

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 1 September, 1886.

Petitions.—Questions.—Immigration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill—third reading.—Formal Motion.—Motion for Adjournment.—Unemployed in Maryborough.—Customs Duties Bill—second reading.—Message from the Legislative Council—Emu Park Railway Deviation.—Succession Duties Bill.—second reading.—Adjournment.

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

PETITIONS.

Mr. SHERIDAN presented a petition from the Baptist Congregation in Maryborough, 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. SHERIDAN, the petition was received.

Mr. SHERIDAN presented a petition from the minister and office-bearers of the Wesleyan Church, Maryborough, 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. SHERIDAN, the petition was received.

Mr. SHERIDAN presented a petition from the rector and churchwardens of the Church of England, Maryborough, 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. SHERIDAN, the petition was received.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS presented a petition from the members of the Jireh Particular Baptist Church, Fortitude Valley, praying for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; and moved that it be read.

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

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. PALMER asked the Chief Secretary—

If the Government have any information as to the reports brought by H.M.S. "Opal" to Sydney about the continued occupation of the New Hebrides by the French troops from New Caledonia?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

The Government have no official information as to any reports brought to Sydney by H.M.S. "Opal," but they have received information from Mr. Blackburne, Government agent of the labour vessel "Sybil," that the French troops are erecting permanent buildings at Sandwich, in the Island Mallicolo, and that it is there understood the buildings are intended to be occupied by convicts. The Government immediately communicated the information to the Agent-General by cable.

Mr. ADAMS asked the Minister for Works—

1. Is the permanent survey of the railway line between Bundaberg and Gladstone completed?

2. If not, are the surveyors working at the permanent survey at present?

3. If not, when will they re-commence the work, and when will the permanent survey of the line be completed?

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

1. No.

2. No.

3. The permanent survey will be commenced as soon as the Parliamentary plans and book of reference now being prepared are approved by Parliament.

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Mr. BAILEY asked the Minister for Works—

What rates are paid per mile for coal traffic on branch lines connecting with the Southern and Western line and the Burrum line respectively?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

The rates for conveying coal over private branch lines are not computed at per ton per mile, but are influenced by special circumstances surrounding each case.

On the Southern and Western Railway coal is conveyed over private branches starting from Bundanba and Dinmore stations at 6d. per truck, and on the Burrum Railway it is conveyed over two branches starting from points where there are no stations at 1s. per truck.

IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1882 AMENDMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

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

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By Mr. LUMLEY HILL—

That there be laid on the table of the House, the official correspondence relative to the ballast on the Brisbane Valley Railway line, consisting of—

1. Memo. from Chief Engineer to Minister for Works, dated 3rd November, 1883.

2. Letter from Commissioner for Railways to Chief Engineer, dated 8th November, 1883.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

UNEMPLOYED IN MARYBOROUGH.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to correct a statement made by the hon. member for Gympie yesterday when the Immigration Bill now before the House was being discussed, and I will conclude with the usual motion for adjournment. I shall read from *Hansard* the hon. member's statement, and I shall produce sufficient evidence, I hope, to flatly contradict that statement and disabuse the mind of the hon. gentleman, who, I have no doubt, is labouring under a mistake. In the discussion upon the Immigration Bill I find the hon. member for Gympie, 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 working man. In Maryborough there are perhaps 200 persons in the depot, and there is possibly work for about fifty."

I desire to emphasise the words "200 persons in the depot." He went on to say:—

"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 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.’

Further on the statement is denied by the hon. member for Mulgrave, Mr. Adams, and the hon. member for Gympie interjects, “It is true, though.” In order to test the correctness of the hon. member’s statement, I may state that I at once wired to two gentlemen whom I consider the principal people in Maryborough, to ascertain if there was any truth whatever in the statement. The first reply I received was from John Walker and Co. John Walker and Co. are known to be the largest employers of labour, I suppose, in Queensland. They employ labour for all kinds of work. They are large sugar-growers, they are large timber-cutters, and they have an enormous foundry. There is no occupation a labouring man can fulfil that there is not an opportunity for his being employed at by John Walker and Co. I received last night before the House adjourned an urgent wire to this effect:—

“Decidedly untrue. We have experienced difficulty in procuring labourers within the last fortnight at 33s. per week.”

I also wired to the secretary of the Maryborough Chamber of Commerce, a well-known man in Maryborough and a very intelligent one, and I received to-day from him the following urgent reply:—

“Statement regarding immigrants’ wages quite incorrect. The whole of the immigrants to this port quickly absorbed at full current wages.”

Now, it is quite evident that the hon. member for Gympie has been misled. He has allowed himself to be cajoled into believing the statement he made, and fancied, no doubt, that he was stating what was literally true when he told us all he did last night. I am a little surprised that a generous-minded man like him should so vaunt about his charity, and inform the House that he gave a portion of his £200 for the purpose of relieving these men, and that he actually sent some of them to get dinner in his own kitchen. We all know that charity is one of the seven cardinal virtues, and covers a multitude of sins. I hope that in this case it will have that very desirable effect. As for the statement in its integrity it is as groundless and baseless as a vision of fancy, let the hon. gentleman now explain it as he will. I move the adjournment of the House.

MR. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I consider that my hon. colleague and myself would fail very much in our duty to our constituents if we did not try to rebut the statement made by the hon. member for Gympie last night. It not only affects Maryborough, but it affects the whole colony. What would the people in the old country think when they heard the statement from what is considered a reliable source, that the employers in Maryborough are offering new arrivals in this colony 6s. a week? Now, sir, *Hansard* does not give a correct report of what the hon. gentleman said. He stated distinctly that it was in Maryborough that offer was made; I think every hon. member will bear out that statement. I do not wonder for one moment that the hon. member for Mulgrave was so indignant, knowing as

much as he does of Maryborough, having lived there for ten or twelve years before I went there. I know far more about Maryborough than the hon. member for Gympie does. I have employed more labour there than he ever did or ever will. I have had more than 1,200 men working for me in the district of Maryborough at one time, and I never had a labourer working for me eight hours a day at less than 7s. a day—two guineas a week. I wired last night to what I consider a reliable authority, Mr. Smyth, the Immigration Agent at Maryborough—

“Smyth, Esquire, Immigration Agent, Maryborough.—Sir,—Smyth member Gympie states Maryborough farmers offer new arrivals 6s. a week. Is this true?”

Mr. Smyth wires in reply—

“Statement not true. No such offer made this district to my knowledge. Average wages single men married couples and domestic servants from forty to fifty and twenty-six pounds per annum with rations.”

Now, sir, Mr. Smyth, the Immigration Agent, has to write out the agreements for the different persons employed in Maryborough. He is a reliable authority; he knows the rate of wages. I would recommend the hon. member to expand his mind a little more, and learn that there are other places in the colony besides Gympie. The hon. member thinks it will go down with the Gympie people to underrate Maryborough and cry up Gympie, but I know the men of Gympie do not believe in it. They know as much about Maryborough as the hon. member does—many of them a great deal more. I do not think it is creditable that any hon. member should run down one place to try and bolster up his own district, and make out that he is the representative of such an important place as he represents, which is Gympie to his mind and no other place.

MR. SMYTH said: Mr. Speaker,—If I have done nothing else, I have benefited the consolidated revenue by inducing the members for Maryborough to send telegrams up last night to know if my statement was true. I am very sorry the senior member for Maryborough was not entrusted with the presentation of those Contagious Diseases Act petitions. The junior member seemed to have all the dealing with the Contagious Diseases Act; our friend the senior member does not seem to be recognised at all.

MR. ANNEAR: Speak to the question.

MR. SMYTH: I am speaking to the question. The question is that the House do now adjourn, and I shall speak on what I like. The junior member for Maryborough goes on to say he has telegraphed to the firm of John Walker and Co. Well, who are John Walker and Co.? There is the junior member for Maryborough—the junior member, mind—is he a member of the firm of John Walker and Co.? I am led to believe he is, and that is the reason why he stuck to the Treasurer last night on the 7½ per cent. business.

MR. SHERIDAN: I am not a member of the firm; I wish I were.

MR. SMYTH: Well, if he is not a member of the firm, he is like my hon. friend the senior member. He owes his position in the House to John Walker and Co. This is what they do in Maryborough: They go to John Walker and Co., and say, “Would you mind letting your men have half-an-hour’s spell while we make an electioneering speech?” They owe their existence in the House to John Walker and Co.; John Walker and Co. sent them into the House. When I made the statement that men were offered 6s. a week, I made a statement which I believed was true. I do not think any member of this House ever knew me to tell a falsehood. The men told me they were offered 6s. a week, and I believe it; but I believe,

like the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, that advantage was taken of them. People came and secured the labour they wanted, and those men who were left were taken advantage of when they were on the point of being turned out of the dépôt. They were some of the finest men I ever saw come into the colony, and I believe their statement that they were offered 6s. a week in Maryborough. They had an honest appearance, and they showed their honesty by going to work at once when I found work for them. I do not wish to depreciate Maryborough; I have as much interest in Maryborough as either of those gentlemen, perhaps.

Mr. SHERIDAN: More, perhaps.

Mr. SMYTH: Perhaps I have more when it is all cleared up. I do not wish to depreciate Maryborough, and to show that, I may say that nearly all the machinery used in the mine in which I am interested I make it my business to get in Maryborough. There are some people in Maryborough I do not like—grasping, greedy people, who want everything they can get from the revenue. If they could dive into the Treasury chest, and use the whole of the treasure for themselves, they would not care a fig about the rest of the colony; they do not care who sinks so long as they swim. I do not want to say they are all like that. Some of them are as good as the people in any part of the colony; but there is a small clique who think the Minister for Works must do everything for them—construct railways here, and a bridge there; do everything for them, and let the rest starve. As for these telegrams, I do not care a fig about them. I knew last night they were going to be sent to John Walker and Mr. Marsden. I am only surprised they did not go to the Chamber of Commerce; I daresay they will go there. I stated what I believed was perfectly true, and what I now believe is true. I will not go back from it; I believe the men who made that statement were telling the truth.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I will not detain the House long in replying, because really what the hon. member for Gympie has said is not worth wasting time to answer. He has indulged in a sort of facetious rhodomontade and nonsense, avoiding the questions at issue; and therefore, to try to lower him from crowing on his own little Gympie is entirely beneath me. I leave him alone, and I hope that by-and-by, when he ascertains that the persons who made those statements to him told untruths, he will have the generosity to apologise for having repeated them in this House.

Question put and negatived.

CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL—SECOND READING.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to move the second reading of this Bill for granting to Her Majesty increased duties of Customs. It is founded on the resolutions adopted by the House last night, as reported from the Committee of Ways and Means. As the subject was so fully debated on that occasion, I do not think there is any necessity for detaining the House at any length. Any matters for discussion in a Bill of this sort can be better dealt with in committee. I therefore simply move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the Colonial Treasurer is quite aware that hon. members on this side of the House disapprove of the Bill. We have already protested against it. We do not, however, intend to oppose the passage of the Bill, but will take the opportunity now of formally recording our protest against it.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 26.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Dickson, Miles, Dutton, Fraser, Smyth, Isambert, Mellor, Jordan, White, Kates, Campbell, Buckland, McMaster, S. W. Brooks, Wakefield, Bulcock, Lumley Hill, Bailey, Sheridan, Annear, Foote, Horwitz, Higson, Midgley, and Wallace.

NOES, 13.

Messrs. Norton, Macrossan, Hamilton, Macfarlane, Philp, Black, Nelson, Adams, Lalor, McWhannell, Scott, Govett, and Lissner.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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

Preamble postponed.

On clause 1, as follows:—

"1. In lieu of the duties of Customs now levied upon the importation into Queensland of goods upon which duties are levied in proportion to the value thereof, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid to Her Majesty, upon the importation of any such goods into Queensland, whether by sea or land, except as to the goods mentioned in the schedule to this Act, duty at the rate of seven pounds ten shillings for every one hundred pounds of the value thereof, and such duty shall be payable also upon any of such goods which were on the nineteenth day of August, eighteen hundred and eighty-six, in any bonded warehouse.

"The duty to be levied and paid upon the importation of the goods mentioned in the said schedule shall be at the rate of five pounds for every one hundred pounds of the value thereof, as at present."

Mr. NORTON said he gave notice when the resolutions were under discussion that he would formally move in committee that machinery be exempted from all taxation under the *ad valorem* duties, and he thought that would be best done by moving an amendment in that section. He proposed, therefore, by way of amendment, to omit the last paragraph of the clause with the view of inserting the following:—

As to the goods mentioned in the said schedule, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Customs Duties Act of 1885, no duties shall be chargeable thereon.

