

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**FRIDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 1886**

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## MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

## GOLD FIELDS HOMESTEAD LEASES BILL.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received the following message from the Legislative Council:—

“MR. SPEAKER,

“The Legislative Council, having had under consideration the Legislative Assembly’s message relative to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill, beg now to intimate that they agree to the amendment made by the Legislative Assembly in the proposed new clause 22.

“JOHN F. McDUGALL,

“Presiding Chairman.

“Legislative Council Chamber,

“Brisbane, 25th November, 1886.”

## SOUTH BRISBANE MECHANICS INSTITUTE LAND SALE BILL.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received the following message from the Legislative Council:—

“MR. SPEAKER,

“The Legislative Council, having this day agreed to the amendments made by the Legislative Assembly in the proposed new clause 5 of the South Brisbane Mechanics Land Sale Bill and the omission of the proposed new clause 6, beg now to intimate that they agree to the said amendments.”

“JOHN F. McDUGALL,

“Presiding Chairman.

“Legislative Council Chamber,

“Brisbane, 26th November, 1886.”

## MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

## THE CHINESE IN QUEENSLAND.—WATER SUPPLY.—IMPORTING WOODEN RAILWAY GATES.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise for the purpose of inviting the attention of the Government during the recess to what I consider a very important matter, and I will conclude with the usual motion. The question to which I wish to direct attention is one of growing importance, and one which, unless it is handled at an early date, is likely to lead to very considerable trouble in the future. We have been reminded of it this afternoon by the petition just now presented from certain Chinese; and it is with regard to their position that I wish to address the Government. I am not one of those who have any sympathy with the undue persecution of those Chinese who have come to the colony under existing laws, almost invited by us; at the same time I do not consider that these Chinamen are entitled to the same privileges as Europeans. Englishmen and other Europeans, if they go to China, are placed under certain restrictions. They are not allowed to mine for gold; but Chinamen who come here are allowed by our laws to take out miners’ rights and mine for gold. The gold, instead of circulating in the colony, goes away to China, and I do not think it does us any great good. I think it would be a very good thing if the Government were to take into their careful consideration the advisableness of notifying that after a certain date no miners’ rights should be issued to Chinese.

Mr. SMYTH: Hear, hear! And no miners’ licenses.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: And no miners’ licenses. They should be compelled to confine their attention to certain pursuits. As agricultural labourers and gardeners, I believe they are fully capable of working where a white man cannot, and their talents and industry would find a useful vocation in gardening, and also in work which Europeans are almost physically incapable of doing—I mean working in the rich scrub

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 26 November, 1886.

Petitions.—Messages from the Legislative Council—Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill—South Brisbane Mechanics Institute Land Sale Bill.—Motion for Adjournment—the Chinese in Queensland—water supply—importing wooden railway gates.—Treasury Bills Bill—third reading.—Appropriation Bill No. 2—third reading.—Messages from the Legislative Council—Bowen towards Ayr Railway—Maryborough to Gayndah Railway—Gladstone to Bundaberg Railway—Cleveland Branch Railway—Cooktown to Maytown Extension—Treasury Bills Bill—Appropriation Bill No. 2.—Prorogation.

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

## PETITIONS.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN presented a petition from the ratepayers and residents of the municipality of Townsville and vicinity against the sale of Government reserves in and about the municipality; and moved that it be read.

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

On the motion of the HON. J. M. MACROSSAN, the petition was received.

Mr. BROWN presented a petition from certain Chinese residents of Townsville and other places in the north of Queensland, praying the Government to protect their rights in this country; and moved that it be read.

