the wants of the North.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member for Burke made allusion to the benefit the Divisional Boards Act has conferred. The divisional boards have endeavoured to wring money out of the Government in order to divide it among themselves, and if that is an advantage to the country there is no doubt that the Act has been of great benefit.

Mr. ALAND: Where has that been done?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is in the North. I have no intention of giving the history of the separation of Queensland or of Victoria. The circumstances connected with the separation of those two colonies are historical facts, and it is not necessary to go back to them now. I believe that when the Imperial Government understand the matter thoroughly they will be inclined to give the people of the North separation. I am perfectly satisfied, however, that the Imperial Government will not embroil themselves in our politics. In my opinion, whenever they are satisfied that the majority of the people desire separation they will listen to their petition; but I am strongly of opinion that the Imperial Government should be warned, through the Agent-General, in regard to the public debt, and it should be impressed upon them that the debt should be fairly apportioned. I will go further than that, and say that if the Imperial Government are going to divide the colony they should guarantee the public creditor the share of the debt to be borne by the North, because I know that as soon as separation takes place they will repudiate every shilling they owe.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No; why so?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I only express my own opinion—it is a very sensible one, though I do not give it as the opinion of the Government—when I say “Settle the boundary; and if you like, I have no objection to drawing a line west of Cape Palmerston along the watershed to the South Australian border, and letting you have all the Gulf country. I should not be at all sorry to get rid of it.”

Mr. BLACK: Hear, hear! The feeling is mutual.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Settle the boundary and the question of the public debt, and then, as far as I am concerned, I am quite sure I shall not stand in the way of separation.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I thought from the way in which the hon. member who has just sat down opened his speech that he was inclined to be an anti-separationist, but he has finished off by suggesting the very thing the separationists demand. That is what he would grant provided our proportion of the public debt be properly secured. I am very glad to hear the Minister for Works has not gone back from that utterance of his at the celebrated banquet at Townsville, when he, being in opposition—and that is a point not to be lost sight of—was in favour of the North getting separation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On certain conditions.

Mr. BLACK: On certain conditions. And the hon. gentleman has now laid down what those conditions should be—separation at Cape Palmerston, following the watershed of the Gulf country to the South Australian border, and proper security for the payment of our share of the debt. Then, he says, he would let us go. Why, Mr. Speaker, that is all we ask for, and when we come to a division by-and-by, and the hon. member sees that we have no wish to attempt any repudiation—I do not see how, if he intends to be consistent, he can refuse to give us his vote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not satisfied about the numbers.

Mr. BLACK: I do not know of any instance on record where the inhabitants of a country voluntarily surrendered a portion of their territory until compelled to do so by stern necessity, and it is only natural, of course, that the two parties look at the question of the surrender of territory from two totally different points of view. Those who are in possession consider it almost an act of treason for the inhabitants of any portion of their territory to desire to repeat the history which has made the original colony so prosperous—namely, separation; on the contrary, those who desire to separate consider they have sound grounds for the step they are taking in view of the precedent set by other colonies. They know it was always anticipated that this grand country, known as Australasia, would be divided into separate colonies from time to time as necessity demanded, and they think the time has arrived when it will be for the mutual advantage of both North and South that separation should take place. There is no doubt that this question has been referred to for many years, and undoubtedly it has been revived lately. But almost from the time Queensland was separated from New South Wales, from the time when settlement spread further north, when the centralising influence, owing to the situation of the capital in this extreme southern part of the colony, became more and more apparent—from that time the cry of injustice has been frequently repeated. To

show how far back this has been referred to in this House, I will go as far back as the year 1869; and this is what now Sir Charles Lilley—then Mr. Lilley—said in speaking on the question of local government. It was then at that time, only nine years after Queensland was separated from New South Wales—it was then considered, in consequence of the remonstrances coming from the districts away from Brisbane, that it was advisable that some steps should be taken towards giving a more general form of local government than the people had; and Mr. Lilley said:—

“Holding the opinion that he did, and anticipating as he did that the feeling of the North would be for separation—he did not say it was so at present, but, looking forward generally, it would be so—being of opinion that Queensland could be governed from the centre, and the cry having been raised for separation, he was not warmly disposed to recommend to the House the establishment of local government.”

Now, Sir Charles Lilley in those days apprehended that the cry for separation would become more general as the colony progressed, and even the question of local government would not meet the requirements of the progress of the colony. He also said:—

“He did not know whether there was any strong feeling either in the North or South for separation, and it would be probably premature to discuss it now. . . . He was, of course, arguing that Queensland remained whole—that all the districts kept together. If separation was brought about, then there must be separate public expenditure in the portions of the colony separated.”

I only refer to this to show that as far back as that year, which is antecedent to the time referred to by the hon. member for Townsville, the question of separation was from time to time agitating the public mind. The reason, I take it, that our race have proved themselves such excellent colonists is because they are so specially adapted to self-government. They have never abused the right of self-government when it has been conferred upon them, and I take it that that is the reason why our race have proved themselves better colonists than any other nation. We cannot point to any other nationality—the French, or the Germans, or any other—as having acquired anything like the grand results in local self-government that our race has, and so it will always be. We know the benefits that America derived from achieving her independence. We know the benefits that Victoria received from separating from New South Wales. We also, in our own case, know the wonderful and more rapid progress that Queensland achieved after separating from New South Wales, and we also know that the Home Government, after the lamentable effort to prevent American independence, has not in any way interposed when the wish of the people of the colonies has been to form themselves into separate colonies with independent Governments, so long as the system of government is in accordance with the Imperial custom. Does any hon. gentleman in this Chamber think that the present configuration of the colonies is likely to last? Is it not evident that the northern territory of South Australia will demand separation as soon as its population and its revenue justify it in such a course? Then we come to Western Australia, a territory of something like 1,000,000 square miles. Is it not certain that the present Crown colony will give place to representative government, and that that huge territory will probably be divided into two or three colonies? Why, then, should any hon. gentlemen in this House, watching and seeing what the experience of the past has been—why should they think us premature, or that the North has not got the right to do that which has always been so beneficial in every case of

which I know upon record? The ability of our people to govern themselves has been pretty clearly shown. We know that no district is ever satisfied until it has got its divisional boards, and as they progress a little they get the municipal system. Every Government of late has recognised the necessity of extending as much as possible the principles of local government amongst the people, and notwithstanding what the Minister for Works said just now about divisional boards abusing their powers in certain cases, I think that is too frivolous an objection when considering and debating such an important question as this. I maintain that, with the trial which the principles of local self-government have had in this colony, the people have been undoubtedly proved to possess the ability for governing themselves, and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that when this grand movement of territorial separation has been achieved it will be found that the North has quite sufficient means and quite sufficient men of ability to carry on the government of the new colony—men of as great ability as will be found in any other portion of the Australian colonies. The men always come when the necessity arises for them to come forward. The hon. member for Townsville sketched out the progress of the movement of separation, and it is not my intention to go over the ground again. He referred to the movement of 1877, and now we have come to the movement of 1884, and I may say that none of the previous movements have taken anything like so firm a hold of the feelings of the people—I may say the entire North—as this present movement has. That is my opinion. Now, I have no doubt that were I opposed to this movement I should be able to bring forward quite as good grounds, from my point of view, for opposing it as the hon. the Premier has done, as the Minister for Works has done, and as probably every hon. gentleman who is wedded to Southern interest will be able to do. I have no doubt whatever that I could do that. I quite admit that the Premier, in raising what is known as the coolie cry, has adopted about the best means that he could find to checkmate this movement. The hon. gentleman has told us over and over again—he told us the other night most emphatically—that this movement originated at Mackay amongst the planters, and that, apart from the planters and the residents of Townsville, who are advocating it from selfish motives, it has little other support. I am sorry the Premier is not here, as I would like him to hear what I am going to say on this subject with reference to some views he himself expressed in connection with the coloured labour question. He emphatically states—and he has made great use of this argument in any communication he has had with the Home Government—that the movement was nothing but one got up by the planters to enable them to obtain coloured labour. And he also recently stated that he was satisfied that were this movement accomplished, within a very short time the northern portion of the colony would be flooded with, or at any rate would have a very considerable addition of coloured labour. Now, if that were the case, Mr. Speaker, I think those who oppose territorial separation would have very good grounds for their objection. But I entirely deny it, and I maintain that the Premier himself does not think so—that is, unless he has changed his opinion very much from that which he held a short time ago. When I say “a short time ago,” I take the hon. gentleman’s utterance on the 23rd January, 1882, to be found on page 133 of *Hansard* of that year, when speaking on the second reading of the Pacific Islanders Bill. I have not recently referred to the debate, but, as far as I can remember, I stated that the feeling of irritation which was

then growing throughout the North, owing to what was conceived to be the unjust way in which the North was being treated, and I had been treated for a number of years, by not only this but other Governments, would, if not checked, lead to a determined movement for separation, and this is what the hon. gentleman said in reply:—

“It may be said possibly that the colony would be divided into two parts. Well, it may be, but I do not look forward to that. I do not think that is a material element in the consideration of the question. I do not think the people of the North who want black labour would get much better treatment from the electors around them than from the electors of the colony at large.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier was quite right when he said that. I was utterly unable to refute that, and I still say that the words he then uttered in this Chamber are just as significant now as he thought them then—that is, that any attempt made by the planters of Northern Queensland to introduce coloured labour against the wish of the people will be just as impossible as it is to do so now. The voice of the people will decide that; and I can tell the hon. gentleman, as I told the planters themselves, that if any of them expect by this movement to secure coloured labour, from my experience of politics I consider that they are basing their hope upon a very false foundation indeed. They will be no nearer getting coloured labour in the event of separation taking place than they are now.

Mr. SALKELD: I think they will.

Mr. BLACK: No doubt some do think so, but, sir, what the majority hope is that, in the event of separation taking place, the agricultural industry in Northern Queensland will be considered sufficiently important to justify the new Government of the North in giving it fair consideration, fair treatment—treatment which it has never received from the Government of the South. Perhaps it is just as well to say at the present time—I may not refer to it again—that the planter of the North has been made a political shuttlecock—he has been treated as a shuttlecock by every Government, no matter what Government has been in power. It has always been a good cry for a Government to go to the country with, that if the planters got their way we should have the colony flooded with coloured labour. The Premier said “hordes” at one time, and “millions” at another, of coolies would come down, overrun this fair country, and drive us out. A more contemptible expression from a statesman I never heard. I know of no instance in the history of the whole world where our race has been driven out by any coloured or inferior race; and it is never likely to be, Mr. Speaker. Although my interests are with the planters and the planting interest, I say that their interests have been wilfully sacrificed for political purposes; and I am glad to say that the people of the North—the 10,000 who signed that petition which is now at home—have come to see the political use of which they have been made, and that although they are not the least afraid of seeing Northern Queensland flooded with coloured labour, they do hope that the new Government will afford consideration to that most important industry—an industry worth over a million a year, sir, to this colony—that it will get that fair consideration which it has never received yet, and which I see no chance of it receiving under present circumstances. That, Mr. Speaker, is one reason why I, and no doubt a great many others, are separationists. The Premier stated that the planters were the authors of the movement. I may say that the planters are numerically a very small class, and I think it will be *à propos* at the present time to

make this remark : That if this is only a planters' movement to get black labour into Northern Queensland, that petition with its 10,000 signatures, must show what a very influential class they are. It must be an important industry, and it is so looked upon by the people of the North. That is the only deduction I can draw from the statement—that the petition is only signed by planters and a few land-grabbers in Townsville. The other class who are supposed to have had a great deal to do with drawing up that petition were referred to the other night by the Premier as some people owning land in Townsville, who hope to see the increased prosperity of that place brought about by its being made the capital of the new colony. That I look upon, sir, as just another red herring drawn across the trail. I know probably just as much about the separation movement as a great many others, and a great deal more than the Premier does. I have travelled all through the North ; I have tested the feeling of the people there, and I have not the slightest hesitation in emphatically stating that with a few exceptions in Townsville they do not expect Townsville to be the capital.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side : Oh, oh !

Mr. BLACK : Hon. members may laugh ; they will have an opportunity of giving their views of the case by-and-by ; I am only giving mine for what they are worth. I say the jealousy of Townsville by the outside districts, which will have a very important say in the matter of where the capital shall be, will be quite sufficient to prevent Townsville ever being selected as the seat of government. We have heard what the hon. member for Townsville himself has said on the subject ; hon. gentlemen have now heard my view of it, and I have no doubt other hon. gentlemen representing other Northern constituencies, who will speak later on, will make some reference to this matter. At all events, the people of Townsville will be able to see from the utterances in this Chamber how little hope they have of carrying out their views. They have just as much chance of getting Townsville made the seat of government as the planters have of getting coloured labour. But these little side issues—these little red herrings—serve very well to draw and divert some separationists from the cause. There was another attempt made in this direction, but it did not go very far. It emanated undoubtedly from the Premier, who said that in the event of separation taking place Northern Queensland must be a Crown colony. But that has died out, and so will all these others die out, and the people of the North will never rest satisfied until they have achieved what they are fighting for—fighting for in a peaceable manner I am happy to say, and are determined to have—that is nothing else than territorial separation, with the same form of government that we are enjoying here. Now, Mr. Speaker, there are many causes that have led up to this movement, and many causes which are considered in the opinion of the people of the North to justify it. One of those causes is that owing to the vast area of this colony—669,520 square miles—it has been found impossible, owing to the spread of population and the diversity of interests, to administer the affairs of this huge territory fairly and equitably from this extreme southern corner of it. Every year this difficulty of administration is making itself more and more felt, and the hon. Minister for Works knows, and no one better, the utter impossibility of administering the huge Railway Department of this colony from its extreme southern corner, and, according to our form of government, the hon.

Minister for Works is actually held responsible for everything that happens. I think it was only last year, as hon. members will remember, that that little fiasco occurred here in connection with the Cooktown and Maytown Railway—when the members of this House actually authorised and passed the plans and specifications of a railway which we supposed was going from Cooktown to Maytown, and the hon. Minister for Works had to admit afterwards that it was going to an altogether different place—namely, Palmerville. The hon. Minister for Works, although it was distinctly stated in the report of his own department that the survey had been made to Palmerville, had to admit that he did not know anything about it, and was not going to be held responsible. These plans had to be withdrawn from the Council, and had they not been the Parliament of Queensland would have actually sanctioned, and would have carried out, a line of railway to a place that was never intended by this House. Every session similar cases are cropping up. We heard the other day of the disorganised state of the Railway Department in the Central districts, and we are told how plans and specifications that were actually passed here have to be amended owing to the difficulty of administration, brought about by the impossibility of a Minister down here administering the Works Department of such a huge territory. I do not blame the Minister. I say that it is unfair to do so ; but what is going on now in the Gulf ? Is it reasonable for any hon. member to get up and criticise a Minister for what is going on under a railway system extending over such a huge territory ? What control have we over that Gulf Railway ? We voted half-a-million of money for it, and it will probably take another million before it is completed. But what control can this House or the Government have over it ? This is one of the largest departments of the country, and a department to which this House voted £6,000,000 of money to spend out of our £10,000,000 loan. Then, take our education system. Is it right to expect any Minister for Education, staying down here in Brisbane, to exercise control over our huge educational system, extending right away to the Gulf of Carpentaria ? That is a department involving an expenditure of over £200,000. Why, Mr. Speaker, I consider that the Ministers themselves, if this territorial separation can be achieved on a friendly basis, with our public debt amicably arranged and apportioned between us, with full security given to the public creditor at home—if they would speak their minds would say, "It is a happy release ; we shall now have a colony which is within manageable bounds, over which we can exercise some reasonable amount of control." There will then be a southern colony with a territory larger than that of New South Wales, with resources more or less developed and in a state of progress, with a railway system well initiated and well in hand, and you will have acceded to the reasonable wish of the North to endeavour to follow in the footsteps of the South, and to achieve an important independence for themselves, the same as they see people down here have done. Of course, Mr. Speaker, the question has been raised before, when previous separation movements have been mooted, that the difficulty of separation might be obviated by the removal of the seat of government. But I take it that that is a movement that no one would ever expect to see realised. It has never been suggested seriously as a solution of the difficulty, and, I think, in discussing this matter, we may entirely leave it out of the question. It is not at all likely to be allowed ; in fact, it seems to be utterly impracticable to do it. Added to the

difficulty of administration, owing to the huge territory, we have the delay which is necessarily brought about in administration, and this is a matter that the hon. member for Bowen, being a legal man, is better able to explain than I am. I have no doubt that the hon. member for Charters Towers (the Attorney-General), being a Northerner, will say something upon the subject, and he will be able either to deny or to endorse what I say upon the subject—namely, that I believe the complaints are very serious now, in regard to the delay in legal administration. I can well understand that the Full Court sitting down here, and being composed of three judges, is very likely preferred in many cases, by suitors, to bringing their cases before a single judge in the Northern circuit. But in addition to the delay in administration there is the positive want of knowledge in the South, especially by Ministers. There is a want of knowledge of the requirements of the North, and we see that very plainly exemplified in the administration of our Lands Department. I would ask any hon. gentleman who will look at the past impartially, what was the reason, when the Land Act was amended, why survey before selection was made the principle in the North, that is, north of Rockhampton, and selection before survey in the South? The Government themselves, without any request from anyone, divided the land system which was to prevail between the North and South at Rockhampton—at Cape Palmerston—which is about the line of the proposed separation. Was there any reason for it? It could only have been through want of knowledge on the subject. I protested at the time, and tried to get the more northern districts included in the good portions of the Bill that would apply to the South. But it was perfectly useless. That want of knowledge which has militated against the progress of the North during the last twelve months was most apparent upon that occasion to me. But it was no use. I do not know whether the Government, if they further amend the Land Act, will amend it in that direction or not. The North complains again of unfair representation, and that, Mr. Speaker, is the most grievous complaint that they have. It was thought, and I thought myself, that when the Government were giving four additional members to this House, those four members would be apportioned to the North, which was justly entitled to them. But two were apportioned to the North, and two to the South. Now, the position of affairs is this: the South, having 49,081 electors, is represented by forty-nine members, that is one to the thousand. The North, however, with 12,374 electors, has ten members, or one to 1,237 electors. Now, sir, I will ask any of the Ministers when they reply—and I hope the Colonial Treasurer will do so later on—to explain why it was that when the Bill was brought in to provide for a more equitable adjustment of representation the North was considered entitled to only one representative to 1,237 electors, while the South was entitled to actually get two more members, or one in over 1,000 electors? Is that a grievance, or is it not? I maintain that it is a grievance, and a most substantial grievance, for this reason: that were the North represented on the same basis as the South she would have about four more members than she has now, and the voice of four additional members with the present ten would very considerably increase the power of the North in obtaining a just recognition of her rights in this House. But it is not only in this Chamber that we complain of unfair representation. The hon. Premier, during his tour in the North, frequently said that his Government—no matter what previous Governments had done—that his Government, at

all events, were determined to do equal justice to the North and South of Queensland. Well, what do we find the very moment he comes back to the South of Queensland? A necessity had arisen for the appointment of four additional members to the Upper House, and the four additional members the hon. gentleman appointed represent Southern industries and interests.