It was not necessary to discuss the matter at any length. He believed there was a general impression throughout the colony that the tax on machinery was a tax on enterprise. The introduction of machinery had done more to increase labour than anything else, and the duty upon it was an impost which had created immense dissatisfaction, and had interfered largely with the development of mining in particular, which was an industry of very great importance to the colony. For those reasons he proposed the amendment.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he trusted the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition would not meet with a favourable reception from the Committee. At the present time they ought to be particularly jealous of doing anything which would interfere with the revenue derived from Customs duties, the Customs being one of the largest and readiest contributories to the general revenue of the colony. He would point out to the hon. gentleman and to the Committee that if the amendment was carried it would result in a very large loss of revenue indeed in the Customs Department, which must not be judged of solely from the collections on machinery for the ten months of the year as disclosed in the return laid on the table of the House. If machinery was held exempt from duty, a large number of articles which were used in connection with machinery, which were largely imported for the purpose, would also claim to be exempted. He would cite a few of those articles. The second time he took charge of the Treasury he had a good deal of

trouble in dealing with repeated applications for exemption, and at last they got the matter somewhat more into form. Still, continual claims were made, and a list had been prepared showing what machinery consisted of. The first three items on the list were—amalgamators for quartz machines, animal-charcoal retorts and revivifiers, and leather belting for machinery. The last-named article, when coming in with machinery, was treated as a portion of it, and was subjected, therefore, to the *ad valorem* duty. To omit it from the schedule would be acting very unfairly to importers who imported leather belting and similar articles by themselves. Those importers would have to pay a duty of 7½ per cent., whereas leather belting connected with machinery would come in free. Considerable loss of revenue must certainly occur unless the Customs were in a position to trace every identical invoice. He gave that as an illustration of how the loss of revenue would occur, for, as hon. members could easily see, it would be almost impossible to find out whether the leather belting imported belonged to machinery, or whether it was imported for purposes of sale. “Steam boilers”—they had already excluded these from the tax. “Open boilers, bone mills or pulverisers, bark-mills, blocks, iron of all kinds, beer-engines, spring balances, brick, tile, and pipe-making machines, Clyburn keys and spanners, iron and brass cocks of all kinds, machinery for the manufacture of confectionery, corn-shellers, chaff-cutters, and knives for ditto.” With reference to knives, when they did not form part of the chaff-cutters they were formerly subject to duty, whereas the chaff-cutters themselves were exempt. If the knives came in with the cutters they were exempt also. That was another illustration. “Corn and seed crushers, corn and seed drills, cotton-gins, cranes of all kinds, copper (sheet) perforated for centrifugals.” There, again, if the copper came in with the centrifugals it was admitted free, whereas if it came in for ordinary purposes of sale or to replace that which had been worn out in the mills of the colony it was charged duty. That was an inconsistency which would be again brought about if the hon. gentleman’s amendment were carried. “Coffee-mills, cheese-presses, dressing-machines for flour, drilling-machines, steam-engines of every description, engine-packing and sheet india-rubber, flour-mills of all kinds, and machinery in connection therewith, gas-meters, gas-retorts, purifiers, boilers and engines, gauges (steam, vacuum, and hydraulic), gauge-glasses, hay-presses, hoists (American and others).” In connection with hoists, as he mentioned last night, if the wire rope came as part of the hoist it was admitted free; but if the same rope was imported for purposes of sale it was subject to duty—another inconsistency. “Horse gears, hydraulic presses and pumps, steam-hammers, harrows and horse-rakes, steam-injectors, screw-jacks, leather-rollers, lawn-mowers, leather for both hand and steam power, lithographic machinery, mortar and pug mills, mining machinery of every description, oilcake-mills, parts of machinery which could not be used except as parts of machinery; piping of all sorts.” With regard to lead and iron piping, of which a large quantity was imported, if it was introduced with mills it was admitted free under the old tariff, but if imported for purposes of sale or to replace the worn-out article it was subjected to duty. “Pumping and winding gear, pumps of every description, pile-driving machinery, iron pulleys of all kinds, printing machinery, punched gratings for quartz-machines, ploughs and cultivators of all kinds, mortising-machines, girder-plates, steam-pumps, iron pulley blocks, self-feeding eyelet machines, cramp folding machines, cutting-engines, astragal machines,

punching-machines, turned shafting, perforated zinc, eccentric presses, testing or curving machines, emery machines, burring-machines, wire-presses, corn-shellers, corn-crackers, screw-presses, wool-presses, sole-presses, blocking machines, plummer blocks, emery discs, silk for receiving flour, ploughs and earth scoops (when made especially to be used with or worked by machinery), belting and laces that can only be used in connection with machinery, pipes, blocks, bolts and nuts (when imported with and as a necessary part of machinery).” There again the same discrepancy arose. Bolts and nuts were used in all classes of iron-work; when they came with a mill or other machinery they were admitted free, but otherwise they were charged duty. He need not weary the Committee by going through an almost endless list, in which there were about 300 articles which had hitherto claimed exemption when there was no duty upon machinery. He had heard no complaints as to the *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. being imposed upon machinery, and certainly thought the concession made last night sufficiently liberal to justify them in not insisting, at the present time particularly, upon abandoning the duty upon machinery. He had strong hope that at a very early date they would be able to remit the additional duty of 2½ per cent. Hon. members might believe him or not, but he certainly did look forward to the time when they would be able to dispense with the additional 2½ per cent. and revert to the uniform 5 per cent. He was sorry that they had made the concession they did last night, because he thought they ought to have regarded the necessities of the Treasury, and not have allowed sentimental considerations to influence them. Except in the case of direct importations of machinery from Great Britain, the 2½ per cent. would not make any appreciable difference in the price of articles produced here. Anyone requiring machinery who went to the iron foundries of the colony would pay a great deal more than the difference of 2½ per cent., which, however, would affect considerably anyone importing large machinery direct from home. However, he was not going to ask the Committee to go back from the resolution adopted last night, but he should strongly oppose any further concession at the present time. The Treasury must be supported with increased revenue in some shape or another, and he trusted that he should have the support of hon. members in opposing the proposed amendment.

Mr. NORTON said if the hon. gentleman had heard no objections to the duty on machinery he must be like the adder that closed its ears, because it was impossible to take up any paper in the colony without, once a week or once a fortnight, seeing some objection raised to that tax. On every leading diggings in the colony there had been very great objection raised to it. The same had taken place in the sugar-growing and saw-milling districts; in fact wherever machinery was used the same objection had been made—that it was a tax upon enterprise and industry. He thought that objection a good one. The hon. gentleman had produced a long list of articles—about 300—and said there would be great difficulty in deciding claims for exemption. But what would be the difference in deciding such claims if the proposed tax were carried? It would be only a question of paying 5 per cent. or 7½ per cent. The hon. gentleman had not given them any idea of the amount of duty likely to be collected from that tax, but he was certain that in going through the Estimates they would be able to cut out double the amount and it would never be missed. He hoped hon. members would not be led away by the objections of

the Treasurer, but that in view of the great objection there was to the proposed tax on machinery they would support his amendment. He did not propose it as a party question at all.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. the Treasurer naturally objected to any proposition which would interfere with the receipts of the Treasury, and had expressed a hope that the Committee would not support the amendment of the hon. member for Port Curtis. He quite agreed with the hon. gentleman that they should support the Treasury in obtaining revenue—as the hon. gentleman himself said—of some sort or other. But he maintained that this proposal was to obtain revenue from the wrong source altogether. The hon. gentleman had not had the courage to go to the right source for it. He had been reminded on several occasions that the proper source to obtain revenue from when there was a deficiency caused by the extra amount of interest to be paid upon the public debt was to go upon property and not upon enterprise. If the hon. member had asked the miners of Charters Towers or Cloncurry, on the occasion of his visit up north in May last, whether they were opposed to the tax on machinery, he would have had ocular demonstration whether there were any complaints against it or not. Whether the hon. gentleman had asked that question or not he had not heard, but he was inclined to think that he was afraid to do so, knowing what the answer would be. He (Mr. Macrossan) would give an instance of how the tax upon machinery would operate, and it might be taken as one typical of scores of cases. At the present time in the far north—on the Gulf waters—a new goldfield had been discovered near Cloncurry. It was reported—and, he believed, truly reported—that they have discovered very rich reefs—reefs, at any rate, that showed very well on the surface and down to fifty or sixty feet. Yet the miners there could not get machinery. There was always a difficulty in getting machinery on a new goldfield, because, no matter how well the reefs might look on the surface, there was always a certain amount of risk in going to the expense of £8,000 or £10,000 for quartz-crushing machinery. The risk was altogether too great at Croydon, owing to the distance of the field from the nearest place where machinery could be landed. The number of miners on the field was between 5,000 and 8,000, and in addition to the disadvantage they laboured under in respect to getting the machinery, an additional tax was put upon it; and it was the same in the cases of all the goldfields all over Queensland, and also on the tinfields where machinery was required. It was undoubtedly a direct tax upon the mining industry, and it operated as such far more in that case than in that of any other industry where machinery was worked.

The PREMIER: How many other articles are there in the tariff of which the same might be said?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said they would be discussed when the hon. gentleman had the courage to bring in a Bill to deal with them. At the present time they were discussing the tax upon machinery, and he thought he had pointed out clearly enough to hon. members how it operated. Of course, if hon. gentlemen opposite chose to support the hon. Treasurer in the tax he proposed last year they must submit; but, at any rate, they had entered a protest by their votes at the present time.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he had voted against the increase of the *ad valorem* duties, but certainly they could not afford to do away with the 5 per cent. already imposed upon machinery. He should rather have seen

machinery placed upon the same level as other goods. He counted machinery as a luxury, and it was a luxury that was generally employed by companies, who did not pay much to the revenue in the way of taxation; and getting at them through machinery would be one small way of getting a little out of the great number of companies that existed in the colony. Of course he was entirely opposed to any increase in the *ad valorem* duties, and he had shown that by the vote he had given. He thought the Treasurer had many ways of increasing the revenue without taxing the common commodities of everyday life. The hon. member for Fassfern had mentioned pianos. They were luxuries, which only the well-to-do working classes were able to indulge in, and why should that article not be taxed? Then there was a great deal of champagne consumed in the colony, and what was the value of that? He supposed it was about 80s. per dozen, and the tax upon it was only 6s. per gallon. He did not know very much about those things. What was the tax upon rum?

The PREMIER: 12s. per gallon.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that would press very heavily upon the working people—the rum-drinkers. But the wealthy classes who consumed champagne paid only 6s. per gallon, because it was a fashionable drink. That was what he called “class legislation.” Those who were able to pay were only taxed 6s. a gallon, whereas if the tax had been 10s. it would have made no difference to champagne-drinkers. That illustration would show what he meant by taxing luxuries instead of the everyday wants of life. He was still of opinion that they could have done without that advance upon the *ad valorem* duties.

Mr. ISAMBERT said he admired the arguments of the Opposition, and their great solicitude for the working man—that he should not be taxed; and really they were perfectly right if the tax had been such a fearful one as it was represented to be. But with regard to those articles which they could manufacture a great amount of misapprehension existed. Times out of number it had been proved that a particularly high duty upon any article that could be produced with facility in the colony actually lowered the price of such article to the consumers. Their argument, that it would be a solid tax upon the consumer, would have been correct if everything had to be imported. But a good import duty tended to encourage the manufacture of such articles, and nothing tended to lower prices so much as competition in local products. He remembered very well about nine years ago, when the Treasurer pleaded very pathetically that the duty of 2d. per lb. upon a certain article was a hardship upon the people of the colony of Queensland, who numbered then 200,000, and the whole tax amounted to only about £2,000. He contended that the proposed tax would actually lower the price of those articles to the consumer, as it would cause local production, and people would have more confidence in themselves. The 5 per cent. duty upon machinery was a real tax, and he would rather see it 15 per cent. or 20 per cent., because before two years had passed a large amount of that machinery would be manufactured in the colony cheaper than it could be imported. The freetraders assumed great anxiety for the working man and for the consumer; but they were very silent on the profits they made, and about the taxes they put on themselves. Yet when the Government required extra taxation, and proposed it in such a way as to bear the semblance of protection, they said the Government were robbers. When the importers made 50 per cent. they

were thought very clever, and thought a mighty thing of themselves, and that they had dropped upon a good "spec." To give an instance, he would enumerate a few things. One item the hon. member for Bundamba referred to yesterday was starch, which paid a duty of 30 per cent., and yet no one had attempted to manufacture starch. The hon. member was certainly right in saying they were paying 30 per cent. upon it.

Mr. FOOTE: Over that.

Mr. ISAMBERT said the hon. gentleman seemed not to be aware—

The CHAIRMAN: I must remind the hon. member the question before the Committee is the amendment of the hon. member for Port Curtis.

Mr. ISAMBERT said he was arguing by analogy. He was trying to show that by increasing the duties they actually lowered the prices to the consumer in time to come, and at the same time gave employment to many people.

The CHAIRMAN: Strictly speaking, the question before the Committee is the amendment of the hon. leader of the Opposition.

Mr. ISAMBERT said that they must adduce arguments to show that machinery should not be admitted free, and if the duty upon other articles had tended to lower their prices to the consumers, by analogy they might also infer that a duty upon machinery would in time to come lower the price of machinery to the consumer. In the year 1885 they produced in the colony 531,912 lbs. of arrowroot, and every ounce of it was starch. It paid 1d. per lb. duty, and arrowroot might be brought into the market at from 2d. to 3d. per lb., and it was sold at 6d. per lb. They heard a great deal about the 30 per cent. duty upon starch, but freetraders told them very little about the amount produced in the colony. Take the items of jams and jellies. In 1885 they imported 2,089,263 lbs. of jams and jellies. He believed the wholesale price was about 7s. 3d. or 7s. 6d. a dozen. Since a duty was imposed on those articles jam manufactories had been started in the colony, and now they could buy jam of colonial manufacture at from 4s. to 5s. 6d. per dozen; another proof that a duty upon any article that could be manufactured with facility in the colony only tended to direct the attention of enterprising people to the manufacture of it, and thus render such articles cheaper to the consumer than if their supply remained in the hands of the importer or speculator. He was only sorry he could not congratulate the Treasurer upon refusing to recede from his proposal of 7½ per cent. duty upon machinery. He would rather have seen him come boldly forward and double the duty than reduce it. He should have made it 15 per cent. He would vote against the amendment for the remission of the duty, on the ground that it was better to get half-a-loaf than no bread.

Mr. LISSNER said the hon. member had mixed up machinery with starch and jam, and all those sort of things. On the jam question the hon. member was wrong at any rate. He (Mr. Lissner) did not know of any Queensland jam manufactory that had sprung up since the duty was put upon that article.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. LISSNER: The colonial jam they consumed came from Tasmania and Victoria, and paid duty all the same, and even the principal consumers came to the stores and asked for English jams. The hon. gentleman wanted to prove that if they put a tax of 15 or 20 per cent. on machinery it would be cheaper by-and-by. He supposed that would be in Heaven. He did not want to say any more in favour of taking

off the duty upon machinery, as he had said sufficient upon the subject. He was in favour of taking it off altogether, as he believed it would be no detriment to the country to do that, nor yet to the Treasury in the long run. The Treasurer would get some other reproductive produce by remitting the tax upon machinery, and without waiting with the hon. member for Rosewood until he got his jam cheaper. They could produce gold and all sorts of minerals cheaper, and the farmers could produce farm produce much cheaper, if they had not to pay duty upon machinery. The tax proposed was no protection to anybody. The hon. member talked about putting on a duty of 20 per cent.! He only looked to Rosewood for jams, and never looked to the country at all. He would vote for the remission of the duty, as he believed it would be found to be for the good of the colony at large.

Mr. HAMILTON said that the Colonial Treasurer told them that the Treasury must be supported by taxation in some way, at the present time. No doubt that was true according to Liberal lights, because it was a matter of tradition that whenever they got into a financial muddle they at once flew to taxation to get out of it. But admitting that taxation was necessary, he objected to the form which the Government proposed it should assume. He and others objected to taxation being levied upon the particular classes who were least able to bear the burden. It was bad policy to impose the extra burden on those requiring machinery, because the development of the industries using machinery would do far more to get the Government out of the position in which they were landed than the additional sum of money they would obtain by the imposition of the proposed taxation. If the Government considered taxation necessary why did they shirk from taxing property? It was admitted by everyone that it would be a far fairer tax and that a much larger revenue could be obtained from it; and without the owners feeling the hardship that would be experienced from the machinery tax. They knew that, considering the manner in which property was so enormously improved in value by the expenditure of public money, considering also the class of people who were the owners of property and on whom a property tax would fall, it was a far more equitable tax than any tax upon machinery could be. The Colonial Treasurer said he hoped soon to be able to remove the increased *ad valorem* duties, and he stated on the previous evening that he hoped to be able to discontinue it in two years. That meant that he intended to continue it just the time he remained in office, for in another two years the term of the present Ministry would be up. They would have a Government ceased to exist by that time. The hon. member for Ipswich said it would be desirable to tax pianos; that was the sort of machinery he (Mr. Hamilton) would like to see taxed, as the class of people who owned that kind of machinery were generally the landowners he referred to, and they could bear taxation. He must say the leader of the present Government was consistent in imposing a machinery tax. He believed it would be perfectly immaterial whether there was a deficiency in the revenue or not, as he thought the machinery tax would be imposed, judging by the light of past events. Because when the Macalister Government proposed to remit the duty upon machinery, and although they had a surplus of £240,000 at the time, the present Premier was one of those who opposed that proposal and voted against it. He recollected perfectly well that during the *régime* of the McIlwraith party, when they proposed to get the colony out of the difficulties which their predecessors landed them

in, when they proposed to do that without taxation, the Liberal party moved a vote of want of confidence in them. That was one of the reasons upon which the vote was based. They believed it to be impossible that the McIlwraith Government could succeed in getting the country out of difficulty without extra taxation. That vote of want of confidence was lost, however, and the McIlwraith Government did take the country out of its difficulties, and left a surplus for their successors. That surplus was now entirely gone, and having overrun the constable the present Government were going in for taxation again.

