

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 31 AUGUST 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 31 August, 1886.

Petitions.—Suspension of Standing Orders.—Elections Tribunal Bill—consideration in committee of Legislative Council's amendments.—Immigration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill—second reading.—Ways and Means—Financial Statement—resumption of committee.—Tariff Bills.—Adjournment.

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

PETITIONS.

Mr. FOOTE presented a petition signed by 2,000 women of Ipswich, 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. FOOTE, the petition was received.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker,—I have been asked to present a petition from the congregation of the Baptist Church, Windsor road, praying for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; but before I move that it be received, I must ask your ruling, sir, whether it is formal. It is not written, nor is it printed; it is a multigraph.

The SPEAKER said: I am afraid that I must rule that the petition is informal. The Standing Order No. 193 says:—

“Every petition shall be fairly written; and no printed or lithographed petition will be received.”

I think a multigraph must be considered a form of lithograph, and therefore, according to the Standing Order, cannot be accepted.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I submit to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and beg leave to withdraw the petition.

Petition withdrawn accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—I will ask the permission of the House to move, without previous notice, that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of the reporting of resolutions of the Committee of Ways and Means on the same day that they shall have been passed by such committee, with a view to expedite the Government proposals concerning taxation, and also with a view to being able to devote a whole evening to the debate on the motion of the hon. member for Townsville. The Taxation Bills will be brought in as soon as the resolutions have been reported.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I will ask the Colonial Treasurer if the Government themselves propose to make any amendment to the taxation proposals brought down to the committee by them? It has been reported that the Government intend to make some alterations in the scheme they have proposed.

Mr. ALAND: Is that in the newspaper?

Mr. NORTON: Of course I do not know whether there is any foundation for the report or not.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We will hear the debate as it proceeds; in the meantime the Government have no alteration to propose.

Question put and passed.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL BILL — CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith), the House went into committee to consider the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill.

On clause 7—

“An election petition must be presented to the Supreme Court of Queensland, at Brisbane, and must be addressed to the judges thereof, and shall be presented by lodging the same in the office of the registrar.

“The petition must be presented within eight weeks after the day of the return of the writ to which the petition relates, unless the petition relates to a charge of bribery or corruption alleged to have been committed at an election, in which case it may, with the leave of the Assembly, be presented at any time within twelve months after the day of the return of the writ.”

The PREMIER, in moving that the Legislative Council's amendments in this clause—omitting the words “with the leave of the

Assembly," and substituting the word "four" for the word "twelve," in the second last line—be disagreed to, said that clause 7 of the Bill, as it left the Assembly, affirmed that the House should have permission to extend the time for presenting a petition to twelve months after the day of the return of the writ, where the petition related to a charge of bribery and corruption. The Legislative Council proposed to reduce that to four months, and to refuse to the Legislative Assembly leave to extend the time. He did not know why an amendment of that kind was proposed. Of course it might very often happen that the House might not be sitting during the four months, so that if a case of bribery was discovered four months and one day after the return of the writ, it would be impossible under the amendment to take proceedings to upset the election. He could not ask the Committee to agree to the amendments. He proposed that the amendments of the Legislative Council in clause 7 be disagreed to, and he proposed to assign as a reason for the disagreement that it was desirable that that House should have the power in proper cases of extending the time for presenting petitions complaining of the return of its own members.

Mr. NORTON said he must admit that it appeared rather an exceptional case for the other Chamber to make an amendment which affected the Assembly only, but the fact of the amendment having been made again directed attention to a subject which was brought forward at the time the Bill was in committee before. There were some members of the Committee who objected to twelve months as being too long a time to allow for presenting a petition, and among them was a gentleman who was not a party man in any respect. He had to sit upon one side, but he was generally considered a fair man, and had no strong feelings of partisanship. Therefore he (Mr. Norton) thought the matter did deserve more consideration. It was quite true that the House might not be sitting at the end of the four months, but if sufficient time was given to enable the petition to be presented at the beginning of the next session, that, he thought, ought to meet with no objection whatever. He had heard the complaint made outside that, by allowing an unnecessarily long time, it gave anyone who wished to get up a charge of corruption against a member, to work it up and complete it. That was an objection to the time being extended. He thought if the time was extended sufficiently to enable the petition to be presented at the time of, or within a week of, the opening of the session, that would do.

The PREMIER said he apprehended that the clause as it stood would have that effect. The House might not sit for four months after the return of the writ in a case in which there had been corruption or bribery. He was quite sure that unless a petition was presented very quickly, immediately after the fact that corruption or bribery took place was discovered, the House would not listen to a request to extend the time.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that it was not that House but the Supreme Court that would have the decision in a case of the kind, because the Legislative Council proposed that the words "with the leave of the Assembly" be left out.

The PREMIER: I propose to disagree to that.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said they had relegated the control of petitions to the Supreme Court, and he thought himself that four months was quite long enough to give, and that twelve months was certainly too long.

The PREMIER: That is with the leave of the Assembly.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that even with the leave of the Assembly he considered it too long. He thought six months should be quite long enough in all conscience for any man to get up a case.

The PREMIER said he thought six months a great deal too long, unless in special cases where it was thought desirable to extend it. The amendment proposed to give in no case more than four months. He thought the time ought to be limited, unless a particularly strong case could be made out for extending the time, and then the Assembly should have leave to extend it.

Mr. FOXTON said he might be obtuse and unable to regard the matter from every point of view, but he certainly did not see the force or reason why it should be necessary to have the leave of the Assembly. For his own part he thought that was opening the door to a repetition of the party votes. He would prefer that any man should be at liberty, on discovering a case of corruption within four months after the return of the writ, to bring a petition on his own responsibility, knowing full well the penalties to which he rendered himself liable in the event of the petition not being well founded. It seemed to him that if a vote of the House was to be taken immediately after a general election it was likely to be a party vote, and the leave of the Assembly might often be reserved where it ought to be given.

The PREMIER said that after a general election was just the case where the clause would not apply, because the House would certainly meet within eight weeks after the general election. It would only apply in cases of bribery and corruption not discovered for some time after the election. Any other objections which might be raised would be on questions of dry facts or law, and would involve no such serious delay to discover. In the case of bribery and corruption, it might well happen in this colony that the charge could not be established in so short a time; yet he did not think there should be more than eight weeks unless the petitioner could show that he could not possibly present the petition sooner. He himself thought that four months was too long a time unless some special reasons existed, and the House was to be the judge of those special reasons. He did not think any better tribunal could be suggested than that Assembly; and if the Assembly was to be the judge, twelve months would not be too long a period, because there would be no guarantee of the House sitting in a shorter period. That was the reason why a similar provision was made in England; twelve months was the longest period that could elapse between one session and another. The original clause would allow the time for presenting a petition to be lengthened in case of emergency; the amendment lengthened the time in all cases, but made no allowance for emergencies.

Question put and passed.

On clause 8—"Petition to be published and served on the sitting member," which the Legislative Council had amended by inserting the words "a copy of" before "the petition"—

The PREMIER moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 9—

"The sitting member or any person who voted or who had a right to vote at the election to which the petition relates, or any person complained against in the petition, may, within four weeks after presentation thereof, by notice in writing to the registrar, be admitted as a party to support or to oppose the same or to defend the return of the sitting member, as the case may be; and every person so admitted shall be deemed to be a party to the petition"—

which the Legislative Council had amended by the insertion in place of the word "or" in the 1st line of the words "within four weeks after service of the petition on him and," and by the substitution of the words "publication thereof in the *Gazette*" for the words "presentation thereof"—

The PREMIER moved that the word "may" be inserted before the word "within" in the first amendment, and that the amendments as amended be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 36—

"Two or more candidates may be made respondents to the same petition, and their cases may, for the sake of convenience, be tried at the same time, but such petition shall be deemed to be a separate petition against each respondent"—

which the Legislative Council had amended by the addition of the words "except that the petitioner shall not be required to pay into court more than one sum of £100, as hereinbefore provided"—

The PREMIER said the amendment was intended to remove an ambiguity which did undoubtedly exist. It was a question whether the words "sitting members" would not be preferable to "candidates," but he was afraid it was not competent for them to make the amendment. He proposed that the amendment be agreed to.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Are you going to insert the words "sitting members"?

The PREMIER: I do not know that we can. It is in no way a consequential amendment on the Legislative Council's amendment.

Question put and passed.

On clause 45—"Admission in certain cases of voters to be respondents"—

The PREMIER said the Legislative Council's amendments were consequential on the amendments in clause 9. He might mention that all the amendments except those in clause 7 were inserted after consultation with the Government. He moved that the amendments be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported to the House that the Committee had disagreed to one of the amendments of the Legislative Council, agreed to one amendment with an amendment, and had agreed to the other amendments.

The report was adopted.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council, with a message intimating that the Assembly disagreed to the amendments in clause 7, because it is desirable that the Legislative Assembly should have power in proper cases to extend the time for presenting petitions complaining of the return of its own members; agreed to the first amendment in clause 9 with an amendment, in which they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council; and agreed to the remaining amendments.

IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1882 AMENDMENT BILL—SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill proposes to amend the Immigration Act of 1882 by enabling some restriction to be put upon the operation of the 9th and 12th sections of that Act. Under the 9th section it is provided that—

"Any natural-born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty, residing in Queensland, desiring to provide a passage to the colony for any friend or relative in Europe, may apply in the form of Schedule C hereto, to the immigration agent in Brisbane, or to any of the

clerks of petty sessions throughout the colony; and on payment by the applicants of such sums as are in accordance with the scale contained in Schedule D hereto, a passage-warrant, available for twelve months, shall be issued by the immigration agent."

Schedule C requires the christian name and surname of the nominated person to be given at full length, and age, trade or calling; and Schedule D states that the scale of payment shall be £2 for each adult male between twelve and forty, one-half that amount for females, and larger or smaller sums for people older or younger. It will be observed that no discretion is given to the Government. All that is required is for a man to be a natural-born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty residing in Queensland, and he may go down to the office, pay his money, make his request, and the Government have no alternative but to provide a passage for his nominee. The 12th section provides that servants may be indentured in the same way, and that on certain conditions being fulfilled a passage to the colony shall be provided for them. It will be seen that under those sections the Government have no discretion in the matter. A good many complaints have been made lately that the remittance system is being abused. Persons residing in New South Wales, it is said, send money to persons residing in Queensland, with a request that they will nominate certain persons to come out to the colony under that system. The persons so nominated come out at the expense of this colony, and, on arriving, go over the border. That isolated cases of that kind have occurred we know; and lately the abuse of the system has been increasing a good deal. In a report from the despatching officer, addressed to the Agent-General on the 30th June last, with respect to the emigrants leaving by the "Quetta," he makes these observations:—

"Many of the full-paying men are going out to Queensland to nominate their wives, children, and friends. The remittance system is being largely used in this way by persons who really have no claim on the colony, and may or may not be honest in their intentions with respect to permanent settlement in Queensland."

One man out of a group of several men who reside in England comes out to Queensland at his own expense, and then becomes a natural-born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty, and the colony is bound to provide his friends with free passages to the colony. The despatching officer goes on to say:—

"In this vessel there are twelve single men and two single women nominated by"—

I will not mention his name—

"who is really a stranger to all of them, but sent remittance papers at the instigation of a Mr. Murphy, in Ireland. The two girls complained to me of being charged more than they should have been. Money was also sent to a man called Ross to remit for three families—Luke, Davidson, and Butler—all in this vessel. I mention these facts, as I am quite of opinion that the remittance system is being improperly taken advantage of, and that the conditions require to be made more stringent."

That is the report of the despatching officer to the Agent-General, forwarded to me under a covering letter, dated the 8th July. In addition to that, sir, we have at present no control over the class of persons brought out, and there is no doubt that it is particularly desirable that we should select the immigrants we pay for. There is plenty of room in the colony for many immigrants—farm labourers and many others—but there is not at the present time room for artisans—or not much room—and it is very necessary that they should not be allowed to come here in large numbers, both for their own sake and for the sake of those here now. It would be an improper thing for the Government to introduce mechanics and artisans in large numbers at the present time, whatever it may be in the

future. The Government allowed the contract for bounty ships, which were principally made use of by that class, to run out, and they have not renewed the contract. We now only have the free system, which is confined entirely to farm labourers and single women, and the remittance system. The remittance system, as I pointed out, is not only capable of being abused, but is actually being abused. I have in my hand a return showing the occupations of the different immigrants landed in Queensland since the 1st January, and on the whole it is satisfactory. A very large proportion indeed are persons who work with their hands, and there are not many tradesmen among them. During these eight months, out of 6,047 immigrants, there were 1,721 domestic servants, 1,831 farm labourers, 1,056 general labourers, 362 miners, 212 carpenters and joiners; then there is a drop to 73 gardeners and 56 blacksmiths, the number of every other class being below 50, and not many coming near that number. What we propose to do is to take power to regulate this remittance system, and even to discontinue it if necessary. We certainly ought to have power to do so—to deal with it by Orders in Council rather than to have the conditions embodied in an Act, because the conditions may need to be varied from time to time. We propose to require that the nominator shall prove that he is a *bonâ fide* resident in Queensland, and has been so for a considerable time, and shall give proof of his relationship to the person whom he nominates. It would be absurd that a man should come here as the agent of persons in England in order to get them nominated, and compel the Government to bring them out at its own expense. That there is a great deal of good in the system no one will deny. It has done much good in the past, and it is only lately that it has come to be seriously abused. What we now propose will, I believe, be sufficient to put a stop to those abuses. I do not see my hon. friend Mr. Jordan in the House, or I might have explained to him in a few words the reasons why it would be inconvenient to deal in this Bill with the subject of the motion he has on the paper. But that will be better left over till some other time. I beg now to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. NORTON: Mr. Speaker,—I think it is somewhat unusual to ask the House to grant power to the Government to suspend entirely the operation of such provisions as the 9th and 12th clauses of the Immigration Act of 1882. When we have clauses which have on the whole worked so successfully as the nomination clauses of the present law have done, the House ought to be somewhat chary in giving any Government authority to suspend the operation of those clauses altogether.

The PREMIER: It is only equivalent to a power not to spend money.

Mr. NORTON: I can quite understand the hon. gentleman's wish not to be obliged to bring out any persons who may be nominated, and I fully agree with most of his remarks. I believe these clauses have been very much abused, and although we have not heard so much about it recently I remember that several cases were mentioned a considerable time ago in which people living in New South Wales and wanting to get servants from the old country got someone here to nominate them, and then after the immigrants arrived in the colony they were shipped to New South Wales. Whether that was a fact I cannot say, but it has been distinctly stated that such was the case, and one hon. member spoke of a firm in Sydney—I forget whether he mentioned the name or not—who had got servants nominated and introduced by

these means, and he spoke in such a manner as to lead the House to believe that he was familiar with the circumstances. I quite agree, therefore, that it is desirable that the Government should have power to restrict the operation of the remittance clauses, so that they should not be compelled to give passages to any persons who may happen to be nominated. I do not think anyone should be brought here unless he is likely to stay and it is considered probable that he will make a desirable and useful colonist. Probably the possibility of the present provision being abused as it has been was lost sight of when it was before the House. Some amendment is evidently necessary, and I do not think there can be much objection to this Bill.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the House ought to consider well any Bill like this which is intended to restrict immigration to this country. The Bill looks simple enough, and will act as a restriction to immigration, and that is one of the things which should be kept in view by this House. The Agent-General in his report for last year refers to these remittance clauses as one of the weak spots in the otherwise very valuable Immigration Act of 1882, and he suggests that the right of nomination should be restricted to persons who have resided in the colony continuously for twelve months. I think the Premier mentioned that he intended to take a somewhat similar course. The Agent-General also makes reference in his report to the number of cases occurring very frequently of people being nominated by persons out here, and on arrival leaving the colony and going to Sydney, and says it is an invidious task to refuse to give passages to such persons after they have broken up their homes. Perhaps while this immigration question is under consideration it may not be out of place to refer to the lunatic asylum in connection with the immigrants. There is evidence that a considerable number of immigrants find their way to the asylum at Woogaroo. In 1883 there were 10 per cent. of the immigrants or new arrivals in the colony in Woogaroo. The following year the number of immigrants introduced was less, but the percentage rose from 10 to 14. The report for this year is not out, but I have information that there is reason to believe that the percentage is now 17 per cent. of the number of immigrants introduced. Some cases may perhaps occur on the passage; still the matter is one that should be looked into. I think that immigration to this country is not carried on so extensively as it might be. Perhaps the Premier may attribute the causes to the adverse seasons we have experienced, but really we are not getting the numbers and the class of people that we should have introduced into this country. The Agent-General, in his report, speaks very plainly upon that point, and in regard to farm labourers, which is the class of men we want to come out here, he writes as follows:—"Mr. Randall considers that hundreds of farm labourers would willingly emigrate if they had a definite engagement for two or three years, at wages varying from £25 a year upwards with rations, who otherwise would not leave the country." I am quite certain that that cannot be considered a high rate of wages, and if the farmers would only lay themselves out for it I believe that they would do valuable service to the country in introducing these desirable immigrants, and also themselves obtain that class of labour they are so anxious to procure. I daresay hon. members have seen the cablegram in Saturday's paper which states that a Mr. Norton has been speaking in Paris at the Trades Union Congress, and that he made the most extraordinary and untruthful statements that have ever gone out to the countries of Europe with respect to the