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

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

lands on canefields and other such work. I do not consider, either, that Chinamen ought to be allowed to hold licenses for public-houses. I do not think they ought to be entitled to a privilege of that kind, for it is a privilege and it is a responsible position. Every European holding a license is a constable in his own house. How can you make a Chinaman a constable over Europeans? I think that the matter should at once be taken in hand by the Government, and seriously considered, and the position of the Chinese in this colony laid down, so that no injustice may accrue to them; and on the other hand no ill-feeling may be allowed to continue to exist and grow, as it is apparently growing day by day, between the two nations, and will, if allowed to smoulder, ultimately burst out into something like a very serious flame, and create a very uncomfortable and unpleasant state of affairs. I myself have been repeatedly urged by my constituents who are largely interested in the matter to bring it under the notice of the Government. They have pointed out to me the absolute danger of the situation as it exists at the present time, and I should be wanting in my duty if I did not, even at this late period of the session, call the attention of the Ministry to the matter so as to enable them to give it the fullest consideration during the recess. I move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member will not, of course, expect me to say anything definite as to the intentions of the Government in this matter, nor can I add anything to what I said a few days ago in answer to the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan. The matter is one that has engaged the serious attention of the Government. It is a very large question, and one that requires the fullest consideration. I am not prepared at present to express any opinion as to what course the Government may be disposed to take. Various methods have been adopted in different parts of the world in dealing with this question, and we shall have to weigh the whole matter very seriously before coming to a definite decision.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am glad to hear that this matter is receiving the serious attention of the Government; but I think it would have been more satisfactory to hon. members if we had heard something more definite than what has just fallen from the Premier. We should have had some expression of opinion to the effect that our mining fields shall not be inundated with Chinese as they have been hitherto. The principle has already been affirmed that it is not desirable to allow Chinamen to mine on some mineral lands in the colony, by a clause which was introduced by the hon. member for Townsville. By that clause it is provided that no Chinaman can take out a license or have any *locus standi* on any mineral field in the colony, except goldfields. I think we should extend that provision to goldfields also. But while speaking on this subject, there is another matter to which I wish to refer. It is one that has greatly exercised the people of Brisbane not only lately but during the last few years, and that is the water supply of the city. I recollect that during several days last year, in the heat of summer, the people in some portions of the city were unable to obtain any water. Now they are obtaining sufficient water, but it is of such a nature that the people who use it are nearly poisoned, especially in the higher levels where they are supplied from Gold Creek. I notice that at last the inhabitants have commenced to move in the matter, and that a public meeting was held lately to consider the question.

At that meeting a deputation was appointed to call upon the Premier. They waited upon the hon. gentleman yesterday, and Dr. Rendle, one of the members of the deputation, said:—

“The deputation considered it desirable that the attention of the Government should be drawn to the following points:—1. That the water supplied is seldom, if ever, pleasant, and very frequently disgusting. 2. That in the opinion of the Board of Health, and of the medical profession generally, the water is unwholesome, and calculated to induce as well as to favour the spread of disease and intemperance. 3. That the Board of Waterworks has been in existence about twenty years, and yet the quality of the water has not improved. 4. That at times during many years past, and generally in the hot weather, when fever and dysentery are prevalent, the water has been unusually bad. 5. That the board has not shown sufficient energy in obtaining a better supply of pure and wholesome water, or made any genuine attempt to purify, by filtration or otherwise, the existing supply.”

I think every person who resides in Brisbane can endorse all those statements. The Premier remarked, in reply, that—

“He did not agree with the present constitution of the board, but nothing could be done except by the removal of the members and the appointment of others, and that, he thought, would be a very ungracious thing to do.”

Possibly it may be a very ungracious thing to do, but I think it would be better for the hon. gentleman to do that ungracious thing than to allow 70,000 people to be slowly poisoned by Enoggera water. He appears to admit that nothing can be done except by the removal of the members of the board, from which it may be inferred that something can be done if the members are removed. Such being the case, and as everyone thinks that it is desirable that something should be done, and done quickly, it is the Premier's duty to take prompt action in the matter. But the hon. gentleman appears to be afraid of taking prompt action for fear of hurting some old friends. My own experience corroborates the statements made by Dr. Rendle. I live on Gregory terrace, and sometimes when I have turned the water on I have to stand two or three minutes before I can muster up courage to go under the shower because of the smell from the water. And when I have had my bath I have to take two or three buckets of rain water to souse off the smell of the Enoggera water. And the children of people on Gregory terrace have to take water in bottles to school, because if they drink the pipe-water they come home suffering from diarrhoea and dysentery. I know of many such cases which have occurred. And I say the Government is strictly responsible if they do not take some prompt action to shift some of the members of the board. The present members of the board are Mr. Petrie, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Hardgrave, the Minister for Works *ex officio*, and Sir Thomas McIlwraith. Sir Thomas McIlwraith was only appointed about a year back. The other members were appointed fifteen or twenty years ago, I believe, or at any rate fifteen or sixteen years ago. And the only member who has any knowledge of hydraulics is Sir Thomas McIlwraith. I believe from statements made to me that many propositions made by him with a view to effect some alteration in this detestable water supply have somehow or other been overridden by some of the other fossils who constitute the board. It strikes me that the Colonial Treasurer, in whose department the control of the waterworks is, should make some inquiries as to the capacity of the present engineer, whose name I forget just now. I recollect that Mr. Henderson, the Government Hydraulic Engineer, designed some of the plans for the Gold Creek works and subsequently resigned. I have heard that his resignation was sent in on account of red-tapeism, and