Mr. MIDGLEY said the persistency with which that duty was opposed would be admirable if it were exerted in a better cause. If all hon. members who considered that there were items in the tariff which were oppressive and unfair were to take them separately and make so much to do about them, they might keep the House in session all the year round. He did hope the Committee would not repeat—he was about to say the exhibition it had made of itself last night. The tax on machinery was as fair and reasonable a tax as they could have, and if at a time like the present they were to take a backward step and abolish it, he did not see with what face they could go to their constituents with regard to the other duties they had agreed to last night. He would point out that English companies were now putting their capital into Queensland gold-mines. There was one some distance out of Charters Towers, and another, he believed, had recently been floated in Charters Towers. Why should wealthy companies like that, introducing machinery for the development of wealth which was known to exist there be allowed, to import their appliances without contributing anything to the revenue of the colony? He hoped his side of the Committee, at any rate, would consider that they had gone far enough in that direction, and pass the duty as it was.

Mr. PALMER said that if the Committee did make an exhibition of itself last night they had the Colonial Treasurer to thank for it. He had allowed them to go on for three hours urging an amendment which had been already printed in the Bill. They had been completely humbugged and befooled; they had been wasting genuine good sentiment in their arguments, and all the time the Colonial Treasurer was laughing in his sleeve at them; the amendment they were contending for was actually in print in the Bill, which was ready to lay on the table of the House.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. PALMER said he considered he had been made a fool of; he did not know what other hon. members thought. Now, with regard to the tax on machinery: they might go round it as they pleased, but the burden of that duty would fall on the miners and others who were to work that machinery. Whether the material was sugar or quartz, the cost of crushing would have to be added. It was no use saying it was the English capitalists they were trying to get at; the burden would fall on the men who were going to use the machinery, and in their interests he protested against the tax. However, he supposed it would be sentiment thrown away again.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not think it was right that he should allow the statement to go uncontradicted, that the amendment had been printed in the Bill before the debate took place. The hon. the Premier drafted the amendment, and it was only after the motion of the hon. member for Gympie had been discussed at some length that the amendment was inserted in the Bill and sent to the Printing Office.

Mr. BLACK said he did not for a moment doubt what the Colonial Treasurer said; but he thought their time had been unnecessarily wasted. He understood the Colonial Treasurer to say that the Bill was not ready—

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Not with the amendment.

Mr. BLACK: Did they not all remember how the hon. member for Gympie in his amendment inadvertently omitted the words "and sewing," and how he had to amend the amendment in order to include those words, as they were actually printed in the Bill which the hon. member laid on the table of the House within five minutes after the amendment was carried? The Bill was cut and dried before the House met; the hon. member knew he was going to allow the amendment to be carried, and so it was he who had wasted the time of the Committee. Hon. gentlemen were now in somewhat the same position; they knew the whole thing had been cut and dried. The Treasurer knew how many votes were at his command; he knew he was going to carry his point, so it was not much use discussing it. A most extraordinary statement had been made by the hon. member for Ipswich when he said that machinery was a luxury. What was the use of arguing, or what hope was there of arguing to any successful effect when an hon. member, representing an important constituency like Ipswich, honestly believed that machinery was a luxury? Nowadays it was an absolute necessary, not a luxury at all. The hon. member had spoken as if pianos were machinery. He (Mr. Black) quite agreed with the hon. member in taxing pianos; it would be a good thing if they imported fewer pianos and more washing tubs. It was well known that if they were to compete with other parts of the world they must do it on equal terms. If it were the intention of the Government to bring in a policy advocating protection to our industries, it would be a different question; but they were not discussing that question at all now. Five per cent. on machinery could not be considered in any way a protective duty; if the time should come when they were determined to foster native industries, it must be on a very different scale. Taking the industry which he represented—the sugar-planting industry—it was well known that outside competition from countries where heavy bounties were paid to the sugar producer had cut down the price till there was no profit at all. Mr. Hodgkinson had lately been appointed to make a tour through the sugar-producing districts, and his able report had been laid on the table. In it he recommended the Government not to have anything to do with any mill the cost of which was under £18,000 or £20,000. Now, 5 per cent. on such a mill would be £1,000, and that was only a small mill. A measure which imposed such a tax on machinery really put a monopoly into the hands of capitalists, and gave no chance at all to the man of small means; and on that ground he thought the Government were not acting judiciously so far as that industry was concerned, at a time when they ought to do all they possibly could to develop it. He quite admitted that those connected with foundries would like to see as much machinery manufactured in the colony as possible; but if that was the aim of the Government, they should put on 15 or 20 per cent. Let them put a bonus on the production of sugar; let there be some reciprocity between the different industries of the colony. He was quite prepared to discuss the matter on those terms, but if they were going to impose a duty which would not add very considerably to the revenue, while at the same time it acted very prejudicially

against a particular interest, he thought they would be pursuing a wrong policy. He admitted the necessity the Colonial Treasurer had for getting increased revenue, and he was not at all certain that on an occasion like the present, when additional revenue was sought for, it was a proper time to attempt a revision of the tariff. He saw no reason why if they removed the duty on machinery now they should not revise the whole tariff, and he thought the Government were quite right in not attempting such a serious measure as that would be. But as the leader of the Opposition had introduced his amendment he would certainly support it. If the Colonial Treasurer would tell them what the division would be it might save them the trouble of going to a division.

The PREMIER said the hon. member who had just sat down had stated that time was being wasted. Well, when an hon. member said he disapproved of an amendment but was going to vote for it it did seem that the time was being wasted. The hon. member also stated that he thought this was not a time to revise the tariff, and that the Government were quite right in not attempting it. Nevertheless, he would vote for the abolition of the duty on machinery—in the same way, no doubt, as he would vote for the abolition of any other item that might be proposed, merely in the way of assisting to carry on the business of the country. In the beginning of his speech, the hon. member said he wanted to know how the words “sewing machines” got printed in the Bill laid on the table by the Colonial Treasurer. He (the Premier) would tell him. He revised the proof, and put in the Bill the same words used in the Customs Duties Bill of last session. When the proof came back from the Printer his hon. colleague the Colonial Treasurer called his attention to the fact that the word “sewing” was not in Mr. Smyth’s amendment, and he (the Premier) said, “Very well; strike it out of the Bill before you introduce it.” That was the whole matter.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he thought there could be no doubt that, in matters of labour, machinery, as compared with ordinary tools, was a luxury. It was something intended to do work quicker and better than ordinary tools or appliances, and occupied the same relation to tools in the labour market as, say, salt-junk to turkey on the dinner table. There was no doubt that one in comparison with the other was a luxury. There was the same relationship between them as between a slab humpy and a marble palace, and why should they impose a heavy duty on the man who built a slab humpy, and allow the man who erected a palace to go scot-free? The hon. member for Townsville regarded it as a tax on labour. It was not a tax on labour, but on labour-saving appliances.

Mr. WHITE said he knew a man at the present time who did his mowing with a scythe, but was looking forward to the time when he would be able to indulge in the luxury of a mowing machine.

Mr. NELSON said that machinery was defined in the Customs Duties Act of last year as “machinery for manufacturing, sawing, and sewing, agricultural, mining, and pastoral purposes, steam engines, and boilers.” He did not think people usually employed those things in the shape of luxuries; they were not in any sense luxuries. He was going to vote for the amendment principally on the ground that he believed the encouragement of the importation of machinery, and fostering the use of it so as to get it into general employment, would create work in a much larger degree than would be done by putting a tax on machinery. There was

no doubt that if they imposed a large tax on machinery, as the hon. member for Rosewood said, they would give employment to a certain number of men in foundries about town, but he considered that the number of those men would be nothing compared with the number who would be employed to work the machines in various industrial pursuits if they once succeeded in getting machinery into general use. To do that they should make the price as low as possible. It was not 5 per cent. only that was added to the value of a machine. The additional price caused by that taxation amounted to considerably more than 5 per cent. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Rosewood that by the imposition of a large duty on machinery it was quite possible in the course of time to establish local factories, but the demand for machinery was not sufficiently large yet. When there was a large consumption of machinery it would be time enough to foster the manufacture of it in the colony. He did not agree with the Colonial Treasurer that it was absolutely certain that the omission of that tax would cause a serious loss of revenue. He did not think that was likely to follow. If he was right in saying that the general adoption of machinery would give employment to a large number of men, any loss there might be by the abolition of the duty would be fully made up in another direction.

Mr. KELLETT said he intended to vote against the amendment, and would give his reason for doing so. Last year, when the 5 per cent. duty was placed on machinery, he voted against it, but he considered that as taxation was found to be necessary, and the Colonial Treasurer had with good grace given in to the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Gympie on the previous evening, it was only fair that the Committee should now meet the hon. gentleman in the same way and not upset all his calculations by omitting the tax on machinery. But he could not agree with the idea that machinery was a luxury. They might as well call a horse a luxury because it pulled the plough instead of a human being, as was the case in old times, or they might just as well say that an ass was a luxury. He hoped, however, that this would be the last year of the 5 per cent. tax on machinery.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. Kellett) had stated that the Colonial Treasurer gave in with a good grace to the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Gympie. He (Mr. Hamilton) admitted that the hon. gentleman did everything gracefully; but, at the same time, they knew perfectly well that it was decided what the Government would do long before the Colonial Treasurer made the announcement to the Committee. There had been a caucus of the Government supporters, and the Opposition had information as to what was intended, and knew all about it. The hon. member for Fassifern had endeavoured to evoke sympathy with that tax by stating that some wealthy company had been formed in England in order to work a gold-mine. Well, that company would want interest on the money they expended; and in consequence of the imposition of the tax on machinery they would, in order to obtain that interest, have to make a higher charge for crushing. But there were many other companies who introduced machinery. There were dozens of co-operative companies consisting of poor men who required it. Every mining member in the House knew perfectly well that there were many fields in Queensland languishing for want of machinery. On those fields machinery was not a luxury but a necessity. It was not merely a labour-saving appliance, as the member for Fassifern said.

Quartz could not possibly be crushed in any other way but by machinery; it was a necessity which miners could not do without. It would have been much more to the purpose if the Colonial Treasurer, instead of taxing machinery and putting additional obstructions in the way of those men getting machinery on those fields that were now languishing for want of it, had offered every possible encouragement to enable them to get it. The consequence of that would have been the development of those mining centres, the growth of a large population upon them, large returns of gold, and a greater benefit to the colony than could possibly accrue from the paltry tax raised in the way proposed. Last year, when they objected to the imposition of a 5 per cent. duty on machinery, the Minister for Works said that what the Government were taking away with one hand they were giving with the other; that although they were imposing a duty on machinery which he expected would bring in £14,000 a year, they were giving £10,000 for prospecting purposes. What had been the result? In that particular portion of the colony which had contributed the largest amount of duty on machinery not one solitary penny of that £10,000 had been expended; and this month the vote would lapse.

Mr. GRIMES said that from the remarks of the hon. member for Fassifern one would think the colony had not advanced beyond the period of the hoe, the spade, the flail, and the scythe; and that they should treat machinery as the working man treated it fifty or sixty years ago—namely, by smashing it as the enemy of labour. As a farmer he might say that it was absolutely necessary that they should have machinery if they wanted to compete with other markets. Forty or fifty years ago they managed to get along very well without machinery, but no one would think of commencing farming operations now in the old style. No wheat-grower could pay one-half his wages at present prices if he did not go in for labour-saving machinery. He certainly thought that by taxing machinery they were hindering the progress of agriculture and of most of the other industries of the colony. Machinery was no luxury, but a real necessity of these times. It was certainly easier to turn a corn-crusher than to follow the old system and use a flail, and to that extent machinery was a luxury; but it was an absolute necessity, if they were to compete with other countries, that they should have the best appliances, and that their ports should be open for all the newest inventions in machinery of whatever kind, whether for agricultural purposes, mining, irrigation, or any other work in which machinery was required. Some years ago thousands of pounds were annually thrown away through not being able to save gold from pyrites, but through machinery a great deal of that had been saved, and no doubt other machinery would be in time invented, through whose agency a still greater portion of gold would be saved, and they would be able to get more as the return from labour. Not only in the production of gold, but of everything else, was machinery required, especially in a country like Queensland, where labour was so scarce, so dear, and so inefficient. If the colony intended to take its stand with other countries, it would have to throw open its ports to all the newest inventions in machinery of whatever kind.

Mr. W. BROOKES said a great deal advanced by Northern members had been said rather with a view of making themselves popular with their constituencies than the settlement of the practical work before the Committee. With regard to the gold-miners of the North and the hardships under which they were labouring, he held in his hand a London newspaper, dated July 8th, 1886,

and in it he found the circular of the North Queensland Gold Mining Company, capital £40,000, in 40,000 shares of £1 each. Let hon. members look at the inducements offered in that prospectus to people to take shares in that company. It was estimated that on the machinery being erected 10,000 tons of ore could be got annually at a cost of £2 per ton, and that the net profits available as annual dividend would be £37,750.

Mr. NORTON: But they have not got that yet. It is something like our Land Act.

Mr. BROOKES said that might not be realised, but what followed in the circular had been realised. There was the Day Dawn, out of which gold to the value of £600,000 sterling had been taken; and there was in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition a cake of gold weighing 1,707 oz., which represented a fortnight's yield from that mine. Other mines were mentioned, from one of which 42,300 oz. of gold had been taken, with others equally rich. He would ask hon. members opposite whether they really thought they could persuade hon. members on the Ministerial side that a 5 per cent. duty on machinery would be a very crushing impost on the owners of those mines? It was a mere nothing, and the miners would never have objected to the duty had they not been incited to do so by their members. He was rather surprised at the hon. member for Oxley talking as he did about not taxing machinery, as the hon. member was a farmer and wanted customers for his produce. The hon. member entirely lost sight of the fact that the policy of Queensland should be to make as much machinery within the colony as possible. That was an essential principle and should form part of what he hoped to see some day—what they called in Canada “a national policy.” They had no national policy in Australia, but he hoped to see it yet. Following the reasoning of the hon. member for Oxley, they ought to import everything, but he maintained exactly the opposite doctrine. He believed that a great deal of the machinery in use on the goldfields of the colony could be made here if sufficient inducement were given.