conditions of these colonies, and which will be somewhat of an antidote to the Agent-General's exertions in obtaining emigrants to send to this colony. This Mr. Norton says that the colonists are as badly off as Europeans; that the soil is in the hands of a few, and that there are thousands of unemployed in the colonies who are really glad to work for any wages they can get. Of course, anyone who knows anything about the matter is aware that the class of people who are out of work are those who will not labour, even for good wages; numbers of them have refused 6s. and 7s. a day in Adelaide. Nevertheless, I think these statements will do immigration a good deal of harm. I hope the Act we are now about to amend—we have had a good number of these amending Bills this session—will not restrict the introduction of immigrants. When the Premier took office he was going to introduce immigrants at the rate of 40,000 a year; to borrow largely and to spend largely; and the immigrants who were to come out were to help to share the burden of our debt. I hope this Bill will not restrict the introduction of the immigrants we require.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think we need take much notice of what was said on the subject by an individual in Paris, but I think we ought to be very careful how we deal with the question before the House, because it would be a great pity if we were to do anything which would interfere with the flow of a suitable class of immigrants into this colony. I think, sir, that the class of nominated immigrants, generally—generally, Mr. Speaker—have really been the class of most service to the colony as well as to themselves. We know that the object of previous immigrants generally has been, as soon as they themselves have got straight and made their little homes about them, to send for their friends—their brothers, sisters, or parents, and so on through all the ramifications of family life—and I trust that in the working out of the Immigration Act, if this amending Bill is passed, the Chief Secretary will not do anything to restrict the introduction of that class of immigrants. I think that would be a pity, because experience tells us that that class are the least charge upon the State when they get here. In nine cases out of ten they come to employment which is ready for them, or to homes ready to receive them, and that is not the case with a very large number of the immigrants who arrive in the colony. I hope, therefore, that the Chief Secretary, in wording the amendment, will pay strict attention to the matter to which I have referred.

Mr. ISAMBERT said: Mr. Speaker,—The principles of immigration have frequently been called in question, not only in this colony, but also in the other colonies; and in some colonies they have gone so far as to suspend immigration altogether. Notwithstanding the benefits to be derived from the presence of a large population, the value of every immigrant to the colony, and the large amount of capital represented by every immigrant, this influx of immigration has had to be suspended in consequence of popular opinion in the other colonies; and the colony of Queensland is the only colony now recognising State aid to immigration. In the other colonies it is almost *nil*, and we must be prepared to see the question arise as to the wisdom of continuing immigration any longer or suspending it for a time. While we are amending this Act for the purpose of limiting or suspending certain sections of it, I believe it would be wise to give the Government the power to suspend the operation of any part of the Act.

The PREMIER: We already have power to suspend the rest.

Mr. ISAMBERT: Provision should also be made for such a proposition as that introduced by the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Jordan) being carried. Notwithstanding that we pay annually large sums for immigration, we have to propose new taxation to make up the deficit, which might perhaps be as well made up by suspending or limiting immigration. We pay large sums to provide labour, and in doing so we are bringing out people to compete with those who are in the colony crying out for employment. At their expense we import people to be competitors with themselves, so that the question is very much involved. But whatever may be our future action, there can be no doubt that the nominated class of immigration will last longer, be the most useful, and give the least trouble to the Government. I have serious doubts whether it is wise to go on with the wholesale importation of immigrants, and whether it would not be better to cast our eyes about and devise some means to render the colony prosperous—some such means as I proposed last year. At any rate, we should only import the most useful class of immigrants, and not glut the colonial market with useless labour.

Mr. SALKELD said: Mr. Speaker,—The Chief Secretary has intimated that this Bill is intended to put a limit on the operation of the existing Act, and I should like to know whether the rates paid for nominated immigrants are to be increased?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. SALKELD: It is simply intended to take precautions against the clauses being abused by parties outside the colony?

The PREMIER: That is all.

Mr. SALKELD: I have no objection to that but I would point out that I have heard several complaints as to the class of immigrants coming out. I was told by some of the officials that a bad report had been given in regard to a large number of the immigrants by a vessel which recently arrived, and I was rather surprised, because I saw by the home newspapers that a large number came from the agricultural districts of England, which I happened to visit last March or April. A friend of mine took me to about twenty or twenty-four villages, and in driving round I was completely surprised at what I heard. He was thoroughly conversant with the subject, though a large land-owner, and to my astonishment he was very much in favour of "three acres and a cow." He explained to me the difficulty there was in agricultural districts in regard to emigration. I saw men working on farms—able-bodied men, used to hard work, really sturdy agricultural labourers—and he told me their wages were only 2s. 6d. a day, and that some were as low as 2s.

Mr. WHITE: And find themselves?

Mr. SALKELD: Yes; they were 2s. 6d. a day, but some were reduced to 2s. 3d., and some as low as 2s. per day. I said, "Why in the world don't they emigrate to the Australian colonies?" and after a long conversation I found that it was very difficult to get this class of people to go abroad, and I am not surprised at it now. Perhaps hon. members will laugh at what I elicited during my journey. In going home by one of the Orient steamers, I saw a person going back from Sydney. He had been in Sydney three months and thought of going to Queensland, and he seriously and candidly assured me that the reason he did not go was because he was informed that it was such a bad place for snakes that people could not live there. I laughed at the idea, but I found several other

persons who had the same notions, and on turning up the statistics for the two previous years I found that out of 11,000 or 12,000 persons who died, five met their deaths through bites of snakes. When I showed these figures I was not believed, and the persons said there must be some mistake, but I assured them that the figures were quite correct. Another idea is that the aborigines are so bad that a great many people who go into the country are killed by them; but on turning to the statistics I found that only fourteen were killed. Those are specimens of what intelligent people believe. In England I found other people who knew comparatively nothing about this colony. They knew there was a place called Australia, but they asked what part of the world Queensland was in. Others again had heard of the country, but had also heard that the blacks were so savage, the heat so great, and sunstroke so frequent that they did not think it a fit place to live in, and they were surprised and thunderstruck when I told them that I had been living for twenty years in Queensland. I do not find fault with the emigration officers, but it strikes me that too many of the emigrants come from the large cities; people who are no use to themselves when they get here, no use to employers, and no use to the colony. They become an incubus, but if we can get a class of people who have been earning their 12s. or 15s. a week, I am sure they would do good here. I should be very sorry to interfere with the working of the Act—as far as nominated immigrants are concerned—because I believe that this is a class from whom we have drawn some of our best immigrants—persons who have stayed here, and have become rooted in the colony. Persons knowing that they have brothers and sisters living here, and doing well, will sooner believe what they tell them than all the rubbish that is published in the newspapers. I have noticed how eagerly any statements affecting the colonies are inserted by the newspapers—statements supposed to come from intelligent men. Before I went home I had numbers of cuttings from some papers sent to me, but I do not believe that any of those statements were written by people who had been twelve months in the colony. I saw one letter abusing the colony, which was written by a person from the immigration depôt, and I do not suppose he could have been here more than a week or a month at the outside. I can assure hon. members that it takes very little to frighten people out of coming to Queensland. I saw a letter from a person who stated that miners received £3 and joiners £4 a week here, and that the children would never go messages for coppers; but that he wished for all that that he was back home again. That letter was shown to me as an impeachment of the colony. I asked the question, “Do you think that will prevent desirable people from coming to Queensland?” and I was told, “Decidedly it will.” “Well,” I said, “if things are so good as that letter states I would not wish to go to a better place.” While I was at home a letter was published in a Cumberland newspaper. It was from a person in Queensland who was well known in the county, and everything contained in it was thoroughly believed, but I took the liberty of contradicting some of the statements contained in it. I believe the chief thing that ought to be impressed upon the Agent-General is the desirability of avoiding the large cities, and getting the people from the country districts where they receive a low rate of wages. I know it is possible to overdo immigration, but if we are to import people at all let us have them from a class who will be of some use to themselves and benefit to the colony. I see that Mr. Randall has been in the locality I spoke of, and has induced a large number of married people to come out. The complaints I

have heard were of the single people, but the married people were said to be a very good lot indeed. Quite recently an effort was made to start a system of Imperial emigration, and in this the various colonies were invited to take a part. I expressed a hope to the Agent-General that Queensland, at all events, would not take the question up, because I believe the real object of the movement is to relieve the poor rates. I hope that none of the colonies will take part in that movement. Let those who manufacture the poor bear the burden of maintaining them, and let us select the class of people we want for ourselves—a class whose introduction will be a benefit to the colony, and not an incubus upon it.

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Ipswich does not blame the emigration agents for their action, but I certainly do blame them. The Premier says that the proper class of immigrants, the countrymen, are coming; but the hon. gentleman told us so last year about this time.

The PREMIER: So they are coming.

Mr. WHITE: I would like to see them coming. I went down last Tuesday morning to the depôt to see the immigrants that had come by the “Quetta,” and I spent an hour there looking for the countrymen—trying to find a countryman. I watched for some time, and waited to see if any would turn up, and at last I spotted one man who appeared something like a countryman. I spoke to him and asked him where he came from, and he told me he was not a new arrival at all; that he had come in some other vessel, and had just come down to see if anyone whom he knew had come out. Well, sir, I waited longer than that, and thought that some fresh one would turn up as it was in the morning—the right time to find them at or about the depôt. Then I saw another man who I thought might pass for a countryman, and I went and spoke to him; but no, he had not come in the “Quetta”—he was not an immigrant. At last, after being there about an hour, looking for a countryman, I picked up another man that I thought I could talk to and get some information from, and asked him if he was an immigrant from the “Quetta.” He said he was, but he was a miner; and when I spoke about looking for some countrymen from off the vessel, he said, “Oh! I never saw such a lot of useless creatures brought together in all my life.” That, sir, is the state of things. If the Government are importing that class of people into the country, it will bring about very serious results. The Government are bound to provide food or work for these people. They cannot work—a lot of them cannot—and the consequences will be serious if the Government have to provide food for them. On the other hand, if means were used to bring countrymen here, “Hodge” would go into the country; he would soon find employment by hook or by crook, and the Government would not be troubled with him as an applicant for labour. Much as he is despised, he would find employment. The agriculturists—sugar-growers, or whatever they may be—would find that they got the worth of their money if they got “Hodge” into their employment, and he would never be out of employment of some sort until he could start on his own account as a colonist, and get a piece of land of his own. He would be no burden on the country at all, and yet we are neglecting that sort of immigration altogether. I blame the emigration agents. There is something about the country districts which requires agents to go and canvass the country. Those gentlemen are men who like to exhibit themselves in large halls, before large

audiences. They have a lecture off by heart, which they deliver at different places, and it is distasteful to them to go canvassing in the country districts. In fact, lecturing is not so much required in the country districts as agents going about talking with the people; going to villages, stopping for a few days at the village inn, making themselves acquainted with the men they can get hold of, and instructing them. That is what is wanted more than lecturing in the towns. I am very sorry to see the present state of things continuing. The country is getting deluged with an undesirable class of people. What we want is to get people who will go and settle upon the land, and we are not bringing out people who will do so, but are deluging the towns with a class who are fit for nothing else than making their living in some way or another in towns; and unless a change takes place very soon, depend upon it we shall suffer.

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—I hardly think it would be fair to allow a statement of the kind just made to go forth unchallenged. It may be that we are not getting altogether the class of immigrants we desire, but I believe it is universally admitted that the character of our immigrants, during the last one or two years, is a great improvement. I am afraid that the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. White) was not looking in the right direction for countrymen. It is a remarkable fact that the immigrants who arrive now in large numbers do not remain any time in the *dépôt* unemployed. And I think the remarks made concerning those who are now engaged as emigration agents at home are very unfair indeed. I allude particularly to Mr. Randall. It is not a fact that he confines his operations to large towns. He devotes the whole of his time to the centres of agricultural population, and I have frequently had newspapers from localities he has visited, in which full and particular accounts have been given of his proceedings in visiting villages—not in delivering cut-and-dried lectures as the hon. member says, but in holding conferences and conversations with the very class of people that we desire to bring to the colony. He generally gets the vicar or some leading man of the locality to preside, and I was very gratified indeed to see the favourable impression he had made upon the class to whom the hon. member for Ipswich refers, a class that we all know it is very difficult indeed to move or disturb from the locality where they have become fixtures. So that I do think we should not allow remarks of this kind to pass, reflecting as they do upon the men I refer to, and particularly one who is doing capital service to the country, and who is sending from the northern counties and the agricultural portions of England a capital class of emigrants. In fact, we cannot get too many of them. I have no sympathy whatever with the hon. member for Stanley, who would have us at all hazards arrest the progress of immigration. If we get the right class and give them facilities for settlement when they arrive here, we cannot have too many of them. I think we should also protest against the objection that we are bringing immigrants to the colony to compete for employment with those who are here already. Why, Mr. Speaker, the very life-blood of the colony and her every capacity for giving employment to those who are here or may come here must depend upon getting into the colony a large number of those immigrants, who, as the hon. member said, will serve their time and in a very short period become employers of others. The Bill now before the House is, I think, a very desirable one. I do think that we should give every facility for the right class of immigrants to

come here, but at the same time we should take every measure we can to prevent the generosity of the colony being imposed upon.

Mr. MIDGLEY said: Mr. Speaker,—So far as the Bill before the House—which is intended to deal with an abuse that has been found by the Government to exist—that is, people of the other colonies getting their friends out at our expense—is concerned, I think there can be no objection to it. But if the Bill is intended to be a restriction upon our already very meagre, as I consider, stream of immigration, I think it is as objectionable a measure as could be brought before this House. I quite agree with the remarks of the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Fraser). I consider that the one thing we want in this colony is a much larger stream of immigration.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Not from towns.

Mr. MIDGLEY: I have my own ideas as to what constitutes the right class of immigrants. I do not believe that any particular portion of the community at home is exclusively the kind of immigrants suitable to this colony. I believe there are grand chances in life for all classes of people in the old country, and I have no fault to find with the emigration officers at home, and, so far as the quality of our immigrants is concerned, I believe we have much to be gratified over. My dissatisfaction is with the quantity and not with the quality of the immigrants. Because things are not always in full tide, and every man is not in constant work in our towns and cities and getting the highest wages, we begin to get down in the mouth and despondent, when really we are too far away from the state of things that exist on the other side of the world to compare the two things at all—too far away altogether. I think the remarks we are constantly making about immigrants who are coming to Queensland are remarks which we ought to be considerably ashamed of. The people who come here have to pass through a certain ordeal of selection, and yet we are constantly, in this House, making remarks upon them which, if they are people of any pluck and spirit at all, must be very offensive. But I would like to know what there is in connection with farm labour that a strong-limbed city man cannot do. I know very well there are certain things which only a skilled farmer can do; but the man with strong limbs—a strong, healthy man—can fell a tree, or feed a pig, or groom a horse, or plant potatoes. I have done a good many of those things myself and I was never brought up in a country town. I came to the colony with this doctrine ringing in my ears, and it is the doctrine which ought to ring in the ears of all people wherever they come from: Tell a man that if he comes to Queensland he must take the first thing that turns up and work his way; and if he is a strong-limbed, willing, strong-minded man, what does it matter what he takes up at first? An agricultural labourer here will often get more constant employment than the artisan will at home; he is really in a better position when things are at all flourishing than an artisan at home. If he can build a house, hew and shape timber, and sow, he is the man for whom there is a considerable sphere in a colony like Queensland. Do not let us disparage the people who do come. If we do not get exactly the class of people we think are the class who should come, to the exclusion of all others, do not let us disparage them when they have come. I say that the city men from England who have known so much poverty and distasteful work are as good immigrants, in the long run, as any who come here—men who can turn their hands to anything and

do anything. I believe it would be found, if hon. gentlemen go into individual cases in the colony, that city men have done just as well in the country and in the towns as men from the country.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—As I understand this Bill, it is intended to restrict the nominees of persons in the neighbouring colonies being brought out at the expense of Queensland. In my own experience I have known a great number of immigrants imported into Queensland who have managed, after their arrival, to set sail for the other colonies, and who have thus robbed, in effect, the colony of the price of their passage here. I regret exceedingly to hear the remarks that have been made about the emigration lecturer at home. It seems to me that he is confined strictly to England—not one word being said about Scotland or Ireland; and although I fully appreciate the excellence of the English character, and the English farm labourers as valuable men to import here, I maintain that Scotchmen and Irishmen are quite as good; and as Scotch and Irish contribute to the Immigration Fund of this colony, they have as much right to have lecturers sent to those portions of Great Britain to get people to come to this colony. I will not make a long speech on the subject. As I understand this Bill it is a very good one: to prevent persons residing in New South Wales from nominating immigrants to be brought through Queensland; and I hope it will be successful.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the remarks of the hon. member for Stanley are very pertinent in objecting to the emigration lecturer confining his labours to large centres of population, because the residents of the towns are not the class we want in this colony. The hon. member for Fassifern justifies the conduct of the emigration lecturer in lecturing in large towns, while at the same time the hon. member for South Brisbane states that he has not done so. From what I have seen from reports, the present lecturer certainly does confine his labours to one particular portion of England. There was one gentleman, Mr. Russell, the emigration lecturer for Scotland, who confined himself to no particular locality, but travelled over all the country districts of Scotland; but his services were dispensed with, although a splendid class of men came out as the consequence of his labours.