that the gentleman who is now the engineer was his surveyor. We want more than a surveyor; we want a man possessing a knowledge of hydraulics to take such an important position. I notice that the Premier informed the deputation that the Waterworks Board will in future be under the control of the Colonial Treasurer's Department. I do not see what good that can do. It simply means that the board will remain as they are, and that they will address their letters and reports to the Colonial Treasurer instead of, as at present, to the Chief Secretary. That is the only difference there will be. But how can that alter the water supply? I think the only course to be adopted is to introduce fresh blood, and I would suggest the appointment of members from the municipal council instead of some of the present members of the board. If members of the council are appointed they will be responsible to the persons who drink the water, and when they come up for re-election, if their action has not been satisfactory to the people, they can record their conviction in the ballot-box.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, has raised a very weighty question. He is very anxious that the Chinese should be kept off the goldfields of the colony; but whilst I am no admirer of Chinese, I think if we allow them to come into this country, even with a £30 poll-tax, it would be too bad in addition to that to limit the occupation in which they shall be employed. The cabinet-making departments are already up in arms against them, so are the storekeepers of the North, and now the goldfields people want to prohibit them entirely from occupying any part of a goldfield either under miner's right or in any other way. Would it not be far better and far more just to prevent the Chinese coming here at all than to allow them to come, even under a £50 poll-tax, and to restrict the occupations in which they may engage? I am no admirer of the Chinese, and would not do anything to encourage them to come to the colony, yet I say that we must either go the whole length of prohibiting them from coming here or they must come here with full liberty after paying the £30 poll-tax. That is the view I take, and I think it very unfair and narrow-minded to prohibit them from going into a certain business and allow them to interfere with others.

Mr. BUCKLAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I take advantage of the motion for adjournment to ask some information from the Minister for Works in reference to a question put to him yesterday respecting the importation of American timber.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order, Mr. Speaker, in referring to a previous debate during the present session?

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member is referring to a previous debate, of course, he is out of order, but if he is simply referring to a question put to a Minister yesterday for the purpose of explanation, he is not out of order.

Mr. BUCKLAND: I was merely referring to a question put to the Minister for Works yesterday by the leader of the Opposition, respecting the importation of a number of gates by the "Junna." I was very much surprised—

The SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that that was not the question put to the Minister. That was debated on motion for adjournment.

Mr. BUCKLAND: I wish to ask the Minister for Works if he has ascertained whether those gates were imported for the Government or for some private individual?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Mr. Speaker,—Is the hon. member in order?

The PREMIER: He is perfectly in order. An hon. member may not quote a previous debate, but he may refer to the subject-matter of it; otherwise it would be very inconvenient. Supposing, for instance, at one period of the session a question affecting the public health were discussed, if such a rule were laid down it would preclude it being referred to again, although it might be of very great importance that it should be discussed.

The SPEAKER: I think if the hon. member wishes to put a question to the Minister for Works to get further information, he is perfectly in order in doing so.

Mr. BUCKLAND: That is what I intended to do, and my remarks were merely leading up to the question I was about to ask. I am anxious to know whether it is a fact that the Government imported those gates, or whether they were imported by a private individual. I find an article in this day's *Telegraph* which says:—

"We learn that the railway gates referred to"—

Mr. HAMILTON: I rise to a point of order. I believe it is against the Standing Orders for an hon. member to read from a newspaper in the House.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is perfectly justified in quoting from a newspaper. The Standing Order the hon. member refers to, refers to members reading newspapers in their places in the House.

Mr. CHUBB: I think the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, is himself out of order. He appears to be reading a newspaper now.

Mr. BUCKLAND: The hon. gentleman is more often out of order than I am, or anyone else. The *Telegraph* says:—

"We learn that the railway gates referred to in the Assembly yesterday as being in the B.I. steamer 'Junna,' from London, have arrived to the order of a well-known railway contractor, and not to the order of the Queensland Government, as was erroneously supposed by many members of the House. The gates have evidently been imported merely as a speculation. The only goods in the 'Junna' to the order of the Queensland Government are"—so-and-so.