Mr. SMYTH: What did the previous Government do?

Mr. BLACK: They were no doubt as bad as this in that respect; but that is not the argument; that is not entering into the question at all. I am endeavouring to show hon. members that the North has for many years not got a fair share or just representation of her rights. I do not care what Government was in power; it does not alter the fact that this cry has with justice grown louder and louder every year, until now it has resulted in a cry for separation. In the Legislative Council, the North is only represented by one member—the Hon. Mr. Aplin—and the other thirty-eight members of that House represent Southern interests. That they are all honourable men I have not the least doubt. I am not saying a single word against those hon. gentlemen; but I say that it is unfair that the North should be suffering so long from insufficient representation in both Chambers, and that when the opportunity arose the Government of the day did not give the North that relief to which, I maintain, she was fairly entitled. Another of the grievances which the North complains of—and which, I must confess, I see no chance under the present condition of things of getting any alleviation of—is that of unfair taxation. It has been referred to before; but in a debate of this kind, which will go forth through the length and breadth of the land, and will be sent home, no doubt, together with the Premier's able speech on the other night, it is necessary that this should appear in one form for future reference. I accept the basis the Colonial Treasurer made use of during his Northern tour, because it will be more convenient to do that than to make fresh calculations now, and especially as we have all the returns upon which the Treasurer based his statements. During the last five years the South has paid for Customs duties alone £2,769,927, or £2 11s. 5d. per head per annum. The North, on the contrary, has paid for Customs duties £955,277 for the five years, or £4 8s. 9d. per head per annum. The Premier, the other night when this matter was referred to, and when the question was asked—Why should the North pay £4 8s. 9d. per head while the South only paid £2 11s. 5d.?—said it was because the people in the North drank too much grog. I think that was a very silly remark, coming as it did from a gentleman professing to be a statesman like our Premier. The Colonial Treasurer, who, at all events, will be able to throw a little more light on this subject, might have explained to the Premier that it was not owing to the intemperate habits of the people of the North that they have to pay so much additional taxation. The Premier, I admit, did not make that remark when he was in the North—that was the remark he made here.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He did not say they drank more grog.

Mr. BLACK: He said they drank more grog, and therefore could not complain of the additional taxation. Well, I maintain that the people of the North are just as temperate as the people of the South.

The PREMIER: Of course they are, but there are so many of them men.

Mr. BLACK: They are just as temperate as the people of the South, and the reason they pay additional taxation is not because they drink more grog.

The PREMIER: Because there are more men.

Mr. BLACK: Well, let us arrive at the proper basis. It is because there are more men and not because they drink more grog. I say the accusation that they drink more grog is an inference that they are more intemperate.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. BLACK: They are just as well able to take care of themselves as the people of the South are. Another reason why the incidence of taxation falls heavier on the North than upon the South is the very small amount of rice consumed in the South. That article contributes £36,000 to the Customs revenue, and is almost altogether consumed in the North. The fact remains that the North—even without taking into consideration the 20 per cent. which we claim as her due for Customs duties collected in the South and paid for by the North—pays £4 8s. 9d. per head as against £2 11s. 5d. paid in the South. If, however, we take into consideration the 20 per cent. which the hon. member for Townsville showed the North is justly entitled to claim, we find that the Southern contribution to the Customs revenue is reduced to £2 8s., and the contribution from the North increased to £5 6s. 7d.

The PREMIER: Make it larger.

Mr. BLACK: I ask the Premier if he can deny it?

The PREMIER: Yes; it is absurd.

Mr. BLACK: It is not for me to make it larger, and I do not wish to make it larger; it is large enough. But it will be larger when they have to pay the additional taxation the Treasurer now proposes, when they pay the additional 2½ per cent. *ad valorem* on machinery. The more the duties, the more disproportionate will be the taxation in the North. I do not so much complain of this in referring to the taxation, but to the fact that we have no right to be expected to contribute to the revenue unless we get proportionate representation, and that I maintain we have not got. I maintain further that in proportion as we contribute to the revenue, so should the expenditure be. That is what I am deducing from this. I am not raising a grievance out of this as the Premier seems to think, but I am laying a plain statement of the facts before the House, and, I hope, before the country and the world, and I will leave them to draw their own conclusions as to whether the North has a sound grievance or not, and as to whether their demand for separation is justifiable. I have only shown what proportion the North contributes to the Customs revenue. I could go into the land revenue and show what contribution the North makes to that, but it is not necessary for me to do that. I will now refer to the expenditure, and I will take the Treasurer's own figures—the figures on which he made those extraordinary statements during his recent tour through the North—and let us see how that leaves the case. Now, in these sums, of course, he has not given the North credit for that 20 per cent. of Customs duty to which I maintain the North is entitled; but even without that, taking the amounts the hon. the Treasurer does give the North credit for, the facts come out something like this:—In the year 1882-3, to the revenue derived from Customs, excise, stamps, licenses, land revenue, pastoral occupation, mining occupation, railway receipts, postage, electric telegraph receipts, harbour dues, escort fees, fees of office, fines, and miscellaneous receipts—the whole of the

items of which the revenue of the colony is made up—to that revenue the North contributed in that year £522,849. The expenditure for that year was £364,500. Now, Mr. Speaker, this expenditure includes the following items:—Endowments to local bodies, which, as the hon. member for Townsville pointed out, is only a loan to be repaid; the interest on the public debt, the police, expenses of Thursday Island, charitable allowances, schools of arts, administration of justice, public instruction, Customs, distillation, public works and mines, railways, post-offices—amounting to £364,590; an over-contribution of the North to the revenue of that year of £158,259. The next year the contribution was £535,963, and the expenditure £443,939; again an over-contribution from the North of £92,024. In 1884-5, the contribution was £571,932, the expenditure £514,421; again an over-contribution of £57,511, or, according to the Treasurer's own statement, an over-contribution of £307,794 in three years. It was on this statement that the hon. the Treasurer stated publicly up north that he would not be surprised if the South complained of over-expenditure going on in the North; while it is clearly shown by these tables that the North contributed £307,794 more to the Treasury than was returned in expenditure. There is another singular point I shall refer to in this return. Where it suits the Treasurer he debits the North with one-sixth of the actual expenditure—for instance, the interest on the debt and cost of immigration—notwithstanding that the North has not had anything like one-sixth of the loan expenditure of the colony, nor anything like one-sixth of the immigration. But on the telegraphs—and if the one-sixth principle holds good at all it should apply to telegraphs—the North is charged with the actual mileage going through the country, though they are national lines. Now, it was fully anticipated that the Government, seeing the growth of this movement in the North, would have done something to remove the grievances under which the North was undoubtedly suffering. The House met; we were all anxiously looking forward for some scheme, and what has been done? Nothing. It was at one time suggested that provincial councils would very likely achieve the object sought for without the necessity for territorial separation. I may tell the Government now that provincial councils would in no way evade the desire for territorial separation; the North will have territorial separation, Mr. Speaker. The North does not expect to gain such a grand object without a struggle, and they are quite prepared if unsuccessful this year to go on again next year. I firmly believe that the movement has taken such a firm hold of the people that nothing short of territorial separation will satisfy them. The colony has got too big and too unwieldy to be efficiently managed from the South. Now, it is a question which it is only reasonable should be raised by those who are opposed to separation, whether the population of the North can fairly be considered sufficient to start a new colony. If we take the precedent of Queensland when it was separated from New South Wales, I do not think anyone can deny that the population is sufficient. We have a total population in the North of 62,000, of whom 50,000 are admitted to be of European extraction—just double the population Queensland had when we separated from New South Wales. Our revenue is admitted to be between £700,000 and £800,000 a year. That, again, is far and away—some three times—more than the revenue that Queensland had when she separated from New South Wales. Our industries are pretty well established; our resources are quite sufficient to justify this movement. The agricultural wealth of the North must be

developed, there is no doubt about that. No country can afford to have those millions of acres lying waste as they are at the present time; some means will have to be devised to make those lands reproductive. Whether it will be done before separation or not I am unable to say; I am afraid that it will not be done before, but I am perfectly certain it will be done after. And when some rational means for the development of the agricultural lands of the North is devised you will see such a flood of population—and European population, Mr. Speaker—pouring into that land as will make its prosperity a certainty.

The PREMIER: No; black labour.

Mr. BLACK: The hon. the Premier was not here just now when I read an extract showing that he himself had stated that in the event of separation the planters would be just as far off coloured labour as ever. Does the hon. member remember it?

The PREMIER: No; if I thought so I should not have such a strong objection to separation.

Mr. BLACK: Well, I will read it to the House again, now that the hon. member is in his place. It took place on the second reading of the Polynesian Act. The quotation will be found on page 133 of the *Hansard* for 1882. I had referred to the possibility of separation in the event of the Northern grievances not being redressed. This brought forward the hon. gentleman's reply:—

"It may be said possibly that the colony will be divided into two parts. Well, it may be; but I do not look forward to that. I do not think that is a material element in the consideration of this question. I do not think the people of the North who want black labour would get much better treatment from the electors around them than from the electors of the colony at large."

The PREMIER: That was before this movement started.

Mr. BLACK: How has this movement altered the feelings of the people on the subject?

The PREMIER: We have had opportunities since then of judging the intentions of the originators of this movement.

Mr. BLACK: I can assure the hon. gentleman that the movement started before 1883-4.

The PREMIER: Not this movement.

Mr. BLACK: I should like to hear from the hon. gentleman the reasons why he thinks the people of the North have altered their opinion. My impression is that the voice of the people of the North at the ballot-box would be just as strong now as it was when the hon. gentleman made that statement; and I reiterate that the planters of the North have no more hope of getting coloured labour after separation than they have of getting it now.

The PREMIER: Two minutes ago you said they would get any amount of black labour after they got separation.

Mr. BLACK: I said the North would get any amount of European labour as soon as rational means were devised for working the agricultural land of the North.

The PREMIER: What do you mean by rational means—black labour?

Mr. BLACK: I do not mean cheap Continental labour.

The PREMIER: It's no use; why don't you own up?

Mr. BLACK: It is not cheap Continental labour that I mean when I used the words "rational means."

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Nor is it the Land Act of 1884.

Mr. BLACK: The Minister for Works seemed to lay great stress on the fact that he thought the North would want to repudiate its liability for the national debt.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am sure it would.

Mr. BLACK: The Minister for Works is sure that the North will repudiate its liability for the national debt. The unforeseen does happen sometimes, Mr. Speaker, but I can assure the hon. gentleman that I never knew anyone in the North ever dream of such a thing as repudiation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The time has not arrived yet.

Mr. BLACK: The North has ample means to pay all it owes; and the hon. gentleman may be perfectly satisfied that separation will never be permitted by the Home Government until the security of the public creditor is assured. Why should they repudiate? They have got the resources within themselves to pay the comparatively small debt which, even on the showing of the Colonial Treasurer himself, will not amount to more than £2,500,000. Taking the share of the North at that amount—and it may be even less—the interest upon it will be £100,000. Will the North not be better able to pay £100,000 out of a revenue of £700,000 than the whole colony is to pay £860,000 out of a revenue of £3,000,000? There is a plain question of arithmetic, and if the hon. gentleman will sum it up he will see that the financial position of the North is his best security against repudiation. Why, Mr. Speaker, the North is at present actually paying £122,000 for interest, and I fail to see why it should not be able to pay £22,000 less after separation. Hon. gentlemen seem to forget that it is not a question of the immediate paying up of £2,500,000, which, it is asserted, the North owes. With the exception of a very small amount payable in 1913, none of it is due to the English creditor till 1915. Will any hon. member, unless blinded by prejudice, assert that immediately after separation takes place the North is going to be insolvent? During the last five years the population of the North has increased 102 per cent. as against 42 per cent. in the South. Why should she become insolvent because she is put in a position to manage her own affairs? On the contrary, you will see her progress more rapidly than any Australian colony has ever progressed before. We have the confidence of the people in our industries. Our mining industry is unrivalled, our goldfields contributing two-thirds to the gold production of the colony. As to agricultural industry, there is little or nothing of it in the South as compared with the North; and of the 60,000 tons of sugar produced in the colony, 40,000 tons are produced by that small handful of people in the North. The pastoral industry, I admit, will not compare with that of the South, but there need be no fear that the North will ever be guilty of repudiation. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, what I think will happen. The English creditor will look at the liability of the South, and what he sees will give rise to apprehensions in his mind. He will doubt whether the South, if this large contribution to its revenues is taken away, will be able to meet its liabilities. I am perfectly certain there will be no apprehensions about the North being able to pay, seeing that we already pay more by £22,000 than what our fair share would be if separation took place to-morrow. I have made rather an interesting extract from the statistics, which come in quite *à propos* on this question, as it will give hon. members some further idea of the wealth and financial independence of the North. The capital value of the rateable property in the municipalities of the North—and there are very few of them—is £1,809,698; and

the capital value in the divisions of the North is £4,277,459—making a total of £6,087,157. With resources such as I have pointed out, and with investments in property amounting to over £6,000,000, there should be no fear of the future of the North after separation takes place. Even the Treasurer can scarcely think that there is any ground for alarm in the financial position of the North. An objection raised by the Premier to separation was that the population of the North was not sufficiently homogeneous; that there would be great difficulty in administering a colony whose population was so scattered. That is a fault which time will remedy; they will become more concentrated as its industries progress; but I would point out that if it would be difficult to manage the affairs of the North from a capital somewhere in the centre, how much more difficult must it be to manage them from here? That is about the weakest argument I ever heard the Premier use. I believe he admits that the present revenue is sufficient. He denied that the revenue distribution was unfair, and stated that the hon. member for Townsville had not referred correctly to loan expenditure. Well, the expenditure from loan is just about as unfair as it is from consolidated revenue. I am not going to mix any other loan expenditure with that for railways, but I will take that one item alone, because it embraces the greater part of the Northern debt. The North had voted for railway expenditure the sum of £1,448,858 up to June, 1884, that is before we touched the ten-million loan. My reason for taking that date is that we have not encroached at all upon the Northern portion of that loan. The expenditure up to the 31st of March, 1886, was £1,209,176 according to the Government returns, so that the North had at that time a credit of £239,682 out of the £16,000,000 of loan money, and without touching the £10,000,000. The southern portion of the colony had spent the whole of her share of the £16,000,000, and had also spent £700,076 out of her share of the £10,000,000. What I want to deduce from these figures is this: that the North has had voted one-fifth of the total loan, but she has only spent one-tenth, or nearly one-half of that, while the South has had four-fifths voted as her share and has spent two-thirds of it. The result is this: that the greater portion of the ten-million loan is being rapidly spent by the South in the construction of railways, and I maintain that it will take a further vote of £3,000,000 to complete the works which have been commenced by the present Government. In fact, the North, from the slow way in which expenditure is proceeding in that part of the colony, will find that in the event of there being any difficulty in raising money after the ten millions has been spent, the portion which should have been expended in the North will have been used by the South, and the public works of the North will suffer in consequence. The Premier admitted the other night the right of the Crown to separate, and it cleared the ground very considerably for this debate. But he thought "it would be an extraordinary course to divide a colony at present united and having a large burden of debt, and large and complicated administrative arrangements." The words "at present united" will bear two significations. The two portions of the colony, North and South, are united as far as forming one territory is concerned; but as far as politics are concerned I do not think we could find two more disunited portions of colonies anywhere than the North and South of Queensland. Their interests are not identical; and at no time has any attempt ever been made to harmonise their interests—they are disunited politically. I have already referred to the large burden of debt. As to the existence of complicated administrative arrangements

which the Premier said was a reason why separation should not be granted, that is, I think, the very reason why separation should be granted. It is owing to the complicated administrative arrangements that the Ministry—whether it be the present or any other Ministry—is physically unable to do fair justice to the North. The hon. gentleman further anticipated a difficulty in providing security for the repayment of the public debt. I have discussed that matter, and have plainly shown that repudiation will never be the policy of the North. Nor do I think the House or the country need have the least apprehension as to the ability of the North to pay her fair share of the public debt. It has also been suggested that no aggregation of three or four towns can expect to get their contributions to the revenue back again in full. That is perfectly true. No two or three towns have any right to expect the exact amount they contribute to the revenue to be refunded to them. But a large section of a colony has a right to expect that. We have tropical Queensland, and sub-tropical Queensland, which would be divided naturally by a line drawn from Cape Capricorn—if that were accepted as a convenient division of the colony. We maintain that the whole of the northern portion of the colony has undoubtedly a right to get a very much larger proportion of their contributions to the revenue than it has been getting for many years past. The hon. gentleman further said that the Gulf country would rather be governed from Brisbane, with an unbiased Parliament to deal with them, than from the North; but we maintain that it is impossible to get this unbiased Parliament. Owing to the preponderance of Southern representation, the North cannot get an unbiased Parliament. I have shown that, for political purposes, one of the best industries of the colony—I mean the agricultural industry—has been sacrificed by the present Government. How, then, can we expect to get an unbiased Parliament to deal with the affairs of the North? How can we ever expect to get fair play for that most important industry of the colony so long as we have got this huge preponderance of southern representation in Parliament? Now, the Premier stated somewhat recently—in fact, he said it again the other night—that he was of opinion that the feeling at Cairns was very much divided on the question of separation, and he said that because a great many telegrams—several of them of a bogus character—have been appearing in the papers lately. There is no doubt that attempts are being made—unsuccessfully, I believe—to get up an anti-separation movement in the North; but I was certainly rather astonished to hear the Premier state that public feeling at Cairns was not in favour of separation, because I was at that place at the time the hon. gentleman and the Colonial Treasurer were banqueted there by the people. I have here the *Port Douglas Chronicle* of August 20th—a very recent date—which I saw in the library just now, and this is what that paper says upon this subject in an article referring to separation. Evidently the writer had in view the motion that was coming on in this House. The article says:—

"Again, Cairns looks forward to the immediate commencement of the second section of the railway, and a portion of that community entertain a fear that if they openly encourage separation the Government might place impediments in their way, and if separation were granted a delay in the construction of the line might occur."

This selfishness of the people might have something to do with the feeling which the Premier says exists at Cairns—if it does exist there—but I do not think we could have a better argument in favour of separation than is furnished by this circumstance. If the people of the North think

that their rights entirely depend upon the support they give to the Southern Government, I do not think we could have a better argument than that in favour of separation.

The PREMIER: You used that argument, not I.

Mr. BLACK: I did not use that argument; it is the argument advanced in the article in this paper. The article also states:—

"This feeling may also extend to a portion of the Herberton community, and a very natural one it is."