Mr. FRASER: Most unsuitable.

Mr. HAMILTON: He certainly failed in this way; that he did not thoroughly believe in the politics of the hon. member who now interjects, but he was generally admitted to be one of the best men who could possibly be obtained. I have been on board several ships filled with immigrants who came out with him, and was told by those who had superintended them that they compared favourably with any immigrants who had ever come to the colony. I hope some attention will be paid to the remarks of the hon. member for Stanley, and that the emigration lecturer will have express instructions to confine his labours to the country districts.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I must say that I have a great deal of sympathy with the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. White. No doubt all the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Fraser, said was quite true; but the fact remains that very few agricultural labourers come here. I daresay that a good many come out professing to be agricultural labourers; but when you come to inquire for them at the depôts you very seldom find them. I know this: that so far as the Ipswich district is concerned, if an agri-

cultural labourer or two were known to be there, they would not be there very many minutes before someone would be asking for their services. So that while a great number of labourers come here under the remittance system, the fact still remains that very few of them are agricultural labourers. I may say that when I was in England I had occasion to spend a few days at a village called Ashton, in Hertfordshire, and the vicar called upon me and asked me to deliver a lecture upon emigration to Queensland. I said I had no objection to tell them what I knew about Queensland, and its immigration laws, and some other things about it; and I had a very pleasant meeting. Nobody had before lectured in that village, which was in a highly cultivated district; and I had a very large meeting—all country people—and they seemed to be perfectly astonished at the resources of Queensland, and the easy way in which they could get here. Up to that time, the beginning of March, no emigration lecturer had been there. I think very much as the hon. member for Stanley thinks, that our emigration lecturers should confine their operations entirely to those districts. The very large towns are not the best places for the emigration lecturers to work in.

The PREMIER: They never go near them.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I am very glad to hear it, but still I can inform the House that a very great number of the rural districts have never been visited by the lecturers. It is high time something was done in this direction in reference to the Bill brought before us to-day. It is well known, I suppose, to most hon. members that many of the people brought out here leave almost at once for the other colonies. I know myself of people being brought to this colony and then going to Sydney and Melbourne and other places. I know complaints have been made in Ipswich within the last few weeks of people who were not long in the colony and were known to be going away. The Immigration Office was communicated with, and the information was given that after persons had been three months in the colony they were at liberty to go. I do not think that is sufficiently long for them to remain in the colony and then be at liberty to leave it. If the colony pays the passage of any person it is right that he should remain until he pays back the amount spent in bringing him out, or he should stop for two years in the colony. I do not think that would be too much to require of anyone. There is no doubt the nominated system might be improved, and that a few amendments are necessary to secure the bringing out of the right kind of people.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the right kind of people are coming to the colony at the present time. It is information for me to hear that the emigration lecturers do not lecture in the agricultural districts. I have seen reports lately of dozens of meetings, and all of them held in agricultural districts. There are none, so far as I know, held in the large centres of population. I received a paper last week from Lincolnshire, stating that 100 farm labourers left that district for this colony, and were accompanied to the wharf by Mr. Randall, the lecturer for this colony. I have taken some interest in this matter, and someone in England—I do not know who—sends me all these papers, and I have read scores of reports of meetings held in schools and presided over in some cases by the vicar and curate of the parish, in others by Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and Congregational ministers, and in all these cases the meetings were held in agricultural districts and amongst the agricultural classes. I have never read a report of a meeting held in London, Birmingham, Liverpool, or in any of the large towns

by Mr. Randall. I maintain that a very desirable class of immigrants are coming to this colony. When I went up to Maryborough to meet the electors some months ago some gentleman—a large land-owner I presume he would be—wrote a letter condemning the class of people now coming to the colony, and, of course, the same arguments are always used by persons of his class. They say that it is the scum of the old country we get out here. That is a very rash assertion to make, because the very reverse is the fact. It is not the scum of the old country, but a very desirable class of people from the old country who come out here, and I am sure if hon. members had gone the other day and seen the class of people who came out in the "Quetta" they would have been proud that such people were coming out to the colony. As an hon. member remarked, England, Ireland, and Scotland form a large territory for one man to work, and so far as I can see there is only one man there, and he is doing very good work. If Mr. Randall continues in the way he is going on, he will well earn his money by sending out so desirable a class of people as those he has already sent out.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—I did not intend to say anything on this Bill, the second reading of which I thought would be passed without very much discussion, but I think the Government should be urged to protect the colony from being robbed by people nominating their friends with the view of going to another colony. I had no intention of speaking on the Bill until I heard the extraordinary speech made by the hon. member for Fassifern.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: By the hon. member for Stanley.

Mr. McMASTER: No, by the hon. member for Fassifern; the hon. member for Stanley was pretty well correct in what he said. The hon. member for Fassifern informed this House that any man with good strong limbs is a fit and proper person to go on a farm and do the work to be done on a farm. I have had some experience in farming, and I have seen some of those strong-limbed men the hon. member speaks of at work on farms, and I found they destroyed more with their feet than they improved with their hands. That is my experience of many of them. I saw one of them who, when he was asked if he could hold a plough, said, "Certainly I can," and when his master told him he was going too deep he said he would take care of that, and he lifted his hands, and of course the plough went deeper, and, as a matter of fact, stuck fast. I admit that strong able-bodied men, willing to learn, may be taught farming. It is not so hard to learn to be a farmer as to be a carpenter or engineer; but as a rule the strong men we get from the large cities at home cannot be got to leave the cities out here. They are walking about the streets here, and to a very great extent they are the persons who go about as the unemployed. They go about asking for work and praying, many of them, that they may not get it. I have myself had applications from scores of men for work, but on taking stock of them I found there was not one suitable for the position for which they applied. I am satisfied that many people coming out now are of the right class, and I believe our present lecturer, Mr. Randall, is one of the most able lecturers we have had since the hon. member for South Brisbane withdrew from it. I look upon that hon. gentleman as the champion of emigration lecturers. Mr. Randall goes about his business in a business-like manner, and goes to the right class of people—people who, when they come out here, settle down, and in a

few years send for their friends and their neighbours. I saw in an English paper reference made to the 100 farm labourers of whom the hon. member for Maryborough spoke as being sent out by Mr. Randall, who went to see them off. I know that some time ago an emigration company or society was being formed in England, and I look on that with a good deal of suspicion. I think that such a society is likely to want to get rid of those people who are likely to be sent to the poor-house; they want to get them to emigrate, so that they may not be a burden on the squire or parish. We do not want that class of people here; they are no good at home, and they would be quite as useless here. That is not the class the people of this colony are paying for, or supposed to be paying for. We want persons who will endeavour to make this colony what we have endeavoured to make it so far as we have gone ourselves—men who will be able to assist in bearing the burden and heat of the day, who will settle down and make their homes, and bring their families with them. As to the large number of farming labourers coming out, I may say that they are the very class of men we have specially invited to come out. It is very easy for a strong-limbed man who knows nothing of farming to palm himself off on the agent as a farm labourer. Farming does not consist of feeding pigs and grooming horses; and even a man who has been a farmer at home has to learn something when he comes here before he can adapt himself to the climate. I am glad that Mr. Randall is going into the rural districts and getting this class of people. The hon. member for Cook made a remark about an agent who went home some time ago, and who was an excellent man, but was dismissed on account of some political bias.

Mr. HAMILTON: I did not say so. The hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Fraser) said something to the effect that he was not a desirable man, and I said the hon. member's political bias inclined him to make that remark.

Mr. McMASTER: Then I misunderstood the hon. gentleman. I may say that I never looked upon that agent as a success, and I do not think many other people did. To my certain knowledge he confined himself very much to the large cities; and the class of people that can be got from those streets are not a desirable class to bring to this colony. I am very glad that a restriction is put on the bounty system as well, because a shipowner would pick up all sorts of people on the street, and did not care what they were, so long as he got his £10. I say we are perfectly justified in giving the Government power to restrict people in other colonies from nominating their friends at our expense. I hope the Government will insist on their lecturers going into the farming districts, as we cannot bring too many farmers into the colony. When they get settled on the land they will be able to bring up their families, and employ and teach the strong-limbed gentry the hon. member for Fassifern referred to.

Mr. SMYTH said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not agree with the hon. member for Fassifern that you cannot bring too many immigrants into the colony. I think at the present time we have a great deal too many. We see that in New South Wales they have started relief works for the unemployed, and the unemployed from Adelaide and New Zealand have been coming over to New South Wales to get work on the relief works at a very low wage. If we continue to pour immigrants into this colony we shall have the same state of things here. There was an agitation in Townsville lately to start works there for the unemployed,

and it will soon be that way in Brisbane and all the other large towns. In Maryborough they were not satisfied with direct shipments of immigrants, but they had steamers calling at Hervey's Bay. The men cannot find employment; they are brought for the sake of the capitalists, who know that the more men they get there the better they will be able to keep the wages down. It is a good thing for the capitalist, but it is a bad thing for the workingman. In Maryborough there are perhaps 200 persons in the depôt, and there is possibly work for about 50. The next thing we know is that the others are shipped off to Gympie, and sent to the clerk of petty sessions to look after. Mr. Farrelly does not know what to do with them, and he has to put them up at a public-house at the Government expense. Then they find out that there is a member for Gympie, and they come up to him. That is where a portion of his £200 a year goes. They come up eight or ten at a time, hungry, and I have to send them into my kitchen and give them something to eat. I find that some of these poor fellows have been offered in Maryborough 6s. a week—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: A day?

Mr. SMYTH: No; 6s. a week. That is what they tell me—big, strong, farming men. Well, Mr. Farrelly and I have succeeded in getting a lot of them work with the larger farmers about; others we have provided with tools and set cutting billet-wood in the bush. There are plenty of unemployed in Gympie; but when these men come looking for work there is a certain amount of sympathy for them. When there is a dearth of employment, then there is a general cry that there are too many immigrants coming into the colony; but we cannot have too many when the country is in a prosperous condition. We do not want mechanics; our young men are growing up to be mechanics; they cannot all be lawyers and doctors and parsons. I wish to enter my protest against the flooding of the country by immigrants as referred to by the hon. member for Fassifern.

Mr. ADAMS said: Mr. Speaker,—It was not my intention to say anything about this Bill; and I do not know now what the discussion is on. I understood that we were discussing the amendment, but it appears we are discussing the action of the Agent-General at home. Now, sir, one thing which fell from an hon. gentleman opposite made me feel indignant. I could not sit quietly and hear this beautiful country vilified in the manner it is—hear that a man who has come to the fair colony of Queensland could say he was offered the paltry sum of 6s. a week. It is a long time that I have been in the colony, but it is the first time I ever heard in a civilised intelligent community that 6s. a week had been offered to a working man—a white man in particular.

Mr. SMYTH: It is true, though.

Mr. ADAMS: I have been in the habit of employing labour in Queensland for over thirty years. I remember the first immigrants who came here; I remember when we saw three or four shiploads a year in Maryborough when Maryborough was very small, and the whole of them were Paisley weavers, yet they were never offered 6s. a week. I have been in the habit of employing farming labour for the last thirty years, and I say the hon. member opposite, Mr. White, is perfectly right when he says we do not get the proper class of labour. I think very great credit is due to Mr. Randall; he is doing his utmost, and I am perfectly satisfied that he is at the present day exerting himself in the proper direction. But, sir, it is not very long ago since I saw labourers out of employment.

Here in Brisbane there are many men out of work, and we hear the cry of the unemployed; but they are not farm labourers, and they will not go out of Brisbane if they can get over 14s. or 15s. a week as porters or anything of that sort about the place. They are perfectly satisfied. I have seen something of these men—men without either "money or marbles." I have given them food, and offered them employment, which they seemed only too glad to get; but as soon as they got round the next corner I never saw them again. I can assure hon. members that any farming hand who is willing to go and work on a farm can get very fair wages—not 6s. a week, nor double 6s., but far more than that even.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—We have heard a lot of conflicting opinions about this payment of labourers question, but I am of opinion that my hon. friend the member for Gympie is somewhat mistaken when he talks about 6s. a week.

Mr. SMYTH: Not at all; I can prove it.

Mr. KATES: That must have been an exceptional case. The man was hard up, and someone took advantage of his position.

Mr. SMYTH: That was it.

Mr. KATES: Although a great deal has been said, the right chord on this question has not been touched yet, which is this: that when the farming immigrants come here there is no one to guide them, to tell them what to do. When agriculturists were introduced into America, land was given them, huts were put up for them; they were supplied with seed, and, thus encouraged, they settled on the land, repaid the advances made to them and prospered. Something of that sort should be done here. We have any amount of land—true, the best part of it has been locked up, especially in the settled districts—but someone should be appointed to meet the newly arrived farming immigrants to show them where they can select, to supply them with seed corn, and in other ways induce them to settle on the land. Then we should no longer hear of such cases as those which occurred the year before last. Some families came to the Downs; they could not find their land, and there was no one to show them; and so, although the colony had paid their passages out, they went over the border to Tenterfield and Glen Innes. There they were supplied with good land, and there they settled, and since that time, I understand, they have got their friends from England to settle there also. With regard to the Bill before the House, I shall certainly vote for it. It is a protection to the country, a protection to the Government, and a protection in every way; and I trust it will pass. As to what the hon. member for Gympie said, that men have been offered 6s. a week as wages, there is no truth in it as far as we are concerned on the Downs. The wage we offer there to good agricultural hands is £1 a week and rations.

Mr. ANNEAR: They give kanakas 10s. a week and rations at Maryborough.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House went into Committee of the Whole to consider the Bill in detail.

On clause 1—"Short title"—

The PREMIER said he would take the opportunity of saying, with reference to some remarks made during the debate on the second reading of the Bill, that Mr. Randall never lectured in the large towns of England, but confined himself entirely to the agricultural

districts. He read a report from him to the Agent-General not long ago, in which he said he had been promised the support of a most influential society of ladies and gentlemen who took an interest in emigration, and from whose help great results were expected; but they wanted Mr. Randall to deliver a lecture in one of the large towns. Mr. Randall refused, saying he did not want any townsmen. When the society heard that they said that instead of helping him they would do all they could to thwart him. With reference to the passengers by the "Quetta," referred to by the hon. member for Stanley, in the same report from the despatching officer from whom he had before quoted, it was stated that nearly all the single men—168—were remittance passengers; or in other words there were nearly 168 men brought out at the colony's expense, with whose selection the colony had nothing to do.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 2, as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may, by Order in Council, suspend the operation of the provisions of the ninth and twelfth sections of the principal Act, or any of them, or may by like Order in Council restrict the operation of those provisions, or any of them, to such persons or classes of persons as may be specified in the Order in Council, or may impose such conditions with respect to the operation of those provisions as may be declared by the Order in Council.

"Every such Order in Council shall be published in the *Gazette*, and shall have the force of law."

Mr. MIDGLEY asked whether the Government proposed to interfere materially with remittance passengers simply because they were not agricultural labourers?

The PREMIER said that if the hon. member had listened to him when moving the second reading of the Bill he would have heard him say that the system had been very much abused, and that the Government had no control over it. He gave an instance of a man who had come from England to the colony, paying his own passage, being the representative of a number of others, and who, as soon as he got here, took advantage of the system and nominated a number of people—several families—in England, with whose selection the Government had nothing to do, and who, when they got here, could go wherever they pleased. Those men excluded the Government from bringing out people from the agricultural districts, for when a ship was filled up with them the others had to stay behind.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he hoped it was not intended to suspend the remittance system. It was about the most important part of the Act, and should be the last to be let go.