The PREMIER: A great portion of it is made here.

Mr. BROOKES: He was very glad to hear it.

The PREMIER: Very little is imported and pays duty.

Mr. BROOKES: That made out his case exactly—that the 5 per cent. duty would not be felt; that it was not worth speaking of. He thought that the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) scarcely put the matter fairly yesterday when he pointed out that agricultural machinery was imported into Victoria free. That in itself was true, but the hon. member should also have pointed out that steam-engines and steam-boilers were charged 25 per cent. duty, and as a consequence of that there were very large foundries in that colony which maintained thousands of people—men, women, and children—by the work they got in those establishments. That was what they wanted in Queensland. They must try and keep their own money—work their own labour, and keep the money circulating amongst themselves. It was far better to pay £100 for a machine made in Townsville, Rockhampton, or Maryborough, than to be able to get it for £80 imported. It was cheaper to the colony. The £100 was kept in the country and circulated amongst drapers, storekeepers, grocers, blacksmiths, bootmakers, and so on; whereas, on the other hand, the £80 went clear away to support people who never contributed a farthing to the revenue of the colony. Surely that was clear enough to hon. members; and he trusted they would see that the proposed tax of

5 per cent. on machinery was a mere trifle. It would not interfere with the introduction of machinery, and would not make one jot of difference to the poor miners indicated by the hon. senior member for Cook. The duty was not being put on for protective purposes, but for revenue purposes, and he thought that they as a Committee would do well in supporting the proposition of the hon. the Treasurer. But the time would assuredly come—he could see the dawn of it now—when they would put a duty of 20 per cent. on machinery.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear! No, no!

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member for North Brisbane had stated that the proposed tax on machinery was justified because immense profits were obtained from reefing claims, and in support of that contention he read the prospectus of a company which had just been formed, the profits from which were expected to be very great; but he (Mr. Hamilton) supposed they would be very much like the revenue from the present Land Act—they were all to come. The hon. member had also mentioned the Day Dawn as an instance where the profits arising from the use of machinery were very great; but there was the other side of the question to be considered. In mining there were far more blanks than prizes. He had been interested in many reefing claims, and hardly in any case had the gold obtained by him been sufficient to pay for the crushing. In fact, the only case in which he ever recollected having made a profit out of a claim was when he sold out for £15 and a pair of trousers to go to a new rush. The hon. member attempted to justify the tax on the plea that it was desirable for purposes of protection, but it could not be justified from a protectionist point of view, because the additional 5 per cent. would not enable manufacturers of machinery in Queensland to compete with imported machinery. It therefore certainly could not be justified from that point of view. It was not imposed on those grounds, as the Treasurer admitted, but for the purpose of supplementing the revenue; and he objected to the revenue being increased from that source, on the ground that, although taxation was necessary, machinery above all things should be exempt.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 29.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Miles, Dickson, Sheridan, Dutton, Kellett, Foote, W. Brookes, Aland, Wakefield, Smyth, Isambert, White, Jordan, Campbell, Buckland, Foxton, Mellor, Bulcock, S. W. Brooks, Salkeld, Bailey, McMaster, Lumley Hill, Murphy, Midgley, Wallace, Higson, and Horwitz.

NOES, 16.

Messrs. Norton, Macrossan, Chubb, Hamilton, Black, McWhannell, Adams, Lalor, Nelson, Jessop, Scott, Philp, Govett, Lissner, Palmer, and Grimes.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the clause, as read, stand part of the Bill—put and passed.

Mr. FOOTE said he proposed to move a new clause to follow the one just passed. He was very glad that an opportunity had occurred to argue the question of repealing the duty upon wheat, which was one he considered opposed to the best interests of the colony. The following was the clause he proposed to insert:—

In addition to the goods now exempt from duty under the provisions of the Customs Duties Act of 1870 and the Customs Duties Act of 1874, the goods mentioned in the second schedule to this Act shall also be exempt from duty and admitted free.

THE SECOND SCHEDULE.

Wheat.

He took the opportunity some time ago, with a view to asking the House to repeal the duty

upon wheat, to move for a return showing the quantity of wheat that was being grown in the colony, and the amount that had been imported coastwise and over the border; also a return showing the number of tons of flour that had been imported into the colony yearly. That return was from the 1st January, 1881, up to the present time, and so far as the question of duty was concerned it might be disposed of very summarily. During the six years the duty collected on wheat was £2,706 10s., and was so utterly insignificant as a means of obtaining revenue that it was not worth taking into consideration. Nevertheless it was sufficient to cause an average of 33,000 tons of wheat to be ground, out of the colony, every year—a quantity that would employ at least 1,000 men in making it into flour. It was only a small tax, only 6d. per bushel, but yet it was discouraging because flour was admitted free. If the flour were taxed it would be upon an equal footing with the wheat; but who would ever dream of taxing flour—the poor man's bread? That would be beginning at the wrong end, and would be far worse than taxing machinery. Therefore he asked the Committee to support his clause in order that they might facilitate the importation of wheat, and its being ground within the colony. He knew that there were persons who were desirous of establishing mills in the colony, and who were waiting for the repeal of the duty upon wheat to do so. There would be no more reason than at present, if the duty were repealed, why wheat should not be grown in the colony, because if they took off that tax the wheat market would be in the hands of every merchant and dealer in the colony. There was no reason why mills should not be established here and in the interior, and at all the ports in the colony, and thus give a greater opportunity for the employment of the labour that was likely to arrive from time to time. He had confined himself to the duty upon wheat, and had not interfered with the duty upon pollard or bran. His hon. friend Mr. Kates, last year, made great capital out of that and asked, "What shall we do with our waste or offal?" He could now hear the hon. gentleman muttering behind him in those tones that he so often used when things were not quite agreeable to his feelings—growling something like a grizzly bear a few yards off. The hon. member would have an opportunity of speaking by-and-by. That was one of the points he raised. He asked what they would do with the bran and pollard when the duty was removed? However, he (Mr. Foote) would confine himself to the duty upon wheat in order to conciliate the hon. member somewhat, because his influence and vote in attempting to repeal that duty would be of considerable assistance. He had already shown that as a matter of revenue the duty was not worthy of consideration, the total amount raised from it in six years being only £2,706 10s. He wanted to show that it was in no way protective in the present state of the colony. If the colony grew one-half or even one-third of the wheat required for its own consumption there would be something to protect; but the fact was that, even in the professedly wheat-growing districts they did not grow sufficient for their own local wants. Under those circumstances the duty could not possibly be any protection to wheat-growers. The return he held in his hand showed that in what were usually considered bad years, and notably last year, the people on the Downs not only did not grow sufficient to export to other markets, but they did not grow sufficient for their own local markets. How, then, could they possibly have anything to protect? Again, even if they grew a great deal more than they grew now, or were likely to

grow for the next ten or twenty years to come, the very fact of the duty being taken off would open up a market for the wheat-growers. At present they had no market, or, at any rate, it was of such a local character that if they had anything like a good crop, a great yield of wheat, they could get no market for it for a considerable time. The market was so circumscribed that they had no outlet for the wheat. They had to bide their time; if they could not get one price they had to take anything they could get. He was showing that by creating a good market the local farmer would not be confined to any particular locality. If they had mills here, the farmer living on the Downs would find his market here for wheat, just as he now found his market here for other produce, such as maize. The market for maize was not in the localities where it was grown but where it was consumed, or the ports from which it was exported. In consequence of there being no market in the localities in which the wheat was grown, the number of buyers was very limited. The farmer could not sell his wheat as he could sell his maize or other produce, for the reason that he had to sell to two, three, or at the most five persons. He had either to wait for a market or get the wheat gristed at so much per bushel, and in that case the miller got the advantage; and he would only do that in case he was not able to wait or could not sell at a price that would remunerate him. He hoped hon. members would not deal with the matter from feeling or interest. He had no personal interest in it. The only interest he had in it was the good of the colony. The colony in six years had imported no less than 166,791 tons of flour—not bushels of wheat, but tons of flour. The amount of labour that would be required to grind the wheat to produce that much flour would be immense. It would all mean revenue to the colony, and the establishment of industries. Five per cent. on the amount of machinery that would be required would come to a considerable amount. It would take something like £10,000 to establish a mill.

Mr. KATES : Oh !

Mr. FOOTE : Yes, it would take something like £10,000 to put up a mill with all requisites. He did not mean one of those mills they knew of in certain places—buildings, which the sooner they were burnt down the better. That was not the class of mill to which he referred, but a mill on the new principle with steel rollers, and new machinery, such as had been recently introduced in the southern colonies, and the production of which was overwhelming every other mill system in all the towns throughout the colony. That was the class of mill he spoke of, and he said it would take about £10,000—he did not mean for the absolute cost of the machinery, but there was the erection of the mill and appliances to be considered. It would not be safe to go into an undertaking of that sort without a capital of at least £10,000. He was prepared to say that that capital would be forthcoming in many instances, and that there would be a great many employed in the business. It would be an outlet for the southern colonies—not any greater outlet than now for the flour, but an outlet for the wheat. The flour trade of Queensland was at present in the hands of the southern millers, who raised and lowered the market as they chose. If there were mills here they would be wheat-buyers and would provide their own stocks, and would not be subjected as at present to the rigging of the flour market which so often took place, and they would be able, as other millers were, to buy their wheat in proper seasons. He was quite positive he was very

much under the mark when he said it would take more than 1,000 hands to grind and prepare the flour used every year in Queensland—that was to say, if the wheat was all grown here. Every consumer was worth something like £10 per annum to the colony, and that would amount to a considerable sum—£10,000—if those hands were employed. He merely pointed that out to show that the duty was quite nominal. It was a duty that should never have been on the Statute-book, and when it was discovered it should have been repealed at once in the best interests of the colony. There was another matter intimately connected with the question, and that was that the amount of wheat imported over the border was very nominal indeed—108,258 bushels in six years. No doubt the duty had acted in a prohibitory way. They must remember that the railway to the border was nearly completed; it would probably be finished at the end of this year or the beginning of next. By taking the duty off wheat, they would secure the trade from a very considerable distance beyond the border; and where people sold their wheat they would do their other business too. That would be traffic for the railways; and when they were making railways they should seek to promote traffic in order that the lines might be a source of income to the colony. The quantity of wheat grown in the colony in 1881 was 39,612 bushels; in 1882, 145,752 bushels; in 1883, 42,842 bushels; in 1884, 195,727 bushels; and in 1885, 53,686 bushels. Of course, there had been bad years, but not such bad years for wheat-growing; wheat did not want a lot of rain; a couple of showers at the proper time were quite sufficient to produce a crop of wheat. He had seen some returns at the Registrar-General's Office showing that the yield of wheat had not been very great, but he was not going to dwell on that, because it did not apply to his purposes. He merely wished to show that the amount of wheat grown in the colony was merely nominal—really nothing. The wheat-growing districts could not raise enough wheat for their own consumption; and those were the districts that had been the greatest importers of wheat to grind for their own purposes.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. gentleman had made a very able speech, and under other circumstances he would individually feel bound to support the amendment; but they could not be so inconsistent at the present time while imposing additional taxation as to remit existing duties. That was his sole defence for allowing wheat to remain on the list of dutiable articles, because he believed that the majority of hon. members would agree with him that breadstuffs, the staff of life, should as far as possible be relieved of duty. The item of wheat had been continued on the tariff under a mere misconception, he thought, at a time when the tariff came on for consideration. The tax was originally introduced in 1870 by Mr. Robert Ramsay, when it was also proposed to put a tax of 25s. a ton on flour. At the same time *ad valorem* duties of 7½ per cent. were proposed. The flour tax was lost, and the *ad valorem* duties were raised to 10 per cent., but the item of wheat was retained. It was somewhat anomalous that the raw article, wheat, should be taxed, and the manufactured article, flour, admitted duty-free; but if it were removed from the tariff it would lead to a loss of revenue, and the Government could not see its way to accept that.

Mr. FOOTE : The duty has been only £2,706 10s. in six years.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the amount was certainly inconsiderable. Last year it was only £257 9s. 2d., but there were other

products manufactured from wheat imported into the country, which would be reduced in quantity if wheat were admitted free. The hon. member had given an additional reason why the amount of revenue derived from wheat during the present year might be increased. Our southern neighbours were extending their railway to our border, and very likely in consequence of that the quantity of wheat introduced this year would be an increase over preceding years. He was free to admit that if the duty were removed there would be a large increase in the manufacture of flour in the coast towns. If he mistook not, the duty on imported wheat was equivalent to about 23s. or 25s. a ton protection duty on flour; forty-five to forty-six bushels of wheat went to a ton of flour, so that it amounted to 23s. to 25s. a ton protection.

Mr. FOOTE: It is as nearly as possible 10 per cent.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. member had produced arguments which he was not prepared to combat, but he could not assent to remit any duties, however trivial, in face of the imposition of fresh duties. Under other circumstances, he would gladly give the amendment his individual support, because he believed that in so doing he would promote the industrial interests of the colony.

Mr. KATES said he was sorry to be in conflict with his hon. friend the member for Bundanba; but in this particular case he must accuse the hon. member somewhat of selfishness. Now, as a miller, he (Mr. Kates) would be very much in pocket if the amendment were carried; because it would open to him a very large field of operations. He could purchase wheat in India, and so bring coolies into competition with the white men on the Darling Downs. They might as well bring the coolies in at once. In India they produced wheat on wages of 6d. a week by means of irrigation; the hon. member could not get white men on the Darling Downs to work for those wages. He (Mr. Kates) would personally be a gainer, as he could get his wheat in New Zealand, Tenterfield, Victoria, or anywhere else; but he was not so selfish. He knew it would be a serious blow to the farmers.

Mr. FOOTE: It would do them good.