Now, to come to the banquet. I had nothing to offer the people; I could not even promise them a railway survey. The people were naturally most enthusiastic when two Ministers of the Crown visited them for the purpose of turning the first sod of their railway; they naturally had everything in their favour. Everyone was most anxious to make the visit of the two Ministers as pleasant as possible. And though the two hon. gentlemen went up north to find out the feeling on separation, it is a very singular thing that they declined to say a single word on the subject at Townsville. And at the banquet at Cairns, though they made speeches characteristic of the occasion—most of us have heard the speeches Ministers make at banquets—they said nothing about separation. Owing to the kindly feeling of the people there the question was not brought forward, and the Ministers would have been able to go back to Brisbane and say there was no such thing as a feeling in favour of separation in the North; so I referred to the separation question myself, and this is what the article says:—

"If, however, the enthusiasm manifested when Mr. Hume Black spoke upon separation at the banquet following the occasion of turning the first sod of the railway is taken as the representative opinion of the people of Cairns upon the subject, they are indeed very ripe for the cause, notwithstanding the Premier's contrary opinion. The writer of this article was present at that banquet, and positively asserts that Mr. Black's speech was received with a spontaneous *furore* of acclamation."

The PREMIER: I did not hear it. It was a very limited one.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: They were stopped.

The PREMIER: I can tell when there is unanimity among people.

Mr. BLACK: I have thought it right to refer to this, because I received congratulations a month afterwards from the Separation Council at Townsville. The chairman of the council was at the meeting, and saw and heard all that took place. I received congratulations for the way in which I evoked enthusiasm at Cairns, notwithstanding the opposition I might naturally have expected to receive on account of the Ministers being there. Why, Mr. Speaker, when I sat down—I merely state this in confirmation of what I have just said, and the hon. gentlemen opposite know it is true, because they were there—when I sat down there was a perfect lull of astonishment for about a minute until a gentleman at the far end of the room got up, waved his handkerchief, and called for three cheers for separation, and those present stood up almost to a man.

The PREMIER: Oh!

Mr. BLACK: I repeat it without fear of contradiction, and what I say is confirmed by the article from which I have quoted, the writer of which I do not know. I do not think the Premier was very much pleased. I believe he denounced it as one of the most rowdy meetings he had ever seen.

The PREMIER: I did nothing of the kind.
1886—2 M

Mr. BLACK: I must say that it was not a rowdy meeting. It was a representative meeting, very well organised and very well conducted. I am sure we all enjoyed ourselves very much.

The PREMIER: There were a few rowdy separationists there.

Mr. BLACK: The Ministers changed their tactics when they got to Cooktown. There they first introduced the statistics laid on the table of this House—statistics which, on being analysed, are proved not to endorse the deductions drawn from them by the Treasurer. The separationists are quite prepared to abide by those figures supplied by the Treasury; their case is sufficiently strong to accept them as they are, but when the people of the North were told at Cooktown, and later on at Normanton, that their debt would be almost insupportable, that it would be nearer £5,000,000 than £1,000,000 if separation took place, it naturally staggered them a little. But when it is shown that the utmost amount of their debt would be £2,500,000, and that they have during the past few years contributed £300,000 more than their share of the consolidated revenue, of which a fair analysis ought to be made—when they take that into consideration they will see that there is no just cause for apprehension on that ground. As I said before, the Ministers enjoyed themselves very much, and I am very glad for the reputation of the people of the North that they got a cordial welcome wherever they went. Even at Hughenden, though times were very bad, the reception was cordial; but I do not think there was much of a public meeting. However, they were sufficiently cordial to assure the Ministers that they hoped to be able to give them a more cordial reception the next time, when it was hoped they would come as visitors to the new colony of North Queensland. The Ministers also went to Charters Towers, and there they made use of an argument which is capable of two interpretations. They reminded the people of the North of the old fable of the spider and the fly; but they failed to explain which was the spider and which was the fly. The people of the North have for a long time considered that Brisbane is the spider, and the North the fly. I do not know whether the Ministers meant the fable to bear that interpretation; but it was undoubtedly a very appropriate simile. The feeling in the North is that the South has been a perfect horse-leech on the North for a number of years, and that the time has come for separation. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that in discussing this matter to-night I have not offended against the feelings or susceptibilities of any hon. member. I have endeavoured to put the case impartially before the House. As a Northerner, my instincts and my interests are naturally in favour of separation, and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the progress of the two portions of the colony will, when they are separated, be more rapid than in the present condition of dissatisfaction in the North, and the impossibility of identifying the diversity of interests prevailing in the Northern and Southern portions of the colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker, — The desire for local autonomy seems to be at present a general political epidemic, and I am free to say to a certain extent it commands the sympathy of many who do not investigate the whole circumstances correctly. Hon. members who address themselves to the question of territorial separation can make use, I believe, of more heroic arguments than those who endeavour to maintain the existing condition of things; but, at the same time, those who defend the present condition of things

may have sounder arguments on their side, and may be guided by a line of action more conducive to the general welfare of the community. That is the light in which we should regard the question, and, while I am quite willing to concede my tribute of praise to the able speeches of the hon. member for Townsville and the hon. member for Mackay, regarded in the light in which they have addressed the House, still I am of opinion that the solid justice of the position will be dealt with by other members of this House, who perhaps may not address us in such glowing terms or with such a flow of language as those hon. gentlemen have used. I consider that at the present time the question of territorial separation is most unhappily advocated. I contend that in the present circumstances of the colony, instead of endeavouring to disintegrate we should, by every means in our power, consolidate our position, until, at any rate, the colony has arrived at a happier condition and has attained a fuller measure of prosperity. In the present depressed condition of affairs, extending over the whole colony, in which the North suffers quite as largely in proportion to its population as the South, or more—I say in the present depressed condition of our industries—the question of separation is one of the most undesirable to be discussed, both as regards its effect upon our position, social and political, and also having in view our financial relations outside our own territory. Now, hon. gentlemen in addressing themselves to this question have very properly urged upon the consideration of the House that it should not be regarded in the light of party politics, and that no unnecessarily irritating subjects should be introduced to withdraw consideration from the larger and more important question of separation. In that light I think it should be regarded, but I regret to say that there have been certain matters introduced by previous speakers who have submitted points of a character which would lead us to regard the question from a party standpoint. That has been especially done by my hon. friend the member for Burke and the last speaker, the member for Mackay. I am not disposed, however, to be led away in this direction. I shall confine myself more to viewing the benefits which are likely to accrue to the colony from remaining in its present position, and the injuries which are certain to follow if at the present time separation takes place. Now, I am not going to inundate hon. gentlemen with a flood of figures to-night. We have had during the week very copious showers of them, and particularly last night, when there was a sufficient volume to last us for a considerable period; but I am bound, however, to make a few remarks upon certain statements made by the hon. member for Townsville, particularly with a view of defending the Treasury from a charge of negligence and carelessness, which I think he indulged in unnecessarily. Beyond that I do not intend to deal with a mass of figures, because, if I were to refer to the arguments contained in the hon. member's speech of last week, the references would lose their meaning and interest to a great extent to hon. members, and therefore I do not intend to dilate upon the items to which he has reverted. But I think I am justified in reading to the House a report upon these Treasury tables, which were prepared at the Treasury—a report which I requested might be furnished to me by the permanent head of the department, with a view of explaining some of the statements which do not appear to be in harmony with others. I mentioned at the time the hon. member for Mackay pressed for his return that the information he solicited was such as demanded a very large amount of research in the department, and

that if the return was summarily furnished it would very likely not give the reliable and exact information to the House that he desired to obtain. And I also invited the hon. gentleman to call at the Treasury and inform the Under Secretary in what manner he would wish this return prepared. The hon. gentleman did so, and the return was made up strictly in accordance with the views he then expressed, but not in accordance with the plan which the Treasury would have adopted had that hon. gentleman not expressed a request to frame the return in the manner he did. The return that he has obtained deals solely with appropriation of loan moneys, and is a continuation of the former return which was supplied and printed on the motion of the late hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Amhurst, some years ago. Consequently when the hon. gentleman refers to the return as an estimate of expenditure up to date it is not correct. The return is not intended to give that information, and if it is accepted as affording that information it is irreconcilable with other figures. It deals solely with appropriation, and embraces not only money spent on account of appropriation, but money yet to be spent in fulfilment of such appropriation. What I wish to say in defence of this account is better comprised in the report which I have mentioned, and which I deemed it my duty to obtain from the Under Secretary to the Treasury, and he says:—

“With reference to Mr. Macrossan's remarks on certain alleged discrepancies in the Treasury returns recently laid upon the table of the Legislative Assembly, I desire to point out that the loan accounts of the colony are kept solely on the basis of the respective loan votes, without regard to territorial divisions not recognised by statute, and which do not even appear on any existing map of the colony. A summary of those accounts is shown in the Treasury tables (D, Loan Account) presented to members with the Financial Statement; and the accounts, in detail, will be found in the appendix to the Auditor-General's recent report on the accounts of the year 1884-5. An examination of the last-mentioned account will show that whilst the state of any individual vote can be ascertained at a glance, the account, as a whole, affords no information as to the territorial distribution of the expenditure, as the deficit on the various loans amounting in the aggregate to £1,240,777, and which must be taken into account in dealing with that phase of the question, are shown as one item of expenditure only in the account. In the same manner the votes—Rolling-stock and Railways, £1,017,000; Extension Surveys, £205,500; Public Works and Buildings General Vote, £169,564; Water Supply and Storage, £230,000; and a large number of other votes, including Immigration, Electric Telegraphs, Improvements of Harbours and Rivers, Pilot and Light-house Service, Bridges, Main Roads, &c., &c., are all treated and dealt with as single votes.

“The distribution of the various deficits to the separate works and services on which the same have accrued has never yet been carried out either by the Treasury or Audit Office, except in the case of general accounts shown on page 2 of the Treasury Return of expenditure north and south of Cape Palmerston; neither is there in this department nor in the Audit Office any reliable data showing the expenditure of the general votes above referred to within the districts or divisions of the colony where such expenditure has taken place. Such detailed information is doubtless to be found in a more or less available form in the books and records of the spending departments, but is not, and never has been, recorded in the books of the Treasury.

“It will be evident, therefore, from a consideration of those facts, that to prepare a full, true, and reliable statement of the loan expenditure, amounting in the aggregate to over £15,000,000 and extending over the last twenty-five years, apportioned in detail to certain territorial divisions of the colony, must be a work of time, care, and no small amount of labour, and which cannot be produced to order in the midst of a busy season, within the space of two or three weeks, as some honourable members seem to expect.

“With regard to the loan return moved for by Mr. Black, the wording of the notice of motion was so vague that it was difficult to gather from it precisely what he required, so a note asking for the information required was therefore sent to him, to which the following reply

was received:—"The return I have called for is an addition to that dated "18th September, 1879—Customs Collections Debt of each Financial District." That return analyses the expenditure of £13,000,000. I want the expenditure analysed to date, or as near as practicable."

"On obtaining the return in question, it was found to be not a statement of expenditure, but an apportionment of the total debt at that time, in accordance with the proposed Financial Districts Bill of 1879, in which Bill certain works and services, including buildings, are defined as general, and certain other works and services including buildings are defined as local works. Such a return, therefore, based on the principle of financial districts, and general and local loan debts, is of no practical value for purposes of comparison with a return prepared to exhibit the actual loan expenditure north of Cape Palmerston, and the actual balances of all special appropriation remaining to be expended within that portion of the colony."

"Coming to the figures quoted by Mr. Macrossan, the first so-called error refers to the table of the Public Debt showing the deficits on the various loans apportioned to the respective services, in which the total expenditure is made to appear as £17,390,959 instead of £17,300,959. This difference is simply a typographical error, which has not the slightest bearing on the question at issue; the balance unexpended, £9,249,891, and every other item of the account being absolutely correct."

"With regard to the Immigration Account, the amount of the debt under this head is shown in what may be termed Mr. Palmer's Return, with the deficiency added, in the other return (Table D) the deficit appears under a separate head. The figures in Table O, making the total loan expenditure £2,012,713, is a mere recapitulation of the figures which have been published in the *Gazette* from year to year, in which no attempt has ever been made to adjust them with the actual balance of the loan vote where transfers, refunds, and adjustments of all kinds in connection with the immigration business, both in London and the colony, are continually going on; neither is the deficit on the various immigration loans taken into account in this account. The statement that the total loan votes, including deficits, amount to £2,639,436, and that the expenditure amounted to £2,100,557 on 31st March, and to £2,142,201 on 30th June, 1886, cannot be called in question, the immigration and all other loan balances being adjusted every month with the Audit Office."

"In the matter of railways, surveys, etc., the difference of £20,000, pointed out between Mr. Palmer's return and Mr. Black's, is accounted for in this way: One return is made up to 31st March, and the other to 30th June; the £20,000 represents the expenditure between these dates which has been transferred from the General Survey vote and from Rolling Stock and Railways to the local vote, in order to arrive at the district expenditure on the later date."

"Respecting the figures in connection with the improvement of harbours and rivers and the expenditure on public buildings, I have already shown that Mr. Black's return is not a statement of expenditure, but an appropriation of the aggregate debt of the colony in accordance with a proposed Financial Districts Bill, with local and general divisions of debt. It is useless, therefore, to institute comparison between the results thus attained and those in Mr. Palmer's return, prepared on a different basis and with a totally different object in view."

"Immigration.—Under this head the northern portion of the colony has been charged with one-sixth of the total expenditure, that being the 'League's' estimate of the proportion of the population north of Cape Palmerston. I do not think in this particular matter there is any ground for complaint, or that any other than the population basis will present a more equitable means of adjusting this portion of the debt."

"The figures showing the appropriation of £184,701 on account of electric telegraphs to the northern portion of the colony, out of a total expenditure of £598,608, to 31st March last, have been supplied by the Electric Telegraph Department, and will doubtless be duly verified when required."

"With regard to the expenditure on public buildings charged to the North, amounting to £109,309, Mr. Macrossan is prepared to concede £32,596 on the strength of the Auditor-General's statement of loan expenditure; but, as I have already pointed out, that statement gives no particulars of the expenditure out of general votes where the difference in question will, on further inquiry, be found to exist."

"Under the head of 'Roads and Bridges,' Mr. Macrossan takes—instead of the Treasury Return, amounting to £182,904—the Auditor-General's figures for the year ending 30th June, 1885: Roads and Bridges, Northern division, £139,323, and gives credit for three-fourths, or

£15,000, out of the vote; £20,000 for main roads to gold-fields, making a total of £154,323. To this, however, must be added payments amounting to £19,000, out of the vote for road boards and shire councils; and £3,000 on account of bridges, main roads. These sums, to which must be added the proportion of the deficits on the various loans not taken into account in the Auditor-General's statement, will more than cover the difference taken exception to under this head."

"E. B. CULLEN."

I cannot expect hon. members, Mr. Speaker, to follow me in the details of a lengthy report of this description. It is, however, better that I should place before the House the exact views of the permanent head of the Treasury, and let this report be published than that I should verbally give the House my explanation. Hon. members will then be able to compare the corrections made by the Under Secretary of the Treasury with the remarks made by the hon. member for Townsville; and I can only say that if it does not traverse the whole question he has raised, any additional information desired on the subject will be supplied from the Treasury. I need not weary hon. members now by referring to the discrepancies the hon. member pointed out. Indeed, I do not think a debate like the present should be conducted merely on the lines of accurate bookkeeping or otherwise. In a debate of this character figures need not necessarily be required to demonstrate with mathematical accuracy the question of separation. That will, I judge, be tested upon a far larger view of the question than the mere point as to whether the South or the North has had an undue proportion of expenditure in their respective districts. To my mind it goes very considerably further than the mere question of distinct accounts. I myself deprecate very much that financial separation even should have been encouraged in previous years. It is desirable undoubtedly that reports respecting the government of the colony should be circulated for general information, but to contend that every distinct division of it is entitled to disbursement representing exactly their contributions to the revenue, is to my mind pursuing the question of the financial administration of the colony to an absurdity. It is at any rate pursuing it to an impracticable issue. Any small section of the community might equally complain of not having had disbursed in the midst of such community the taxation which it has contributed to the general revenue. Indeed, in a new country like this, Mr. Speaker, where everything has to be formed, and a very large amount of expenditure takes place with a view of opening up and developing it, it is impossible that such an exactly equal disbursement of expenditure can be provided for. Again, there are some districts which will demand immediately a larger expenditure than they have contributed to the revenue or are likely to contribute for some time to come. I contend, therefore, that separation should not be urged merely on the ground that the North has contributed per head of population a larger amount of revenue to the State than the older settled districts of the colony have furnished. I do not think a complaint of that kind is sufficient, or is based upon sufficient foundation to justify the dismemberment of the colony—merely for the purpose of securing a larger share of public expenditure. There is no doubt that if the colony were reduced in dimensions it would be much easier to administer its affairs; that I think goes without saying. It is a very large extent of country to administer; its very extent undoubtedly adds to the difficulty of administration, but I do not accept that to be a sufficient reason for urging separation between the northern and southern portions of the colony at the present time.

These difficulties may very fairly be overcome, as the Government desire to overcome them, by decentralisation as far as practicable, and I may fairly urge upon hon. members that it is desirable that a system of decentralisation should, at any rate, have a trial. Let it be put upon its trial before resorting to the extreme course of adopting separation. Separation once established is irrevocable; but, on the other hand, if decentralisation should prove a failure, there is still the ultimate course of adopting separation. In that view of the case I think we may very fairly postpone decision upon the question of separation, and see if decentralisation will not tend to restore confidence—if there be a want of confidence in the North in the Government established in Brisbane—and promote the general welfare of the whole colony. I do not urge this from any spirit of apprehension that the southern portion of the colony would be a loser by the separation of the North, or from any desire that the South should continually absorb a larger proportion of the public revenue than it is fairly entitled to, and spend money which several hon. members contend has been furnished by the North. It is not that, I say, which induces me to desire to maintain the territorial integrity of the colony. I will take the opportunity of just quoting from figures similar to those which I read when up north, and which have been referred to by the hon. member for Mackay, and which are now made up to the end of the last financial year. These figures show that at the present time the South has nothing to apprehend from financial separation, nor anything to gain from undue absorption of the public revenue provided by the North; and they also establish the fact, which I wish to impress upon the House, that the present Government have shown every desire—that they have endeavoured far more largely than any preceding Government—to establish an equitable distribution of expenditure throughout the length and breadth of the colony.

Mr. BLACK: No.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Well, the hon. gentleman says "No," and he can take them for what they are worth. As I have said before, this debate will not be decided either here or before the Imperial tribunal by figures solely. There are much wider and broader issues than those to be considered; but still I am not afraid, even upon the question of figures, so far as they affect locally the northern and southern portions of the colony, to maintain my position, that the present Government have endeavoured, and I think successfully endeavoured, to distribute equally the expenditure of the colony to a greater extent than their predecessors.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: You said "more so."