The PREMIER said he quite agreed with the hon. member, but it was the only provision in the Act that was imperative; all the rest depended upon the money being voted by Parliament. Under that section, as soon as a man had paid down his money he was entitled to a passage warrant, and that entitled the nominee to have a passage provided by the Government; and he could bring an action against the Government if they did not provide it. That was a state of things which was certainly undesirable. He quite agreed with the hon. member that that was the last part of the Act that should be suspended, provided that it worked as it was intended to work, and as it always had worked until lately, when people who were really *bonâ fide* residents of the colony were bringing out their friends and relations to settle near them. But the Government ought certainly not to be called upon to bring out nominated emigrants in the way mentioned in the letter of the despatching officer.

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Mr. NORTON said he believed that at the time the Immigration Act was passed it was the intention of the House to give power to persons living in the colony to nominate their friends at home without any opposition being put in their way. Reasons had, however, arisen, as the Premier had pointed out, why that provision should be restricted, but he was afraid that if the Committee passed the Bill in its present form the effect would be detrimental to the colony, because people at home were acquainted with the fact that the nomination system existed, and many persons came out to the colony for the purpose of ascertaining for themselves whether it was a desirable place to settle down in before bringing out their families. Of course, the lecturers at home mentioned the fact that that portion of the Act was in operation, and he believed that many persons came to the colony in the first instance to spy out the land, intending, if they were satisfied with the prospects here, to bring out their families under the nomination system. The effect of the Bill, therefore, would be very prejudicial, because it would lead those people to believe that after they had come here the clauses might be suspended, and they might not be able to introduce their families in consequence. Then there might be a Minister some time who objected to bringing out people under the nomination system, and he might suspend it altogether; and it was very undesirable that any Minister who happened to have a strong feeling against the system should have the power to do that. For those reasons he did not think power should be given to the Government to wholly suspend the operation of the remittance clauses of the Act.

The PREMIER said the Government should have the control of immigration, and not those people in England, who came out here for the purpose of bringing a number of others out afterwards. At the present time not much harm had been done, but it did seem an absurdity that any one man coming out here paying his passage could make the Government bring out all his friends. That was taking the matter out of their hands. It was only lately it occurred to people to do that, but now it appeared that they were making a practice of it.

Mr. NORTON: If you have power to restrict the operation of the clause, that should be sufficient to meet the case.

The PREMIER: The power to suspend would sometimes be more effective. It might be necessary at some time to send instructions to the Agent-General to suspend emigration altogether, and that could not be done as the law stood now.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The late Government did it.

The PREMIER: One of the first things the late Government did when they came into office was to stop immigration. He did not know how the remittance clause stood then, but as it was now they could not do that. They might determine not to put on ships for immigration, but they would be obliged to bring out people nominated in the colony or they would subject themselves to an action.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The report was adopted, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

WAYS AND MEANS.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the

Whole, further to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Question—

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

1st. That in lieu of the duties of Customs now levied upon articles on which such duties are levied in proportion to the value thereof, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid a duty at the rate of £7 10s. for every £100 of the value thereof.

2nd. That in lieu of the duties now levied under the provisions of the Stamp Duties Act of 1866 upon the granting of probates and letters of administration, there be raised, levied, collected, and paid in respect of the property, real and personal, of deceased persons which is transmitted, whether by will or upon intestacy, duties at the rates following, that is to say—

Where the total net value of the estate, after deducting all debts, does not exceed £100, no duty;

Where the value exceeds £100, and does not exceed £1,000, 2 per cent.;

Where the value exceeds £1,000, and does not exceed £10,000, 3 per cent.;

Where the value exceeds £10,000, and does not exceed £20,000, 4 per cent.;

And over the value of £20,000, 5 per cent.

Provided that, as to so much of the property as is transmitted to the widow or children of the deceased, the duty shall be calculated at one-half only of the percentage above mentioned.

On all settlements of property made by any person, and containing trusts or dispositions to take effect after his death, duties at the same rate as before provided.

On letters of administration granted after a grant during minority or absence, £5.

On probates granted pursuant to leave reserved, or limited or special letters of administration, £5.

On which it had been proposed, as an amendment, that the word “£100” be omitted from the 2nd paragraph of the 2nd resolution.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Fraser,—In reference to the Budget presented by the Treasurer, on which we have had a long debate, fault has been found with the fact that the Government have not been able to square their accounts for last year. I myself, when I saw the accounts of revenue and expenditure for the year, was surprised that the deficit was not a great deal more than it is, knowing so well the depression that existed in the country; not from the adverse seasons alone, on which we have been so often twitted by the other side, but from the depreciation in the value of a number of our exports. For instance, the price of wool has been down to a figure which, I believe, it has only touched once before in the history of Queensland. This depreciation in the value of our exports is, I believe, a great cause of the depression, as well as the losses in stock. There was a smaller quantity of wool brought down, there were less sheep in the colony, and consequently less prosperity. The railway returns could not possibly come up to what they had been, or to what we might reasonably have expected they would have been in an ordinary season. We are told now that there will only be a deficit of something like £60,000, and the Treasurer finds it necessary to put on an extra *ad valorem* duty of 2½ per cent. I think that is not necessary. It is right to balance revenue and expenditure; but I believe the prospects we have before us this season are such that revenue and expenditure will square each other at the end of the year without increasing the *ad valorem* duty by 2½ per cent. There is another reason for the deficit, which I place a good deal of stress upon, and that is that our land revenue has not come up to what was expected. If it is necessary to have something extra to meet expenditure,

I think it would be better that it should come out of the land than that this 2½ per cent. *ad valorem* duty should be felt all over the country. I am certain that this additional 2½ per cent. will be injurious to trade, especially after the seasons from which we have not recovered yet. People are only just beginning to think they may live, and if bad seasons and low prices had continued I should be afraid to say how many insolvencies there would have been. But there is now hope glimmering in the distance. We all see it, and are all beginning to smile; but till recently we were inclined to laugh the other way. We are not, however, out of the fire yet. We just think we may pull through, but this 2½ per cent. on trade will be a great bar to the prosperity we were expecting. I believe that if this money is required it should be got in some other way; and if it is necessary to impose additional taxation I believe we should go boldly into the matter and institute a property-tax, which I consider as fair a tax as could be put on the community. Some hon. members think that the land alone should bear the burden; but I think it should be borne by all kinds of property. I believe our revenue from land would have been greater but for the alterations made by the Act of 1884; and I am satisfied that there would have been more settlers on the land, because the generality of people do not believe in the leasing system in regard to agricultural land. I hold with the Act so far as stopping the alienation of large blocks of land is concerned, but when ten years must elapse before the settler can acquire the fee-simple of his homestead, that is sufficient to stop all dummyming. I believe also that a man should be allowed ten, twenty, or thirty years in which to pay for the land, and that what he pays year by year should be counted as principal at the end of the time. I feel satisfied that if that plan were adopted there would be ten, or even a hundred, settle on the land for every one at the present time. This defect is the main cause of the deficiency of revenue from land. Settlement is going back instead of going ahead, and it will not go ahead under the present condition of things. There will be another opportunity of speaking on the land question, so I will say no more on that subject now. As I said before, I do not believe in the additional 2½ per cent. *ad valorem* duty; and I will now allude to the succession duties. I think that in some cases a larger amount might be paid, but I would not impose any duties at all on property left to widows and orphans. It has been said by the Premier that the widows and orphans receive property for which they do not work, and it is therefore right that it should be subject to a duty; but I maintain that in many cases it is the wife who helps a man to earn what he afterwards leaves to her. Another thing, the widows and orphans remain here, and are paying to the revenue every day just the same as the man who left the money; so that I cannot see any fairness in charging succession duties to the widow at all. There is one other matter to which I wish to refer, and that is the additional tax on machinery, which I hope the Government will not insist upon. My principal reason for excluding machinery from additional taxation—I would exclude it altogether if I could, but half-a-loaf is better than no bread—my principal reason is that a tax of 5 per cent. *ad valorem* was put on machinery last year, and that it would be wrong to put on an additional 2½ per cent. Last year I voted against the tax on machinery, and I think it would be a very fair concession this year for the Government not to impose the additional 2½ per cent., considering that the tax was imposed for the first time last year. One item of expenditure which has increased very

much of late is that for the Defence Force; and I think that the necessity for additional taxation might have been avoided by reducing the amount expended on the Defence Force. I do not think the item should be wiped out altogether, because, after going to the expense to which we have gone, it would be merely wasting money to upset the force now. But there is too much spent on it, and the expenditure might wisely be reduced. I am sorry the Government have thought it necessary to bring forward a proposal for additional taxation, because I believe that in less than a year it will be found to have been unnecessary. The Government propose that it shall be imposed for two years; but I think it would be better to let it be imposed, if at all, from year to year, because if my hopes are fulfilled it will not be necessary longer than one year at the most.

Mr. ADAMS said: Mr. Fraser,—There is not a doubt in my mind that taxation is not unpalatable to anyone in the colony; but it appears to me that we get a little too much of it. If additional taxation is necessary, I believe better means could have been devised for raising it, because we find that the additional 2½ per cent. will fall on the very classes not able to bear it. When I say the class that is not able to bear it, I mean that it falls mostly on the poorer and middle class, and when we consider the difficulties the colony has been in—the distress and want of employment—when we find hon. members on the other side of the House saying that men are being offered 6s. a week, we ought to pause before we pile more taxation on these unfortunates. But I am almost ashamed to mention a thing of this sort after what fell from the Colonial Treasurer the other night; when he appealed to the country as a father appeals to his children, and when he said that—

“The people of this fine territory, under the care and protection of Government, have improved their worldly circumstances and possessions to an extent beyond the means afforded to their fellow-countrymen in other lands.”

And then he goes on to say—

“Surely it is not too much to ask of the people, in this time of temporary adversity, to show their sense of gratitude to the country from whence they have derived their abundance by sharing for a limited period an increased burthen of taxation.”

Surely those men who are offered 6s. a week—surely those men will give of their abundance to ease the burdens of the country? I think when we come to look at the matter seriously and see where the burden will fall—when we come to hear hon. members on the other side telling us of the large amount of pay which people are offered in the country, the large incomes which they are deriving in this country, the prosperity which they are enjoying under a paternal Government—when we see and hear these things we shall see that the people ought to be perfectly satisfied to give up some of that abundance of 6s. a week to help the Treasurer out of his difficulties. But there is another thing to be considered. The Treasurer tells us that a paternal Government have done more for the people than they could ever do for themselves, and more than is done for them in any other part of the world. Now, it is not everyone who appreciates all that the Government do. I do not think the hon. gentleman meant the present Government more than any other Government in speaking of how much they had done for the prosperity of the people of the country. But there is another side to that. I would say, and I daresay the populace would say, “What do we come here for?” Do we come to this country to eke out a bare existence, or do we come here to improve our condition in life? I

think we do. People come here for that express purpose, and when they do come particularly the men with 6s. a week who could get double that sum at home, they are asked to bear out of that paltry sum a share of extra taxation. When this 2½ per cent. is put on, are we sure that the taxation is going to stop there? Are we sure that we are not going to get more taxation even before the end of the present session?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh!

Mr. ADAMS: Hon. members laugh, but I shall be rather surprised if their constituents laugh when they find out the mistake. We are told—and I am satisfied hon. members on the other side who laugh will understand this perfectly—we are told by the Colonial Treasurer—

“I have already alluded to the growing extent of endowment paid by the Treasury on the health rates levied by local authorities. During the present year that endowment will probably exceed £23,000, and next year if Government aid be continued the drain will be considerably larger. Government is of opinion that in view of the large and permanent endowment on general rates paid to local authorities the endowment on health rates may fairly be discontinued, and the general taxpayer be relieved by Parliament of the contribution to a service of a purely local character. A Bill dealing with this retrenchment in expenditure will be forthwith submitted to the Legislature.”

Now, Mr. Fraser, gentlemen on the other side laughed when I said, “Are we sure that the Government will not make other taxation proposals before the end of the session?” Hon. gentlemen on the other side represent constituencies that are actually under the Health Act, and here we are promised a Bill to be brought in before the session ends to do away with the endowment on health rates. I do not know what the health rate is in Brisbane, but I do know what it is in Bundaberg. It is 6d. in the £1, and the endowment upon that is 1s. in the £1. The Government, Mr. Fraser, have deceived us. They have induced us to come under the Health Act; they have deceived us into that, and having got into thorough working order they say, “We have enticed you to come under the Act and now we will abandon you.” And the consequence is that by taking away the endowment an extra tax of 1s. in the £1 is thrown upon the people. Now, I would like to know how hon. gentlemen will laugh when their constituents find that they have to pay an extra 1s. in the £1 on their properties. I think that taxation is quite heavy enough with us already. It has been the curse and bane of the old country, and it will be the curse and bane of Queensland if a stand is not made to resist it. We are told by the Treasurer that—

“The present Government have no desire to emulate the fiscal policy of the late Administration in wholesale alienation of Crown lands to relieve the exigencies of the Treasury, nor yet aspire to rival the financial reputation of their predecessors in this direction, considering the permanent welfare of the State far superior to the adoption of a policy of mere convenience, even though attended by the temporary acclamations of a section of the community.”

Now, I have not the slightest doubt that they do not wish to emulate them, but what do they do? I do not believe there is an allotment of land that could be sold that has not been sold by the present Government. They have done everything they possibly can to get money from the land, and I will say—and I say it advisedly—that they have been very unwise—penny-wise and pound-foolish. A very valuable piece of land was to be sold by auction lately, and by a mere accident someone happened to see an advertisement in the paper that it was to be sold, and that the particulars could be seen in the *Government Gazette*. That was all that was to be seen. It was advertised in such a way that the

general public really knew nothing about it. It must be remembered that a large section of the community, particularly in the country districts, do not take a newspaper, and the consequence is that as they do not see the advertisements in the *Government Gazette*—they know nothing about it. I think the wisest plan to adopt would be to follow that which has always been adopted hitherto, and advertise it thoroughly, so that people may know about the sale of land. I cannot say that I am an advocate of the wholesale alienation or the wholesale disposal of land, but I do say this much—that it is absolutely necessary and desirable that when a deficiency takes place in the Treasury the land should make up that deficiency. We have been told by the Minister for Lands—

“We know that a private individual may make a luxurious and ostentatious display of wealth as long as he chooses to sell piece by piece of his patrimony; but we look upon such people as simply fools, who are robbing those who ought to receive from them the property which it is their duty to preserve.”

Now, sir, I believe there are different classes of fools. There are some fools who won't see, and some who can't see, and some people who try to be fools, but have not brains enough. I take it, sir, that if a man has an estate which he wishes to leave to posterity, gets into difficulty, and has to raise money to get out of that difficulty, and goes on doing so continuously until the time of his death, and gets the whole estate involved in such a way that it would be impossible for those who come after him to extricate themselves—I say it would be far wiser for that man to dispose of a portion of his property when he got into difficulties first, and leave the other portion free and untrammelled to those who came after him. And I say, sir, that the State is in just the same position. What is the use of leaving a large estate to a family, trammelled in such a way with taxation that they can hardly stagger under it? I believe that they would rather be without the estate than have it so burdened with taxation that they really cannot eke out an existence from it. Therefore, I maintain that it would be wise, and I hope that even before this session is ended the Land Act will be altered in such a way as will give the populace an opportunity of making homes for themselves. We hear a great deal about what is going on in the old country, particularly in Ireland, and the very thing the Government is trying to do here is what the Government at home is trying to undo. The Government here are trying to establish leaseholds; the Government at home are trying to get freeholds for the people; therefore, I maintain that after the experience of people in the old country—of men who are as well up in politics and in land management, land legislation, and, in fact, far better able to judge of such matters than we are—I say that, in place of disregarding what they are doing, we ought to follow more in their footsteps. The hon. member for Mackay said, in the course of the debate, that he would like to hear some members representing farming constituencies express an opinion as to the condition of affairs in their districts. Well, sir, I can assure you that, notwithstanding the eloquent speech we heard from the Treasurer, there are numbers of people in my district that are holding on as it were by a straw. The last three or four years have been so disastrous to them that really they do not know in which way they are to move. If we do get a good season or two it may possibly bring them out of their difficulties, but I am perfectly satisfied that they have a hard struggle before them. I do not know how it is, but yet it is a fact, that even the black labour question has been dragged into this debate. I do not

know why it should have been, but, at any rate, the Minister for Lands, in replying to the hon. member for Mackay, who asked :—

“Where are the men with £5,000 and £10,000 who were to come to Queensland and take up land under the Act of 1884?” said—

“Those men for more than one reason have been debarr'd from doing so, and it is hardly surprising that they have not come here. The hon. member says, ‘Let them go up north, and give them a start at sugar-growing.’ Well, they may do that when separation is granted, and then we shall see who will command the young men with capital—whether the sugar-grower of the North or the pastoralists of the West. I know where my own countrymen will go. It will not be up north to drive niggers.”