I was very glad indeed to see that article, because I felt very much annoyed when I heard the statement made yesterday respecting the importation of this timber. I think, with the large amount of timber we have at our very doors, it would be a great mistake indeed for the Government to import timber for gates to be made in this colony. I am one of those who, although not a protectionist, am very anxious to see all the work that can be constructed in this colony within a reasonable advance on the imported articles made here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—It was my intention to explain to the House, after this motion had been disposed of, that I had investigated the matter referred to, and found that the railway gates in question were imported by a private firm, Overend and Co., for what purpose I do not know—most likely some private speculation. They may intend to offer them to the department, but at present the Government have no knowledge on the subject. I am very glad, however, to say that the Railway Department did not order them. I must go a little further, and inform hon. gentlemen that the first indent sent home for Baltic timber was passed through by the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, amounting to £650. I went through the whole of the correspondence this morning, and, in justice to the hon. gentleman, I would like to say that he evidently did not like the business, but

it was forced upon him in some way. I also sent home an indent, not for Baltic but for Oregon timber, but the Government have set their faces against importing any more. I have always been opposed to importing American timber for any purpose, and some years ago I was threatened with an action for libel for some comments I made concerning some Baltic timber that was imported. At that time Mr. Fitzgibbon, the Chief Engineer, imported the whole of the timber for railway stations at Toowoomba, Laidley, and other places, and I was informed that if I did not apologise for what I had said I would be sued for libel, damages £2,000. However, I took no notice; I did not apologise, and the matter was not proceeded with. I believe the statement I made was to the effect that Sir Charles Fox, who sent out the timber, and Mr. Fitzgibbon, divided the commission between them. At all events, I know all the timber was imported from America. I do not believe in importing American timber, and I am never likely to do it.

Mr. SMYTH said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the subject brought before the House by the hon. member who moved the adjournment is a very important one. I see that in Ravenswood a large public company are employing Chinese labour where European labour could be used. The white labour there is perfectly reliable, and is obtainable; and I think white labour should be employed where it can be employed. I think the matter could be dealt with during the recess in this way: It is nearly time we had a general revision of the Gold Fields Acts and the Gold Fields Regulations, and I think the Government might take that into their consideration during the recess. One amendment could be to refuse to grant to Chinese the right to work in any mining district without a miner's right or a miner's license, and those could be refused to them. The fact of their working on a goldfield or tinfield, or any mineral field, should be quite sufficient ground for prosecuting them. It is said that we cannot do without them—that we must employ them as cooks and so on; but if they are driven out it will be found that the white men will fall back on those vocations. I know that in the district I represent we have driven out the Chinese, and white men have taken to the occupation of market gardening, which it is said nobody but a Chinaman could thrive at. I know that there are some very respectable persons amongst the Chinese; some of the Chinese merchants at Cooktown are very intelligent men, and would compare favourably with any European in the district; but there is also a very low class of Chinese. In any large city we find that the Chinese shops in the back slums are amongst the most degraded in the city. Women of the lowest class are always found about them, any number of opium-smokers, and the Chinese are huddled together in large numbers. We do not want that class of people in Australia, especially in the mining districts; and I quite sympathise with the suggestion of the hon. member for Cook, to refuse to grant these people a miner's license or a miner's right. The sooner this is done the better. I have read in the papers lately that they have been employing Chinese in mines in the North where European labour can be procured. I suppose the reason is that the Chinese can be worked long hours and at a very low rate of wages. This is a white man's country. If a European gets any privileges in China, they are obtained by force. No European gets a show to do any work that a Chinaman can do, and we should retaliate here. I have heard that on a steamer in some port of China all the hands were Chinese except the engineer, who was

a European. At last they discharged him, and put on a Chinese engineer, and the consequence was that they had to run all round the harbour before they could get steam off and stop the boat; so they had to fall back on Europeans again. When they can dispense with Europeans in China they will do so, and when we can dispense with Chinese in Australia we should do so. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* some time ago, it was stated that there were 600 Chinese cabinet-makers in Sydney. They are driving the white men out of that trade there, and they are getting in the thin end of the wedge in Queensland. Why should we, as Europeans, stand that? We have a large white population here, who support all the institutions in connection with civilisation, and these Chinese do not support them. All the degradation incidental to opium-smoking and a low class of females is to be found in the Chinese quarters in every large city. There is an agitation on the subject in America at the present time, and that agitation will arise in Australia; and now, while we have the chance, we ought to put a stop to it. I think it is the duty of the Government to do everything they can to protect the white population against the Chinese.