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think so, even more so than preceding Governments. The tables from which I quote are the tables, as I have already stated, referred to by the Premier and myself, on our Northern trip, but are brought up to the 30th June, and are apportioned now upon the census population of 19,275 instead of one-sixth, which was formerly considered the fair proportion of the population of the North. In 1882-3 the North contributed a revenue of £531,573. The distinct expenditure of that year in the North was £380,164. These tables refer to the receipts and expenditure, I may say, of the consolidated revenue. In addition to that £380,164, the proportion due by the North for the expense of the general administration of the colony, based upon the 19,275 proportion, was £54,969.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is the population in 1886.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is more in favour of the North. The expenditure was £380,164, and the general expense of government was £54,969, making the total obligation of that year £435,133, showing that in that year there was a deficiency of expenditure, as against revenue received from the North. In the following year, 1883-4, £545,897 was received from the North, and the expenditure was £461,564, and the Northern share of general expense of government £57,740, making a total of £519,304, which hon. members will observe is a considerable increase in expenditure as compared with the previous year. In 1884-5, the receipts were £582,719, and the expenditure £533,480, and the share of general expense of government £70,211, making a total actual expenditure of £603,691, a surplus of expenditure over Northern receipts of £21,000. It is upon that year's transactions, and upon that of which I am about to speak, that I base my statement that the present Administration have enlarged the expenditure in the North to an extent beyond what has been done in previous years, and very largely so when compared with the last year of the preceding Administration, when we observe it was nearly £100,000 short of the estimated receipts. Then in 1885-6 the receipts were £645,862, the expenditure was £555,139, and the share of general expense of government £78,375, or a total of £633,514, being within £12,000 of the actual amount which was received from the Northern districts. These tables do not show exactly what is really expended in the North, because there are several general votes, such as buildings, and a variety of other services out of which expenditure proceeds, and which are not distinctly appropriated to the North on the annual Estimates. This reminds me that it is the intention of the Treasury to endeavour, as early as possible, to investigate each detail of expenditure—I don't know whether it can be done during this session—since Separation item by item, and apportion it to the respective districts. That, however, will be a matter of immense work and labour, as I may inform hon. members that there are no books showing these transactions in the Treasury, and they will have to be pursued through the different spending departments, and each department will have to be investigated from the foundation of the colony in order to distribute these details of expenditure. Until we receive those exact items of distinct expenditure we are all talking in the dark to a certain extent, and hon. gentlemen may challenge my statements as I challenge theirs. It is impossible at present to get the exact amount of expenditure that has taken place under such circumstances. At the same time I contend, as I have already stated, that mere figures will not determine this question ultimately, and we have to regard figures more as a whole than in their exact accuracy, with a view to learning whether any substantial injustice has been experienced by the North, and if so, how it should be rectified. I contend, further, that out of the loan moneys the North has received its fair share of expenditure, combined with its fair share of appropriation. I am free to explain that the expenditure in the North has not been so large as in the South; but the circumstances of the colony have been so obvious that it is unnecessary to take up time in referring to them. I repeat what I said in the North, that out of the loan moneys of £16,570,850, which was the total amount of loan before the last £10,000,000 was authorised, one-sixth of that being the proportion due to the North represents

£2,761,808. The part of the last loan was apportioned to the North upon the recent basis of population, which will be more in its favour. The £9,980,000 of the new loan is apportioned upon the population basis of 19,275, which represented as due to the North £1,923,645. The total appropriation, therefore, to the North out of loan moneys amounts to £4,685,453. Now, what we have actually expended to the present time, up to the 30th June—distinct services which can be traced as having been expended in the North—is £2,801,780, and the unexpended balance of appropriation represents £2,032,521, or a total of £4,834,301, showing a surplus due by the North at the present time of £148,848. I take the £10,000,000 upon the population basis of 19,275, and all previous loan moneys appropriated to the North upon the basis of one-sixth. I will point out that this embraces solely the expenditure and appropriation recorded in the Treasury books, but it does not deal with the very large sum of loan expenditure under the general terms of buildings, water supply, defence force of the colony, and portions of the electric telegraph expenditure. Hon. gentlemen must bear in mind that there has been a very large expenditure in public buildings, in which the North have had a share. We have the Parliamentary Buildings and other public buildings, for which the whole colony is responsible. That does not appear to have been considered by Northern men, but surely it is no reason, because such expenditure has not been distinctly charged to the North, that they intend to ignore their responsibility in connection with the expenditure upon that head. I think I have said enough on the matter of figures, as we might go on to all eternity, or as long as we are spared, challenging each others' statements. I might challenge the statements made on the basis of the figures of the hon. member for Mackay, and possibly he might do the same with statements made on the basis of the figures used by me. We shall not have this determined exactly until the Treasury returns before mentioned are completed, and that may take some months; but we need not delay on that account our consideration of this question of separation. The hon. member for Mackay has complained of the inadequate representation of the North, and has specially blamed the present Government for ignoring the just requirements of the North in the matter of parliamentary representation. He has stated that they have only one member for every 1,200 electors. I do not consider they are under-represented in this House. No doubt, on account of the sparse population of the North, and also because of the centres of population in the North being at such remote distances from each other, the same extent of territory is not as largely represented as in the South. But taking the population basis they have no right whatever to complain. I am sure the hon. gentleman has no ground for complaint against the present Government for not according to the North its fair share of representation in this particular. Unless his memory is faulty, I may turn to the Act passed last session to give additional representation, and we shall find that two members were given to the North and only one to the South, and one to the Mitchell district.

Mr. BLACK: Is not that in the South?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is not what the hon. gentleman generally pleases to call the southern part of the colony. However, that does not touch my argument—that whatever the requirements of the North for extended representation may have been, they have been recognised, at all events, by the present Government. Then the hon. gentle-

man proceeded to expatiate upon the unfair taxation from which he says the North has suffered. That matter has been referred to already, and it has been pointed out that in any new country, which possesses a large male adult population, the contribution to Customs is undoubtedly larger proportionally on account of the larger consumption of dutiable articles. The hon. gentleman should remember that the South has heretofore made a very considerable concession to the North, and particularly to the class he represents, and whose interests he so continuously advocates in this House. He appears to forget that at the present time the consumers of the colony generally are subsidising the sugar industry to the extent of £5 per ton protection. That really ought to be considered in the question of taxation as charged against the North, for it was largely with a view—and has had the effect intended—of encouraging sugar production in the North, that this bounty in the way of protection has been maintained.

Mr. BLACK: Take it off.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It has largely induced Northern planters to go into sugar cultivation. If this protection to the sugar planters was taken off at the present time, I have no hesitation in saying that a very considerable reduction in the price of sugar would take place so far as local consumption goes. Therefore, I think hon. gentlemen opposite have no reason to base an argument on that account upon the desire of the South to obtrude unfair taxation upon them, or to ask the northern portion of the colony to contribute unduly to the Customs revenue of the colony. The hon. gentleman proceeds to point out that the North has resources within itself sufficient to provide for an independent Government, and the hon. member for Burke has pointed out that there are very large mineral deposits there. That goes without saying; it has never been contended in the South that the North is not in a position, if it obtains separation, of providing the cost of maintenance of its own administration. That has never been denied; but it has been pointed out that in proportion to the population the expense of a separate Government is one that would fall most oppressively upon the taxpayers of the new colony. Some hon. gentlemen, I know, do not think so; but if they look at the circumstances of the case carefully I think they cannot but regard it in that light. They must consider that their proportion of interest on the public debt is the first charge the administration of a new colony would have to provide for. It has been pointed out that £100,000 for interest is but a small amount to provide out of a revenue of £700,000. So it is, but I question the accuracy of the amount of £100,000. That represents the interest on the loan money actually spent, but it does not represent the interest to be provided upon loan moneys held in trust until they are disbursed. We do not receive from deposits in banking institutions the whole amount paid to the public creditor, and the hon. gentleman cannot so arrange his financial business as to provide the interest on the money actually expended, and also upon money raised for expenditure. Apart from that, I do not think hon. gentlemen will say that the expenditure of the new colony in the northern portion of the colony can be conducted more economically than it has been in the South.

Mr. BLACK: Yes.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. gentleman may say "Yes"; but when we consider the enormous distances between the centres of population, and that the means of getting over those distances—the means of travelling are

also much less efficient than they are in the southern portion of the colony—considerable delay must arise even if the affairs of the new colony are administered from Townsville. The Gulf country is a very considerable distance from Townsville.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Always Townsville!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am not going into that part of the question at the present time. Hon. gentlemen will greatly deceive themselves if they imagine that the expenses of government will be so very much reduced from what they are in this portion of the colony. They say they will have a revenue of £700,000, and for interest on the public debt they will have to provide between £100,000 and £200,000, and how far will the rest of the revenue go to provide for the expense of administering the government? The first thing they will have to do will be to provide special taxation of an extremely heavy character—not but what the North is fully able to bear it, but at the same time I contend that to provide for a thoroughly equitable and complete system of administration of the northern portion of the colony, with a white population of something under 50,000 inhabitants, there will be a very heavy charge indeed upon the inhabitants of that district. In that view of the case I consider that the separation movement ought to be opposed. If the population of the North were large, and able to provide without additional heavy taxation for the expenses of government conducted on the lines of all constitutional Governments in these colonies, then, sir, I think there would be a very much greater justification for the demand of the hon. gentleman. It is said that the population is larger than Moreton Bay possessed at the time Queensland became a distinct colony; but the expenses of government have grown disproportionately larger than they were in those days. A new Government in the North would have to be abreast of the times in the administration of public affairs, otherwise there will be very great dissatisfaction indeed amongst the people over whom it presides. They will not be content to go back to the *régime* established in 1859; they will require all the nurture that is provided by a good and provident Government—expensively provided, no doubt; but the people are accustomed to it, and would be dissatisfied with any less liberal provision. There is yet a further matter which renders the consideration of separation undesirable at the present time. If it were only a question of local concern the subject might be surrounded with less difficulty; but it must be remembered that Queensland at the present time has taken under her wing the island of New Guinea. The government of that island is not yet determined, and it is not desirable that the interest of Queensland as a whole in New Guinea should cease at the present time; but the difficulty would be considerably increased by a large independent territory intervening between it and the country which has undertaken to look after its concerns.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: What does it cost?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. gentleman, I think, takes rather a narrow view altogether of this separation question. It is not a mere matter of finance. I discard that view wholly; I say the question of separation is not bounded by pounds, shillings, and pence; we must look beyond that to the present welfare of the whole community, and the future prosperity of that great portion of the colony of Queensland which has yet to be developed to its full extent. The question is whether that development will best take place in the colony

united as a whole, or in a small portion of it—a small portion so far as population is concerned—cut off and erected into a separate colony surrounded with all the expenditure which is inseparably connected with constitutional government. Now, the hon. member for Mackay can never make a speech in the House without showing between the lines his desire to promote the interests of the planters. Like King Charles's head, that invariably crops up. When he asserts that under the new Government the planters would have fair play, I read between the lines that the fair play he desires is the unlimited admission of coloured labour. It would really be better if the hon. member would make a clean breast of it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: They have that now.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. member for Mackay will not say that they have unlimited opportunities for obtaining coloured labour.

Mr. BLACK: Yes, they have.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Then what is the desideratum? The hon. gentleman says his chief reason for advocating territorial separation is that the planters may have fair play. What is the fair play they want? I should like that explained, and I am sure other hon. members would desire it likewise.

The PREMIER: They want to ruin the country.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I take it that all the difficulties which the hon. gentleman complains the planters labour under resolve themselves into this—that they have not a sufficient source of coloured labour.

Mr. BLACK: They have.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Then what is the fair play they want? I am of opinion that the fair play hon. gentlemen desire is in the direction I have named. The benefits hon. members seek to obtain for the North lie very largely in the direction—not, possibly, of their own interests, but the interests of many who seek to promote thereby their own personal welfare. As for these disclaimers we hear so continuously about Townsville not being the capital, I have already expressed my opinion that I do not for one moment admit their sincerity. I am sure Townsville does desire to be the capital, and what is more, I think Townsville ought to be the capital if separation were to take place. It is as good a town as any other, and after the large expenditure made by Government it must become the most important port in the North.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: What does it matter to you?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I merely want to point out to the hon. member for Townsville his duty towards his constituents. He ought not to delude himself or the public with the idea that Townsville is not going to be the capital of the new colony. A very prominent citizen of Cooktown was in this House a short time ago, and he said he was in favour of separation. I asked him on what ground. He said it would greatly improve Cooktown. "But," I said, "Cooktown is not going to be the capital." "Well," he replied, "if Cooktown is not to be the capital all my interest in separation dies out." The same expressions have been made use of in Hughenden and other towns of the North. I may say that the interest in separation very largely centres in three classes of people—first, the sugar-planters, who desire to have larger opportunities of obtaining free coloured labour; another class, who wish their real estates to be improved by the erection of a new capital in the North;

and a third class of people, who imagine that under the new administration their chances of obtaining Government situations are largely increased. These are the three classes of people who have the matter most largely at heart; and I believe there is a further class—people who do not come to the front, but are working quietly, though unseen—people who desire to introduce the system of a land-grant railway in that new country. We have here, sir, happily averted the evil of a wholesale influx of coloured population; we have also averted the incubus of being swamped by the introduction of a transcontinental railway syndicate. We have saved the country from the degradation of the one and from the abuse of the other; and I hope we shall continue our endeavour to avert these evils from the North—to save them from being overrun by a black servile population, and prevent them from becoming victims to the greed and rapacity of a transcontinental railway syndicate.

Mr. BROWN said: Mr. Speaker,—I need hardly say that I intend to support this resolution. It is very well known that my constituents for four years past have consistently advocated territorial separation, and that I myself have steadily advanced the same views. Before proceeding to argument, I wish to put myself beyond the accusation of interested motives. It has been stated here and elsewhere that one of the objects of the promoters of separation is to have Townsville made the capital in order to increase the value of land there. I happen to be connected with a firm who have an interest in Townsville in the shape of property, and who also have an interest in Normanton in the shape of property, and who are therefore considerably interested in the welfare of North Queensland. But they have also a considerable interest in the shape of property in Rockhampton and in Brisbane, and therefore they are interested in the progress of South Queensland. As far as I am personally concerned, my little interests—small in the aggregate—are almost entirely confined to South Queensland. I can therefore look at the question from a Southern standpoint, as well as advocate separation as a resident of Townsville. I make these remarks to put myself beyond the accusation of selfish motives. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have heard a good many arguments for and against separation both outside and inside this House. The promoters of the movement have very fairly set forth their views in the petition they have sent to the Imperial Government. We have heard those views very ably advocated by hon. members on this side, and we have had two very able speeches from the Government benches opposed to them, and it is only right that while advocating our views we should look carefully at the arguments put forward by those who have an opposite opinion. One of the best arguments that has been used against separation—if it could be sustained—is that the North is at present financially incapable of undertaking the task of self-government. When the Colonial Treasurer was at Charters Towers he is reported to have used these words:—

“The whole population of the colony was a mere handful distributed over a large tract of country. That number was much too small for partition. In the event of a division, the North would have to bear the expenses of government, which would amount to very little less than the expenses of all Queensland at present. They would also have to provide for the public debt to be taken over, and make provision for the debt incurred on account of public works, for which the present revenue of the colony north of Cape Palmerston would be insufficient.”

That is an argument that requires consideration and study, because if North Queensland is incapable of paying the expenses of government,

and of also providing for its public works, and paying its share of the public debt already incurred, it would be very natural that the people in the south of the colony should object to separation. But how is a thing of that sort to be decided? We are not going to take a mere verbal statement on one side or the other. How would a committee of experts deal with it? They would ask, what is the population of North Queensland?—61,000; what is the revenue of North Queensland?—it is estimated at £700,000; the Government admit it to be £600,000, and the Treasury returns we have before us, made up to the 31st March last, put it at £571,000. For the sake of argument we will take the revenue at £571,000. The committee of experts would then ask: What was the population of this colony when it was separated from New South Wales, and what was its revenue? At the end of 1860, twelve months after separation, its population was 28,000 and its revenue was £178,000. But they would go a little further and ask what was the position of the colony when its population was 61,000? And the answer would be that the revenue was £295,000, against the revenue stated in the Treasury returns to be £571,000. They might then ask as to the comparative exports of Queensland and the North, and they would be told that when the population of Queensland was 28,000 her exports amounted to £523,000, and that when her population was 61,000 her exports amounted to £888,000. But what are the exports of North Queensland? They amount to £1,440,000. This is very important, because the mere question of revenue might not satisfy the committee of experts. From Townsville alone—one port in the North—the exports are now £855,000, as against £888,000 for the whole colony when its population was the same as that of the North—namely, 61,000. As revenue depends to some extent upon taxation, the Committee naturally would want to know something about the producing power, and I think we should have no difficulty in showing them that we have in North Queensland ample means to enable us to undertake the task of self-government. I believe it is beyond question that North Queensland is in a far better position to undertake self-government than Queensland was in 1863, three years after she was separated from New South Wales. The Premier in his speech the other night—and a very good speech it was, but we must not be carried away by the fact that the Premier made a good speech, because, as we all know, he can make a good speech on any subject at any time—the Premier caused a good deal of amusement by the way in which he handled some tables that the hon. member for Townsville quoted from. Those tables were quoted from to show that in 1871, 1872, and 1873 the north of the colony showed a surplus of £14,000, £27,000, and £11,000 respectively; and he went on to the year 1877 to show that in that year the north of the colony had a surplus, excluding Customs as an item of local revenue, of £19,000, or, including it, of £25,000. The Premier in a very amusing way said it was all nothing but a mere arbitrary arrangement of figures, and he asked if there was a surplus what had become of it, and what had become of the surplus due to the South at the same time? We know that in those years there was a general surplus, and if the Premier wants to know what became of that surplus I can show him. If he looks at Treasury Table K he will see that in 1874 there was a sum of £200,000 transferred to surplus revenue, or it may have been a little more. That surplus did not go back, or any of it, to North Queensland. We know where it went; it was spent in the South.

The PREMIER: Oh, oh!