Now, sir, if those men have half the common sense the Minister for Lands has, I am sure they will never go north to drive niggers, although they might do worse things. There is one thing that I am perfectly satisfied of, and that is that if they have, as I anticipate they have, as much common sense as that hon. gentleman, they will never go up there to employ niggers. I am certain, notwithstanding the statements of the Treasurer, that there are scores, even hundreds, who have gone into sugar-growing who would never have done so if they knew what it was to come to. Therefore, I am satisfied that the Minister for Lands will never go sugar-growing, and will never advise his friends to do so. Another thing I wish to mention is this: It has been said here that the miners know nothing about Polynesians. Well, in my electioneering tour the very first question put to me by the miners was, would I advocate small farmers being allowed to employ Polynesians, during the time they are allowed to remain in the colony, as well as planters. I said “Yes;” I promised to do so, and I had done so, but without effect, and for that I am sorry. I do not wish to occupy the time of the Committee longer. I only hope that the Government will see their way clear to alter the Land Act in such a way that it will put something in the Treasury.

Mr. SMYTH said: When I made the statement this afternoon that immigrants had been offered 6s. a week in the town of Maryborough it caused a little amusement, and, I fancy, a good deal of indignation on the part of the hon. member for Mulgrave.

Mr. ADAMS: I am never indignant.

Mr. SMYTH: It created a good deal of amusement, anyway. I do not think the hon. member should say much about labour, for a great deal that he employs is at 2s. 6d. a week.

Mr. ADAMS: I will answer the hon. member. I pay from £1 to £2 5s. a week.

Mr. SMYTH: That is not exactly the class of labour I refer to. I mean Polynesians, who have been employed driving horses and carts, working in the cane-fields, and who have been paid about 2s. 5d. a week. The hon. gentleman referred to the Health Act. Well, if the people of Bundaberg, Maryborough, Brisbane, or any of the other large towns wish to keep their towns clean, let them do so at their own expense, and not at the expense of the people of Barcoo, Mitchell, and Warrego. Why should people out there pay for keeping the coast towns clean? I am very glad the Treasurer has thought it worth while to strike that allowance to municipalities off the Estimates. It is what I might call a very hard word—but I will not use it—I will say too great a strain on outside taxpayers. I am not going to talk about the Treasurer's Statement with reference to the Land Act. I do not know much about it; neither do I know much about the pastoral interest, nor about farming. I

believe there are plenty of members in the House better able to thrash that out than I am. But I want to say this much with regard to the tax on machinery : That tax affects a great many people in the colony. It does not affect the mining class in particular, so that I need not speak especially in their behalf. It affects the whole colony, pastoralists, agriculturists, farmers ; and when on a previous occasion—when there was no tax on machinery—it was proposed to impose an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. on it, I voted against the proposition, and I shall do so on this occasion if it comes to a vote. I consider that the mining class are already heavily taxed all round. Even this proposed $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. increase in *ad valorem* will be felt on a great many articles—dynamite, caps, steels, and a number of other articles consumed on goldfields. The proposal to increase the tax from 5 per cent. to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. will meet with disapproval all over the colony, more especially in the Northern districts. In the North they mostly use imported machinery, and therefore they will be the heaviest sufferers by the tax. I intend, Mr. Fraser, to move that after the word “thereof,” in the 2nd line of clause 1 of this clause before us, the following words be inserted :—

Except machinery for manufacturing, sawing, agricultural, mining, and pastoral pursuits, steam engines, and boilers.

The clause will then read as follows :—

“That in lieu of the duties of Customs now levied upon articles on which duties are levied in proportion to the value thereof, except machinery for manufacturing, sawing, agricultural, mining, and pastoral pursuits, steam engines, and boilers, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid a duty at the rate of £7 10s. for every £100 of the value thereof.”

The CHAIRMAN : I would point out to the hon. member that there is an amendment now before the Committee, and I cannot, therefore, accept his.

Mr. SMYTH said : If the hon. member does not intend to withdraw his amendment, I shall move this after his has been dealt with.

Mr. NORTON said : Mr. Fraser,—When I spoke the other evening I gave notice that when the Bill came before the Committee I should then move a resolution exempting all machinery from the operation of the *ad valorem* duty. I believe that a protest is sufficient at the present time, and that the amendment should be moved when the Bill is before the Committee.

The PREMIER : We had better settle it now.

Mr. NORTON : My reason for not doing so now is that I wish to see machinery exempt from all *ad valorem* duties, not merely from the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., but from the present 5 per cent. I can see no reason, and I could not last year, why an *ad valorem* duty should be imposed upon machinery, and I believe that a large number of members of the Committee are in favour of doing away with it. At that time they were somewhat unprepared for the imposition of that tax upon machinery, and beyond a protest being entered against it, hon. gentlemen did not realise that they were consenting to a tax being put upon it. If the hon. member for Gympie is not satisfied with that, I am willing to withdraw my amendment ; but I think he will agree with me that it is far better that machinery should be exempted from all taxation under the *ad valorem* duties. I will, with the consent of the Committee, withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. SMYTH : It is not my intention to move that machinery shall be altogether exempt. If the country requires taxation, and it is really necessary, the mining community are quite prepared to bear their fair share. But if we see that

the Government are asking rather more than we consider our fair proportion, then we must strike against it. That is why I intend to stick to my amendment.

Amendment put.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said : Mr. Fraser, — I am glad that the hon. member, in introducing this amendment for consideration, does it in a more moderate form than that proposed by the hon. leader of the Opposition, because in the present state of the Treasury the total abolition of the *ad valorem* duty on machinery would be a loss to the revenue, which I would most certainly deprecate. One of the chief reasons which induced the Government last year to include machinery in the *ad valorem* duties was this : That there had been, indirectly, a very great loss of revenue through a large number of articles which came in as parts of machinery, which under the former exemptions was free from duty. The mere pieces of machinery themselves by no means represent the value of the goods which came in free as being adjuncts to such machinery, and it was with a view of relieving the Customs from embarrassment as to what really constituted machinery that it was deemed desirable by the Government to extend the *ad valorem* duty to it last year. For my own part I think it is a very fair tax, and I do not at all regret having been instrumental in passing it, because, so long as we derive duties through the Custom House, I cannot see the potency of the arguments for a total exemption of machinery. People using machinery for the purposes mentioned in the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie should, I think, contribute equally with all other classes of the community to the exigencies of the State. I fear that, if the amendment now proposed is carried, there will still be a good deal of confusion in the Customs as to what constitutes machinery. I may say that I have looked into the matter very fully, and the Collector of Customs has reported to me in the past that over 200 kinds of articles have at times been submitted as obtaining exemption through being parts of machinery, although by themselves they would be in no wise regarded as such ; yet being attached to or connected with working machinery they have been allowed exemption, and if we adopt a differential tariff the same difficulty will remain. The strongest argument in favour of exempting machinery was that advanced by the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, who pointed out that having put on the *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. last year it is acting too suddenly to increase it to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. now.

Mr. NORTON : Quite right.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : That affords good ground for consideration. The Government have no wish to oppress any industry, and I am in favour of maintaining the proposals as they now stand ; but, at the same time, I shall be quite prepared to hear the debate proceed further upon the matter, and then state what the Government are inclined to do. I warn hon. members that if the proposal is carried there will be a great deal of embarrassment thrown on the Customs in connection with defining what is machinery.

Mr. NORTON : Cannot you draft a clause which will define it ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : That has been tried, and found impracticable, in the past. Almost everything from a needle to an anchor may be considered a part of machinery. For instance, lead-piping or wire-rope coming in with machinery, and even galvanised iron, have claimed exemption ; whereas, if they come in

apart from the machinery they would, of course, have to pay the fixed or *ad valorem* duty. There would be a great deal of confusion if the amendment were carried, and it will certainly be the duty of the Custom House to prepare a list defining strictly what constitutes machinery. However, the position placed before us by the hon. member for Stanley and by the hon. member for Gympie is one that deserves consideration, and I am quite prepared to hear further debate upon it.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Fraser,—I think it would save the hon. gentleman the trouble of preparing a list, and at the same time be better for the colony, to wipe off the tax upon machinery altogether. I find in Victoria, the most protective colony in Australia, and although Victorians are themselves large manufacturers of agricultural machinery, that still, in the interests of agriculture, they allow agricultural machinery to come into the colony duty-free. They look upon the agricultural industry as the first industry in the land, and in order not to injure agriculturists they have in their tariff provided that agricultural machinery may be introduced free of duty, although they are exporters of agricultural machinery to the extent of £37,000 in the year. I protest against this tax upon machinery altogether. In a young colony like this, where new industries spring into life almost every week, we want machinery to save labour, we want labour-saving appliances, and I think it will be much better to do away with this tax upon machinery, which last year only realised £8,000, and it will give more satisfaction to the people of the colony. The deficiency should be met by a land-tax, as I pointed out when I spoke upon the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech. The Government ought to have reserved to themselves the right to dispose annually of land worth from £150,000 to £200,000 if they found it necessary. I am not one of those who condemn the Land Act, because I consider there are a good many good points in it, but from a financial point of view I have always said it is a failure. I do not see why the Government should not reserve to themselves the right to sell a certain quantity of land. I do not mean that they should sell land as it has been sold in the past—in large blocks of 20,000 or 30,000 acres without roads—but in small blocks of 160 or 200 acres with proper boundaries to prevent large monopolists from stepping in. I do not know whether the Committee will accept the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie, which, of course, is an improvement; but for my part I would much rather see the tax upon machinery abolished altogether.

Mr. DONALDSON said: Mr. Fraser,—It was not my intention to take part in this financial debate, but, after hearing the remarks of the hon. member who has just sat down, I should not be acting justly to myself if I did not say something in contradiction of some of the statements he has made. I strongly condemn the system of selling land for the purpose of making up any deficiency in our revenue. If we were to allow that system to be adopted in this colony we should very soon drift into the state New South Wales is in at the present moment. In that colony for years there had been no limit to the quantity of land they could sell, and what was the result? The result was that they carried on the Government in a most extravagant manner. After a time the House came to the conclusion that they were selling land there too extravagantly, and then put a limitation upon the sales of land, with the result that they now find the revenue there so deficient that they are obliged to resort to taxation of a most objectionable nature. I

think the hon. member's proposal very objectionable indeed, because it would allow the Government to be extravagant in their expenditure, and then sell as much land as they liked to make up the deficiency. What would we be doing in a case of that kind? Would we not be parting with our principal in using the funds of the State in carrying on the Government instead of spending them in reproductive works?

Mr. NORTON: Are we not doing that now?

Mr. DONALDSON: Yes; but to a limited extent, and I venture to say that if the Government had power to sell more land they would not be in the position they are in now in being obliged to levy higher duties. If they had the power to sell more land they would not have to do that.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: They sold all they could.

Mr. DONALDSON: They sold all they could, but they would have sold more if they had had the power. Notwithstanding the Minister for Lands' opposition to the sale of land by auction, I have not the slightest doubt that sufficient influence would have been brought to bear upon him to sell more if they had the power to do it. I shall always enter my protest against the sale of land for the purposes of carrying on the Government. If land is sold for the purpose of constructing reproductive works in the country, I have not the same objection. I have an objection, though perhaps it is not a very strong one, to the alienation of our lands too freely, because I do not think that at the present time we can get anything like the value for them that we shall be able to get at a future time; it will therefore be better for us to continue the leasing system. I do not intend to go into the question of the Land Act now, though several hon. members have spoken upon it, and have proved conclusively that we have not had the revenue from it that some hon. members anticipated. They must, however, remember this: that the rents coming from that Act form revenue proper—I mean the returns from pastoral leases—and there will no doubt be a much larger revenue derived from the Act when it gets more fully into operation. With regard to the proposal of putting a tax upon machinery, I certainly voted last year for it, though it was against my convictions. I voted for putting a tax of 5 per cent. upon machinery, because I believed that at the time it was necessary for the purposes of raising sufficient revenue. I am not, however, prepared to go any further than I did then. I think 5 per cent. is a pretty severe tax upon machinery, more particularly upon the agriculturists. The agriculturists in this colony have not a very profitable investment, and any extra taxation put upon machinery they use will fall very heavily upon them. I shall vote for the amendment moved by the hon. member for Gympie, and against any further increase of the tax upon machinery.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Fraser,—This splitting of straws about 7½ per cent. and 5 per cent. is really straining at gnats, while we are swallowing camels. The whole thing is not worth taking up the time of the Committee about. It is simply a question of whether we are to get £8,000 or £12,000 per annum from the whole population of the colony—North and South—and from three classes of people—the agriculturists, the pastoralists, and the miners. So far as the miners are concerned, I do not think they have any right to grumble particularly about it, because they happen to be the only class at all likely to be able to pay. The agriculturists in the North—so far as the sugar business is concerned that is

knocked on the head—and the pastoralists, too, are making as bad weather as they possibly can. The root of the evil and the reason why we are so short of funds is the failure of the Land Act to provide revenue. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that. I do not hold with the hon. member for Warrego on the subject of the sale of land. I say that so long as we can sell land let us sell it, so long as we can find people to buy it. It always remains there to be taxed afterwards when it is sold. If this theory is to be propounded, and this gospel of nationalisation of the land is to be preached, why is it not carried out in its integrity? Why should we have the Government selling town lands all over the colony, so that individuals may reap the unearned increment from them, which increment grows very much faster, I understand, than in the case of any of the country lands? Why should not I, or any other man who has gained a certain amount of money, provide for his old age and keep himself alive at a time when he is past work? Why should he be debarred from investing his savings or earnings in country lands, and using his credit and his time in improving them and making two blades of grass grow where only one grew before—so increasing the exports and imports of the country?

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid I must point out to the hon. member that he is not discussing the question before the Committee. The hon. member is discussing the Land Act.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I am discussing the bearing of the Land Act upon the revenue. I beg your pardon, Mr. Fraser, I think I am perfectly in order. This does bear very considerably on the question. The Minister for Lands said that in his first year of office he refused from £300,000 to £500,000. He talked about the Land Act and its merits, and you did not pull him up; why should you pull me up? I never in all my life saw such a case of turning money away from the doors; and now we are in want of it we are not likely to get it again. As for the cries of robbing posterity of their birthright, and all that kind of thing, I cannot make out why that has not been exploded long ago. As I pointed out here the other night, posterity are likely to be our own descendants, and posterity will be much better off when they get the land—which will go to them anyhow—if it is burdened with less debt than is likely to be bequeathed to them. I myself cannot see the slightest injustice to posterity in selling the land—country lands as well as town lands. If the Minister for Lands thinks that the people of the country will be content to wait four, five, or ten years for the financial success of this Act, I think he will find himself very much mistaken. I do not think the people of the country will wait any longer than the end of this Parliament; I do not think the Act will last longer than that. We have been asked to give it time. I say give it rope enough, and it will hang itself as sure as fate. I do not blame the Minister for Lands' intentions in the Act. I believe he and the party behind him intended to make it as good an Act as they possibly could; but they were met by an Opposition who desired to make it as bad an Act as they possibly could, in order that they might have a chance of getting on the Treasury benches again. This is the outcome. The Act does not make the land provide a fair share of the revenue, and it never will. It will always be an enormous expense to keep up. We are asked for £65,000 or £70,000 to run the Lands Office. The sooner the whole of the land is alienated—cut up, given away, divided equally among the people of the colony—and the Lands Office shut up, the better. The

sooner some way is seen of getting something out of the land—the sooner the Treasurer demands that he shall get some substantial contribution out of the lands of the colony—the better for the country. At present the Land Act is a hindrance to people going on the lands of the country. It was carried by the townspeople, who, with the preponderance of voting power in their hands, thought that in that way they would shift the burden of taxation from their own backs on to the backs of the country people. It is the old story of the belly and the members. But it was from a mistaken point of view, because it will not act. The Treasurer admits it has failed, and the Minister for Lands himself cannot say much for it. It does not come up to his expectations. The selection which is going on is nothing; and I take it this is the most opportune time to call attention to it. When we are in difficulties, and want to see our way out of them, the best thing is to go to the root of the matter, and see where the trouble comes from.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Fraser,—I do not think it is necessary to debate the land question to-night. Of course, all our troubles are said to arise from the Land Act. It never occurs to hon. members that it is rather absurd to speak in that way of an Act which has been in force less than eighteen months under circumstances unprecedented in unfortunateness for bringing any new law into operation. The hon. member's remedy is, of course, extremely simple. When you are hard up sell something—that is a very simple remedy. When you are short of money sell some of your land. Wiser people sometimes mortgage rather than sell under circumstances of temporary depression. What the hon. member for Warrego has pointed out as to the result of that policy in New South Wales should be a warning to all the Australian colonies. There is no colony, I believe, in the British dominions which has fallen into such serious financial difficulties as New South Wales, simply owing to their spendthrift policy. That is the policy proposed by the hon. member for Cook, but I hope we shall never be reduced to the necessity of adopting it. With respect to the proposal before the Committee, the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie, there is no doubt a great deal to be said in favour of it. I confess that last year I had a good deal of sympathy with the opposition raised to the tax on machinery; but we cannot always do what we like, especially with taxation. The first duty of every Government is to make both ends meet. We were so long in this colony without a change in the tariff, that people began to think that the tariff was a sort of thing as fixed as the laws of succession to real and personal estate. Now, in most parts of the world, the tariff is understood to be a purely temporary and fluctuating thing, a means of raising revenue. In an entirely protective country it may be regarded from a different point of view; but in most countries it is regarded as a thing which can be fairly altered any year, raised or reduced according to the necessities of the time. That principle is carried so far in some countries that the tariff is never made to last more than one year. It is understood to be simply an expedient for raising money for that year, and there is a great deal to be said for that system too. It is simply a means for raising revenue, and it is the Treasurer's business every year to say how much he wants and how he proposes to raise it. If the expenditure is not large, it is his duty to reduce the tariff if he can; and if for any reason the existing tariff does not bring in as much as is wanted, to raise it. Now, in England there is sometimes a deficiency of £300,000 or £400,000, and they raise the income tax.