Mr. KATES: Let the hon. member go up and ask them. He had tested the feeling of the people on the Darling Downs, and he found that any number of them wished him to tell the hon. members of the Committee that they would much rather allow the duty to remain as it was without any alteration or change. The hon. member for Bundanba had interrupted him, and said that the farmers would like that the amendment should be carried; but he had received a great number of letters and petitions from various parts of the Darling Downs requesting him to protest against the passing of the hon. gentleman's amendment. He had not received one single letter or petition in favour of the hon. gentleman's amendment; and that met the hon. member's arguments when he had said the farmers would like it. He (Mr. Kates) always judged things by their results, and he had only to look at the southern colony of Victoria. From an agricultural point of view, he looked upon Victoria as the model colony of Australia. He found that there, recognising the great value of the agricultural interests, they had in the year 1878, he thought it was, introduced an import duty on wheat, not of a paltry sixpence as they were squirming over and wrangling about in Queensland, but of 2s. per cental, or equal to 1s. 4d. per bushel; and at the same time they put a duty upon imported flour of 2s.

per cental, or £2 per ton. That had given that colony a great impetus as regarded wheat cultivation, as, although they had had in that year only 400,000 acres in wheat, producing 5,285,000 bushels, last year they had raised the acreage of wheat to 1,100,000, producing nearly 16,000,000 bushels. That had been done by the impetus given to wheat cultivation there. Protected Victoria, with only 58,000,000 acres of land, had now 2,500,000 acres under crop, whilst New South Wales had only 800,000 acres, and Queensland, which had just eight times as much land as Victoria, had only 200,000 acres. That showed what the people in Victoria were doing for the agricultural industry. An amendment like that proposed by the hon. member for Bundanba would be scouted there—not even the rankest Tory would dare to suggest it. It would, if passed, in time give employment to a few people down in Ipswich or Brisbane at the mills, and would keep the mill of the hon. gentleman going. That just reminded him of something he had almost forgotten to mention. The hon. member had said that the railway line from Tenterfield to Glen Innes would be completed in a short time. He (Mr. Kates) hoped it would, and then, if the duty were taken off wheat as proposed, the millers on the Darling Downs would take good care that the wheat did not come to Ipswich or Brisbane. They would intercept it, and would purchase wheat at Inverell, where it was often to be had at 3s. a bushel, and would not allow any to come down to the Ipswich or Brisbane millers. But he would point out that the hon. member had tried to hoodwink the Colonial Treasurer and the members of the Committee. The hon. member had told them that last week he suggested to the Colonial Treasurer that if they took off the duty on wheat they might allow the duty on bran and pollard to remain. That was an insult to the understanding of every member of that Committee, because when wheat came into the colony the bran and pollard came with it; so that the bran and pollard would come in free, and the Treasurer would lose revenue to the extent of about £5,000 a year. According to the financial tables in the hands of hon. members, the amount received last year from the duty on bran and pollard was £4,472, and he supposed that the amount for six years would be about £30,000. That amount the Treasury would never get if the amendment was carried. They were haggling on the previous evening about the tax of 5 per cent. on machinery, and now the hon. member for Bundanba proposed to deprive the Treasury of an income of £5,000 a year from the duty on bran and pollard besides the amount received from the impost on wheat. At the present time when the Colonial Treasurer was racking his brains to make both ends meet, he did not think the hon. gentleman would consent to the abolition of the 6d. per bushel duty on wheat, because it did not mean a loss of only £250 a year but of £5,000. He would just direct attention to what the Government of Victoria—that model colony for agricultural people—was doing for farmers. They not only imposed a duty of £2 per cental on flour, and 1s. 4d. on wheat, but 2s. per cental on barley, 1s. per cental on maize, 3s. a bushel on malt, 1s. per bushel on rye, 20s. on onions, and 2s. per cental on bran and pollard. The result of that was that last year Victoria exported agricultural produce to the value of £6,000,000. They exported wheat to the amount of £1,738,000, oats to the amount of £658,000, barley to the amount of £189,000, potatoes to the amount of £644,000, hay to the amount of £1,372,000, green forage to the amount of £832,000, tobacco to the amount of £22,000, grapes to the amount of £19,000, wine to the value of £152,000, hops to the value

of £77,000, and orchard produce to the value of £460,000 — making a total of £537,000 worth of agricultural produce, which was exported in one year. And here they were asked to hurt the farming community for the benefit of a few persons. The hon. member for Bundamba did not appear to know that his proposal would hurt 36,000 people on the Darling Downs. According to the last census that was the population of that part of the country, and most of the people were farmers, and he would rather have one farmer than six townsmen. Farmers were always there, both they and their children. He valued miners very much, but they were a migratory class and not to be compared with farmers. When a new goldfield was discovered at Kimberley, if the mines at Charters Towers did not yield well, away the miners went to Kimberley, or perhaps to New Zealand. At Ballarat, and other places in Victoria, many of the miners became farmers, and there was no doubt but that they were a more useful class of people. Farmers were always there, and their children and their grandchildren, but that could not be said of miners. He looked upon the agricultural industry as one which should be encouraged, and would go further than that and say that without an agricultural population in the colony—without a million of farmers the country must collapse. What was to keep it up after the public buildings in Brisbane and the railways were completed? How was it to be then? Without a large farming population to lighten the burthen of taxation the colony could never bear it. That had been seen in Victoria, where they would not take off the duty on wheat although they had become exporters to a large extent. For the last twenty years the farmers here had been trying to get a suitable rust-resisting wheat to grow on the Darling Downs, and they appeared now to be on the point of succeeding. He held in his hand a sample of wheat introduced there two years ago—an early-maturing wheat. In August it was already in ear, and if it could be matured in October, before the November rains and thunderstorms set in, they would be able to grow hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of bushels of it. And just at that critical time the hon. member, a Liberal member, came forward and asked the Committee to cast aside all thought of the 16,000 or 20,000 farmers on the Darling Downs in order to encourage a few millers at Ipswich. It was those very farmers who, in times past, had made Ipswich, and who had helped to make Brisbane; and it was they who ought to be encouraged. He was not actuated by personal motives; indeed, personally, he should be a gainer by the amendment; but he did not like to go against the wishes of the farmers on the Darling Downs. There was no necessity to take off the duty. If they could import wheat, pay freight on it to the Downs, and grind it there at a profit, surely they could do so at Ipswich, to which the railway charges were little or nothing. In good seasons the Darling Downs yielded very heavy crops of wheat. According to the "Victorian Year-Book," the yield there in 1881 was 20 bushels to the acre, while in Victoria it was only 9 bushels, in New South Wales 15 bushels, in South Australia 4½ bushels, and in Western Australia 14 bushels. Last year the yield was not so great here, but neither did the squatters have so many lambs, foals, and calves as in previous years. From an agricultural and pastoral point of view, it was a bad year all round. They had on the Downs the soil and temperature; all they wanted was moisture, and then they could defy anybody; they could grow anything; and he hoped the Premier would push on his Water Bill so as to get moisture on the land. On the Downs, if the season was prosperous, the farmers grew grain; if the wheat got rust

they cut it down and turned it into wheaten hay, which was the most valuable hay in the market. Speaking of hay, he might inform the Committee that the hay yield in Queensland was 1½ tons to the acre, while in Victoria it was only 1¼ tons, in New South Wales 1½ tons, in South Australia and Western Australia not much more, and in New Zealand 1¼ tons; Queensland thus showing the highest average of all the Australian colonies, New Zealand included. It was not necessary for him to say more on the subject. He did not think the Treasurer would support the motion, on which the hon. member for Bundamba had already been severely beaten last year by thirty-three to five. He would leave the question to the Committee. The Downs farmers had long been struggling hard, and seemed now to be on the point of success, and if they were not interfered with they would soon not only supply Queensland with the staff of life, but would become exporters of wheat on a large scale.

Mr. WHITE said he agreed with everything the hon. member for Bundamba had said with regard to the advantages which would ultimately accrue to the farmers of Darling Downs by bringing in machinery and capitalists to erect mills, and probably raise the price of wheat higher than it would be with the duty on. But farmers were very slow to see many things that would turn to their advantage, and he shrank from anything that would check or disappoint them in their operations at the present time. He therefore felt bound to vote against the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no wish to do anything to harm the hon. member for Bundamba, but he certainly hoped he would not carry his amendment. He did not intend to quote a large number of figures, because hon. members must have had quite a surfeit of them during the past fortnight. He felt as if he had had enough to last him for the remainder of his life. The hon. member for Bundamba had quoted the amount of duty derived from the 6d. a bushel on wheat, and he (Mr. Miles) freely admitted that the amount of duty collected was very small indeed, hardly worth troubling about; but it had the beneficial effect of preventing the colony from being flooded with wheat from the southern colonies. If there was any class in the country that deserved some little encouragement from that House it was the agriculturists. He had no desire to rake up old sores, but he would point out that from the very foundation of the colony up to the present day they had been forced by the action of the Legislature to go upon stony ridges and the very worst soil it was possible to put them on. When they considered that that House voted large sums of money for purposes of deep sinking to assist the gold-miner, he would ask what it had done for the farmers?

Mr. FOOTE: Given them cheap land.

Mr. KATES: £6 an acre.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He hoped the hon. member for Bundamba would not interrupt him, because he had a friendly feeling towards him. Not only had the Legislature voted large sums of money for deep sinking—

Mr. HAMILTON: Which they do not get.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not only had they done that to assist the miners, but they had taken steps to show them how to do their work. And what had they done for the agriculturist?

Mr. KATES: Nothing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : He contended it was about time they gave the farming community some little consideration. He represented a farming community and was proud of it, for he was convinced that, in the future, agriculture would be the backbone and mainstay of the colony. Close settlement by agriculture was what would make this a great colony, and the farmers who had been struggling and endeavouring to introduce wheat that would be suitable to the colony had rendered very great service to it. He therefore sincerely hoped that hon. members would think twice before they voted for the amendment of the hon. member for Bundanba.

Mr. NELSON said, although there appeared no chance of the amendment being carried, he intended to support it. He thought the hon. member who introduced it had brought forward very good arguments in favour of it. He had the less hesitation in supporting it because he had a very strong conviction, amounting to certainty, that not one penny of the duty now imposed ever reached the farmers at all. In fact, the farmer was simply made the catspaw of other people who lived upon farmers. That was very evident from the observations of the hon. member for Darling Downs, supported by those of his colleague, the Minister for Works. In fact, it was not a question of farmers at all, but a question of millers.

Mr. KATES : Not at all.

Mr. NELSON : It was very like it when they heard the hon. member tell another hon. member that he would take all the grist from his mill, and ruin all the millers who started in other parts of the colony. It was just the same old thing that had been going on for generations. They had all read the story of the silversmiths in the ancient city of Ephesus. They did not come before the public and cry out "The craft is in danger," but they appealed to something that everybody venerated and looked upon with respect. Just the same as "the farmers" were brought forward in the present instance, the silversmiths came before the people crying out "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." In the same way, for their own purposes, certain people now said, "What a fine man the farmer is!" He believed there was no man who had suffered more from his friends than the farmer. They had had him brought forward session after session, *in forma pauperis* as it were, always asking some concession for him. Even the terms in which the hon. the Minister for Works had addressed the Committee were very different from what they heard about the farmers at Beauaraba when he was asking the House to consent to the construction of a railway to that place. They heard nothing then about stony ridges and bad land, but that it was some of the best agricultural land in creation.

Mr. KATES : Eton Vale has got the best part of it.

Mr. NELSON : He was referring to what took place since that. Eton Vale was an established property—established long before there were any farmers at Beauaraba; and since that the Minister for Works had told them that the country there was the finest in the colony, and quite sufficient to support a railway itself. Now, however, the hon. gentleman told them that the farmers never got anything done for them. How were they to make those two statements coincide? If anyone would show him that the farmers got any benefit from the present duty he should—even though it would be going against his principles—vote to allow it to remain as it was; but he was perfectly satisfied that nobody got one sixpence benefit from it. The hon. member for Stanley (Mr. White) had admitted

the same thing. He said the farmers were not intelligent enough to see how the matter stood; but he thought that it was the hon. member's duty to educate them up to the point, and show them what it meant. One of the strongest arguments for doing away with the duty was that they would give increased employment by manufacturing all their own flour. At present they imported an immense quantity of flour, which was made by foreigners, and were losing all the value of that labour, and why they should do so he was unable to see. The hon. member for Darling Downs had referred to Victoria, and said, "Look at what the wheat is there," but he should also have told them that there was a duty there on flour. He could not see that the farmers derived any benefit whatever from the present duty, as they had no duty on flour, and he did not suppose the Treasurer was likely to consent to such a proposal. At any rate, it was not before the Committee; and he (Mr. Nelson) should support the amendment.

Mr. HORWITZ said that if the hon. gentleman who had just sat down would propose an import tax upon flour he would be very glad to assist him. He would remind the hon. member for Northern Downs that the farmers did not come down to Parliament for assistance year after year, as the squatters did. If they did require any reasonable assistance he would be only too glad to give it to them; but for the hon. gentleman to state in that Committee that farmers came down annually for assistance was altogether incorrect. The hon. gentleman could not bring forward one single instance of their having done so. They were well able to follow their ploughs and make a living, which the squatters could not always do. In the Warwick district they were very well off and did not require assistance. With regard to what the hon. member said about the hon. member for Darling Downs wishing to keep this duty on for his own benefit, it was nothing of the kind. He had the honour to represent a farming district, and he was in duty bound to vote what he thought would be of the greatest benefit. They could import wheat from South Australia to Brisbane at a freight of 10s. per ton, but if they wanted to get it up to Warwick by rail it would cost 25s. more per ton; and if the Warwick people, who ought to be the first to come and ask for the duty to be taken off wheat, did not object to it, he was sure the Committee need not. If they kept that duty on they need not be alarmed about wheat coming from India, as he thought that, as the freight was very low, the duty was a sort of protection to the farmers on the Darling Downs. The member for Bundanba told them that they might soon expect to have mills in Brisbane and Ipswich; but he thought they would not be the same kind of mills that he referred to. If the hon. members for Darling Downs did not object to paying 25s. per ton on wheat and then compete with Adelaide, nobody else could. This motion was a hobby of the hon. member for Bundanba. The hon. member for Darling Downs had made such an able speech on the question that he should not detain the Committee any longer, but would leave it to the sense of hon. gentlemen not to accept the amendment, which was not for the interest of the colony at all.

Mr. SMYTH said he would not have got up to speak if the hon. member for Darling Downs had not thought it worth his while to attack the mining industry.

Mr. KATES : I did not attack it.

Mr. SMYTH : The hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, stated that the farming industry was a larger industry and a better one for the colony than the mining industry. But he

would ask him this question—Which had done the most for the colony; what had the agricultural industry done up to the present time, and what had the mining industry done? Did not the mining industry drag the colony out of the mire when it was on the verge of insolvency eighteen years ago, and put the finances in a safe position? During the last three years, when every other industry was perishing from want of rain, the mining industry had come to the front again, and he maintained there were more families living upon mining than upon agriculture.

Mr. KATES: They will all become farmers.