Mr. BROWN: There has always been a surplus in the North. I cannot prove it at this moment, as the returns for some of the years have not been made up, but it is shown in every return that has been made. Four years ago there was £245,000 in the Treasury; to-day there is only £45,000. There has evidently been a deficiency in the South of £200,000; and during the very same period there has been, I contend, a large surplus in the North. In speaking on the debate this evening, the Colonial Treasurer had an advantage over hon. members on this side of the House in having in his possession returns brought up to a later date than those we have before us. But if we take the returns we have before us, we find on looking at the third page that during the last three years and nine months there was a surplus revenue in favour of North Queensland of £394,000. Then, at the fourth page, taking the same arbitrary basis of one-sixth, we find that North Queensland was entitled to pay the sum of £218,000 as their share of the expenses of the general government. So that after paying the expenses of general government, all the expenses and interest charged against them in these returns, there was actually a surplus in favour of the North to the extent of £176,000. During the same period there was in regard to the South an actual loss of £200,000, so that during those four years the South absorbed £376,000. I use this argument to show that the North has had a surplus from time to time which has been spent in the South; it has never gone back to the North again. Now, the Premier went on to say that it was not at all likely that the Home Government would agree to the partition of a colony like this, to disarrange our finances, and interfere with our complicated administrative arrangements. That might be an objection; I do not think it is. If it is, the longer separation is deferred the worse it will be. The Premier knows very well that we must have separation. It is only a question of time. The tendency of all the speakers on the Government side of the House has been to admit that when the majority of the people of the North desire separation they will not oppose it. If hon. members will not oppose it later on, surely the difficulties with which we shall have to contend then in adjusting our finances will be greatly intensified! The longer we defer the matter, the greater will these difficulties become. The Premier further argued that it was a very serious thing to deprive a colony of £700,000 annual revenue. Perhaps it would be. But the hon. gentleman forgot to say also that if the Southern colony were deprived of that amount of revenue, it would, at the same time, be relieved of an expenditure of £514,000; so that taking the revenue given in the same returns there is really only a difference of £57,000. We have to add to this the sum of £122,000 which we are charged for interest on loans, but even then the amount the South would be deprived of—£177,000—is not so very serious. It would be quite possible for North Queensland to go on paying interest on their public debt, and the cost of Government; but if the commission appointed to settle the amounts between the two colonies are going to take the arbitrary view of the government, and say that the proportion of revenue and expenditure to be assigned the North is one-sixth, the accounts can be adjusted in a few minutes. The Premier further stated, in reply to the arguments of hon. members on this side respecting the lack of a fair share of public works in the North, that it was impossible that those works could be carried on in all parts of the colony, but that they must proceed from the centres of population, that works must be initiated in districts where there was a popula-

tion, and where there was a fair chance of a remunerative return being received. It would be a very good argument in the case of South Australia or Victoria, where there is only one principal port for the whole colony, that public works should radiate from the centre; but in a country like this, where we have such an extensive seaboard, I contend that they should proceed from many centres, or rather from many places, and not from one centre or the capital in the southern part of the colony. But the Premier, in stating that it was the duty of the Government to construct public works in the centres of population where there was a fair chance of getting a reasonable return for the outlay, must have overlooked the fact that at the present time the railways in the North return a far better rate of interest than the railways in the South; and I contend that if the Government borrow in the English market for the purpose of constructing reproductive works, it is their duty to carry out those works where they can get a good return for the money expended. I do not admit that they have a right to build railways in the south of the colony, simply because there is a considerable population there, especially when those lines only pay £1 15s. per cent., while the railways of the North pay £3 6s. 6d. per cent. Surely these figures furnish an argument why they should proceed faster with the construction of railways in the North than in the South! The Premier said also in the course of his remarks that if there was a preponderating number of residents of the North in favour of separation the proposition would be a reasonable one. He also stated that the total adult male population of the North, excluding aliens, was 19,000. Hon. members are aware that a considerable portion of our population is scattered over a great part of North Queensland, and that being so, it would be impossible to wait upon every person with the petition. I think, however, that when the promoters obtained the signatures of 10,000 people out of 19,000 in a sparsely populated country like ours they can certainly claim to have got the majority. Will anyone tell me that because the remaining 9,000 did not sign the petition they are opposed to the movement? Some of them are, no doubt; but it is reasonable to suppose that many of them, if not the majority, are in favour of separation, and would have signed the petition if they had had the opportunity. If, however, it is not possible to obtain separation by means of this petition, another will be sent, and another, with an increasing number of signatures every time. I have not attempted to go over the same ground as my predecessors in this debate. That would protract the discussion. But there is one other point to which I would refer, and that is the one with regard to what is called reliable labour. It has been constantly put forward that the object of the promoters of the separation movement is to get black labour. That I emphatically deny. The promoters of the movement have all through disclaimed any idea of bringing about black labour. It is quite possible and probable that a small section of the planting community hope to get coloured labour if separation is obtained. But, because they do so, that is not a reason why we should refuse to accept their assistance in the matter. We could not say to them, "You shall not sign the petition, because you hope to get coloured labour." That question has already been ably argued. If hon. members desire to obtain information on the subject, they will find an able article on the question at page 499 in the first volume of the *Victorian Review*, written by Mr. C. Feilberg on the future of Northern Queensland. I do not know Mr. Feilberg, but I

believe he is a journalist of considerable note. He shows that in the future it is perfectly impossible for any class in the North to have so much influence as to be able to introduce coloured labour. He argued that the mineral wealth of North Kennedy, the Burke, and Cook districts was greater than the mineral wealth of all the rest of Australia, and I believe he is right; and he showed that, no matter what other industry there might be, the mining industry would overshadow everything else. And so it will when we get better communication and the means of developing our mines. Hon. members have no conception of the mineral wealth existing there, and the large population that will be attracted when railways are taken out to those distant fields. This article showed—and I quite concur in the writer's views—that separation will make it more difficult for the planters to get coloured labour than it is now, because the miners will then have more influence. At the present time a large section in the south of the colony are not very much opposed to coloured labour, and they go with the planters to a certain extent, but the miners will always oppose coloured labour, and there is not the slightest chance of planters getting coloured labour in the colony of North Queensland. It may be said, "Why do the planters take such an interest in the movement?" Well, the planters are in such a position now that, no matter what change takes place, they cannot be worse off than they are, and if there is any change it is reasonable to suppose that it will be better for them. Certainly, the people of the North are not going to stand by with their arms folded and see this magnificent industry that has brought £3,000,000 of money to the colony go to ruin. No; instead of that they will give assistance—not coloured labour—to the industry; construct railways in the sugar districts; make some reciprocal arrangements with the view of getting the £3 or £4 per ton import duty now charged by the other colonies removed from sugar. At the present time a saving of that amount means the salvation of the industry—just the difference between profit and loss. I say that the people in the North will not stand by and see the ruin of an industry that has brought £3,000,000 to the country. If capital comes in unasked and develops our country, surely we should do something to sustain the industry that induces it. The people of the North know the planters, and are in sympathy with them, and will help them as far as they can, though they will not allow the introduction of coloured labour. The planters know that the people in the North are in sympathy with them, and they know at the same time that the great majority of the residents in the South have no interest whatever in the progress of their plantations, and have no sympathy whatever with them. I believe there are a great many people in the South who would not care if the planters left the colony to-morrow—they do not understand that the planters affect the prosperity of the colony—they are too far away. Now, Mr. Speaker, suppose a large number of the supporters of separation did want coloured labour, what is that to the people in the South? Why should they be so solicitous for our future welfare? Do they want to be our spiritual advisers as well as our business advisers? What interest have they in the matter? They have not sunk any capital in North Queensland that I know of; and why should they trouble themselves in the matter? The residents of the North have not come here to ask the people of the South to protect them against the introduction of alien races. This question was introduced to the North from the South. It was really a political cry. I do not see why members who represent Southern constituencies should

take such a vast amount of interest in this question. They do not take such a vast amount of interest in any other matters that affect the North; they do not even come up there to have a look at us, unless they want to buy a corner allotment now and then. There are some of them who do that, and I can see a few of them on the other side of the House who have such an interest in Townsville. The question is a very simple one. We want to manage our own affairs. We have shown that we are quite competent, and that we have the means to do it. We want to develop our territory; we do not want to wait till another Loan Bill is introduced. When the Government introduced the last Loan Bill, providing for expenditure five years in advance, they forgot that a number of places in the North entitled to railways would have to wait five years before they could look forward to another railway system being proposed. That means practically that a field like the Etheridge, one of the best fields in Australia, is to wait ten years before it has railway communication. Do the Government call that pushing the public works in the North of Queensland? The Government do not understand the wants of the North, they never did, and I do not believe any Southern Government ever will. It is quite evident why we want separation—that we are entitled to it; and, after showing that 10,000 people out of 19,000 signed the petition, I consider that we have made out a very good case.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said: Mr. Speaker,—If this discussion did no more than bring out the dormant capabilities of the hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat, and show that he is capable of taking an effective part in the deliberations of this or any other Parliament, it has had a good effect. I must congratulate the hon. gentleman on his very able address. His arguments seemed to strike me as being as forcible as those of any hon. member who has spoken on that side of the House in favour of separation.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The North has got some brains after all.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The North has got brains; and I do not think it was ever seriously contended by any hon. member of this House, or by anyone out of it, that the North had not its full share of brains.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It was said so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: So much has been already said that I think the time for long speeches has gone by, and if we are to conclude this debate even this night week, it will be incumbent on all who further propose to take part in it to speak with the utmost possible brevity. One reason why the demand for separation has been urged, and particularly by the hon. member for Mackay, is that there is a resemblance between the condition of things as between the North and the South in this colony now and the condition of things as between the southern part of New South Wales and what was Moreton Bay previous to the year 1859; but I wish to know whether any hon. gentleman who has given serious attention to the question can deliberately state as his honest conviction that there is any parallel between the case of Moreton Bay in 1859 and the condition of the North at the present time? Would any hon. member dare to so far defame the wealthy commercial metropolis of the North—I refer to Townsville—of the present day as to compare it to the Brisbane of the year 1858? Will anyone presume to tell me that the Ipswich of 1858 is to be compared in any respect with Charters Towers, which is the

second town in importance in the North at the present day? And when we consider not merely the advanced condition of these northern towns—their prosperity, and the development that has taken place in connection with all enterprises up there—and weigh the prosperity which these northern parts of the colony have attained, can we seriously come to the conclusion that there is an evil existing in the north of this colony of the same kind that existed in the north of New South Wales previous to separation that requires the same remedy in order to redress the grievances that are alleged to exist? Unless we can establish a parallel between the state of the grievances existing in the year 1885 and those of the year 1886, then I say it does not follow, if there is no parallel between the grievances alleged to exist in the two cases, that the remedy that was essential and beneficial in 1858 is the remedy that is essential and will be beneficial to the north of this colony in the year 1886.

Why, sir, there was not a mile of railway constructed in the Moreton Bay district, or the district north of Moreton Bay, in the year 1858. How many miles of telegraph were there constructed in those days? What attempts were made to explore the great interior of this colony or develop the resources either of the mining industry or the pastoral industry by the expenditure of public or private money in those days? Why, the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that for all practical purposes the Gulf of Carpentaria is very much nearer to the city of Brisbane than the Clarence River was to the city of Sydney previous to the separation of this colony from New South Wales. We have heard a great deal about petitions, and it is alleged that not only do the grievances which existed in Moreton Bay in 1859 exist in the North, and must be remedied by similar means, but it is said that the people are entitled to consideration, because just as a petition was sent home before separation of Queensland from New South Wales, so a petition has been sent home from the North, and inasmuch as the one petition was favourably regarded, it is reasonable and fair to expect that the other petition will be favourably regarded.

Now, an attempt has been made also to suggest that the mere extent of the names attached to the petition is a matter of no very great importance, and that the number of names which were successful in bringing about separation in 1859 was not nearly so great as the number of the names attached to the petition in favour of the separation of the North from the South of Queensland, which has been recently transmitted to Her Majesty the Queen. Well, if numbers are not to count for so very much after all, and if a petition so long as it represents the comparative strength of the districts in question is presented—if that is to be looked at, I want to know whether we are to disregard all petitions that do not reach the respectable total of 10,000 signatures? What is to be said about that petition of which very little has been heard during the course of the debate, which I had the honour of presenting to the Governor of this colony last year, and which was signed by no less than nearly 1,500 people, the residents of Charters Towers, Ravenswood, and Townsville, deprecating in the strongest language the proposed separation of the North from the South, and urging reasons why Her Majesty should not listen to the prayer of the petition which was in preparation then and until very lately for the purpose of urging separation? Nearly 1,500 signatures, and those 1,500 signatures not obtained as the result of expenditure of a large amount of time, money, and influence, and the efforts of newspapers extending over a period of nearly two years, but a petition sent by 1,500 people—the spontaneous expression of

that number of people—signatures collected within a few weeks as the spontaneous expression of the people who signed it, urging that separation should not be granted. Now, we know very well what value to attach to petitions. I do not wish to say anything in disparagement of this petition, nor do I attempt to impugn the motives of those who have taken the lead in the agitation, nor do I attempt to insinuate that any one signature to that petition was obtained by improper means, but we must take into consideration the circumstances of the case, and if we do that, it will be seen to be by no means remarkable, judging by the untiring efforts of those people extending over a lengthened period, that the number of persons found to sign the petition reached the total of 10,000. The great objection that I have to this separation movement is that it is premature to consider the question. There can be no doubt that the time will come when the population will have become so large in the northern parts of the colony, as well as in the southern portion of it, that the interests of the far North can no longer be subordinated to the will of the central Government directing the affairs of the colony from Brisbane; but that time has not yet come. Hon. gentlemen seem to think that, because there is a certain number of people in the North with the intelligence, and wealth, and capacity to govern themselves, they therefore have a right to “cut the painter” and govern themselves without any interference on the part of the South. Now, I intended to refer, when speaking of the parallel which has been said to exist between the case of the North and Moreton Bay previous to 1859, to this fact, that there is a large amount of local self-government enjoyed by the Northern districts of this colony, as well as the Southern districts, which was not enjoyed by the northern districts of New South Wales prior to separation. Why, sir, are we to take no account whatever of the efforts to extend the benefits of local government that have been made during the last few years by means of our Local Government Act of 1878, the Divisional Boards Act of 1879, and the amendments of that Act which have been passed into law? Practically, with all the best principles of local government in active operation the people of the North have their affairs in their own hands, and a large amount of money—not only the money that is raised by means of rates levied by the residents of the North, but by means of Government subsidy—a large amount of money is placed at the disposal of the people of the Northern districts of the colony, to administer for their own benefit without any interference whatever on the part of the central Government. These benefits which have been conferred on the Northern districts of the colony seem to be entirely ignored, and when we look round and see the state of prosperity to which the North has attained by reason of the application of the principle of local self-government and the large Government expenditure that has taken place—when we see the prosperity that everywhere prevails—why should we venture upon an experiment the results of which will certainly be very costly to the people who ask to be allowed to try that experiment, and which will be attended with a very considerable amount of loss to the colony in the South as well as to the Northern districts? Why, sir, I maintain that those who have signed this petition have no just conception of what they are asking for. It is all very well to say that there is one-sixth of the population of the colony in the North, and that consequently one-sixth of the expenditure for government is all that now ought to be debited to the Northern districts, that when they come to be separated, all they will be expected to be responsible for, for the purposes of government, is about

one-sixth of the present cost of government of the whole colony. To begin with, they will want a new Governor, and they cannot get a man worth anything under £5,000 a year. Then they will have to get a Government House. They will have to get all the Governor's suite; they will have to start a legislature, and they will have to start all the other accessories that are absolutely necessary to the carrying on of government whether it be in a large or small colony; and I contend that what the Treasurer is reported to have said is perfectly correct, that when you come to look at the thing all round there will not be such a very great amount of difference between the cost of government in the new colony and the cost of governing the whole colony—not a sufficient difference to justify hon. gentlemen in coming to the conclusion that the cost of government in the new colony will be just one-sixth of the cost of government now. Now, some hon. gentlemen, especially the hon. member for Mackay, have enlarged upon the grievances of the North, and that hon. gentleman has travelled over a very great deal more ground than he usually travels over in referring to Northern grievances. I daresay that the one grievance that the hon. gentleman feels more acutely than any other is the coloured labour question, and were it done away with I have not the slightest doubt he would make very small work indeed of the other grievances, and regard them as being trifles light as air, and not to be taken into calculation at all. I venture to say that if the Northern districts of the colony once got coolie labour we should never hear a single complaint from the hon. member for Mackay in regard to some of those grievances which he has brought forward as reasons why the North should be separated from the South.

Mr. BLACK: You didn't hear me.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes, I did. I was doing some important official work in the Ministers' room and heard the hon. gentleman's speech. He referred to the question of under-representation, and based one of his arguments in favour of separation on the ground that the North was unfairly treated in the matter of representation. But let us look at the figures, Mr. Speaker. I am not going into those wretched financial calculations of which the more I hear the more bewildered I feel; and I only wonder that the hon. gentlemen opposite who have waded through these oceans of figures have not been altogether asphyxiated by them. I do not like abstruse calculations at all. They are not in my line; but I am going into figures, nevertheless. The hon. member for Mackay said that the North was under-represented in this House, and he chose to base his calculations upon the number of names on the electoral rolls. He said there was only one representative of the North in this House for every 1,200 electors, whilst there was one representative of the South for every 1,000 electors. But, sir, let us take another basis. We see from the Census returns that the total population of the colony is, in round numbers, about 321,000. Of that total number 62,000 are residents of what we call "the North"—persons who are interested in this question of separation. If we deduct 62,000 from 321,000, we get a balance of 259,000. We have not, I am sorry to say, any return of the number of persons who are classed as "aliens" in the Southern districts. We know from the Census returns that in the North, out of the total population of 62,000, there are about 12,000 aliens—that is, persons who are not British subjects, and who may be supposed to have no social rights amongst us as a community. I take 6,000 as a fair estimate of the probable number of aliens in the Southern districts, and deducting that

number from the population of 259,000 we get the result of 253,000 European population. Now, forty-nine members are returned to this House by what the hon. gentleman calls Southern districts, in which he includes Mitchell and Gregory, places far out west, and which only by a stretch of imagination can be called in the South. However, dividing the total European population of 253,000 by 49, we get one member for every 5,163 Europeans. Then, if we deduct from the total population in the Northern districts—62,000—the 12,000 aliens, we get 50,000 Europeans. The hon. gentleman admits that we have ten representatives in this House of the districts which are now collectively known as "the North." If you divide ten into 50,000, you get a net result of one member for every 5,000 Europeans in the North; that is to say, that the North has a larger representation in this House for its European population than what is called "the South" has.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: There are eleven Northern members.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That makes it so much the better. I thank the hon. gentleman for the correction. I took the hon. member for Mackay's figures. He said ten, and I allowed that number. I had calculated that number myself. If there are eleven—

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: No. I made a mistake.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I thought the hon. member for Mackay's figures were likely to be correct, and accepted them.