Mr. NORTON : That does not interfere with trade.

The PREMIER : It does interfere with trade. The *ad valorem* duty does not interfere with trade in the slightest degree—at any rate it interferes less than any other duty, and it costs less to collect. I maintain that we are a great deal too timid about the subject of taxation; we look on it as something alarming to make a change in the tariff. I maintain that the tariff ought not to be regarded as one of the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered. On the contrary, it is a thing that ought to be adjusted from time to time according to the exigencies of the colony. It would be a much more convenient principle to go by, and I am satisfied it is the right one.

Mr. NORTON said : Mr. Fraser,—I do not think the public is likely to be disappointed with respect to the tariff remaining stationary, for the policy of the Government seems to be to keep on putting it up, and next year they will be putting it up still higher. That we have had a very fair indication of already. It is an absurdity to say that frequent changes in the tariff do not affect trade. When it is supposed that the *ad valorem* duties are to be lowered goods are rushed into the country, and when put up merchants allow their stocks to run as short as possible. I cannot understand anyone with the political knowledge of the Premier or the Colonial Treasurer saying that the *ad valorem* duties should be raised or lowered in accordance with the requirements of the Treasury. It must interfere with trade. I rise now, however, to refer to the amendment, so that there may be no misunderstanding on the subject. When the Bill is introduced, and has gone into committee, I intend to propose that machinery shall be exempted from the *ad valorem* duties. I make this announcement now so that my action, when the Bill comes before us, will not be misunderstood.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said : Mr. Fraser,—If the Government have made up their minds to accept the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie—and I think they have, from what fell from the Chief Secretary—it is no use debating it further, and we may just as well come to a division at once. Then we can get on with the rest of the work.

Mr. MIDGLEY said : Mr. Fraser,—If it is imperative that we should now impose additional taxation there is nothing, in my opinion, that ought more readily to bear that taxation than machinery. I certainly could not advocate such a motion as that of the hon. member, Mr. Annear, in reference to encouragement being given to the manufacture of locomotives and rolling stock in the colony, and then vote against this proposed increase in the *ad valorem* duties. It is the one redeeming feature in this proposed taxation that it tends in the right direction—I mean in the direction of the protection of and building up our own industries. I shall vote for this proposed increase, for the reason I gave when I supported the imposition of any duty at all on machinery. If there is anything that comes into the country that ought to bear its full share of taxation—considering the class of men and the corporations to whom it is mainly consigned—it is machinery; apart from that which many of us have in view—namely, the aiding, fostering, and building up of our own iron trade and machinery manufacturing trade. At the same time, there are certain things about this proposed increase of taxation that are objectionable. The people of Queensland must be very well-off and in a flourishing state, or they would not be able to bear the many burdens that are imposed upon them—burdens which are

producing no general advantage to the community at large. One very objectionable feature about it is, that as soon as ever it is announced in the House that an increased duty is intended to be imposed, the Colonial Treasurer can at once come down on parties who happen to have goods of the kind in bond and demand payment of the money.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Of course.

Mr. MIDGLEY : There is no “of course” about it. I know that when a man has contracted to sell a certain article in bond, and after the agreement is made an increased duty is imposed on that article, he can charge the increased duty on the transaction. But that does not affect the case as it stands with a large number of men who import goods for their own use in the fulfilment and completion of contracts into which they have entered. A gentleman in Queen street, who is carrying out contracts which he has undertaken, said to me the other day that had he known before that those duties were to have been imposed it would have saved him so-and-so. If a man has goods in bond which he has to sell he can charge the additional duty, but how can it be just and right to men who have contracted to do certain works at a certain price to make them pay the extra impost; how can they save themselves from loss and disaster? In matters of this kind there ought to be a fair and reasonable amount of notice given. A man may have taken a contract to build culverts, or bridges, or anything of that kind at a time when the duty on cement was 2s. a cask, and before he gets half through, perhaps, the duty may have been raised to 4s. or 5s. a cask. In that way an alteration of the tariff materially affects trade and causes disorganisation, which ought to be caused as seldom as possible. The revision of the tariff is a thing which we ought to consider most carefully. At present the tariff does press most hardly and unjustly upon the poor men, the labouring men of the colony. I will quote some of the principal lines which the working man—I use that term for want of a better expression—consumes or uses. First, there is kerosine, which he uses for lighting. He can import kerosine from where it is made, ordinarily at about 1s. 1½d. a gallon. The duty on it is 6d. a gallon, or nearly 50 per cent. Then there is tea; a good tea can now be bought in the Southern markets at from 7d. to 10d. per lb.

Mr. McMASTER : Not a good tea.

Mr. MIDGLEY : Suppose it is 1s. per lb.; the duty upon it is 6d., or 50 per cent. Other items consumed by the poor man are pickles, which are charged 1s. a dozen, or about 12 per cent.; jams, which are charged 20 per cent.; corrugated iron, which the industrious and thrifty man uses in building his house and for other purposes, pays £2 a ton, or about 12 per cent.

Mr. DONALDSON : What about wire?

Mr. MIDGLEY : Wire pays 2s. per cwt., and that is a very sensible arrangement. The only other sensible and properly regulated duties I see standing out amongst the special duties are the duties on cigars and tobacco. I would tax things in proportion to the ability of the man who uses them to pay the tax. I would tax imported upholstery, furniture, carriages, pianos, bicycles, and, amongst other things, I would tax lawyers. I cannot for the life of me see why an auctioneer should be taxed fifteen guineas a year for his auctioneer's license, while lawyers, who do a great deal better, make a great deal more money, and get it more easily and with less labour, should get off scot-free and not be taxed. I wonder the Colonial Treasurer has not turned his thoughts in that direction. But the people of this colony will get sick and tired of

increasing the load of debt and the imposition of duties just for the purpose of paying salaries and of paying our way. I do not think it is the duty of this side of the Committee, however, to follow the example set by the other side in that it was stated that they did not feel themselves under an obligation to suggest remedies. I think it is the duty of members of this Committee, sent here to represent the interests of the people, when we see anything wrong, to suggest a remedy, even if it be a wrong remedy, supposing it is the best we can think of. I am of opinion that, in view of these deficiencies, and the greater claims there will be on the resources of the colony from the increasing interest we shall have to pay, we should not only at a time like this not increase the burdens of the people, but we should reduce the expenditure. I maintain that one thing which ought to be done, and I really regret I am obliged to harp upon this one string—but I say it because of the strength and intensity of my convictions in the matter—I maintain that at a time like this we should try to reduce the cost of our Civil Service. Many of the salaries were increased during the prosperous times, because it was said these men should participate in the prosperity of the colony, and that seemed to meet with the approval of many generous members. But now, when everyone is suffering—business men, commercial men, working men—from the state of the country, I think it is time that the pruning knife should be used in this direction; and it would be no hardship to Civil servants who are getting from £300 and upwards a year if we were to reduce their salaries 10 per cent. for a time, at least, and I do not think there would be any complaint made. If that were done there would be a saving—I have only gone through this roughly—of about £25,000. Then there ought to be, as soon as possible, a reduction—and perhaps the abolition—of the endowments to municipalities. Those endowments are becoming an intolerable nuisance, inasmuch as our local bodies, in order to get as much as possible from the Government, are making local rates almost insupportable, in some instances getting as much, half as much, or a quarter as much as the rental of the property might be. We are trying to get on too fast; but we cannot make roads in this new colony all at once like the old Roman roads. I maintain, also, that the time has come when hon. members should no longer allow the Postal Department to drag down the Works Department. The way in which the Postal Department is worked at present is simply absurd, from a business point of view. I think, with regard to mails, it is very desirable that everyone in the country should get their mails every day, if possible; but, in view of our means and our circumstances, that cannot be done. There are at times requests and demands in many places for three mails a week where two might suffice. Then we are carrying thousands and thousands of tons of newspaper literature throughout the length and breadth of the colony every year without any charge, which is a wonderful piece of protection on the newspaper interest, to say the least of it. To my mind this ought not to be done; these newspapers ought not to be carried scot-free. A charge ought to be imposed on the carriage of newspapers at some reasonable rate; there should be a stamp duty of some kind, at so much per hundred or score, to recoup the colony the outlay incurred in connection with them by the Postal Department. The great cure for our present burdens is an increasing number of backs to carry it. Our railways will carry ten times the produce, and ten times the passengers they now carry; our telegraph offices will flash ten times the number of messages that are now sent, and our Postal

Department will carry a great deal more than at the present time; and unless we get more people—and whatever may be the apprehensions of some hon. members, a vast deal more—if we go on obtaining and spending this loan money, in a few sessions we shall get into a hopeless mire of despondency and desolation.

Mr. LISSNER said: Mr. Fraser,—The question as to whether a duty should be imposed on machinery concerns me and the constituency I represent a great deal more than it does the hon. member for Fassifern. Hon. members may think that I am harping on a very narrow string, but the matter is one of the greatest importance to my constituency, and they feel the injustice of the tax perhaps more than any constituency represented in this House. Some time ago I called for a return showing the amount of duty collected on machinery. But I may here state that I protested last year against this duty, which I think is an unjust one as it presses heavily on an industry which is not always making advances, and in which the majority of the people are struggling against great difficulties, and getting gold, getting the ready money, for the benefit of the whole colony. The people engaged in that industry depend upon their own resources and have received no benefit from the present or, for the matter of that, any other Government. They have been left to themselves; and I protested against the duty, on the imposition of which no judgment was manifested. The hon. member for Gympie has made a fair start in the right direction in moving his amendment to exempt machinery from this 2½ per cent. additional *ad valorem* duty. That is very good in its way, and I suppose I must take that if I cannot get any more; but I think with the hon. member for Darling Downs and others that the whole of this duty on machinery should be erased from the Customs tariff. This duty is felt more by farmers and miners than any other class, and I think we can very well afford to let machinery come in free. But going back to the return to which I have referred, it shows very plainly that there is not much revenue obtained from the duty on machinery. The whole amount collected from the time the Act came into operation, which was, I think, in August or September last year, was £8,000. Of that sum £2,000 was collected at the port of Townsville, which means that it was collected on machinery for Charters Towers and Ravenswood. The return is not, however, confined to mining machinery, but includes sewing machines and farming machinery. I suppose the largest amount of sewing machinery was landed at Brisbane. But whether that was so or not I can safely assume, that as £2,000 was collected at Townsville, the miners of Charters Towers and Ravenswood have contributed 25 per cent. of the whole income from this source. I have, therefore, as good a right to protest against the proposed increase of the tax on machinery as some hon. members who know nothing about it have to support the proposal. The hon. member says, "I am in favour of a duty on machinery; it doesn't affect me at all." I do not think it does affect him, and I do not think he ever will have anything to do with the importation of machinery, or else he would not have spoken as he has spoken. If his district had contributed 25 per cent. of the tax on machinery, he would have harped on a different string. When the question comes to a division, if I cannot get the 7½ per cent. taken off, which I consider the fair thing, I shall vote for the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie. I trust hon. members will not look at the matter in a narrow light, but will give it fair play. It is not an equitable duty, and when

one little district has to pay 25 per cent. of it, hon. members will see that it cannot be equitable. I do not want to oppose all the *ad valorem* duties. We are prepared to pay our fair share of taxation, but we don't believe in being taxed for everybody else. We have been told that we are taxed too much because we drink too much; but now the Reverend Booth is lecturing up there I suppose that will be reduced. We may go in for sarsaparilla or something else.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is taxed.

Mr. LISSNER: I believe that when the Reverend Booth leaves the taxation will be the same as ever. I don't want to slate the Minister for Lands about the Land Act or the Colonial Treasurer about his labyrinth of figures, which no one can understand, but I hope the Government will take the tax off machinery, because that will be a step in the right direction.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Fraser,—I speak on behalf of one of the largest of the undeveloped goldfields in the country. It has the longest highway carriage, the highest freightage, and the heaviest roads, and the people there deserve a little encouragement instead of being hampered with additional taxation. I protested last year on behalf of the Etheridge against the tax on machinery, and this year I have to protest also on behalf of the Croydon, a rising goldfield in the same district. When we consider the extra amount they will have to pay for the machinery going up, and the machinery to go up in the future, we see that they deserve a great deal more sympathy than they get. A tax of £7 10s. on every £100 worth will prevent a great many people from investing in machines. That will to a large extent prevent settlement and the development of the industry, because each machine on a goldfield means a centre of occupation and a living for a great number of miners—there are wheels within wheels; so that by imposing this tax we are killing the goose that lays the golden egg. I do not think a better or a stronger argument could be adduced in favour of separation than the imposition of a tax on machinery to be used on the large Northern goldfields. Those fields already suffer heavily from the natural condition of things. The fields which have railway communication are not taxed in the same way for freightage. The large fields in the district I represent have for years struggled under the greatest difficulties. In addition to the large amount for freight, the miners there have had to pay, and are now paying, large sums for the conservation of water. The Chief Secretary has not seen the roads to the Etheridge. They are heavy sandy roads, necessitating a high rate of carriage and additional insurance; and the miners in that part of the colony are deserving of a great deal of sympathy. I shall heartily support the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie; and if anyone else proposes an amendment to do away with the tax on machinery, I shall vote for that also. The amount that has been received within twelve months—between £8,000 and £9,000—does not make it worth while to throw an additional burden on one of the chief producing industries in the colony. We should nurse that industry in every way we can. It is one that has the greatest vitality, employs the largest number of men, and will ultimately be the means of producing that revenue which the Colonial Treasurer is now so anxious to get. I do not see anything against selling land if it is done judiciously. New South Wales is held up as a horrible example of the evil of selling land. It is true that New South Wales has been under a cloud, but no colony in Australia can so quickly recover from difficulties as New South Wales can and will