Mr. BROWN said: Mr. Speaker,—I am not an advocate for the introduction of Chinese, but I would like to mention a fact which I think is not generally known—that is, that the Chinese in this colony, so far as we can tell from the arrivals and departures by sea, are rapidly decreasing; so that, unless they are coming across the border, which I do not think is likely—it is supposed sometimes that they come over from the Northern Territory of South Australia, but I think not—their number in this colony will be very small before long. I would like to say, by way of explanation, that I think I committed an error in saying there was a palpable mistake in the petition I presented this afternoon. I said I thought there must have been some mistake in the statement that the duty on the cargo of one vessel arriving in Australia from China recently came to £100,000. The amount seemed so enormous, that I thought it must have been an error, but I have ascertained since that that ship had something like 600 cases of opium aboard—I believe the duty on that alone would be £60,000—and as cargoes from China are generally valuable, possibly the duty on that cargo would come to £100,000. I do not say it was all intended for Queensland; no doubt that cargo is distributed throughout Australia.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—It must be very evident to every member of this House how inconvenient it is to mix up different things. The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, introduced a very important subject, but one which can hardly be treated fairly now on the last day of the session. Then the other member for Cook introduced another very important subject, as to the poisoning of the people of Brisbane by bad water—a subject quite as important as the other; then another very important subject cropped up in the explanation given by the Minister for Works—a very fair and pleasing explanation to this House—about the timber for gates. Now, it is not very easy for a man to deal with all these questions on the same motion for adjournment, especially when one member takes one subject, and then another jumps up and goes at something else. I wish, Mr. Speaker, to say something on two of these subjects; I will say something first on what fell from the Minister for Works about these railway gates, and what fell from the hon. member for Bulimba, who read a newspaper paragraph, stating that the

gates were introduced by some well-known railway contractor. My memory does not serve me sufficiently in the matter to say whether railway contractors here are obliged to furnish the gates ready-made and put them up. I think they are; I know they are in the other colonies. They put in a tender at so much a pair, and they have to erect the gates. Now, why should a railway contractor or anybody else import ready-made railway gates unless for the purpose of railways in Queensland? He could not sell them for any other purpose. Now, I point that out so that the Minister for Works may make inquiry, and find whether there is not a condition in the specification compelling the contractors to have the railway gates made of a certain imported material. If that is the case, I believe it is his business to ask the engineer to alter it so as not to compel railway contractors to import the timber for gates, or gates already made, which is probably a much cheaper process for them. As to this Chinese question, I quite acknowledge the extreme difficulty which the Government have at the present time in dealing with it. It is a far larger question now than when it was first dealt with in this House, or when it was first dealt with in Australia. China was then a country which nobody thought much of; but it is now assuming a position among the nations of the world. The Chinese Government and the English Government are on terms of the most perfect amity towards each other. The laws which we here pass in relation to the Chinese have to be approved or disapproved of by the Imperial Government. Now, it will be a serious question for us to begin to pass laws to embroil Great Britain with China; and such will be the case if we pass such laws as to prevent Chinese from coming here altogether. I myself would like to see them prevented from coming here. I do not think they are a desirable acquisition to our population. They have not proved themselves so either here or in any other European country, or country inhabited by the descendants of Europeans. They have not proved themselves to be an acquisition that the people wish to have. But still there is this great difficulty facing us that, when we are passing a law preventing them from coming here, we are passing a law against a people who are not only on terms of friendship with Great Britain, but who are the coming power, who have a policy—a policy to which Great Britain must to a certain extent show some deference. Then on the other hand, again, there are a vast number of Chinese who come here who are British subjects. That is another great difficulty we have to deal with. All the people of Hongkong are subjects of Great Britain. I believe that a very large number of Chinese who come here come from Hongkong, and it would be a very easy matter, if we had a law passed to prevent the Chinese from coming here, for the Chinese to go to Hongkong and become British subjects or to pass themselves off as British subjects, so that we should still be in the same difficulty. I recognise not only the importance of the question, but the extreme difficulties by which it is surrounded, and which the Government will have to consider very carefully before they go into any measure dealing with it. I hope myself they will see a way to deal with it, not by way of persecuting the Chinese who are here at present, but of preventing any more from coming if it possibly can be done, by putting every obstacle in the way of their coming here, if we cannot prevent them altogether. A way has been pointed out such as was done when the Mineral Lands Act went through this House. A clause was introduced preventing licenses being issued

to Chinese. If a new Gold Fields Act were passed through the House, a similar clause might be inserted in it, but I question whether the Government would really approve of that or send it home for the approval of the Imperial Government. As I said before, the difficulty of dealing with the question now is very great compared with the time it was dealt with before. Whatever the Government do, I am quite certain they will have the full approval of both sides of the House, in trying to remedy an evil which is admitted by all, or almost all, without exception to be one of the greatest evils which is looming in the distance to European people—that is the spread of the Chinese over the civilised world.