Mr. BLACK: You will find your calculation is wrong if you look at it again; 49 into 259,000.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No. I take the European population of the South at 253,000; that is, after deducting 6,000 aliens, and I do the same with regard to the North, deducting the 12,000 aliens there. I say, therefore, these figures show that there is one member for every 5,163 Europeans in the South, and one member for every 5,000 Europeans in the North; and I contend that that is a far truer basis to take than the calculation based upon the number of electors on the rolls, because we know that many of the electors are upon several electoral rolls. Therefore the other is not so accurate a basis to go upon as to take the total European population; and I say the arguments based on the ground that the North is under-represented in this House fall to the ground. The hon. gentleman also said that there was a grievance in the matter of the administration of justice in the Northern districts; but has not the Government, or the southern portion of the colony, done all that it could in reason be expected to do with regard to making due provision for the administration of justice in the North? There is the Northern Supreme Court, with all the necessary machinery provided for the Northern districts; and if suitors in the northern part of the colony prefer—as they have a perfect right to do if they choose—to institute actions in the first instance in the Southern districts rather than in the North, it is not the fault of the southern part of the colony. The Government has made provision for the Supreme Court and for the regular administration of justice in the district courts, and is constantly extending facilities for the administration of justice in those courts. Why, sir, only since the present Government came into office, within the last two years, at the solicitation of the hon. member for Burke,—whom I must compliment as being always anxious and energetic in promoting the welfare of his large constituency—who has, in fact, never neglected their interests—and I am always glad, so far as I can, to further his desire in that respect,—since he has been the member

for that district and has put its claims before the Government, district courts have been established both at Hughenden and Normanton at very considerable expense to the colony. And I will say this, sir: that if Northern electors have been in the habit of sending to the House members who have not been anxious to promote their welfare, it is not the fault of the southern part of the colony or of the Government which controls the affairs of the colony from Brisbane, but the fault of the representatives who have been sent from those remote places that more has not been done. I say that if their representatives during past years had been more like the hon. member for Burke in constantly bringing the necessities and claims of that district before the Government, they would have got a far larger share of expenditure than has been the case, because whenever a just claim is brought under the consideration of the Government that claim is always respectfully and attentively listened to, and if possible complied with. I say, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for Mackay had no ground whatever for charging the Government—or the southern part of the colony, if he does not wish to identify this Government with the matter—charging the southern part of the colony with not having made proper provision for the administration of justice in the North. That, sir, is a complaint respecting a grievance which, like some others to which we have listened, has really no solid foundation to rest upon. Now, a great deal of reference has been made to coloured labour, and as to the probability being that if there were a new colony coloured labour would soon be introduced into it. The hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Brown, very properly said that, particularly in the mining districts of the colony, black labour would not be tolerated for a single moment, and that is quite true. But do the miners form the largest and most influential part of the population of that part of the colony? Unfortunately they do not preponderate. They are not a preponderating, although a large, element in the electoral power of the Northern districts of the colony, and while they, I am quite sure, will never for a single moment tolerate an attempt to saddle the new colony, if there is to be a new colony, with the burden of coloured labour, there are other people who take an interest in these matters as well as the miners. My constituents in Charters Towers, even those who are in favour of separation—and there are some in favour of it, but not many—

Mr. SMYTH: Since the machinery tax.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You can sometimes make use of a very little thing in order to foment dissatisfaction with the existing condition of things, and by taking advantage of such a matter, as the imposition of the 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty upon machinery, a good number of persons who have no feeling whatever with the separation movement in their hearts have been induced to subscribe their names to this petition.

Mr. NORTON: "Imposition" is the right word for it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not use the word in its bad sense. I should have said "impost," if the hon. gentleman likes it better, in connection with the tax. I say that the miners would never tolerate black labour. I know there is the feeling in their minds to-day—a feeling of fear that the probability is that an attempt will be made if a new colony is formed to introduce what they regard as the baneful element of coloured labour. I am perfectly satisfied, therefore, that if the matter were left in the hands of the miners coloured labour would be a thing as remote from the possibility of becoming a domestic institution in the northern part of

the colony as it is in the southern. But, as I said before, it does not altogether rest with the miners. There are powerful influences at work, and I have only to draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that this last separation movement was, to a very great degree, agitated by persons who are deeply interested in the obtaining of coloured labour, in order to show that there is a very influential section who will make it a cardinal part of their policy that, when the new colony is started, coloured labour shall be introduced into it. I wish to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. gentlemen who are agitating for the establishment of this new colony lose sight of the fact that there is a great proportion of aliens in that part of the colony to whom they do not propose to extend the benefits of citizenship if they get separation from the South. There is an alien population of 12,000 in the North, or one-fifth of the entire population, and those who wish to obtain separation desire to have the entire control and advantage of the labour of one-fifth of the population, without extending to them any corresponding advantages, such as they desire to obtain for themselves. I say that that alien population, since it is there, has as much right to look to the colony as a whole for protection, and for such advantages as they may reasonably claim, as any others have. I do not wish to weary the House, but I will refer to this fact: that there would have been a great deal more in this separation movement than there is if it were a spontaneous thing. If it were like the petition I spoke of in the earlier part of my speech that emanated from the people of the North in the course of a few weeks and was an honest expression of opinion of men who had not to be induced by all sorts of arguments extending over a long period to sign it, there would be more in it than there is. But it must be borne in mind that everything depends upon that. It may be said that since those 1,500 people signed a petition against separation a number have turned in the other direction, and that even, perhaps, some of those who attached their names to this petition have now signed the other one. But what are we to think of this fact—that at the present time there is a spontaneous agitation going on in other parts of the North, and at the present moment there is a great amount of effort put forth in order to counteract the effect of the present separation petition? I have seen a telegram received during the course of this debate, in which it is stated that in one particular locality in the North no less than 511 signatures have been spontaneously added to the petition against separating the northern part of the colony.

Mr. STEVENSON: Who sent that telegram?

The PREMIER: It came from Normanton.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is from a gentleman occupying a responsible position—the mayor of one of the most influential towns in the North. I say that this indicates what is going on there—that there is a reaction already setting in. As I have said before, I do not wish to attribute any improper motives to those who have petitioned, nor do I say there is one name upon that petition but what has been *bonâ fide* signed by the person whose signature it purports to be. But how were those names obtained? I suppose all the shiploads of immigrants poured into the North during the past two years have been laid hold of, and their names put down upon the separation petition. Of course, as soon as they landed they became residents in the North and had a right to put their names down. I say there is not so much value to be attached to the petition, because, as I said before—and it cannot be

repeated too often—it has taken so long a time to gather it together and so much expense in order to bring it to its present state. But the petition which I myself presented a year ago contained nearly 1,500 names, asking that separation be not granted. I daresay some hon. members may think from what I have said that I have not spoken in harmony with the views of my constituents. My hon. colleague, the member for Kennedy, who sits on the other side, will probably have his separation say, as I have had mine, and he may probably present another view of the question. I daresay I am speaking in opposition to the views of some of my constituents, but I am perfectly certain that I am not speaking in opposition to the views of a great majority of them.

Mr. BLACK: They will show you at the next election.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will take the risk of that. I believe in a matter of this kind I am bound, so far as I possibly can, to study the views of my constituents. But if I thought it would be an injury to them and the colony as a whole, it would be my duty to oppose it, no matter what they thought; but inasmuch as they are the persons who would be most seriously affected by separation if it took place, it is for them to say, and for me, as their representative, to say how far I ought to support their views. And I do say this: that if there was anything like unanimity in the minds of my constituents that separation was a good thing—that if they believed they had grievances and that they under the present régime could not expect redress, and that they required me as their representative to give effect to their views in the matter—I would very seriously consider whether it was not my duty to give effect to their views in this House; but although a section of my constituents are in favour of separation, I am perfectly convinced, as the result of my recent visit to the electorate, that the great bulk of my constituents are as firm in opposition to the attempt to divide the colony now as they were when they sent that petition down against it twelve months ago.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to detain the House many minutes in discussing the question now under consideration, but I cannot allow it to go to a vote without saying a few words upon it. I must express my surprise at the action taken by the members of the Government who have spoken upon the question, and who profess to be opposed to separation as brought forward by the Northern members. If they wanted to bring about separation they could have taken no course more likely to bring it about than that they have taken. What does the action of every member of the Government mean, the Minister for Works alone excepted, in regard to what has taken place? The Minister for Works when he got up said he was opposed to separation, but before he sat down he said he would be quite willing, if the colony could be divided and the boundary line be taken from Cape Palmerston westward to the South Australian boundary, and if the debt could be fairly apportioned, he would be quite willing to see the people of the North separate from the South, and he would be glad to get rid of them.

Mr. STEVENS: Provided the majority were in favour of it.

Mr. NORTON: Yes; he said "provided the majority were in favour of it." He is the only Minister who has spoken in anything like a reasonable way on the question—though, of course, I do not mean to say it was reasonable to say he would be glad to get rid of them. We

are bound to consider whether the wish of the Northern constituencies is for separation or not. In this House we have ten Northern members, and out of the ten nine are separationists. The hon. gentleman who has just sat down is the only one who has opposed it yet. In spite of the fact that these nine members are strong advocates for separation, and in spite of what I believe to be a fact, that in no case have their constituents condemned their action in supporting separation—in spite of all that, one hon. member opposed to separation gets up to say that the people of the North do not want separation. Are the people of the North a parcel of fools? Is that the way to treat them? Why cannot we treat them like men and as reasonable beings? I am not in favour of separation but opposed to it, and if the resolution comes to a vote and I am in the House I shall have to vote against it. At the same time, my sympathies are with the men claiming separation, not that I sympathise with their desire, but because I think they should get fair play when they claim it. The position is this: These nine members come forward as the spokesmen for these Northern constituencies, and say that the North wants separation; they do not think they get a fair share of expenditure, and they think they have to pay more than their fair share towards revenue. That statement is met by counter-statements on the other side. They say on the other side that the majority of the people of the North do not want separation, that they do not contribute more than their fair share to the revenue, and that they get a larger share of expenditure than they are entitled to. We have these counter-statements, but when we look over all the evidence we find it is largely in favour of hon. members who represent the North. I have been watching the movement for months and have not seen yet any decided opposition in the North to the separation question, with the exception of one or two meetings held at Normanton. The action of the Government is to say that the statements made by these hon. gentlemen are misrepresentations. They do not say so in as many words, but that is the effect of their arguments. They say that the people of the North do not want separation; that they would rather stay as a part of the whole of Queensland, and would be better off than if they separated. They actually say that the people of the North are not in a position to know whether it would be better for them to separate or not. Surely they are as well able to consider the matter as hon. members down here. For my part I would regret very much indeed to see separation take place. I believe that, so far as Queensland as a whole is concerned, it would not be to her advantage. So far as the North is concerned, I am not prepared to make any statement. I leave the North to speak for itself, but I say this: when this question of separation is brought forward in the way we see it brought forward, that the fairest and most reasonable thing Queensland can do is to give them every opportunity of proving their case. Give them every opportunity of finding out whether the North is really in favour of separation or not. If we try to compel them to continue as they are, that is the very thing to make them continue the agitation which has taken place. Let us treat them fairly like men, and if in the end separation does take place we will part in a friendly manner. But if we oppose what they consider their just demands, as they have been opposed in this House, that will not deter them from separating if separation is considered desirable by the Imperial Government; and instead of parting on good terms, we shall part with a very great deal of ill-feeling, and ill-feeling that will not be

got rid of for a very long time indeed. The action of members of the Government has been exactly the same as the action of members of the New South Wales Government when Victoria and Queensland separated from New South Wales. They met the demand for separation by those two colonies in exactly the same way as the demand is being met here—with opposition and with nothing but opposition. If the people of the North have made a mistake, let us give them every opportunity to find out that they have made a mistake; and, if not, let them appeal to the Imperial Government. The Imperial Government will have to decide, after they have heard what the people of the North have to say and what the Parliament here say. The fairest thing we can do, so far as I can form an opinion, is this: place no obstacle in the way of the fullest inquiry by the Imperial Government into the whole of the circumstances of the case. It is the Imperial Government that have to decide, and if they find that the Northern people do want separation, and that the opposition to it here arises from a desire on our part to keep them in spite of their own wishes, then the Imperial Government will most decidedly go in favour of the Northern people against the South. For my part, I would far rather see the system of local self-government extended in such a way that it would apply on a much fuller scale to the whole of the colony. I believe it is quite possible that that system of government could be so extended that even the North would yet be satisfied with it. At the same time, I do say that it is most unwise to resist, as hon. members of this House seem disposed to resist, the action taken. Let us treat the Northern people as if they were not absolutely all fools and did not understand what they were doing—for that is the whole gist of the argument of the hon. the Attorney-General. He spoke of the petition which was sent home with 10,000 signatures, and he spoke also of the petition brought down to this House by himself. The petition he brought down had, he said, 1,500 signatures, but those were given spontaneously. Were the others not given spontaneously?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They were a long time about it.

Mr. NORTON: What does that matter? If the signatures were put there by compulsion they had no right to be there. Does the hon. member mean to assert that? If not, it was a false argument to press the point that the 1,500 signatures on the petition he was charged with were put there spontaneously. For my part, I cannot vote for this motion; but I can, and I will so far as lies in my power, give the Northern members and the people in the North every opportunity of ascertaining what the real facts of the case are, and every opportunity of representing their case to the Parliament here, and to the Imperial Government. Then, I say we ought to encourage and help the Imperial Government to make such inquiries as will enable them to decide—not upon any false issues, not upon prejudiced statements made by either one side or the other, but upon the facts they are enabled to elicit—whether there ought to be separation or not. If after an inquiry of that kind the Imperial Government are opposed to separation, then I believe the Northern people would very soon become satisfied with the position of affairs, and instead of further agitating for separation they would be prepared to extend a system of local self-government which would give to every district of the colony a fair share of its revenue and a fair share of its expenditure. But if that is not the result of the inquiry—if the Imperial Government are satisfied that the people of the North have just reason for complaint, and that their complaints cannot be

satisfied without separation—then I say, whatever course the southern portion of the colony may adopt, that separation will come. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, let us treat this matter as reasonably as we can; let us not only claim for ourselves the right to judge whether it is desirable that the colony should be divided or not, but let us concede to those who differ from us now the same right of judgment. Let us meet them in a friendly spirit, and in a spirit of fair play do all we can to assist them in finding out whether the case as represented by them is a proper one to submit, or whether some mistake has been made, the exposing of which will induce them to change their minds. That, I think, is a reasonable way to treat the matter. I am quite satisfied that unless we do that—if we continue to oppose the scheme that has been proposed here, it will have the result, without any possibility of avoidance, of ensuring the very thing to which many of us—I believe the majority of this House—are decidedly opposed.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I am a believer in separation, and I suppose I am the only man on this side of the House who is a thorough believer in it. I believe in it upon my own judgment; I have not adopted the creed or cry from any political motive; I believed in it, and expressed my belief in it before I came forward at the last election in the North. The only reason I would not sign the petition more than twelve months ago, when I was in Townsville, was because I did not consider they carried the dividing line far enough south. I believe that the line should come down to Port Curtis, with a view to subsequently dividing the northern colony into two. I believe the colony is too big and unwieldy to be governed from any one point. I do not recognise what was stated by the hon. member for Port Curtis, that the Ministers have resisted this disposition of the North to separate, or resisted this petition. Masses of figures have been hurled in by one side and controverted by the other with equal ability. It is necessary to argue the thing and sift it from both points of view. The Minister for Works, at all events, said he would be very glad to be rid of the North. That seemed to me to be the gist of his speech, and I myself, looking at the matter as a Southerner, think the South would be far better off without the North. The Ministry here would have enough to do to look after the business which would be comprised within the limits of the colony as it is proposed to be reduced, or even less than that. There are a few bunches here—I mean chiefly those composed of the members for Brisbane, Ipswich, and Darling Downs—that can really rule the destinies of the whole colony, and as a rule they are the men who really know the least about it. The proportion of members for the North is not inadequate at all—I do not complain of that; but what I do complain of is, that the Northern men cannot come here, and have to do their representation for the most part by deputy. I do not mean to include in that the members for Musgrave and Burke, but I include many of the others, myself among the number. I say I am wholly unfit to be the representative of a Northern constituency; but they could not get a local man to give the time and trouble, and I was invited to come and represent them. I do the best I can, but I know perfectly well that I have not the intimate knowledge of their wants and requirements that I ought to have. Take the electorate of Bowen now, for instance. The Houghton Gap line to my certain knowledge has sent in three Attorneys-General one after the other—nothing but professional politicians—and a very useful seat it is. Talk about justice being done to the Northern constituencies! I may say that the

Mr. LISSNER : It seems to me that it has. Being the member for Kennedy, where the Attorney-General is my colleague, I must say that he appears to me to have said some very severe things about my people. He says they don't want separation; that they belong to the other wing. The difference between the Attorney-General and myself is that he is a member for the North, and that I am a Northern member. When I listened to the speech of the hon. gentleman I could almost imagine that I was listening to a speech from the throne from the Czar of Russia addressing his subjects: "Now, my children, if you do not do what I tell you, you will go wrong; you will perish." I suppose the hon. gentleman was making a lawyer's speech, and trying to make the best of a bad case. The hon. gentleman referred to a great petition against separation, got up some time ago, and purporting to be signed by 1,500 people in my constituency. That petition was sent down to him, and he handed it over to His Excellency the Governor, who perhaps has it still. At the time when that petition was drawn I was neither a separationist nor an anti-one. I believed in the same old claptrap, that at the bottom of the movement was this everlasting nigger. I think the gentlemen now on the Treasury benches have had some very fair innings out of this nigger, and it is just about time to give the poor nigger a spell. We have had the Coolie Bill continually before us. At last the Upper House has passed it, and now we are rid of it—I hope, completely rid of it. If we get separation, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the voting power of the North is a sufficient guarantee to our parental Government that we will not have black labour. It has been a sort of war-cry from the Salvation Army—"Stick touts; if you go away, you will perish." I think the hon. member for Townsville, in introducing this motion, brought it in a very fair-and-square way before the House. We do not want to appear here as rebels against the Crown, forming ourselves into a party like the Parnellites. We merely represent the wishes of the people who have sent us into the House. I represent along with the