recover. The amount of vitality and the resources of that colony will assert themselves, and show that it is a mere passing cloud—produced, it is true, through the selling of land. But we are not likely to wreck on the same rock. What is the use of land to us without people to live on it, and what is the use of mines unless we encourage people to work them? If we encourage settlement and our industries, we shall be able to recover ourselves and be able to wipe out our debt. I have protested against the tax on machinery before, and I protest now. It is an unjust imposition, and the Colonial Treasurer has not given any reason why additional taxation should be put on one of our main producing industries.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Fraser,—I hope the Treasurer will never give a reason why one industry should be relieved from taxation at the expense of every other industry of the colony. The Colonial Treasurer has done what any Colonial Treasurer ought to do. He has come down and made a clear statement of the position of affairs. The country is very well aware how we stand. There is a deficiency in the revenue, brought about by the severe drought, and that is to be made up by an increase in the *ad valorem* duties. There can be no fairer imposition applied for the raising of revenue in the colony. We have had this bogus cry about a tax on machinery before, and it is nothing else but a bogus cry. The hon. gentlemen who raise this cry—one of them in particular, the hon. member for Gympie—spoke of so many men being out of employment, and the low rate of wages offered to them. I hope the Colonial Treasurer and the Government will stick to this 7½ per cent. the same as other items in the tariff. What is machinery, Mr. Fraser? It is the tools of every man's trade. I suppose a good set of carpenter's tools would cost £50, a navy's pick and shovel cost money, and they are taxed; and why should not machinery also be taxed? This cry about the duty on machinery does not emanate from the people who use it, but from the importers in the different seaport towns of the colony. Let hon. members go to the wharves of Brisbane, and they will see scores of imported hand-winchies and crab-winchies—things that could be made here by apprentice boys. Is this what hon. members who stand up here and are so much exercised about the employment of the working classes—is this the policy they advocate? A duty on everything that a man wants to consume, but on machinery nothing at all! I do not think hon. members are consistent. Now, the hon. member for Gympie said the miners are heavily taxed already. He quoted steel, dynamite, and caps, and he might have quoted candles, but the taxation on candles has been the means of starting industries in the colony, whereby candles are sold cheaper now than they ever were before. At present, dynamite bears an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. In the other colonies it is 1d. per lb., and there is double the amount of carriage there on railways than there is in Queensland. As regards steel, there is no duty in Queensland at all, so that I do not see what the miners have to complain about. They do not complain. The working miners are just as willing and perfectly able to bear their share of taxation as any other class in the colony. Now, this debate has drifted into a good many subjects, and hon. members have advocated different systems whereby the revenue may be increased without coming down with these increased duties from time to time. The hon. members for Fassifern and Bundamba say they hope to see the time when endowments will be withdrawn from municipalities and divisional boards. Well, I think that time is far distant, and I think it is

very patent to every hon. member and to the country that since the introduction of the system of divisional boards in this colony there has been far less strain on the general revenue than there was previously when every hon. member came to the House with a motion in his pocket for the granting of a sum of money to build a bridge or culvert. The work is carried on now in a better and cheaper manner. It would be very hard indeed if centres of population had the endowment withdrawn from them. After what we have heard from the Minister for Works, we ought to look to our railways and make them pay. That is, work them under a different system. I think myself, when we have now 1,400 miles of railway working every day, that the time has arrived when the railways of Queensland should be withdrawn altogether from the political head and worked in the same manner as they are worked in Victoria. Hon. members have seen that since Mr. Speight took over the management of the Victorian railways with the other commissioners, the railways have begun to pay, and last year paid 4 per cent. on the cost of construction. Up to that time they paid nothing at all. They were just the same as our railways are at the present time. I think there is now a deficiency in the estimated receipts of £130,000. The railways in Victoria are worked under a board, away from the political head of the department altogether. There is no political influence at work there, and I do not think we should go far wrong in adopting the same system. Mr. Speight, the chairman of the board, lately visited Adelaide, and was interviewed by a reporter from the *South Australian Register*, and the interview is copied into the *Sydney Morning Herald* of August 24th. Mr. Speight says:—

"The first thing to be kept in view with railways is to make them pay. You must look at all the questions relating to the management from a purely business standpoint, and free them from influences that do not pertain to commerce. The interests of the railways and interests of the communities, in a commercial aspect, are identical; but if any extraneous element is allowed to interfere with them it cannot be expected that the railways will be worked to proper advantage. This question of working railways profitably affects a number of other matters, and more especially the colonies' position as borrowers. If capitalists in England know that the money borrowed by Colonial Governments is mainly invested in railways, and that the railways are paying, they are far readier to lend; and the Governments are thereby in a better position to develop the resources of the countries."

Then, again, the article, speaking of railway management and political influence, says:—

"Speaking of the discipline and order necessary to be maintained on railways, Mr. Speight said he would not have taken the position he occupies in Victoria if the Railway Commissioners could be at all hampered by outside influences. He remarked:—'If railways are managed on other than business lines their usefulness is lessened. I believe that the South Australian railways could be made to show first-rate results; but I condemned the principle that allows the Government to be more than the owner on behalf of the people. Many evils arise out of it indirectly. Supposing I was a Commissioner for Public Works, and had to deal with the railways which is a department that involves very extensive employment to labour. Well, I find a lot of persons looking out for Government offices. I say to myself perhaps 'None of them are wanted.' But at the same time there are other considerations interwoven with the existence of the Government, or with other political matters, that lead me to think that it would be well to employ some of the parties. In this way additional expenditure is incurred in favour of a few individuals at the expense of the community. With this kind of thing going on it would be impossible to produce satisfactory results. Why should the community be taxed for the sake of billet-hunters, who generally turn out to be 'round pegs' in 'square holes'? Another instance may be given of where the political element comes in. If a man is guilty of a breach of duty and gets punished, he resorts to all sorts of means to get restored to his post,

and, for the reasons I have named before, he probably succeeds. The effect of such a case is very far-reaching. A feeling of laxity is created throughout the service, because the men think that, although they may commit a fault, they have other means than those that are ordinarily recognised in a commercial establishment for returning to the position they had lost. There is no service in the world that requires greater discipline—with, of course, every consideration for the employers—than the Railway service. Not only is discipline necessary in the interests of men themselves, but it is even more necessary in the interests, and for the safety, of the public; and it can only be properly obtained by letting all the men, from the top to the bottom, know that they are part of a machine, and that they must do their duty faithfully."

"The railways of these colonies—take either South Australia, Victoria, or New South Wales—represent the bulk of the debt of their respective countries, and I firmly believe that, properly worked, they are an asset equal to 20s. in the £1. The colonies cannot really be said to have public debts if their railways are worked on purely business principles. The authorities entrusted with the charge of the railways, taking into account the requirements of the trading community, should provide means for developing the traffic without any rigid rules as to affording no concessions. Wherever a traffic can be developed, accounts must be taken of the necessities of the country. If the Railway Department considers it necessary to send waggons up country to bring back produce they should see if they could not so adjust the rates as to allow of the waggons going up with merchandise instead of being empty, even though the rates for the upjourney may not be so profitable as those for the return journey. By such a plan a traffic may be created. This course is good policy on the principle that any merchant is content if the aggregate result of his business at the end of the year is satisfactory."

Now, Mr. Fraser, I do not for one moment wish to say that we have not got men in this colony equal to Mr. Speight in the way of ability to manage our railways, but the Commissioner and Traffic Manager at the present time are subservient to the Minister for Railways. If we adopt the principle carried out in Victoria, I believe our railways will pay. The hon. member for Bundamba referred the other night to the expensive stations erected between here and Ipswich. Well, I think if there was to be no duplication of the line at all those stations would have had to be erected in a short time, because they were badly wanted. Those stations, in my opinion, should not be debited to the cost of duplication. If I rightly understand, the amount proposed for this work was originally £100,000. That was cut down to £85,000, but the amount of the tender of Overend and Company for the wooden bridges without iron girders was something over £50,000. If the duplication of that line can be carried out for £100,000, not including the stations, I consider it will be a piece of work very cheaply done. I should be very much against reducing the salaries of Civil servants—very much indeed. I do not think that the Civil servants of this colony are overpaid. Some hon. members have objected or spoken about the dandified ways of the Civil servants. Well, sir, every member of this House must from time to time come into contact with Civil servants, and I must say that on every occasion when I have done so the Civil servants I have met in every department have been most civil. I never met with greater civility and consideration than has been shown to me by the whole of them. I know that I am treading on dangerous ground when I refer to the Land Act, and I shall, I daresay, be considered somewhat inconsistent. But I look upon the Land Act in the same way that a man would look at his business. If I were to embark in business and made a fair start, sailing along very fairly, and in twelve months found that I was going wrong, I do not think anyone would say I was a less wise man if I retraced my steps and tried to do better. It is the same with the Land Act. That measure is somewhat similar to the Act in force in New South Wales, but there they reserved to the Government the right

to sell as much as £200,000 worth of land to make up any deficiency in the revenue. I believe, sir, as one hon. gentleman stated, that we may do a little bit too much for posterity. I think that we should do a little for ourselves at any rate, and not let posterity reap the whole of the advantages. Therefore, I do think that without any loss of prestige the Minister for Lands or the Government might, whenever they see a deficiency in the revenue, sell, say, £100,000 worth of land at its value. I say, Mr. Fraser, "at its value," and not in the way we have seen land sold before—sacrificed to fill the Treasury. They should be certain that when the land is offered for sale it will realise its value; if not, it should not be sold at all. If that were done I do not think it would reflect in any way on the Minister for Lands or upon the Government, and I am sure the country would support them in carrying out such a policy. Reference has been made to the great expense incurred from year to year in keeping up our Defence Force. One hon. member said there was a war scare the other day, but I think there is a bit of a war scare now—just as much as there was the other day—and if we have to provide for the defence of the colony it must, in my opinion, be a continuous provision. I do not think that we should go in for a Defence Force this year and next year relax it. From what I have seen of our Defence Force, especially at the encampment held last year at Lytton, I think it is a credit to the colony. I believe the men are well officered. I never see any of these dandy officers walking about Queen street with canes and so on; and if any hon. member went through the same treatment and did as much work as I saw the volunteers do at the encampment at Lytton, I am sure they would find it is not such a bed of roses after all. I think, Mr. Fraser, that what we heard just now seemed like a hint that this duty on machinery is only to be 5 per cent., and if that is the case I say it is not just to the other taxpayers of the colony.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Fraser,—I cannot help imagining that there are signs in the air which show that the Government have already decided to accept the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie, taking off the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. duty on machinery. We know that the Government, in answer to a question put by the leader of the Opposition when the House met this afternoon, said that they had not made up their minds to a remission of that duty; but, sir, taking into consideration the facts that the leader of the Opposition intimated his intention to propose a remission of the $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., that the hon. member for Gympie proposes to remit the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on machinery, and also that a great many hon. members on each side object to the tax on machinery, I cannot help thinking that a compromise has been decided upon, and that the result will be that they will shortly agree to take off $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and thus reduce the duty on machinery to 5 per cent. The hon. member for Maryborough said that this duty was a bogus cry. He doubtless expresses the sentiments of his constituents, for in the district he represents there are some very large foundries and a great many men existing on the work which they obtain there. This $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would be no burden to them, as it would be to others, especially in the northern part of the colony, but it would not benefit them, as it would not increase the work which the residents of Maryborough would expect to obtain, as, looking at it in the light of a protective duty, it would not enable them to compete with imported machinery. He stated also that the present deficiency has been brought about by the severe drought. I cannot agree with that. I believe that the deficiency

has been brought about by maladministration and extravagance—that the result has been just what occurs when one has an inefficient manager of a business firm. One cannot point to any particular matter in which he has done wrong, but the result is bad; and so it is in the present instance. I think also that the means which are now being taken to get out of the mess into which the Government have brought themselves are equally objectionable—I mean the proposal to tax machinery. The hon. gentleman who last spoke said that diggers do not object to paying a fair share of taxation; certainly they do not, but what they do object to is being unfairly taxed, and they consider this proposed tax inequitable. They are taxed more heavily than any other class in the community, and I certainly think a land-tax would be far fairer than the present one. A larger amount could be easily raised, and it would in every way be a fairer tax. We know that taxation is necessary through having to raise money in order to pay the interest on our immense loan. We know also that nearly the whole of that loan has been invested in the improvement of lands by railways and various public works; and therefore, since the owners of those lands have—through no energy or foresight of their own, but simply through the expenditure of those large sums—benefited in such a surprising degree, they are the persons who equitably ought to pay the interest instead of the miners, who practically derive no benefit whatever from it. With regard to this matter, I shall take the case of the Treasurer first and then myself. On the present Gympie line he owns land at the turn-off of the Brisbane and Sandgate Railway to Gympie; that has in consequence immensely increased in value through this Government expenditure. I possess land further along the same line which has also increased greatly in value through no exertions of my own, but simply through this large expenditure of money from loan. Is it not right, therefore, that I ought to pay for the interest of this expenditure instead of those who derive no benefit from it? Look at the Premier again; I shall mention one of his possessions—that is the land he owns at Townsville. About one-fifth of his property has been sold by him for £26,000, and the remaining portion is estimated to be worth not less than £100,000, and, if we get separation, probably £200,000. It has increased from a merely nominal value to that amount through the expenditure upon public works. Therefore, I think it is only fair that those whose land is benefited so largely by the expenditure ought to be taxed to pay the interest on the money which has been so expended, instead of persons who have received no benefit whatever. That would be a better mode of getting out of the difficulty than that proposed by the Government, who are striking a deadly blow at one of the staple industries of the colony, and it certainly seems to me that the tax will not be sufficient to get them out of their troubles.

Mr. CAMPBELL said: Mr. Fraser,—I am one of those members who intend to oppose fresh taxation upon the people; but I suppose it is necessary, although I think the Treasurer has taken the wrong course in doing so. I think that if he had sought to make up the deficit by some other means than increasing the *ad valorem* duties upon goods already taxed, it would be better for the country. I have no doubt that that is the easiest way for him to get at it, and I suppose he will adopt it; but I think it would have been better—I hope I shall not be debarred from setting forth my views upon the land question—if the Minister for Lands, before this tax was sought to be imposed by the Treasurer, had taken some steps to amend the Land Act without affecting the principle of it.

I am sure all classes who occupy land in this colony are complaining somewhat, and seeking relief from the Government, and I think it is only fair that they should get it, and it would tend to increase the revenue by doing so. The pastoral tenants are complaining. They want a maximum rental fixed, and are seeking, I believe, for an increase of tenure. If that would be a benefit to the country, I for one am prepared to grant it. I do not mean to say I would go to the length indicated in the petition presented by the hon. member for Burke a few days ago—thirty years; but I would be disposed to grant an increase of two or three or even five years. Then, again, there are the grazing farms, which are in the same position. There is an uncertainty about them, and it will be necessary for the Government to fix a maximum there. There are a considerable number already surveyed, and there are no occupants for them, and it is necessary for the Government to take some steps to get them occupied. Then there are the agricultural farms. I was very pleased indeed this evening when I heard the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. Kellett) suggest that there should be something done in respect to them. As regards the rental going towards the purchase, I think that would induce people to take them up readily. I believe, furthermore, that if there were not sufficient revenue derived from that source we ought to turn to the Defence Force. That force up to the present time has cost the country over £90,000, and I believe the cost of it this year will be something like £60,000. I ask the Committee, are we getting value for our money? It is true there is a certain amount of work being done, and it will not do to spoil that work; but I think some means ought to be taken to curtail the expense as much as possible. At a time like this, when there is a general depression all over the colony, I think with the hon. member for Fassifern that it is only fair that the Civil servants of the colony should bear some of the burden. They have good times and have received good salaries in consequence of the good times throughout the colony, and when the time of depression comes they should bear it as well as other members of the community. The hon. member for Maryborough said he had not seen members of the Defence Force swaggering about the streets. I can only say that if he has not seen them he must have had goggles on, because it is patent to everybody that if you go about the streets you can see them everywhere. They seem to be a useless lot from what I have seen of them. I am very pleased indeed that the hon. member for Gympie has seen fit to move an amendment to do away with the *ad valorem* duty upon machinery. Last year I believe there was something like £5,000 raised from that source, and the North paid nearly every penny of it. There is one gentleman with whom I had a conversation when I was at Bundaberg some few weeks ago, who told me that just at the time when the duty was imposed he had a very expensive sugar plant in Queensland waters, and it cost him £800 to land it. Of course he never expected that, and it threw him out of his calculations altogether when he found that he had £800 more to pay. So you see, Mr. Fraser, that the burden falls upon so few that it is advisable that it should be withdrawn. I hope that the hon. gentleman will see his way to forego that, because I feel sure that if he does not he will be defeated.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Fraser,—Hon. gentlemen know my views upon this matter, and therefore it is needless for me to enter into any long dissertation upon my reasons for supporting it. The hon. member for Toowoomba (Mr. Campbell) made some allusions to which I

wish to reply. I consider that an unjust attack has been made upon the Civil servants, and it is my duty to defend them, having been so long a Civil servant myself, and having gone through the ordeal of the threats which are frequently held out that so much per cent. of their salaries is to be deducted. I sympathise with them, and trust that their salaries will not be reduced. I do not consider that there is at this moment, throughout all Queensland, one Civil servant who is overpaid, and I believe the Civil Service of Queensland to be as efficient, as good, as well regulated, and as well conducted as any Civil Service in the world. I have been through most of the offices, and all I can say is that if any man with a civil tongue in his head visits them he will meet with nothing but civility in return. Those persons who have gone to any of the offices and have said that they have not been treated with civility must have gone there in a very bad temper, and they must have been very bad-tempered people indeed if they did not come out in a very good temper from the very great civility that they received. With regard to this very great talk about the Land Act, and also about the *ad valorem* duty, I say that the Land Act has not had a fair chance. It has had to contend with what I may call an intervention of Providence. We have gone through a period of the greatest drought that has ever occurred in the colony, and I am sure that persons interested in pastoral pursuits deserve great credit for the manner in which they have availed themselves of the provisions of the Land Act in the face of such a drought. Now, since we have had the advantage of the rains I hope we are at the beginning of a very bright period in the history of the colony. I have no doubt that if the Land Act gets a chance for a year or two it will prove all that its originators hoped it would prove. As to the *ad valorem* duty, if it were not that it suggests a road to fraud it would be the most equitable duty in the world, because each man pays only in proportion to his wants. The poor man pays in the same proportion only as the rich man. The rich man, owing to the luxuries he uses, pays ever so much more than the poor man. I will not continue to speak any longer upon the subject, because I think it has been exhausted. I would not have risen at all had it not been my intention to say a word for the Civil servants. I shall support the proposals of the Colonial Treasurer.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Fraser,—I do not think there was much necessity for the hon. member to get up and speak in favour of the Civil servants, because I am not aware that any member has during the debate attempted to say anything in disparagement of the Civil Service.