Mr. NORTON: Mr. Speaker,—In connection with what took place yesterday in reference to the railway gates, and the explanation that has been made this afternoon, I would like to know from the Minister for Works if the gentlemen to whom the gates are supposed to have been sent have a contract with the Government for railway-making—Messrs. Overend and Co., I mean.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Speaker,—The gates were imported by Overend and Co. At the present time they have no contract with the Government for railway construction. They have been building the bridges on the duplication of the line from Brisbane to Ipswich, but they have no contract whatever for the construction of any railway at present. The tenders for the South Coast line are to be opened this afternoon at 4 o'clock, and very possibly they may be tenderers for the construction of that line.

Mr. NORTON: It appears to me a most extraordinary thing that gentlemen should be importing gates for railway purposes for this colony on speculation. One thing is also most remarkable—namely, that those gates should be addressed to the Queensland Government. I have not seen them myself, but I understand it is the case that they are not addressed to Overend and Co., or to any private person, but to the Queensland Government. I may be misinformed on that point, but I have been told it is so. It is pretty obvious that if they are railway gates imported for use on Queensland railways, and if Overend and Co. are not requiring them for their own use, they are for some other contractor or for the Government. It must be for one or other of them. They would not bring them here on mere speculation on their own account. I think if the Minister for Works comes to examine into the specifications, he will find, as suggested by the hon. member for Townsville, that the specifications require the gates to be made of foreign pine and not of Queensland timber. I am quite sure the hon. gentleman will direct his attention to that, for it is a matter that requires to be looked into.

Mr. CHUBB: Mr. Speaker,—There is another question as to the gates. It is quite possible that those gates may have been ordered in respect to a particular contract, and have arrived behind time. Messrs. Overend and Co. may have completed the contract they had at the time they ordered the gates, and, if so, they may come in handy for the next contract that firm get. It is inconvenient, as was said by the hon. member for Townsville, that on a motion for adjournment three or four subjects should be introduced and debated—not consecutively, but intermittently. It would be an improvement if we could make some alteration in the Standing Orders by which a subject introduced by way of motion for adjournment should be disposed of before another subject is taken up. I believe the House of Commons have taken a step, or intend to take

a step, in that direction, and it would be beneficial to introduce it here. Now, in regard to the Chinese question: that is a very wide question indeed, because we must not forget that there are treaty rights; that there are treaties between Great Britain and China existing in respect to the Chinese, which give certain rights to Chinese subjects in the same way as we have certain rights with them.

The PREMIER: That was very fully discussed in 1877. There are no such treaties. The only treaty is the treaty of Tientsin, and it does not contain any such provision.

Mr. CHUBB: At any rate, Mr. Speaker, there is what is called the comity of nations, and it must not be forgotten that Great Britain has enforced her entrance into China at the point of the bayonet. While I am not in favour of allowing the Chinese to run indiscriminately over the colony, we must act as a civilised nation in dealing with the question. It is claimed that they should not be allowed to mine on our goldfields, and I agree with that; at the same time, if they are not allowed on our goldfields, it would be hardly fair to allow them to come into our towns and compete with cabinet-makers or other tradesmen, or to go on farms and compete with our farmers. Why should we restrict them from one industry and not from another? It is a large question, and one which must be dealt with in such a way as will protect the rights of the British inhabitants of these colonies. The water question is another very large one; but, of course, a debate in this House, at this period of the session, will not make the water any purer. The board, so far, seem to have progressed backwards. The water appears to be worse now than when it was first brought into Brisbane, and the supply seems to have got worse. Besides that, there is an enormous amount of waste; in fact, I was told by a gentleman, who is in a position to know, that if the metrical system were introduced, twice the number of people could be supplied. When I lived in the city my neighbour's taps were running all night, and there was no supervision. Apart from the question of the purity, the member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, said that the municipal council should have charge of the water. The water does not belong to the municipal council, but to the city of Brisbane and suburbs. The municipal council might be a proper body to have charge of the water supply within the municipality, but not the whole supply, because there are rights beyond those of the city. I have nothing to say on the question of gates. That has been disposed of by the Minister for Works, and I think no hon. member of this House approves of foreign timber being imported for gates, or anything being imported by the Government which can be made here at a reasonable cost. I want to bring up a subject for the consideration of the Attorney-General—who is not here—and I hope it will receive the attention of the Premier. It is in connection with something that shows the necessity for an amendment in the criminal law in the direction of the protection of female children. Every hon. member is acquainted with the disclosures made some time ago by the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The outcome of those disclosures was an Act of Parliament passed in England last year which raised the age of consent of girls from thirteen to sixteen years. In this colony, to carnally abuse a female child under ten years of age is felony; between ten years and twelve years it is a misdemeanour whether there is consent or not on the part of the female. The punishment for misdemeanour is not very severe—only two years' penal servitude; but for carnally abusing a girl under ten years the offender may be sentenced to penal servitude for life. In England, before the recent Act was passed, the protected