Mr. SMYTH: It would be a very good job for the hon. member if they did get all the gold out of the ground, and then become farmers. But it was not a profitable occupation—not so profitable as mining, at any rate. If the Minister for Works was giving that subsidy for deep sinking in a charitable kind of way, he had better put it upon the Estimates among the charitable allowances, and then he (Mr. Smyth) should vote against it. That money had been given to prospect on the grounds of the State, whereas the farmer who got his land for 2s. 6d. an acre, with five years to pay it in, had all his improvements for himself. Who had developed the country more than the miner? No one except the squatter. The agriculturists had never gone into the country as pioneers. The hon. member, Mr. Foote, was quite right in bringing forward the motion about wheat. He knew of a gentleman who came from Victoria some time ago, Mr. Kickam, who went to the Colonial Treasurer and asked him if he would remove the duty upon wheat, saying that if he would do so he would put up large flour-mills at Brisbane. What would be the result of that? The farmers would not be in the hands of the few mills on the Downs. There would be any amount of wheat shipped from Adelaide to Townsville, Rockhampton, and Maryborough; but it would be ground there, and not in Adelaide, which would be a very good thing, because they would get more than the amount previously charged upon the wheat, in the shape of the tax upon the machinery that would be brought in to grind it, and there would be the labour employed besides. He therefore had much pleasure in supporting the motion of the hon. member for Bundanba.

Mr. DONALDSON said he must confess to not having a very strong feeling upon the subject. It appeared to him to be absurd that they should put a duty upon wheat and not upon flour. He thought that it should be the object of any country to allow the raw material to come in in order that it might be manufactured. From the returns that had been furnished upon the motion of the hon. member for Bundanba, he found that the quantity of wheat coming into the colony was very small indeed; in fact, it had yielded hardly any revenue, whereas they had had from 22,000 tons to 38,000 tons of flour imported annually. It appeared to him to be a most peculiar position in which to place the agriculturist, because he was hardly protected at all. If it were necessary to protect him at all, let it be done by protection all round, upon all the produce he could grow, and upon flour as well as upon wheat. Very few people indeed had the courage to maintain that it was desirable to put a duty upon bread-stuffs, and thus tax the poor man's loaf. Nearly all countries, even the greatest protectionist countries, were in favour of that. He might say, further, that the greatest and most successful industry in America was the one which was not protected, and that was the farming industry, and the same thing would result here. If the protection the farmers here had in

the matter of railway freight was not sufficient for them, it would be hardly possible to make their industry profitable at all. The protection in their favour at the present time was so slight that they might allow the duty on wheat to go with the rest. They had been asked, "What have we done for the farmer?" Well, he thought they had done a good deal for the farmer, who, in addition to having liberal land laws, had also differential rates on the railways in his favour, and that was a considerable advantage. The people in the interior had to pay double the rate to get flour, the produce of other colonies, to what they would have to pay for flour from the Darling Downs. Though they could grow as good wheat in this colony as in any of the other colonies, he was sorry to say that somehow the flour made from it was not popular in the interior, and the people preferred getting the Adelaide flour to the Queensland product. The people of the interior had for a long time complained about the differential rate in favour of colonial flour.

Mr. KATES: That has been done away with to a great extent within the last six months.

Mr. DONALDSON said he knew it was not as great now as it was, but still there was a considerable advantage in favour of colonial-grown produce. The hon. member for Darling Downs went on to point out the success of farming in Victoria. There they were protected to the extent of £2 a ton on wheat and 2s. per cental upon grain. The hon. member was a little disingenuous in dealing with the success of farming in Victoria. He should have mentioned that that colony had now for several years exported both flour and wheat, and it could be of no benefit at all to the farmers there to have a moderate duty upon those articles. It would be as absurd as to say that in Queensland they benefited by the duty upon sugar when they were producing thousands of tons beyond their present requirements. The duty upon wheat in Victoria had never done any good for that industry, and the farmers would be perfectly satisfied if it was left off, provided that their implements were allowed to come in free, because they were well aware that as exporters of grain no duty levied upon foreign grain would benefit them in the slightest degree. From 1876 to the present year he found that Victoria had exported from 384,000 to 8,000,000 bushels of wheat in one year. The smallest quantity exported in one year was 384,000 bushels, and the largest quantity exported in one year was eight millions and some odd thousand bushels. He quoted those figures because some hon. members might be led to believe from the statement of the hon. member for Darling Downs that the duty in Victoria had been the cause of the success of farming in that colony. Farming flourished in Victoria before any duty was levied. There was no duty levied until Victoria began to be an exporting instead of an importing colony, and the duty was put on too late to be of any benefit to the farmers. He spoke from actual experience, and he knew the farmers of that colony would always have been satisfied to have the duty taken off if they had not to pay the duty on bagging and agricultural implements, a duty which pressed heavily upon them. If they were to do anything for the farmers of Queensland by imposing import duties it would be necessary for them to levy a duty upon flour as well as upon wheat. What would be the result of that? If they allowed wheat to come in free and taxed flour they would have mills established in Brisbane, in Ipswich, and in other parts of the colony, grinding the 38,000 tons of wheat that came here; and their establishment would also find a large amount of employment for the people of the colony. At

the present time they levied an absurd rate of 6d. per bushel upon wheat and actually allowed the manufactured article to come in free. He was anxious to do whatever he could for the farming interest of the colony, as he had great sympathy with the farmers, and believed they would yet become the backbone of the colony. They had lands as fine as any in any of the colonies, and he had travelled over the whole of them. On the Darling Downs he had seen the finest wheat-growing soil he had seen in any of the colonies. In 1884 he was at Warwick and saw the crops there too. He travelled from there down through New South Wales and Victoria, and certainly did not see any crops anything like as good as those he saw at Warwick. There was an excellent quality of wheat, and the crops averaged something like twenty bushels to the acre. With such fine soil and crops as that, if the farmers could not get on without having an import duty levied upon wheat it was nearly time for them to give up altogether. The duty at the present time was a very light one, and did not affect the industry one bit. He found that the largest quantity of wheat grown in the colony of Queensland was 195,000 bushels in 1884, and with the soil they had it was a disgrace to them as a farming community to say that they could not produce more wheat than that. He was sure there was finer wheat-growing soil in Queensland than in Victoria or New South Wales if they could only get the right class of people to go upon the lands and develop them, instead of trying to bolster up the farming industry with a useless impost upon wheat which he was satisfied would never do any good. The sooner it was taken off the better, and they would then have in its place the establishment in the colonies of large mills which would give employment to a very large number of people.

Mr. GROOM said that the anomaly which the hon. member who had just sat down had pointed out—that while they had a duty of 6d. a bushel upon wheat, flour was imported free—was entirely the result of circumstances. When the Colonial Treasurer in 1870 introduced the tariff—the same tariff which they had had in existence to this day for sixteen years, for it was never altered—he proposed a duty of 6d. a bushel on wheat, barley, maize, oats, and malt, and also a duty of 25s. per ton. upon flour. It was proposed by himself on that occasion to increase the duty on wheat, barley, maize, oats, and malt to 1s., and on division that was lost by 13 to 17. When the Colonial Treasurer proposed his motion for 25s. a ton upon flour, then was started the cry to which the hon. member referred: “Who is going to tax the poor man’s loaf?” That cry was taken up as strongly by the present Chief Justice, Sir Charles Lilley, who then represented Fortitude Valley, as by any member. While he supported all the other imposts he strenuously resisted the tax upon flour. On division, an amendment against the proposal was carried by 17 to 13. Then the Committee did not retrace their steps, and remove the apparent anomaly of admitting flour duty-free while putting a tax on wheat; and that had remained on the Statute-book ever since—a period of sixteen years. A large number of his (Mr. Groom’s) constituents were interested in the question, and had asked him to resist the motion of the hon. member for Bundamba. But for that he would not have thought it necessary to address the Committee. Of course, in accordance with the wishes of his constituents, it would be his duty to record his vote against the motion, but at the same time he thought it his duty to say that the farmers had not derived much benefit from the tax. He regretted to say that it had not had the effect of putting a larger area under wheat. The

figures quoted in the return moved for by the hon. member for Bundamba revealed that for the last fifteen or sixteen years the area of land under wheat on the Darling Downs had not increased. People naturally asked, like the hon. member who had just sat down, how it was that when they had such magnificent soil, and a population of 300,000 to consume their flour, a larger area was not put under wheat? Well, he would not go back to the very initiation of the duty, but would just refer to something which took place in 1884, which might possibly account for it. In 1884, as they would see from the returns which had been moved for by the hon. member for Bundamba, there were 195,000 bushels of wheat grown in the colony, as against 58,000 bushels last year. Of course, the bad season would account for the difference in a great measure. Now, what took place in 1884? No doubt the members from the Darling Downs knew perfectly well what took place; why, Mr. Fraser, there was a perfect revolution among the farmers on the Darling Downs. There were only two or three millers to purchase their wheat; and, notwithstanding the impost of 6d. a bushel, they would only give the farmers 3s. a bushel for the wheat. Indignation meetings were called; they tried to start co-operative flour-mills, but they were entirely at the mercy of the millers. One miller made a boast in Brisbane that he had brought the farmers down to their knees, and had made £20,000 that season.

Mr. KATES: Name!

Mr. GROOM: The hon. member knew his name. There was no getting over that fact; and when he (Mr. Groom) was asked by the farmers to speak on the subject he told them he would be compelled in justice to themselves to tell that House and the country why they did not grow more wheat on the Darling Downs when they had such an unlimited field for its growth. The millers of Darling Downs were a great deal to blame for the small quantity of wheat grown there; had they been a little more liberal in 1884 and shown a disposition to help the farmers to tide over their difficulties, there might have been a larger area put under wheat last year; though it would no doubt have been a failure in consequence of the season. It must not be forgotten that the price of wheat on the Darling Downs was very largely governed by the price of Adelaide flour landed in Brisbane. If there happened to be a very large crop in Victoria, as there promised to be this year, and also in South Australia, as there also promised to be this year, then there would be a very large export from those colonies, either to Great Britain or to the other colonies—Queensland, for example, which was unable to grow sufficient for herself. Flour could be sent to Brisbane from Adelaide or Melbourne by sailing vessel for 10s. a ton—10s. to 15s. was the outside price charged.

Mr. KATES: Nine shillings.

Mr. GROOM: That had to be taken into consideration. If there were large crops in both those colonies it would largely affect the price of wheat in this colony, though it was not in any way affected by the import duty. When that duty was introduced by Mr. Ramsay, he took the opportunity of saying that it was not intended as a protection to farmers—he disclaimed that altogether, although the majority of the House at the time took an opposite view—he said it was simply for revenue purposes. The colony at that time was in a far worse position than it was now; the colony had never experienced such a time of depression since 1866 as existed in 1870, and they were compelled to amend the tariff. The import duty had certainly not had the beneficial effect which was anticipated from it. There was

another point he (Mr. Groom) would like to refer to, as it had been referred to by the hon. member for Warrego. The hon. member said there was some prejudice against Darling Downs flour. That was true, and it was just as well that the reason for it should be known. It did not arise from any defect in the wheat, but it arose in this way:—One of the millers on the Downs bought a large quantity of inferior wheat in Tasmania, mixed it with Downs wheat, and manufactured a quantity of flour which was sent to the western districts by bullock drays. It heated on the way, and became perfectly rotten in the bags. By that mistake a prejudice was raised against Darling Downs flour, from which unfortunately it had not yet recovered. He did not mean to say that the mistake was wilfully committed, or that the person had any bad intention in doing it; it was quite possible he was imposed upon as to the quality of the wheat by the people who sent it, or that the millers did not know what they were doing in grinding the two wheats together. The unfortunate mistake occurred; the flour heated in the western interior, and a prejudice was created which had not yet been overcome. There was as good flour to be bought in Allora or Toowoomba as could be made in Melbourne or Adelaide; the bread made from it was as good as would be found anywhere. He would not have addressed the Committee had not some of his constituents waited upon him on Saturday and asked him to oppose the duty. Of course, for that reason he would feel it his duty to vote against the amendment of the hon. member, and he honestly confessed he would do so on another ground—he believed in protection.

Mr. DONALDSON: Then put the duty on flour.

Mr. GROOM said he believed that would be the better course. It would have done more good had 25s. a ton been put on flour in 1870 instead of the 6d. a bushel on wheat. He believed that a conviction had been growing within the last twelve months in the public mind that if they were to be both a united and federated Australia, it would be by federating as the dominion of Canada had done, and becoming a protective dominion. It was the result of his readings and his convictions that the colonies were gradually drifting towards protection. In New Zealand, in South Australia, and even in New South Wales the feeling was growing, and in New South Wales as strong as anywhere else, that they should adopt a protective policy. Speaking simply as the member for Drayton and Toowoomba, he believed that, as far as Queensland was concerned, it would be the very best thing that could happen if a protective policy were adopted. It was almost pitiful to look at the producing industries of the colony and see the lamentable condition they were in at that time, which was entirely owing to what he called "freetrade prejudices," or, as Lord Penzance had termed it in his excellent articles in the *Nineteenth Century* in May and June last, "the idolatry of freetrade." They did not seem capable of throwing off what he designated the incrustations of centuries. He knew that protection was called "a species of economic quackery" at the present time, but he thought, if careful observation were made, it would be seen that even Great Britain herself would not be in the prosperous commercial condition which she was now in if it had not been for her early principles of protection.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That won't go down.

Mr. GROOM: He heard an hon. member say it would not go down, but he had no hesitation in saying that as a matter of public policy the electors of Queensland would demand a protective policy before long. He

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thought that as sure as he was standing there they would vote for protection as they had it in Canada. The protective policy of Canada was one of the most successful that had been up to the present time produced in any of the British dependencies. In 1883 the Finance Minister of the Dominion was able to go down to the House and inform hon. members—and he only wished the Colonial Treasurer in Queensland in any year could say the same—that in that year the revenue had exceeded the expenditure by 8,000,000 dollars. He wondered if it would ever be any Treasurer's lot in this colony to announce to the House that the revenue had exceeded the expenditure by one million sterling. That was undoubtedly owing to protection, and although the hon. member for Warrego, Mr. Donaldson, said that protection had not been of any value to the farmers, he could tell the hon. member that a select committee in the Dominion House of Commons, sitting in 1882, to inquire into the working of what was then called "the national policy"—that was the name it went by in Canada, as there they did not talk of "freetrade" and "protection," nor did they apply to it such epithets as "economic quackery," or any wretched expressions of that sort—a select committee of the Dominion House of Commons, where they had quite as able men to administer their affairs as probably in any part of the British dominions, reported to hon. members that they found it had stimulated the farming industry to such an extent that the exports in three years had exceeded the exports of the three previous years of freetrade by over 12,000,000 dollars. It had not been in the farming industry only that such progress had been made, but the other industries were also progressing. In manufactures the number of hands employed had increased from 2,800 to 8,900. There was hardly a single manufacturing industry where the wages had not increased from 15 to 25 per cent., probably none under 10; so that he thought the hon. gentleman might be convinced that he, as a moderate protectionist, and having ever the welfare of the colony at heart, was bound to vote against the hon. member's amendment.