Mr. SHERIDAN: Yes, they have.

Mr. ALAND: The hon. member for Maryborough has been confounding the Civil Service with the military service.

Mr. SHERIDAN: Not at all.

Mr. ALAND: That was the service spoken of in a somewhat disparaging way by some hon. members, and by myself among the number, but I have never in this House spoken one word in disfavour of the Civil Service. I always found them civil and obliging, and when I spoke about the matter the other evening I deprecated the proposal to reduce their salaries. What I spoke in favour of was the reduction of expenditure upon the Defence Force, as I thought, and still think, that we are travelling too fast in that direction.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said: Mr. Fraser,—I think every hon. member will regret the necessity of the Treasurer coming down to the House to ask

for additional taxation, but I quite approve of the manner in which he proposes to raise it, because I consider the *ad valorem* the most fair tax he could have imposed, as it presses equally upon every resident in Queensland. Not a single man can reside in Queensland without paying his quota to the revenue derived from *ad valorem* duties. It has been mentioned by the hon. member for Fassfern and by the hon. member for Toowoomba that a reduction in the salaries of members of the Civil Service should take place. I cannot agree with those hon. members, because the members of the Civil Service will have to pay their quota to the *ad valorem* duties as well as other people, and by reducing their salaries as well we would be putting a separate burden upon one portion of the community. We have seen the time in Queensland when we had to put on an *ad valorem* duty of 10 per cent. I remember when the 10 per cent. *ad valorem* duty was put upon all dutiable articles, and at that time machinery was exempted from duty and admitted free. I shall have much pleasure in supporting the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie, and I hope the Treasurer will see his way to accept it. I think we should encourage the importation of machinery for the sake of our manufacturing industries. We have very few manufacturing industries in the colony, and they should be encouraged. With respect to the foundries, if we put on this 2½ per cent. additional it would be no protection to them whatever. I will therefore support the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Fraser,—I think if it is the intention of the Committee to accept the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie it will be as well to adopt the language of the last Customs Act in dealing with it, and make it apply to "machinery for manufacturing, sawing, sewing, agricultural, mining, and pastoral purposes, steam-engines, and boilers." I must say that there is a force in some of the arguments used with respect to remitting the additional duty upon machinery, especially in the first reason mentioned by the hon. member for Stanley and by the hon. member for Gympie—that machinery was subject for the first time to a 5 per cent. duty last year, and that to increase the duty now is adding rather suddenly to the burden then imposed. I take it in another light, however—that is, that the Bill to be laid before the House dealing with taxation is only to extend for a couple of years. The increased *ad valorem* duty will only continue for a couple of years under the Bill. In the case of machinery which is of a permanent character, it might be as well to relieve it of the increased taxation to be imposed for a sudden emergency—for the present taxation proposal is what I call an emergency proposal. I shall certainly object, however, very strongly to the total remission of duty upon machinery as intended to be proposed by the leader of the Opposition; and I trust that if the Government accept this suggestion of the hon. member for Gympie and remit the increased duty, those in favour of this suggestion will give them their support in defeating the proposal of the hon. member who leads the Opposition. In the present state of the Treasury I could not regard with complacency the loss of £12,000 a year from this source of revenue. We are not in a position to be liberal as regards the financial requirements of the colony. After the debate that has taken place I may say that the Government do not intend to insist upon the 7½ per cent. upon machinery, and I will accept the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie, but I would like him to frame his resolution on the basis of the Customs Duties Act of 1885. I think I shall be

able to give convincing arguments to the hon. the leader of the Opposition to-morrow, when he proposes his amendment upon the Customs Duties Bill, against the total remission of the duty upon machinery. I imagine I shall be able to prove to him that the total abolition of the duty upon machinery at the present time would be very unwise; and when I have read to him a list of the articles for which exemption has been claimed as coming under the designation of "machinery," he will, I think, agree with me that the loss of revenue to be incurred by the abolition of the duty is too great to entertain at the present time. I do not intend now to go into the question of the total abolition of the duty on machinery, but I will be prepared to do that when the hon. member brings forward his motion. After the debate which has occurred, I think it better to say at once that the Government will accept the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Fraser,—I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the Treasurer is trying to make a good bargain with his own side of the Committee, and I think that is rather a corrupt political action. He asks them to vote against the amendment of the hon. member for Port Curtis, and he promises that if they will do that he will support them in doing away with the proposed increase of 2½ per cent.

The PREMIER: He says he will concede so much, but not more.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I would like also to correct the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. I would like to correct his memory, and to correct the memory of the Treasurer. They claim to have been always opposed to the tax on machinery.

The PREMIER: No; I did not say that.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The hon. member did say it, and it was repeated by the Colonial Treasurer.

The PREMIER: I said I had always a kind of half sympathy with the objectors.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It was that half sympathy which led the hon. member to vote for the retention of the tax. He certainly never had a thorough sympathy with the admission of machinery duty-free. I think we have had debate enough upon the matter and that we might now go to a division, and I think the debate has shown this—that the Government really did make up their minds before the Committee met that the 2½ per cent. *ad valorem* was to be taken off machinery.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Fraser,—I think it is very absurd that the whole of this evening should have been lost in debating the subject of restricting taxation on machinery, when the Government have eventually decided to take it off. The leader of the Opposition, this afternoon, when proceedings commenced, asked the question in consequence of information he had received, whether the Government had decided on the remission of this tax. The statement was denied. I subsequently stated in the face of that denial that I had reason to believe the Government would conclude by accepting the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie, and take the 2½ per cent. off. That was a kind of bargain on account, the Government knowing that many members were unfavourable to this tax, and that probably, if that concession were made, the motion against the 7½ per cent. duty would be lost when it was put by the leader of the Opposition to-morrow. The result has been as I stated. They have accepted the amendment, as they decided to do four or five hours ago. It is rather amusing to

hear the Colonial Treasurer say now that they only intended to put this duty on for two years—namely, to carry them through their period of office.

Mr. SMYTH said that with the consent of the Committee he would insert the words “and sewing” after the word “sawing.”

Amendment, by leave, amended, and put and passed.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Fraser,—I propose now to move my amendment raising the amount on which succession duties are not to be collected. My object is to spare the widows and orphans, and I shall therefore frame the amendment in a different form. I propose to insert after the word “deceased” in the proviso, the words “no duty shall be charged on less sums than £3,000, and on £3,000 or any larger sum.” It will then read—

Provided that, as to so much of the property as is transmitted to the widow or children of the deceased, no duty shall be charged on less sums than £3,000, and on £3,000 or any larger sum the duty shall be calculated at one-half only of the percentage above mentioned.

I understand that the Premier acknowledges that the widow and children are fairly entitled to a concession of one-half, whatever the amount. My object is to save them from any claim where the sum left to them is small. I need not enter into any discussion on this. As I mentioned the other night, it is very hard that an unfortunate widow who is left without her husband to support her should have to pay, out of a small sum of money, even £1 or £2 to the Government in the shape of duty. I think the Government should spare widows and children, and I hope the Treasurer will accept my amendment.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Fraser,—I think if anything like this amendment were carried it would be better to withdraw the resolution altogether. The direct result of it would be to deprive the Treasury of even the moderate amount of revenue it receives from personalty at the present time. As hon. members are aware, personalty at present pays $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on all sums; there is no free minimum; and on what ground can the hon. member contend, in the present state of the Treasury, that that contribution should be abolished? I am of opinion that anyone who receives a legacy or bequest of £3,000, even a widow or children, should certainly contribute to the necessities of the State. I would refer the hon. gentleman to the succession duties as they stand in Victoria. Our resolutions are on a far more liberal scale.

Mr. DONALDSON: What is the minimum in Victoria?

The PREMIER: There is no free minimum fixed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: In New Zealand there is no duty under £100; from £100 up to £1,000, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; from £1,000 up to £5,000, $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; from £5,000 up to £20,000, 7 per cent.; and over £20,000, 10 per cent., with 3 per cent. additional for strangers in blood. In Great Britain there is a free minimum of £100. In Victoria there is no free minimum, and all the rates are higher than those which we propose to charge. The object of the succession duties is to obtain revenue, and the adoption of the amendment of the hon. member would be not only to reduce the revenue but to abolish the revenue we at present receive from this source. For all practical purposes the free minimum of £100 is enough, especially when there is a concession of one-half the duty in the case of widows and children. There are not many very large fortunes accumulated and transmitted here, but it seems a very fair tax to charge a small succession duty on such as we have.

Mr. NORTON: The hon. gentleman's argument is that he charges the succession duty on money left to widows and orphans, because a succession duty is now charged on personalty, and because the other colonies charge a higher rate than he proposes to charge. My argument is that no charge should be made on either personalty or real estate in cases of that kind, where the value of the estate is under £3,000. A widow left with £3,000 would be very lucky if she got 7 per cent. upon it; she would probably get 6 per cent. or $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. upon it. Even at 7 per cent. her income would only be £210 a year, and what is that for a woman to live and bring up a family upon? That is the manner in which I regard it. The free minimum of £100 I do not care a bit for. If the hon. gentleman leaves me £100 in his will, and I should live to inherit it, I do not care whether I am charged duty upon it or not. It is only in the case of widows or children that exemption should be made, for the reason that that cannot compensate a widow for the loss of her husband, or children for the loss of their father. When left under £3,000 they can only have a life of poverty and hard work before them. I hope the Committee will favour my amendment, notwithstanding what has fallen from the Colonial Treasurer.

Mr. DONALDSON said: Mr. Fraser,—I think the minimum fixed by the leader of the Opposition is too high. Anyone left £3,000 will be able to afford something out of it to the State, especially when only 1 per cent. is charged. I had intended to propose an amendment limiting the free minimum, in the case of widows and children, to £500.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Make it £1,000.

Mr. DONALDSON: I should have no objection to support that.

The PREMIER: That would be a serious thing, as nearly all the estates left are under £1,000.

Mr. DONALDSON: But this refers only to widows and children. I would make the large estates pay even larger duties, which persons receiving large legacies could well afford to pay.

The PREMIER: The duty at 1 per cent. on £500 is £5; and at present the amount payable on personalty to that amount would be £7 10s. The object of hon. members opposite seems to be to reduce taxation. Not having the responsibility of making both ends meet, it is easy to obtain a cheap popularity as the friend of the poor widow and the poor orphan. But at the present time they have to pay a tax, and they have always had in every country I know of where there are probate or stamp duties. I have never heard of its pressing hardly upon them, and this is certainly not the time when it is reasonable to reduce the very light duty that is now paid. The result of the proposition would be to reduce the total amount of the duty to a very large extent. A vast percentage of all the estates left in this colony are under £3,000. I will go further and say that a very large proportion are under £1,000, and nearly the whole of them are left to wives and children. Practically, we should receive nothing from this source, except in the case of very large estates, of which there are very few in Queensland; and what is the use of increasing the stamp duties on estates which do not exist? What we want to do is to put our house in order, and we propose to do so in part by putting a tax on real estate, leaving the duties on personal estate very much as they are now, except for large amounts. The effect of the proposition of the hon. member would be to reduce the stamp duties to such an extent that there would be very little of them left.

Mr. NORTON : How much would you lose by it?

The PREMIER : Nearly all we are getting at the present time. I am not prepared to say what is the amount, as the probate duties are not kept separately from the other duties.

Mr. CHUBB said : Mr. Fraser,—I know that people who receive small estates do not complain of the duty. What really presses upon them is the expense of obtaining letters of administration and probate of will. I do not know what the amount is now ; but some years ago it was from ten to twenty-five guineas, or say an average of fifteen guineas for obtaining letters of administration where the value of the property was under £200 or £300. The duty, as compared with that cost, is small. If the Government could devise a simple process by which that expense could be reduced to about five guineas they would do a good thing.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said : Mr. Fraser,—There is no doubt that would be a highly desirable consummation, but it is somewhat outside the scope of the present proposals. I was very much pleased to hear the hon. member express himself in the way he has done, and state that it is not the amount of duty but the cost of the lawyers' bills in taking out letters of administration that is most felt. I have no doubt that the charges are moderate enough in themselves, and that the expense is caused by the forms which have to be gone through. However, as I have said, this matter is outside the scope of the proposals before the Committee, and we had better not be led away by it. The leader of the Opposition asked what amount of revenue we received from probate duty ? Well, last year the receipts from that source amounted to £6,500.

Mr. NORTON : Is that all ? Why, we can make up that amount by reducing the Estimates.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I hope to see that amount increased when realty is included. Many residents possess a large amount of realty, and I have no doubt, therefore, that under these proposals the receipts will be correspondingly increased. Hon. members should not overlook the fact that the proposals of the Government reduce the charges on small property owners. Under the present Stamp Duties Act, the amount payable on £100 for probates of will is 1 per cent., and on letters of administration without will 1½ per cent. ; while under the proposals of the Government 1 per cent. is the maximum to be paid by widows or children, so that they are directly relieved. In New Zealand, as I have already stated, property under £100 in value is exempt, and from £100 to £1,000 the duty is 1 per cent. Under the English Act the duty on property of the value of from £100 to £500, if bequeathed to a widow or children, is 2 per cent. ; from £500 to £1,000, 2½ per cent. ; over £1,000, 3 per cent. ; so that the rates there are very much higher than those contained in the proposals of the Government. In New Zealand the duties run up to 10 per cent., and 3 per cent. additional is charged upon property bequeathed to strangers in blood.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : Is that 10 per cent. where the property is left to widows and children ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : No ; 5 per cent. in the case of widows and children, 10 per cent. for others, and 3 per cent. additional for strangers in blood, making 13 per cent. in the case of the last mentioned. Under the circumstances, I think it cannot be considered that the proposals of the Government are at all exorbitant or extravagant. We want to derive revenue, the Treasury needs money, and that is the object of introducing these proposals to the Committee.

Mr. LISSNER said : Mr. Fraser,—I do not disagree with this tax ; I think it is a fair tax. We have knocked 2½ per cent. off the living miners, and I think we ought to give the Treasurer a chance of taxing the dead. As long as we do not encourage moneyed people to die, I shall support the proposal.

Mr. NORTON said : Mr. Fraser,—I do not think hon. members on the other side of the Committee are prepared to give any support to the amendment. They are all prepared to back up the Treasurer in his desire to extort revenue, even to the uttermost farthing, from widows and orphans. All the hon. gentleman expects to lose by accepting my amendment is about £6,000.

The PREMIER : Oh, no !

Mr. NORTON : I think the Premier said that if the Government accepted this amendment they would lose an amount equal to what we are getting now. The Colonial Treasurer said that the revenue at present received is £6,000, but, allowing it was £10,000, cannot we take £10,000 off the extravagant Estimates ? We shall do so, I hope ; and I anticipate that members on the other side will help to do it ; indeed I am quite sure that some of them will. We have taken 2½ per cent. off machinery, and now the hon. gentleman will not spare even the widows and orphans. With the permission of the Committee, I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

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

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the resolutions were adopted.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, leave was given to introduce Bills founded upon the resolutions.

TARIFF BILLS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER presented a Bill for granting to Her Majesty certain increased duties of Customs, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed, and the second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The COLONIAL TREASURER presented a Bill to impose duties in respect to estates transmitted upon death, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed, and the second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—It is rather early, but I doubt whether it is worth while to go on with any further business to-night ; I therefore move that this House do now adjourn. To-morrow we propose to take the two Taxation Bills, and if we are able to dispose of them we propose to take the other business on the paper in this order :—Opium Bill—further consideration in committee ; Gold Mining Companies Bill ; and Settled Land Bill.

Mr. PALMER : When will the second reading of the Water Bill come on ?

The PREMIER : I hope to be able to move the second reading on Tuesday next. That is what I would like, and what I intend, unless anything happens to-morrow or on Thursday to retard it.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to 10 o'clock.