Attorney-General a very large portion of the Northern territory which, according to the last census, contains a population of 13,000. They are all very white people, and I believe the majority of them are miners. I know that when the hon. gentleman visited them on his rounds he always flattered them about the amount of intelligence he found amongst them. I believe the hon. gentleman meant what he said. Of course, they are an intelligent class, and know right from wrong, and they have the courage of their opinions. I think the majority of them are now of opinion that we should do better if we separated and kept house for ourselves, instead of waiting for instructions from their "big toe" which should decide their fate on any question. As far as the labour business is concerned, I must say that I have not seen any improvement effected by the labour policy of the Government. I do not see any white men of any consequence on the plantations; the employes there are still kanakas and Chinamen. Now Javanese have been introduced, and I believe they are an improvement. But I want to prove that this separation movement is not a question of labour, or of driving the white man out of the colony, but has arisen from a wish on the part of the people to govern themselves. It is the same sort of feeling that has existed in other places. Even some of the provinces of Russia asked the Czar to give them home rule. Of course we are in a different position here. He simply told the people to be quiet and lie down. However, under a free and constitutional Government, I think we have a right to follow our inclinations, and if the Imperial Government think our representations are such as should be listened to they will receive attention. I am very glad to say that it will not be the vote of this House which will decide the question of separation. It will be Her Majesty's advisers; and I think we can take the matter very coolly on both sides. There is no necessity for getting into a rage about the matter. We can consider it on its merits. For myself, I am of opinion that the practical business of the colony is too big for one man to carry it out properly. The question is, after all, one of business. I agree with the Attorney-General, that when this colony separated it was not in the same condition as the North is now; it was in a worse condition. Our demand is a fair one. I will not go into figures, as several hon. members have already treated that aspect of the question in an excellent manner. The Premier, in replying to the hon. member for Townsville, said the figures proved nothing. I think they show something in the aggregate, because when the Treasurer delivers his Budget the figures show that we are losing money. There must, therefore, be something in figures. However, I will not go into that matter. Without them I will prove to the House that the country demands separation on very good grounds. The principal argument from the Government benches against the motion was that the movement has been got up by the advocates of black labour, and a few people in Townsville who wish to see their property increased in value by having that town made the metropolis of the new colony. As far as that goes, the inhabitants of the Kennedy, who number 13,000, are not exactly first cousins with the people of Townsville with respect to the metropolis. I do not think that would induce the people of Charters Towers and Ravenswood to agree to a scheme for separation. Indeed, the position of the metropolis is a matter of secondary consideration. What we desire is to keep house for ourselves: have our own revenue, our own expenditure, and our own troubles and responsibilities. With regard to

the finances, I think we shall be quite as well off as Moreton Bay was at one time. I think one of the first financial speculations Sir George Bowen, in this wonderful colony then, was advised to make was to lend £500 at 15 per cent.; the result was that the 15 per cent. was paid for three months, and then the men went away with the capital. I think we can do a little better than that; we can promise interest for a longer time than that. The hon. gentleman said that the miners of the Kennedy have only become separationists since a duty was imposed upon machinery, and there is a good deal of truth in that; I do not doubt it for one moment. The movement has not been got up by designing politicians, but has arisen from a feeling that injustice had been done to the people of the North. And what are the Government doing to atone for this? My hon. colleague, when he was addressing the miners at Charters Towers, stated that he never voted for the duty on machinery, and he was very sorry it had been imposed. Then our Treasurer comes down to the House, and to make the matter worse puts 2½ per cent. on; that won't make the people sweeter on the Brisbane Government—not a little bit. Some members on the other side of the House said during the debate that the separation movement was not a matter of public opinion—that it was only got up by a few interested parties, and that there were just about as many anti-separationists as there were people in favour of separation. Who got up this anti-separation movement? I think it was Mr. Archibald Meston and another gentleman pretty well known to some members of the Liberal Association, Mr. Peter Aldridge, chief secretary. Between the two they carry on this anti-separation concern; but that is of no material consequence. The fact is that the majority of the people wish to part from their friends and brothers in the South because this extensive business is too large, and some of the customers in the far North are getting very much neglected, and it is better to give them the chance of doing their own business, and going on their own hook; if they are allowed to do that, they will be better satisfied. Some people here, especially the Government, seem to think that if we get separation we shall go to ruin. Well, let us go to ruin; it will not affect the South very much. The Minister for Works says we shall have to pay our share of money down; possibly he means in a cheque, or at least with an endorsed bill for the amount. I do not believe Her Majesty does that sort of business; I do not think that would be good enough for Her Majesty. But we have securities sufficient to square the financial position of the colony. I want now to refer to a journal, the editor of which is a well-known public man—Mr. O'Kane.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh!

Mr. LISSNER: When I stood for the Kennedy election, I only beat him by seventeen votes, so he must represent something—he represents public opinion. He was one of the principal agitators in favour of the anti-separation petition. After going in for a great deal of abuse, he comments on the tax on machinery in this way:—

"A tax on machinery will not affect the Brisbane lawyers nor the commercial speculators of Queen street, nor the Rosewood cockatoos, and therefore it has their willing support. That it should injure the mining and sugar industries of the North appears to be of very small consequence to the Griffith Ministry. It appears to us that they are laying the sure foundation of their own downfall. The imposition of the 5 per cent. on machinery may be justified on the plea of sudden pressure and emergency; but when the blow is repeated no such plea is admissible. With a wide field of untried resources from which to pick and choose—land-tax,

income-tax, property-tax—to fall back on machinery and *ad valorem* betrays the shallowest financial ability, or a set purpose to damage the two leading industries of the North. For ourselves, always freetraders, we would support a tax on machinery in order to encourage local foundries, as we support a tax on imported sugars in order to encourage and foster a young and struggling local industry; but let us have some intelligent principle to guide us. The present Ministry appear to have no principle at all; they are a Ministry of scraps and expedients, ingenious devices, and essentially one of amendments, an endless screw of little Bills always requiring tinkering and always containing large holes, through which fees drop into the lawyers' ever-gaping pockets. The present session is essentially a 'scrap' session. It is like a patchwork quilt, made up of little bits of odds and ends. Mr. Griffith—

He ought to have said "Sir Samuel"—

"Mr. Griffith is proving himself a most accomplished legislative tailor. He is great at small clothes and knickerbockers, but he apparently lacks the genius or the ability to turn out a whole decent suit, of even serviceable moleskins. His little Local Government and Divisional Boards Bills will all pass, but they will be trotted out again next session, for the chief tailor will have discovered several fatal rents in them, and fresh patches will be required. They say in Brisbane we have not the men in the North qualified to undertake the Government, and even an ex-parson—Mr. Rutledge—gravely informed his Orange supporters in Charters Towers lately, that the thing could not be done, that we must import our guides, philosophers, and friends from the South. We admit that a Government by Northern men would be for some time something wonderful; but it could not exceed in stupidity and incapacity the present Government of mediocrities and small men in Brisbane. A parish vestry could turn out better enactments than are now manufactured by the chief law artificer in the Brisbane Parliament. The cockatoos about Brisbane, the land syndicates who are clamouring for the transference of money voted for Northern railways to the construction of railways to every mud-hole in Moreton Bay, the farmers on the Downs who want protection for their pumpkins, have given the present Ministry a large majority, and, unfortunately for the colony, Sir Samuel Griffith appears to be using that majority for the benefit of Brisbane and the South, and to the injury and detriment of the North. We may have hard times under separation for some years, but one thing is certain, we can share our own plunder."

I should not have taken up the time of the House reading the article, but for the fact that the writer is a well-known public journalist and a truthful man; and he is a supporter of the present Government—that I know, because I was opposed to his views, and had to suffer any amount of insults every morning his paper came out at the time of the election. What he says now, however, I believe, is pretty correct. What I want to come at is that the same gentleman who wrote the article was one of the principal agitators who helped to collect the signatures of which the Attorney-General made so much—the signatures to the anti-separation petition.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: There will be another next week.

MR. LISSNER: I am not going to say anything about that. I only say that if we have a right to what we demand we ought to get it; and if we have no right to it we will be satisfied without it. If we establish our colony we can divide our large business, and take over a portion of the debt, and pay it off gradually as we get the money. I have no doubt that we can get along. The hon. gentleman said once at Charters Towers that we have not sufficient men of ability to form a Parliament.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I said there were not enough men of experience.

MR. LISSNER: We can get them. I think we can get them easily, especially if we pay them. The hon. gentleman wanted to prove that the hon. member for Mackay was wrong in complaining that we have not the representation to which we are entitled in proportion to our population as compared with the South; but the hon.

member did not prove his case—he only said he did. The hon. member for Mackay only counted the voters of the colony—not the population—and the voters in the northern portion number 12,374, which gives an average of 1,237 souls for one representative. The balance remaining in the South is 49,000 electors for 49 members, and that makes a difference in the argument.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What difference?

MR. LISSNER: It makes that much difference that you have a larger representation in proportion than we have. That is what the hon. member for Mackay wanted to prove, and what I think he did prove. We were quite prepared for opposition. We could not expect that gentlemen representing Southern constituencies would be so willing to get rid of us as they pretend, and I think they will stick to us as long as it suits them to do so, if they can. I believe, however, that when we do part we shall both get over it. Before I came to Brisbane this session I addressed the people of Charters Towers and the people of Ravenswood, and there were very full houses both times. I told the electors that I was a strong separationist, and my views were accepted at the Towers with the exception of two persons. At Ravenswood there was a small amendment moved against me in regard to my views on separation. The mover of the amendment was a gentleman who was made a J.P. for services rendered during the last election, and his followers were six hands. So, taking that into consideration and that they are all white men, I think the people of the Kennedy are very much in favour of getting a Government closer and more handy to their own homes. Wherever I go in the South I hear of grievances and the way in which the people are being neglected. In Rosewood, South Brisbane, Cleveland, they are all neglected; and I think the Government will have more time to attend to the requirements of the southern portion of Queensland, and bring it into a proper condition, if they get rid of us, and we likewise are well able to help ourselves.

MR. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker, —I have made a point of listening to every one of the speeches made in favour of separation, and I have done this purposely, so that I might be able to form my own opinion and come to a correct conclusion. Now, we must admit that from the point of view of the separationists we have had several very good speeches indeed; but I should like to treat this matter in a different way from the way in which the separationists have done. I look at it in a different light altogether. I look upon the North and South as one, and I want to ask this House and the country—Is any district in the colony justified in demanding separation because they find themselves in a position to carry on an independent Government? Sir, I might bring forward just as strong arguments, and I have no doubt that all the districts outside Brisbane might bring forward arguments just as strong, as those adduced by the hon. members from the North. I do not think because a district is rich in gold-mines that therefore it should demand separation, or that because the shipping of the North has increased that is any reason why they should ask for separation. I look upon the colony as one. I maintain that a wife has no right to demand separation from her husband because she finds that through some gift or legacy she is independent of her husband. The North is just in the same position to the South as the wife is to her husband. Without the consent of the husband the wife has no right to demand separation, and without the assent of the South I say the North has no right to demand separation. The South and the North have joint liabilities; and though the North may be willing to pay its

air proportion when it gets separation, yet to my mind there is no argument why, as the hon. member for Kennedy has said, it should start housekeeping on its own account. Queensland has now attained a position in the financial world that is not to be despised. She is in as high a position as the other colonies; her name is spoken of in the old country as one of the most progressive colonies in Australia, and it does not seem wise to separate. It is no use hon. members saying we can do well without the North. So we may, but we shall do better a great deal with it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I think so.

Mr. MACFARLANE: And the North will do a great deal better with the South than it will without it. It is said that the decision of the House will have nothing to do with the granting or not granting of separation, but I believe that if it is granted the North will suffer a great deal more than the South. Besides, I do not think the House would be justified in voting in favour of separation, simply because a petition has been sent to the Queen with 10,000 signatures attached, in favour of it. One of the Ministers to-night informed this House that of the 10,000 signatures only 3,500 were the signatures of electors; and if that be so, is this House to listen to a bogus petition and vote in favour of separation? I should think not. If all the people of the North are in favour of separation—if all the males in the North are in favour of it—then matters would stand differently; but I do not think we would be justified in voting for separation unless at least five-eighths of the people were in favour of it. Then I do not think that this House would stand against the movement. The hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Brown, in the very excellent speech he delivered, asked the question, "Why do we desire separation?" and he replies himself by saying, "We can manage our own affairs." Now, suppose I, the representative of West Moreton, were to say, "I demand separation, because we have as many people in the West Moreton district, having Ipswich for the centre, as they have in the Northern district"; and if I further said that we, having mineral wealth and other advantages, demand separation, would that be any reason why separation should be granted? We have mineral wealth in the district of West Moreton, as everyone must know, that will do more for that district than all the wealth of the North can do for the North, and yet the people of that district have not followed in the footsteps of the North and demanded separation. I say this, Mr. Speaker, that any district which is in a position to govern itself independently of the rest of the colony is as much justified in demanding separation as the northern part of the colony is. They are in just the same position, but the colony has no more right to grant separation to one district than to another. I think the hon. member for Kennedy, the Attorney-General, said that the principal argument against separation was that it was premature, and I quite agree with him. The hour has not come yet—the day has not yet arrived—when the North is entitled to be separated from the South, and I trust that the time will be long in coming. I believe that the people of the North are perfectly satisfied with the justice we have done them, and that the desire for separation will gradually wear away, and they will settle down to contentment. These being my views, Mr. Speaker, I cannot vote for separation. Besides, the colony is not so very large after all if we look at the fact that all parts of it are brought into instantaneous communication by our telegraphic system. There is scarcely a district in the colony, even the most distant corner, but what is ramified by tele-

graphic communication; and by that system, although there is a great distance between the far North and the seat of central government, practically it is brought right to our doors; and what was the difficulty in the days of the separation of Queensland from New South Wales is as nothing at the present time. I am quite of opinion that if the black labour question was not at the bottom of this separation movement there would be no noise made about it. The Loan Fund and other funds of the colony are, I believe, divided as honestly and as equally between North and South as it is possible for the Government to do it. In fact, Southern members contend that the balance is in favour of the North; while, on the other hand, Northern members complain that the North does not get its fair share. It is therefore a matter of dispute; and under all the circumstances I hope that the vote will be so decisive that it will be some little guide towards the settlement of the question in the old country, and show that as far as this House is concerned it is not yet prepared to grant separation to the northern part of the colony. I will not prolong the debate by any further remarks, but will simply express the opinion that, considering the position that Queensland has as yet attained, separation should not take place at the present time.

Mr. PHILP said: Mr. Speaker,—I must commence by saying that I am a strong believer in separation. I am one of the members recently elected to this House, and my principal ground for standing for the constituency I now represent was that I was a strong believer in separation. I think that until we get separation for the North it will never get fair justice. It has never yet got it from this end of the colony. I have lived a considerable time in Northern Queensland—about twelve years—and during the whole of that time it has not been abreast of the expenditure in the southern part of the colony. It is now seven or eight years since the first sum of money was placed on the Loan Estimates for the North. I refer to £200,000 voted for the Charters Towers Railway, and it was not until two years after it was voted that the money was commenced to be spent; and that, sir, has been the case with nearly all the moneys voted for the northern part of the colony, more especially railways. There was a railway undertaken four years ago by the late Government; I refer to the line from Herberton to the coast. At that time, I think, £200,000 was voted by the late Government for the commencement of this railway, and it was only the other day, after a lapse of four years, that that work was commenced. That is only one instance; there are numbers of others I could refer to. We know that nearly all the loan money voted four years ago has been spent long since. We know that the money voted out of the ten-million loan has been spent to a considerable extent, especially on railways in the southern part of the colony. I refer more particularly to the duplication of the Ipswich and Brisbane lines, the extension of the Gympie line, the Southern line, and I believe the Western lines. All these works had been put in full operation long before the line to Herberton was started. That line, to my mind, is one of the most important that is being built in the colony at the present time. It is a very short line, though I believe it to be a very difficult one to build. If the North had been better treated in times past this cry for separation would not have arisen. I do not refer especially to this Government or to any particular Government; all Southern Governments have been behind the times with the Northern people. I am not going to refer to a mass of figures to-night, sir, but I should like to say some-

thing about the separation petition. This movement was started about four and a-half years ago, and it has got along gradually until the other day when we sent home a petition containing 10,000 signatures. The movement was started when the present Government were in opposition, so that I think we can claim that it is not a party question at all. It was commenced when the McIlwraith Government were in power; when there was a full supply of black labour; when a little loan money was being spent in the North; when that which has proved the greatest boon ever granted to the North—the British-India mail service—was established, and when apparently we had not much to complain of. But, sir, underneath all this there was a great desire in the North that we should govern ourselves. It is a natural desire, which we see in other countries. Look at Ireland—at the great desire in that country for home rule. Then again, there is a cablegram in this day's paper, that in Scotland, my own country, there are thirty members who desire home rule; and if England does not desire a repetition of Bannockburn days, I think she will consent to give it to them. And why, sir, should we in the North, representing as we do a territory five or six times the size of Scotland—why should we not have our desires? It is all very well for hon. members opposite to say that the people in the North are not unanimous. Why, sir, out of ten members returned by the North—and I suppose they represent their constituents—nine are in favour of separation. That argument ought, I think, to be a sufficient answer to those gentlemen. A good deal has been said about representation—that the North always had a fair share of representation. At the commencement of the last general election there were 60,000 voters on the electoral rolls of the colony. Out of these 60,000, 12,000 were living in the North; these 12,000 returned only eight members out of fifty-five—only one-seventh, when we should have returned one-fifth. Last year the present Government brought in a Bill giving two additional members to the North and two to the South, bringing the Northern proportion up to one-sixth, still two behind what we ought to have. But according to the last census—I am taking the figures furnished by the Premier and the Treasurer—we had 19,000 adult males in the north of the colony. Then the Treasurer said—I have had to adopt rather a roundabout way of arriving at his figures—that there were 586,000 gallons of liquor consumed in the colony, and that each adult male consumed seven gallons. That makes 80,000 male adults in the whole colony, black and white, I suppose—say they are whites; and of that we have in the North 19,000—about one-fourth; so that out of a House of sixty members we ought to have fifteen instead of ten, as at present. It is all very well to talk of the total population, but the bulk of the women and children are in the southern part of the colony, and this House has not given women the right to vote yet. It is only the male adults who can vote, and if we have 19,000 male adults in the North out of a total of 80,000 in the whole colony we should have one-fourth of the representation. The Premier says justice will be done if any fair request is made. Is not this a fair request? yet no effort has been made to remedy it sir. Why, at the beginning of last session the hon. member for Townsville (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) was representing 3,400 names upon the roll, while there were six members upon the other side who, collectively, represented 3,400 names. What can one man do against six? We know that in debate the Hon. Mr. Macrossan is equal to any six men in the House; but when it

comes to a division he has only one vote. I do not know much about figures, Mr. Speaker, but perhaps I do not know much less than several gentlemen who have already spoken. In the return furnished to the hon. member Mr. Palmer, £2,500,000 was supposed to have been expended in the whole of the North. We will start with immigration, upon which £350,000 is said to have been spent. I have taken the trouble to find out how many immigrants had been landed in the northern part of the colony up to 1877. I take the Hon. Mr. Macrossan's figures: 2,880 immigrants had been landed there; and since that time I have taken the arrivals, and found that they are on the wrong side of the North, because a lot of people were not immigrants, but paid their own passages in the saloon. The numbers are: Townsville, 11,478; Bowen, 624; Mackay, 4,093; and Cooktown, 1,095; or altogether 20,170 people. Possibly, many of those were children, but still we will give the colony the benefit, and say they were adults. I believe the immigrants have cost £20 per head since separation, which would bring the cost up to £403,400. Against that we must reckon the total cost of immigration from the commencement of the colony. Table O of the Treasurer's Statement shows that there has been paid from Loan Fund £2,042,000, special receipts £467,000, revenue £357,000, with a total of £2,861,258. But in addition to that there is an item for land-orders of £853,000, and out of that I reckon that £753,000 has been paid for bringing immigrants to the colony. I am allowing £100,000 of that which has been given to volunteers for their services, which makes a total expenditure of £3,614,000 spent in bringing out immigrants at £20 per head. That should have brought in 181,330 people, and we have had one-ninth of those; so that, instead of the Treasurer saying one-sixth, he should have said one-ninth, which would have amounted to £233,000. We do not complain that we have not had sufficient immigrants landed in the North; I think we have had quite enough. But we complain that we are charged £350,000, when we have only expended £233,000 out of the loan vote. In regard to water supply, the hon. gentleman must recollect that we are paying the interest and the principal upon the money expended. Large sums have been granted by this House for water supply in Brisbane upon which neither principal nor interest have ever been paid. Then the Treasurer goes on to explain to us that our share of the interest upon the public debt is about one-sixth. It is very easy from these figures to find out how much loan money was expended in 1882-3; I find that £2,500,000 had been spent up to the 31st March, 1886. I have a table here showing that during the last three years and nine months the sum of £1,402,000 has been spent. In the year 1882-3, the expenditure of the previous four years was £1,100,000, and I will add the loan expenditure for that year, which makes a total of £1,418,000 which was spent in the North, according to the Treasurer's own figures. The interest, I may say, would be about $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., allowing $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the loss in floating the loan, which is a very liberal allowance. Instead of charging us £99,000, we ought to have been charged only £63,000 in that year. I am not taking any figures made up by myself. I am taking the Treasurer's own statement. In the year 1883-4 the interest at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. should have been £81,000, not £112,000. Then again, in 1884-5 we find the interest ought to have been £99,000 instead of £122,000. Why did not the hon. Treasurer, with the whole paraphernalia of his office at his disposal, bring us a correct return to show what was expended, and what interest we ought to pay? Any schoolboy could have told him the figures were not correct.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Nothing will satisfy you.