age was thirteen years, but in consequence of the disclosures made by the *Pall Mall Gazette* the age was raised to sixteen years. It is not necessary to give the particulars of the different offences created by the Act; it will be sufficient to mention the great principle which ought to be adopted; that is, the raising of the age. Girls in this colony mature more rapidly than at home; but if the age of sixteen years is found not to be too old in England it is not too old here. The subject is one that may very well receive the attention of the Government during the recess. During the last week three or four very gross offences against girls have been prosecuted in the Supreme Court—one of a kanaka in connection with a white child, and three or four other cases of a similar nature. The crime is on the increase in this colony, and some steps should be taken to make the law more stringent. At present if a girl is over the age of twelve years, and becomes a consenting party, the offence is not punishable. Again, the powers of the court with respect to administering corporal punishment by means of the lash ought to be extended; and I believe that in certain cases police magistrates might be empowered to award offenders a number of strokes up to a certain limit. I mention the matter because it is very important, and one upon which practical legislation can be brought to bear much more effectively, perhaps, than the water question introduced by the hon. member for Cook.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—With the permission of the House I will say a word or two. A deputation waited on me in reference to the matter a month or two ago, and I informed them that it was the intention of the Government to deal with it during next session, as there was not time to do so this session. I take this opportunity, if I may be allowed, of making a retraction of the confession I made yesterday in error. I was under the impression that the Government had ordered some gates made of foreign material and took the blame; but I find that my memory deceived me. I remember the matter coming before the Cabinet, and we refused to give an order, but I was under the impression that we must have agreed to do so. I remember the proposition being made, and I thought it must have passed.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—While these hints are being given to the Government as to what they should do during the recess, I may say a word or two on the Chinese question. I am very glad the junior member for Cook has brought this matter forward, and it strikes me that this is very likely to become a great Australian question. I think I heard the Premier say, a short time ago, that there were commissioners coming from China to inquire into the position of the Chinese here, and that they will very likely go to the United States and other countries. I trust that when they do come here, supposing they come during the recess, the Government will give those commissioners clearly to understand that we don't want any Chinese at all—that we don't want to ill-treat them, but we want them to keep out of our way. I do not believe that the action of Queensland, or any of the Australian colonies, is hampered by the treaties said to exist. It seems to me that it cannot be so, or else the Imperial Government would not have allowed us to put a poll-tax of £30 on the Chinese. It is said that because Chinese in Hong-kong are British subjects, we have no right to turn them out. I do not follow that argument at all. All such arguments are swallowed up in the great fact that the influx of Chinese into Australia means the degradation of Australia.

If we allow them to get a footing here they will be much the same as white ants. When white ants once get into our wood there is no getting them out without great difficulty, and when we have got them out we have very likely to take away the rotten timber and replace it with sound wood. I quite agree that the question is a large one, requiring the fullest consideration. I cannot myself come to any conclusion in the matter. I think, however, that when all measures have been thought of it will be found that the only plan is to absolutely prohibit them coming here, treaties to the contrary notwithstanding. I would like to know what becomes of the idea of the federation of the Australian colonies if they are not free to act in this matter. Will it be tolerated by the federated Australian colonies that they shall not deal with a matter so closely affecting their own welfare, in consequence of Imperial treaties with Peking? However, this is a very large matter which may well be left for the present. I am very much obliged to the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Lumley Hill, for having introduced the matter now, because every year its proportions will become more alarming, and it will have to be dealt with definitely and decisively. All I ask of the Premier at the present time is that when the Chinese commissioners come here the Government will give them clearly to understand that we do not want Chinese in this colony at all.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—With regard to the water supply of Brisbane and suburbs which has been referred to by the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, I do not think it is altogether fair that the whole blame of the matter should be thrown on the board. I recollect that years ago the water from Enoggera was as bad as the water from Gold Creek is now, if not worse. I have not seen much of the Gold Creek water, but I do not think anything could be much worse than the Enoggera water was at the time I refer to. The board then took steps to scour out of the pipes the filth which had accumulated in them for some years. The result was that the water became perfectly clear; and at the present time the water passing my place is quite clear. There is no doubt that the board have done a great deal so far as the Enoggera water is concerned. Seven or eight years ago that water was very bad, but now it is completely changed, and any one drawing the water as it passes the suburb where I live will find that it is perfectly clear, and free from sediment and offensive smell. If that could be effected by scouring the pipes I do not see why the same could not be done with respect to the water from Gold Creek.