Mr. HORWITZ said that, with reference to what the hon. member had said of the millers in 1884, the reason why they had not paid high prices for wheat was that a large amount of flour came from Adelaide at a very low price which kept up for two years, and the millers could not give any more. He believed he might inform them that as far as the farmers of the Darling Downs were concerned they always got the full price for their wheat, according to the standing price of wheat in Adelaide, and exactly according to the price of flour in Brisbane. That was the only reason he could give. As regarded the reason why they had not got as much ground under cultivation as they should have, it was very well known to hon. members that the best land on the Darling Downs consisted of sheep-walks. It was a great pity that that land had been squandered a good many years ago, and for that some of the hon. members of that Committee were responsible.

Mr. FOXTON said it seemed to him that the explanation of the hon. member was about the strongest possible argument put forth in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Bundamba. What did it amount to? That, though an immense quantity of wheat was grown on the Downs, the price of the flour ground from that wheat was governed by the price of the imported article, which was admitted duty-free. The flour ground here had to compete with the imported article, and that governed the price the farmers were able to squeeze out of the millers for their wheat. This showed that the tax on wheat

did not protect them. They could only get 3s. and no more. It appeared to him that the arguments advanced by the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba and the hon. member for Warrego proved conclusively that the result of the impost on wheat was an utter absurdity, and therefore he should support the amendment.

Mr. ALAND said that, although he had some sympathy with the amendment, at the same time he did not feel himself quite free to support it. He remembered that some years ago when he was engaged in the milling trade he had appeared before his constituents, and he had then promised to resist any effort which might be made to remove the duty from wheat. He had since promised the same thing, but at the same time he pointed out to them that he believed it was to their interests, and for the interests of everyone, that that tax should be remitted, because at that time there were only three mills working on the Darling Downs.

Mr. KATES : Six.

Mr. ALAND said he did not know where the six were. He believed there were two in Warwick, and two at Allora.

Mr. KATES : And two at Toowoomba.

Mr. ALAND said he did not think there was more than one mill working at Allora that year.

Mr. KATES : Two.

Mr. ALAND said there were two mills there, but he thought there was only one working. When a large quantity of wheat was grown the farmers were to a large extent in the hands of the millers, and if the duty was taken off it would induce a large number of persons to go into the milling business. During the two years he was in that business it would have made all the difference in the world if he could have got the wheat in duty-free. During those years there was not sufficient wheat grown in the colony to supply the millers, and in consequence the mills had to stand idle nine months out of the twelve. If it were a fact that in 1884 wheat was sold in the Darling Downs at 3s. a bushel, all he could say was that it was too low a price for the millers to give to the farmers for it. The price of wheat was governed by the price of flour. It was well known that a ton of flour could be made out of from forty-two to forty-five bushels of wheat, and the bran and pollard from it was generally considered sufficient to pay the cost of grinding and making flour. That came to £6 15s., or, with 10s. added for bags, to £7 5s. a ton. Now, no matter how cheap flour was, it had never been imported into Brisbane for £7 5s. a ton. It should be remembered that the Darling Downs millers had a very large concession made to them in the way of railway carriage. They could send their flour on the line at 2d. per ton per mile, while the charge for sending Adelaide flour was about twice that amount. He was sorry he should have to vote against the amendment on the present occasion, but perhaps at some future time he might be able to support it.

Mr. MURPHY said the strongest arguments for the repeal of the duty had been urged by hon. members on the other side who were going to vote for its retention. They were going to vote for it against their convictions, and that was the strongest possible argument against it. It had been stated that the millers had a monopoly of the wheat trade, and it was evident from the debate that they were determined to keep it if they could. It was the duty of every hon. member to break down that monopoly if possible. Had the tax been protection in any shape or form he would support it. But it was in no degree protective, because flour came into the colony free. He should support the amendment.

Mr. KATES said that, with regard to the assertion of the hon. member for Warrego that Darling Downs flour was not in very good repute in the country, he need only appeal to the hon. member for Maranoa (Mr. Lalor), who bought some Warwick flour not long ago, and who told him that it was preferable to the Adelaide imported flour. Indeed, some of the Warwick flour, prepared by the steel-roller process, fetched £1 a ton more than the Adelaide flour. With regard to millers on the Downs having a monopoly of the trade and making big fortunes out of it, he might remark that the hon. member (Mr. Aland) was for a time a miller, and he did not find it such a well-paying thing; in fact, he gave it up. As to any conspiracy on the part of millers to keep down the price of wheat in 1884, he knew nothing whatever of it, and he denied that 3s. was paid for wheat in that year, he himself having given as high as 4s. 6d. for it when flour was being imported into Brisbane at £9 a ton. It was the unanimous wish of the farmers on the Darling Downs that the duty should not be taken off wheat.

Mr. FOOTE : No.

Mr. KATES said he doubted whether the hon. gentleman could point out one in a thousand who was not of that opinion. They wished to have the duty retained for another year or two. They were just now on the point of success, and it would be wrong to check and discourage them by removing the duty. Indeed, to carry the amendment would be to give the Darling Downs farmers a blow in the face.

Mr. FOOTE said the hon. member (Mr. Kates) had proposed no new reasons why the duty on wheat should be retained. The hon. member said he wanted the duty to be retained for another year or two. It had been clearly pointed out in the debate that the present duty was no protection to the wheat-growers of the Darling Downs whatever. It could not possibly be any protection while flour was admitted duty-free. The question simply resolved itself into this: whether flour should be manufactured in the colony or out of it. By retaining the duty, practically they would say that it should be manufactured out of the colony; by taking it off, they gave parties a chance of manufacturing it in the colony. The only difference taking it off would make to the farmer was that it would better his position by providing a market, which he had not at the present time. He would suggest to the hon. members for Darling Downs, who had given their constituents a promise to oppose the amendment, that before they entered into a compact of that kind again they should endeavour to convince them of the mistaken position they now held, because they were under the impression that they were protected by this 6d. a bushel, whereas they were not, but were absolutely injured by the fact of the market being confined to two or three local millers who could give them what price they chose. The millers were the only men protected by this tax. He did not expect to hear much from the hon. the Treasurer on the question except a little dancing round like an old man round the maypole at certain seasons of the year. Of course, the hon. gentleman opposed the amendment in order to protect the revenue, but at the same time he (Mr. Foote) was fully convinced that the Treasury would be considerably benefited by the removal of the impost. The hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) had pointed out that a certain amount of duty was received on account of pollard and bran. Well, when he (Mr. Foote) brought forward a similar amendment last year he included pollard and bran, and it was then objected to; and now when he omitted those articles, it was

objected that he had not included them. If the parties interested in this business had nothing to fear from other mills being established, he could not see the ground of their opposition. Again he would point out that the duty was no protection to the wheat-growers of the Darling Downs, because the importers of wheat hitherto had been the Downs millers, and it had been carried at produce rates on the railway, so that in fact the 6d. a bushel duty was more than returned to them by the differential railway rates. That would not be the case if mills were established in the coast towns; so that as far as the growers on the Darling Downs were concerned they would still be sufficiently protected by the carriage if the duty was taken off. He thought the arguments about Victoria had been very ably answered by the hon. member for Warrego and one or two other speakers. The hon. the Minister for Works had made a very bombastic speech. He (Mr. Foote) had always observed that whenever that hon. gentleman intended to make a good logical speech he spoke very quietly and tried to send every remark home to the point, but when he wanted to make an "all-round" speech he spoke in loud tones. The speech he had made was simply something for *Hansard*, intended for his constituents, so that they might say "Look how he had defended their interests." In order to make a good speech from the farming side the hon. gentleman had to pitch directly into the opposite side — into the graziers and squatters — set one party against the other. He looked upon that speech as one of the most bunkum speeches ever made in that House. He would repeat that the motion simply resolved itself into this: that if they retained the 6d. per bushel they would determine that the labour of making flour should not be employed in the colony, but out of it; and so far from the duty being a protection to the farmer it was simply a protection to the millers of the Darling Downs. As to milling as a speculation, it was a very good one, which would pay a good round 10 per cent. for the use of the money employed.

Mr. BULCOCK said he had not intended to speak on the subject, but thought he should say that the only ground upon which he could vote for retaining the present tax was that it was for revenue purposes. But when he heard the Treasurer say that only something like £200 had been derived from it last year he could fairly come to the conclusion that it was not of much use to the Treasury. After listening carefully to the debate, he was satisfied that it was of no use to the farmers. It was an anomaly to put an impost on wheat when they let in flour free, and on the principle that it was wrong to put a tax upon the people's bread he should vote for the amendment.

Question—That the new clause stand part of the Bill—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 19.

Messrs. Norton, Chubb, Nelson, Smyth, Jessop, Foote, Foxton, Lalor, McWhannell, Bailey, Palmer, Bulcock, S. W. Brooks, Govett, Murphy, Salkeld, Donaldson, Philp, and Hamilton.

NOS., 25.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Dickson, Sheridan, Dutton, Macrossan, Miles, Isambert, Groom, Rutledge, White, W. Brookes, Buckland, Jordan, Adams, Campbell, Kates, Wakefield, McMaster, Grimes, Lissner, Wallace, Aland, Higson, Horwitz, and Mellor.

Question resolved in the negative.

The remaining clauses of the Bill, the schedule, and the preamble, were passed as printed.

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

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

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

EMU PARK RAILWAY DEVIATION.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council approved of the plans and sections of the Emu Park Railway deviation.

SUCCESSION DUTIES BILL—SECOND READING.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—In rising to move the second reading of this Bill to impose duties upon estates transmitted by death, I may assume that hon. members are aware that it is founded upon the resolution adopted by the Committee of Ways and Means last evening. I do not require, therefore, to explain it at any great length, as the subject has been pretty well thrashed out already. In its present form it proposes a new source of revenue and a new system of taxation, but it is a system of taxation and a source of revenue that might fairly be requested at the present time to assist the requirements of the colony. I may go further and say that not only at the present time, but throughout all time, these estates should be required to assist the necessities of the State, so long as revenue is required for the expenses of government and the administration of the government throughout the colony. The accumulation of property, particularly in the shape of real estate, may fairly be looked to for assistance to the State, because it is owing to the care of the State that such property to a large extent derives its value, and those who receive it as a legacy are put in possession of immediate means whereby to provide their contributions to the State. I may say that the system is gradually creeping into favour in all the Australian colonies. It is adopted in New Zealand and in Victoria, and a Bill of a similar character to impose stamp duties upon the succession of real estate was recently before the Legislature of New South Wales, though I am not certain whether it has passed at the present time. I may say that the proposed tariffs in all those colonies upon the succession of property are considerably heavier than those proposed in this Bill. As a matter of revenue the benefit to the Treasury from this Bill may not be immediately felt, but doubtless its benefit, as an assistance to the necessities of the State, will be more largely perceptible as wealth is accumulated, and in the ordinary course of mortality people pass away. It cannot be regarded as likely immediately to furnish a large source of income to the Treasury, still that income will gradually extend. Although I am not in a position to inform hon. members as to the probable amount that may be received from this source during the coming year, yet if we look at what is being done in the other colonies we may form an approximate idea of the benefits likely to accrue to ourselves by the acceptance of a measure of this character. In Victoria last year I observe they derived a revenue from succession duties of £104,000, while in the previous year I think it was £86,000. I observe it has gradually been creeping up in such a manner that it now forms no inconsiderable item of the revenue of the colony. I do not think that anyone will dispute the fairness of taxation of this character with respect to property which has derived its value from good government and care in the administration of the State. I consider, in introducing this proposed scheme of taxation, it will not only assist the financial requirements of the Treasury at the present time, but I consider it a prudent

scheme of taxation which may be fairly regarded as a permanent measure from which future Treasurers of the colony will likely derive substantial assistance. Under these circumstances, and as the resolution adopted in Committee of Ways and Means has been pretty well debated, and as this will probably receive further consideration in committee, I will not trespass upon the time of the House any longer, but will conclude by moving that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill was introduced last night, and printed and circulated this morning. I have not had time to examine it very carefully, but I suppose we may take the assurance of the hon. gentleman that it has been very carefully prepared. We know that attempts have been made, and in many cases successfully, to evade the provisions of the Stamp Duties Act. The Bill is, of course, almost entirely of a technical character, and I may say that, so far as I have glanced through it, I have not been able to find any fault with it generally. There is one section I would like to refer to, however, and that is the 15th section with regard to the question of too much duty having been paid. I think it should be compulsory upon the Treasurer to restore the money paid in excess. The words used in the Bill are that “the Treasurer may,” &c. I think it should be absolutely refunded in the same way that if too little duty is paid it is compulsory upon the executors to pay the rest. Of course the clause says the Treasurer is to be satisfied that too much has been paid, and it might be very easy to say he was not satisfied; but I think the imperative mood should be used, and that it should be compulsory upon the Treasurer to refund duty paid in excess. I suppose the Government have considered the effect of the Insurance Policies Act in regard to this Bill. There is an Insurance Act which protects certain policies as against the debts of the deceased person. I know there is a clause in that Act which provides for the dispensation of letters of administration and probates in certain cases. One section of that Act provides that where the amount is under a certain sum the insurance companies may pay without waiting until probate or letters of administration are taken out. In those cases there might be an evasion of the duty, and I am not prepared to say whether this Bill covers them or not. However, the legal members of the House will have an opportunity of looking into that matter, and putting it right if it is not provided for.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it rather hard to ask hon. members to give their consent to a Bill like this, containing twenty-eight clauses, without giving them an opportunity of looking at it. We are asked to pass the second reading of this Bill, and will perhaps be asked to go into committee upon it, without having any opportunity of considering it. The only consolation we have is that this Bill proposes to put the finishing touch upon the Colonial Treasurer's system of taxation. We know now, that from the moment a person enters this life and draws his first breath, and right through his life, he is taxed for everything he uses, and lastly, by this Bill, we get at him when he has passed away altogether. This puts the finishing touch upon him, by taxing him after he is dead upon what he leaves behind him. I protest against having to swallow this Bill of twenty-eight clauses without having time even to read it through. We have to take the Colonial Treasurer's assurance that it is correct, and we have had a legal opinion from our own side that it is pretty correct, and I suppose we must walk in faith.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—Late last night before the House adjourned, the Premier spoke to me about these two Bills and expressed his desire to get them both through to-night. I rather demurred to this Bill when I was told the length of it, but I was assured we should have it this morning to look over. Well, I have looked over it, and there was only one matter I was doubtful about. I showed that to the hon. member for Bowen, and he pointed out to me that the objection I thought I saw was not a valid one; so that, personally, I do not intend to object to the matter going forward. At the same time, unless the Government have very sound reasons for being anxious to push it forward to-night, I think it would be wise to postpone it. Two hon. members on this side have stated that they have not had time to read the Bill; and as I suppose the Government do not expect the Opposition to take everything for granted, I strongly recommend them to take the second reading to-night, and commit the Bill on another occasion, so as to give every hon. member an opportunity of satisfying himself upon all the details of the measure.