Mr. PHILP: Then we come to the statement of revenue and expenditure, and I will here be a little more elaborate than some hon. members. I will allow one-seventh of the whole for general government, which is a large allowance, as we are charged one-third of the whole police fund. I find that the revenue for 1882-3 was £522,000, and our expenditure, adding £41,000 for our share of the cost of the general government down here, was £406,000, which leaves a credit balance of £116,769. In the same way I find that in three years and nine months we have over-paid the sum of £207,526, quite enough to make up the deficit. If to that we add £90,000 overcharge for interest and £120,000 for immigration, we find that we have been defrauded out of £417,000 of Northern money spent on account of the South, and which ought to have been spent in the North, yet hon. members wonder why we are dissatisfied with the treatment we have received. The Colonial Treasurer, in his speech, says the Government have done a great deal for the sugar-planters in regard to the tariff, which he says has been the means of getting better prices in the colony than they are getting outside. This tariff is a legacy left by the New South Wales Government: and I believe, when the colony was divided, the duty in New South Wales was £5 for raw and £6 13s. 4d. for fine sugar, and I do not think that has been altered; so the hon. gentleman cannot say that this tariff was put on to protect sugar-growers. If he took off that tariff altogether it would not make much of a difference in the price we get for sugar. It is the Sydney and Melbourne markets that regulate the prices of sugar in the colony. At the present time the price of sugar in Melbourne is £24 per ton, and the price of white sugar in Brisbane is £20 per ton; but if we allow duty and freight and commission, say £4 per ton, we get exactly the same price. The hon. gentleman might as well say that if he put a duty upon gold and tin he was protecting the miners. What benefit would that be to the miners? Or suppose we put 1d. a pound on wool, what benefit would that be to the squatters? I will make one more calculation and then I shall have done. I do not want to take up the time of the House further, as I understand the hon. member for Townsville wishes to go to a division. What will be the result if this Government, and if successive Governments, resist the present claims of the northern part of the colony? They may do so for years and years by specious arguments, and all sorts of things. At present the agitation now being got up in the North shows a singular thing, that all supporting the petition against separation are supporters of the Government side of the House, and yet the petition sent home was signed by supporters of Sir Samuel Griffith as well as by supporters of Sir Thomas McIlwraith. Look at the last census and the census in 1881. In 1881 there were 213,525 people in the colony, and in 1886 there were 321,000. The population in Northern Queensland—that is, north of Cape Palmerston, was in 1881 29,000, and in 1886 it had reached 61,000. The population of the southern part of the colony in 1881 was 184,000, and in 1886 it was 260,000. The northern portion of the colony during the last five years has increased its population at the rate of 110 per cent. The southern portion of the colony has only increased at the rate of 42 per cent. If we go on at this rate, in a very short time the northern portion of the colony will have as big a population as the southern portion. If we go on increasing in the North at the present ratio, in fourteen or fifteen years there will be a greater population in the North than in the South. Then what will

the demand be? The demand will then be to remove the seat of government, and the cry here will be to let the North go at any price. However, I hope that long before that time comes hon. members on the other side will have the good sense to freely give us our moderate and just demands. I was very pleased to hear the hon. member for Ipswich say he was in favour of a plebiscite, and if five-eighths of the people of the northern portion of the colony were in favour of separation he for one would not oppose it. I am very glad to hear that, and I think the present leaders of the separation movement would be only too glad to accept a proposal of that sort, and if the present Government take steps to satisfy themselves on that point I think that in a very short time indeed we shall get what we are now asking for.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it will be readily conceded that this is one of the most interesting debates that have taken place this session, not only from the subject-matter of the debate, but from the different points of view from which the various gentlemen who have spoken have discussed it. The debate has also been amusing in one or two ways. For instance, a number of hon. members who have spoken in favour of separation commenced by saying they knew very little about figures and did not intend to introduce them, and then they have immediately gone into a perfect labyrinth of figures. Another amusing feature of the debate has been that, no matter how the subject has been started, it has invariably turned to the sugar question, with the exception of the speech made by one member—and only one; even the hon. member who has just sat down had to deal very largely with the question of sugar to carry on his speech. One of the most taking speeches delivered was that delivered by the hon. member for Townsville (Mr. Brown). He stated his case very ably, clearly, and concisely, and showed in how much better a position the North is than we were in when we separated from New South Wales. He showed that the population of the North is very much larger than the population of Queensland was at that time, and that the revenue of the North is also larger than the revenue of Queensland was at that time. But he totally omitted to state the enormous liability of the North at the present time. The North, to give the figures generally accepted as correct, owes about £2,500,000. That is the actual debt, and they owe for money not yet expended another £2,500,000. That is about £5,000,000 to start with. They will have a debt of £5,000,000 to start with and nothing in the Treasury to pay it or to carry on the expenses of government. To carry on the government of that territory and to construct the various public works indicated as necessary by hon. members who have spoken, and to build the great lengths of railway to open up undiscovered goldfields, would take several millions of money. That is in addition to the debt, so that they would probably have to commence with a debt of £8,000,000 or £9,000,000. Those would be very different circumstances under which to begin from the circumstances of Queensland when separated from New South Wales. Great stress has, of course, very naturally been laid upon the petition sent home with 10,000 signatures, but I believe that investigation has proved since that less than half of the names attached to that petition appear on the rolls of the colony. That is very significant, because it points out that, in spite of the scrutiny of the committee, a great number of those signatures ought not to be there. It is morally impossible for a committee sitting in one place to decide which are *bonâ fide* signatures and which are not. There are very few members of the House, with the exception of new members, who do not know

how petitions are usually got up upon almost any subject. A petition is sent round, and almost any number of names can be got for it. I may say that the other day I was travelling with a commercial traveller who had done a good deal of business in the North, and he told me that in every place where separation was strongly advocated he was compelled to put his name to the petition before he could do any business. Then, as another hon. member pointed out, all the raw new chums coming into the northern part of the colony had to put their names to the petition. They knew nothing of the merits of the question, and were entirely ignorant as to whether separation was a good thing or not for the colony. At the same time they put their names down because it created a friendly feeling with the man who asked them to sign. From the experience we have had of petitions, and of the way in which signatures can be got for them, we may, I think, fairly say that a large number amongst those attached to the petition sent home might be struck off. There was one remark made by the hon. member for Mackay which was noticed by the Colonial Treasurer, and I think it rather significant. I do not wish to impute to the hon. member for Mackay that in that case he made a statement which he did not thoroughly believe in; but we know that persons strongly interested in anything are biased in spite of themselves, and without their own knowledge. Even though they may be arguing calmly and coolly, still their minds are biased in a certain direction. The hon. member's remark was with reference to the sugar industry and black labour. I would like to ask what the hon. member means when he asks that the planters should have fair consideration? It cannot be in the direction of getting white labour at a payable rate, because that was offered them and they would not take it. They could not see their way to employ any sort of white labour. If that is the case, it must be in the direction of black labour. Well, I think that is sufficient ground for members representing the part of the country which is not interested in black labour, and does not believe in it, to oppose the movement for separation to the full extent. Now, I have many times argued that the planters should have black labour for a certain length of time, for reasons which I have given before and need not repeat; but I never advocated that black labour should be introduced into the colony year after year, for ever and ever. I thought time should be given them to procure some other kind of labour. Well, if separation is granted, and the planters receive that fair play which they demand, as far as I can see, it tends only in one direction, the perpetuation of the employment of black labour in the northern portion of Queensland. The hon. member for Mackay also said that it was the energy and determination of the planters—I am not using his exact words, but this is the gist of what he said, so far as I can remember—that it was mainly their energy and determination which had brought the separation question to its present point. Well, that shows that those planters have considerable determination and energy; it has brought them so far, and why should it not carry them further? If they can manage to split up the colony of Queensland into two portions, why should they not be able to carry out their scheme of black labour when the colony is divided?

Mr. BLACK: I must beg to correct the hon. member; he is misstating what I said. I never said it was the determination and energy of the planters that brought the separation question to its present state; at any rate, I never intended to say it.

Mr. STEVENS: That I have misstated the actual words is very likely, but if I have mis-

stated the effect of the hon. member's remarks I apologise for it. That certainly is what the words conveyed to my mind; we can see in *Hansard* to-morrow whether I had sufficient grounds for the interpretation I put upon them. At any rate, even if the hon. gentleman did not say so, the facts bear me out, because it is chiefly owing to their determined efforts for separation that the matter has reached this point. Now, it is not very long ago since the separation question in Townsville was received very coolly indeed. I was there for a few days about four years ago, and in moving about I made inquiries regarding the feeling about separation. I found it was received with disfavour, chiefly because it was supposed to emanate from Mackay, or that persons in Mackay had a very great interest in it. Then Mackay disappears from the scene altogether, and Townsville takes up the cry. We can easily understand the reason for that. It suited Mackay and those chiefly interested there to retire from the scene, so long as they could gain their end by getting more powerful friends to come forward. But in Townsville also I maintain that the black labour question has a great deal to do with separation. I went into a hotel on some business, and in talking to the owner of the hotel the conversation turned on separation and the black labour question. He said that he would vote for separation through thick and thin, because it was the only chance they had for getting black labour in full swing again. He said that during the prosperity of the sugar trade he used to take £50 or £60 over the bar every Sunday.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Sunday?

Mr. STEVENS: Yes, that was the day on which people used to arrive in Townsville from different parts of the coast. That shows that the black labour question has a good deal to do with a portion at any rate of a powerful class in Townsville. There is one thing that has been omitted by all the hon. members who have advocated separation, especially by the hon. member who introduced this motion. They have given us no complete scheme. They say the metropolis should not be in any point that has been named; it is to be in some unknown place, and no one is to know anything about it. It is to be in a place that will suit everybody, and thereby do away with the argument that Townsville is to be the metropolis. Also, there is no scheme of government; they give us no idea of what the legislation will be. In fact, we are completely in the dark; we are simply asked to grant separation, and then trust to them or Providence. I think we ought to know a little more about it.

Mr. CHUBB: Do you want a corner allotment?

Mr. STEVENS: Not just yet. I would like to know the Government we were going to have first. I think it would have only been fair if they had indicated something in the way of the new legislation or style of government. I dare say they could have told us fully what the policy would be, and also who would form the principal members of the Ministry, also the Chief Justice, and various other minor points. I believe that although they did not care to inform us where the metropolis of the new colony is going to be, there is little doubt in the minds of most hon. members and of the country generally. The application is too strong from one particular point not to indicate where the Government will be established. If that particular point can command all the influence at the present time, why should it not command the influence in the future—at any rate in the immediate future after obtaining separation?

Mr. CHUBB: Mackay?

Mr. STEVENS: No; I do not think Mackay stands much chance. It has been playing second fiddle, and is likely to go on playing second fiddle. There is a very considerable portion of the northern coast just as strongly opposed to separation as the southern portion of Queensland. I allude more particularly to the Gulf country, the principal town of which is Normanton. There is a very strong feeling there against it, and in the country at the back of Normanton. If the North obtains the separation they require, before very long that colony will have to be divided again; and so we may go on splitting the country up into small colonies. The more we do that the further we get away from the point which every legislator, up to the present, seems to have set his mind upon, and that is federation. It is useless to argue that if we have a dozen colonies instead of six we are quite as certain to get federation. The few colonies we have now are not unanimous on the subject, and the more colonies we have the less chance there is of unanimity, and the more chance of federation not being gained. I think that when the Premier replied to the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, he used one argument which very fairly met most of the arguments brought forward by that hon. member—that is, that in whatever portion of the colony requirements have arisen they have always been met. If hon. members will look back a few years they will see that when a cry arose in the West, a considerable distance north of Rockhampton, it was met by the previous Government. They raised £3,000,000, which was considered a very large loan at that time. That was done to meet the requirements of the colony, and when those requirements became greater on the present Government coming into office they borrowed a still greater loan to meet those requirements. As those requirements arise they will be met. There is no desire in the South to defraud the North in any way—to swallow their revenue, and give them nothing in return. Indeed, lately there has been the very strongest disposition to do full justice to the North. Some hon. members have claimed that they have given an impartial opinion on this question. I can claim to do so, too, for although I represent a constituency in the South, I am very largely interested indeed in the North; for every hundred pounds I have invested in the South of Queensland I have a thousand in the North. Therefore I claim to give my opinion and vote on this subject apart from all political considerations whatever. Speaking from a purely selfish point of view, what would any political consideration be to my own good? I consider it is far better for me to be governed by, say, the Government now in power than to trust my fortunes in the North to any Government that may be appointed there. In the words of the old saying, "It is better to trust to the devil you know than to the devil you don't know;" and I would much sooner remain under the present régime than trust myself to some unknown Government to whose ideas and opinions I might very much object. Various schemes and projects have been introduced into the colony to which I have been strongly opposed, and I am not at all certain that they will not be again introduced in the North. I should like to be assured on that point before I help to give the future rulers of the new colony an opportunity of carrying them out. I would much sooner suffer as the North is suffering than be blessed in the way that some would like to bless it.

Mr. BROOKES moved the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I think we ought to finish the debate to-night. I only know of two other members on

this side who wish to speak on the subject, and I do not think they will occupy more than half-an-hour. The question is one of great importance, and if the debate is adjourned now we may not be able to resume it for another fortnight. It is the unanimous desire of the Northern members that the debate should be finished to-night, and I hope, therefore, that the hon. member will speak to the motion instead of asking for the adjournment.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I should certainly like to see the debate close to-night, but I understand there are several hon. members on both sides who wish to speak, and the debate certainly ought not to be stifled. The Northern members would, of course, stay to see it through, but there are many on this side to whom it would be inconvenient to sit here after midnight.

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—I believe there are several hon. members on this side who wish to speak to the question.

Mr. DONALDSON said: Mr. Speaker,—It is certainly rather late to continue the debate, and I would suggest that the Government might consent to give up Thursday night to the debate. That is not much to ask, seeing that we have always done all we could to forward the Government business. I should like to say a few words upon the question, and although I intend to vote against it I should like the motion to be fully discussed. To adjourn the debate for a fortnight—for it could not come on again next Friday without some special arrangement—would be keeping the question too long in abeyance.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it is not asking a very great deal from the Government that they should give up next Thursday evening for the completion of the debate on this question. As a rule, we have only three hours for Government business on a Thursday, and that time might be very well devoted to finishing this very important debate. I understand that if it is not finished then it will have to be delayed another week.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—I hardly think this is a reasonable request for hon. members to make in the present state of public business when there are very important taxation proposals before the House. I do not think it would be right to ask the Government to promise to surrender any evening next week until these taxation proposals are definitely concluded. It is, however, possible that if this most important business is sufficiently advanced next week my hon. colleague, the Premier, might see his way to make a concession of Thursday evening for finishing the debate on the motion now before the House.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I really think this is a most important debate. We know that the financial business is of the greatest importance, as it is in a bad way, and will take a great deal of discussion. Still, I would like to see this matter cleared off the paper as soon as possible. I believe it is a question that ought to receive the utmost consideration, and that the fullest opportunity should be given to any member who wishes to speak upon it to express his opinion. I therefore think it would come as an act of grace from the Government, which would be received by the people of the North in a very kindly spirit, if the Government granted the concession asked for, and I do not think it would be pleaded as a precedent on future occasions by hon. members who have private motions for local matters on the paper. This motion is of great importance to all the colony—both North and South—and I do hope the Government will see their way to make some concession in the matter.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I have already spoken, and must ask leave to speak again. I should be very glad to meet hon. members' wishes, but I feel embarrassed in the matter to some extent. It is very important that the financial business should be got on with. It was extraordinarily protracted yesterday, and if it is protracted again on Tuesday and Wednesday I certainly think the Government would not be justified in giving up Thursday; but I hope it will not be. Again, there is this embarrassment in the way: I have been every week entreated by some hon. members to give up just this one evening, and I have been obliged to say "No"; otherwise the session would be of inordinate length. If we make reasonable progress with the financial business on Tuesday and Wednesday—as I hope we shall—I, for my part, should be glad to give up Thursday; not because this motion is so urgent that it must be disposed of at once, as before any action is taken the petition will certainly be sent here for report, and that is not likely to be done for a considerable time yet; but because I think it is convenient to have a debate disposed of in as short a time as possible between the beginning and end. Only that the hon. gentleman is not in possession of the following Thursday afternoon, I should feel inclined to make a bargain that hon. members should give us the following Thursday afternoon in exchange for next Thursday evening, but I am afraid that would be robbing Peter to pay Paul. If the hon. gentleman chooses to make the resumption of this debate an Order of the Day for Thursday, unless Government business requires it, I shall be disposed to give up that evening.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the HON. J. M. MAC-ROSSAN, the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: I move that this House do now adjourn. It is proposed on Tuesday, first to consider the amendments of the Legislative Council in the Elections Tribunal Bill; then to take the second reading of the Immigration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill, and consider it in committee also; then to resume the debate on the Financial Statement in Committee of Ways and Means. The Opium Bill in committee will stand next on the paper.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at fourteen minutes to 11 o'clock.