Mr. FOXTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not suppose there can be any possible objection to the second reading, though I may have something to say with reference to the clauses in detail as they are going through committee. I have heard it stated that since the Financial Statement was made the Supreme Court, when probates and letters of administration have been brought before them, have withheld issuing them pending the passing of this Act. I can scarcely believe that it is so, and yet I have been assured of it on what I believe to be very good authority. I should like some information on the subject, because it appears to me that it is scarcely right; and I do not see the necessity for it, for I cannot conceive how this Bill, if it becomes law, can possibly be made to apply to those cases.

The PREMIER: It is not a fact.

Mr. FOXTON: I was going to point out that the interpretation clause says it is only to apply to persons dying after the passing of the Act.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—I may explain that there has been some foundation for what came to the hon. gentleman's ears. The stamp officer sent some documents to the Treasury, asking whether he should assess them under the existing Stamp Duties Act, or hold them in abeyance. I ordered them to be proceeded with at once.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to say a word with respect to the question of going on with the Bill this evening. The Government are anxious to devote the whole of tomorrow evening to the resumption of the debate on the motion of the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, on the question of separation. They are very anxious also to see the way clear for the general business of the Government next week. The Government would very much prefer to dispose of the Bill this evening; otherwise they will certainly have to ask for the time after 7 o'clock to-morrow. But I do not think there is any serious objection to proceeding with it this evening. The machinery of this Bill is necessarily to a great extent of a technical character, and I do not think it is likely to be fully discussed in any case, however long is taken to consider it. If it is passed through committee to-night, and transmitted to the Council to-morrow, that practically makes a great deal of difference in the time of its coming into operation. I can assure hon. members that the Bill has been carefully revised more than once. It is based on the same general principle as the

Victorian system, with the addition of some provisions from the New Zealand law. Indeed, all the laws on the subject are very much the same; you have to provide some convenient means of assessing the value of the estate, and there is practically only one way to do that—make someone give an account of it, making provision for checking the account if there is any reason to suspect it is incorrect, and also for preventing evasions of the law. The experience of other countries shows pretty well how to do that. The Colonial Treasurer did not point out in detail how the measure was to be carried out, and I shall briefly go through its provisions. It is proposed that every person charged with the administration of the estate of a deceased person, whether as executor under a will or as administrator, shall within a time to be fixed by regulation file a statement of the estate, showing the particulars of it so that they will be capable of being checked, with valuations of each part; and giving also particulars of all debts, so that the net value on which duty is payable may be assessed. The amount of duty then becomes a debt due to the Crown; and for the purpose of enforcing payment the instrument under which the executor derives his title, the probate or letters of administration, is retained by the Registrar of the Supreme Court. If the money is not paid within a reasonable time summary application may be made to the court for a sale of sufficient part of the estate to pay the debt. Then there is provision for the refundment of money paid in excess, and for compelling payment of any money underpaid. Questions frequently arise on the construction of Acts of this kind; various questions have arisen in New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand as to whether particular property is subject to the law of the colony—whether, for instance, when a man dies in Victoria, duty is payable in respect of property not actually situated in Victoria. I forget how that point has been decided. That would be determined by an action in the name of the Attorney-General on behalf of the Crown. There is a provision in the 14th section that duties payable upon any property passing to an individual shall be a debt due by him to the Crown. That is a provision not found in any other Acts I have seen. With respect to property administered by the curator, there is a provision that if nobody applies within three months for letters of administration the estate shall be administered by him. The curator, however, will not be called upon to pay duty on the whole estate, but only on the part which is administered by him, which is, of course, reasonable. If the curator has an estate in hand, and has partly administered it, and somebody else asks to have administration granted to him he will not get the administration until he pays the duty on the remainder. In that case also the State is fully protected. There are also provisions for preventing the abuse of the Act by settlements—attempts to evade the law which have been very common elsewhere. That is, I think, amply provided for in the 22nd and 25th sections of the Bill. I believe the Bill will meet practically every case that will arise, and that there will be no difficulty as to the administration of it. As to the actual machinery of it, hon. members who are not lawyers must be prepared to take it to some extent on trust, as is usual in all legislatures when technical Bills of this kind are before them, unless they have reason to suspect that the Bill is carelessly drawn.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I certainly sympathise a good deal with the remarks of the Premier. Being a layman, and not much more intelligent than the average run of laymen in the House, I must say that if

we really did study the Bill we should not be much wiser afterwards. I spent some little time over it this morning, and if I had devoted to it thrice as much time I should not have understood it half as well as I do now after the explanation of the Chief Secretary. I quite agree with what he said, that unless we suspect that the Bill has been badly drawn we must take it upon trust as we have always done with what we call lawyers' Bills; and we may very well allow it to go through committee to-night, and so clear the financial business off the paper, especially as there is other important business to come before us to-morrow.

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

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

On the motion that the preamble be postponed,

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was very pleased to have the benefit of the criticism of the hon. member for Bowen and other legal members upon the Bill. The Bill had been entrusted to him to pass through committee as Treasurer, because it imposed taxation, otherwise he should have requested one of his legal colleagues to take charge of it. He believed there need be no apprehension on the part of hon. members that the Bill was not prepared with the utmost care, or that it would be more oppressive on the community than was authorised by the taxation proposals which had been accepted by the House.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 1 to 6 passed as printed.

On clause 7—"Duties to be paid; duties in case of widows and children"—

Mr. PALMER asked whether some limit to the half-percentage in case of widows and children should not be fixed, say £10,000 or £20,000? Very large receipts might come from the succession duties. A property of £20,000 was a very large one, and the Treasurer might be inclined to insist on the full percentage. He recognised the principle with regard to the smaller amounts, but the question was whether they could consistently carry that out in larger legacies.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there were good grounds for making the reduction in the case of property devolving upon members of families—widows and children. If it descended to a family it would probably be distributed. He thought they might very fairly adopt the practice of other countries where similar provisions to those in the Bill were found to work satisfactorily.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 8 to 12 passed as printed, clause 15 transposed to follow clause 12, and clauses 13 and 14 put and passed.

Clause 16—"If too much duty has been paid"—was agreed to, with a verbal amendment proposed by Mr. Chubb.

On clause 17, as follows:—

"Every administrator to whom letters of administration are granted during minority or absence from Queensland shall file the statements required by this Act and shall pay the duty imposed by this Act. When such duty has been paid no further duty shall be charged upon the issue of letters of administration to the person entitled upon his coming of age or coming to Queensland, but a fee of five pounds shall be paid to the registrar."

Mr. CHUBB said in small estates a fee of £5 would be a very considerable sum. There were no fees payable at the present time, and unless the Treasurer was anxious to have a nominal fee he (Mr. Chubb) should move that the concluding words of the clause be omitted.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could hardly see his way to waive the fee altogether; but if the hon. gentleman considered that £5 was excessive he was prepared to reduce it. They must have some fee, and, in order to make the charge uniform with another part of the Bill, he would move that the word "five" be omitted, with the view of inserting "two."

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 18 to 21, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 22, as follows:—

"Every settlement of property made by a person after the eighteenth day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, containing trusts or dispositions to take effect after his death, shall upon the death of the settlor be registered in the registrar's office within the prescribed time, or such further time as the Treasurer may allow, and no such trusts or dispositions shall be valid unless such settlement is so registered, unless it was made before or in consideration of the marriage of the settlor, or in favour of a purchaser or incumbrancer in good faith and for valuable consideration, or unless it is a settlement on or for the wife or children of the settlor of property which has accrued to the settlor after marriage in right of his wife.

"No settlement shall be registered unless the trustees or some other person interested under the settlement file therewith a statement setting forth the nature of the property comprised in the settlement and the value thereof, in such form, and with such particulars, and verified on oath by such persons as may be prescribed.

"The trustees of the settlement or some other person shall, before registration, pay to the registrar duty at the same rate as is hereinbefore prescribed to be payable upon the estates of deceased persons, which shall be calculated upon the total value appearing in the statement as finally certified by the registrar.

"If such statement is not filed within the prescribed time, or such further time as the Treasurer may allow, the registrar may assess in the prescribed manner the duty payable under this Act in respect of such settlement, and if such duty is not paid within the prescribed time the Attorney-General or any person interested may apply to the Supreme Court, which may order that a sufficient part of the property included in the settlement be sold, and the proceeds of the sale applied in payment of the duty together with the costs of the order and sale and consequent thereon."

Mr. FOXTON said he was not satisfied that the clause could not be evaded. He thought a settlement might be so drawn up as to completely evade the clause, assuming that the property was really under the Real Property Act. Supposing a man settled it by the nomination of trustees, with power of appointment in himself, upon his wife for life, and, after her death, to his children or any others he might think fit. By that means he might obtain, by reserving to himself the power of appointment, the complete control or power of disposition of that property by will, if he so desired; and, in the event of his not doing so it would pass to his wife and children in such order as he might have specified, and no duty would be paid.

The PREMIER said he did not think it could be evaded in that way, because the dispositions took effect after his death, and the duty would be payable under the Bill. Suppose he made a settlement on such trusts as he might appoint by his will, and, in default of appointment, to his wife or children? They would not take effect until after his death.

Mr. FOXTON: They would take effect at once.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman was referring to a case of this sort: where a man

settled property upon his wife and children in his lifetime, reserving power to give it away by his will. He did not see how that could be avoided.

Mr. DONALDSON: Some of the largest estates in Victoria have been given away in that manner.

The PREMIER said if it were *bonâ fide* given away nobody could avoid that. Of course, there would be nothing to prevent him, unless it was done for the deliberate purpose of evading duty, and it would be difficult to prove that. He knew there had been various attempts made in England; but he was not sufficiently familiar with them to describe them. Clause 25 dealt severely with such cases.

Mr. FOXTON: That is only in anticipation of the passing of this Act.

The PREMIER said the latter part of that clause read as follows:—

"Any conveyance, assignment, gift, delivery, or transfer of any estate, real or personal, or of any money or securities for money, already made, or which may hereafter be made, either in escrow or otherwise, to take effect upon the death of the person making the same, shall be deemed to have been made, or to be made, as the case may be, in anticipation of the passing of this Act, and with intent to evade the payment of the duty thereunder."

Mr. PALMER asked if the Premier could inform them how the duties would be collected upon insurance policies?

The PREMIER said they were part of the personal estate, and the duty would have to be paid before the letters of administration or probate were issued from the office, which was provided for in clause 27.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 23 and 24 passed as printed.

On clause 25—

The PREMIER said he would take the opportunity of saying, with respect to the point referred to by the hon. member for Carnarvon, that the only way he saw out of the difficulty would be by altering the Stamp Act, so as to make duty payable upon the value of property conveyed instead of upon the price.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 26 passed as printed.

On clause 27—

"No real or personal property whatsoever in Queensland of any person who dies after the passing of this Act shall vest or be deemed to have vested beneficially in any person under any will or upon intestacy until probate of the will or administration of the goods or land has been granted in Queensland, or an order to administer the goods or land has been granted to the curator."

Mr. DONALDSON said there was a point he would allude to before the Bill was passed, and that was that a person might have his life insured in another colony, and not in a branch office here. For instance, a person might be insured in the Australian Mutual Society, of which the head office was in Sydney: would duty have to be paid here?

The PREMIER said if he lived in this colony it would. Money had no locality, and if it formed a part of a man's estate, his successor would not get his letters of administration until he paid the duty. If he went to the other colony he would have to pay duty there, and if administration had to be granted here, the duty would be paid in respect to all the personal estate. Nice points had arisen with respect to persons having property in various places, and he was not prepared to say at once how they were dealt with. At any rate, the rule was settled.

Mr. FOXTON said that if he remembered rightly the case of "Blackwood" was based upon a peculiar construction of the Victorian Act, which was something the same as the Bill before them, but different from the wording of the Probate Act in this colony as it stood at the present time. How far the passing of that Bill into law would bring the Queensland law into unison with that of Victoria, or render the decision of the Privy Council, in the case referred to, binding here, he did not know. Unless he was mistaken, although the succession duty was payable in Victoria in respect of the whole of the estate, wherever situated, it was not so here under the Stamp Duties Act.

Mr. DONALDSON said that in the case of an executor applying for probate here, and the deceased person being insured in another colony, it might be quite possible that he would also have to pay duty in the other colony, and it would be very hard to make the executor pay twice. That was the reason he asked the question. The Blackwood case in Victoria had been sent to the Privy Council, and was lost by the Victorian Government, and in that case they only received duty for the property in Victoria.

The PREMIER said the difficulty arose in this way: In order that the representatives of a deceased person might recover his personal estate they must get administration—that was to say, they must get the legal title given them by the courts of the country where they seek to recover it, and before they get the legal authority they must pay the duty. If they did not want the legal authority they need not ask for it, and they would not have to pay the duty. If they took probate in Queensland they would have to pay duty in Queensland, and it would be payable in Victoria if they got administration there.

Mr. DONALDSON : Not here as well ?

The PREMIER said they would not have to pay in both places. There were some extremely nice points arising occasionally in connection with the subject—for instance, in the case of a bank which had branches in various places, as to whether a debt due to a deceased person could be recovered by a Queensland administrator from the bank in Queensland, irrespective of where the debt was incurred. He remembered a very interesting case of that kind occurring. He did not know whether it was settled by the courts of law, or how it was settled; but he knew that a very eminent lawyer in New South Wales and himself were consulted, and they came to directly opposite opinions. His opinion was that the debt could be paid in Queensland; the opinion of the New South Wales lawyer was that it could not be paid in Queensland, although the money was the proceeds of property in Queensland. The New South Wales lawyer gave the opinion that it could not be paid in Brisbane, because the mortgage under which the money had been realised was executed in Sydney.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 28—"Repeal of existing stamp duties on probates and letters of administration"—and preamble, put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

The report was adopted; and, on the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—In moving that the House do now adjourn, I may state that the Government propose that the

motion of the hon. member for Townsville, the Hon. J. M. Macrossan, shall come on to-morrow before Government business, and at the conclusion of the debate upon the motion of the hon. member for South Brisbane, which, I understand, will not take up a very long time. There is one matter of Government business which I shall ask precedence for at 7 o'clock, if it comes here by that time—that is, the amendment made in another place in the Elections Act Amendment Bill. It is important that that Bill should come into operation as soon as possible for the purpose of printing the new forms, and I propose to ask the House to deal with that amendment if it comes from the Legislative Council in time.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at thirteen minutes to 10 o'clock.