Mr. HAMILTON: I wish you lived on the higher levels; you would not speak like that.

Mr. SCOTT: I do not live at a high level, but close to the main from Enoggera. It may be that the water is so clear because it is drawn direct from the main which has been scoured up to the place where I live; but that the water is good is indisputable.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I have had occasion two or three times to visit the reservoir at Gold Creek, and on each occasion when I visited it I did so with an object. I hope some day to introduce some valuable fish there, and it is necessary, in order that these fish should survive and thrive and multiply, that the water should be good. I examined the water carefully and critically, and so far as the water in the reservoir is concerned, I never saw better water anywhere, so that if there is any taint in the water it must be from going through

the pipes. If it could be conveyed into the city in the state in which it now is, I do not think we could have better water. I believe that in Sydney they have a tank of very large dimensions, in which the water is exposed to the air before it is used, and I think that if the tank system were adopted here, the water would be improved very much. But I again repeat, that so far as the water in the reservoir is concerned I found it most excellent.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I regret extremely that the point which I raised should have assumed such a variegated aspect, several other subjects having been introduced. I more especially regret that my colleague should have turned dirty water on to the Chinese question, which is one of very much more importance to the constituency which we together represent than the water supply of Brisbane. The latter is, no doubt, an important matter in its own way. However, with reference to the Chinese question, I have listened to the arguments that have been advanced this afternoon, and I have heard very little said in favour of Chinese. The member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, certainly said that he did not see why any restrictions should be put upon them. I cannot see the force of that argument at all, because restrictions are placed upon Englishmen going to China. They are not allowed to mine there, and they are not allowed to do a variety of other matters. Englishmen are under considerable restrictions there, and what is sauce for Englishmen in China should be sauce for Chinamen in the British colonies or in any part of the British dominions. I trust myself that the matter will be considered of sufficient importance to be dealt with at the next meeting of the Federal Council. It is a question in which the whole of Australia is interested, because this country is in the vicinity of the shores of those innumerable people, and its proper settlement is of the greatest importance to the welfare and future prosperity of the whole of Australasia. I myself think it is a matter worthy of the gravest consideration as to whether it would not be preferable to exclude them altogether—not have them coming here upon any terms. Certainly I would never consent to their being admitted to all the rights and privileges of Queensland colonists or British subjects in any way. As to the inhabitants of Hongkong being British subjects, I think they could hardly be recognised as thorough Queensland colonists when they come here, because we all know they are nothing of the kind. They come here, and as soon as ever they can scrape enough together to give them an independence in China for the rest of their natural lives, they clear out, and all their time is spent in hoarding up to achieve that end. I was very glad to hear the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Brown, say that the number is on the decrease; I hope it will continue to decrease, and also that the Government will see the force and advisability of placing some absolute restriction upon them with regard to mining business, which is the principal interest in my constituency. I trust that they will be debarred from having miners' rights or licenses issued to them in any kind of way. I thought that as the attention of the Government had been directed to the matter some time ago, they would have been prepared to have given some tangible indication of the policy they are likely to pursue, and I trust that in the recess they will fully make up their minds to bring forward a clear and decisive policy with regard to the position to be adopted towards the Chinese in the future.

Question put and negatived.



TREASURY BILLS BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

THIRD READING.

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

The SPEAKER: I shall resume the chair at half-past 5 o'clock.

The House resumed at half-past 5 o'clock.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

BOWEN TOWARDS AYR RAILWAY.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received a message from the Legislative Council intimating that they approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway from Bowen towards Ayr, section No. 1, in length 30 miles, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 4th instant.

MARYBOROUGH TO GAYNDAH RAILWAY.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received a message from the Legislative Council intimating that they approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway from Maryborough to Gayndah, section No. 1, from 12 miles 21 chains 86 links, on the Maryborough Railway, at Mungarr, to 25 miles 27 chains 50 links, near Clifton, in length 25 miles 27 chains 50 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on 3rd instant.

GLADSTONE TO BUNDABERG RAILWAY.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received a message from the Legislative Council intimating that they approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway from Gladstone to Bundaberg, in length 106 miles 46 chains 50 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 3rd instant.

CLEVELAND BRANCH RAILWAY.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received a message from the Legislative Council intimating that they approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed Cleveland branch railway, commencing at Woollongabba, on the South Brisbane Branch Railway, and ending at Cleveland, in length 21 miles 48 chains 2 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 3rd instant.

COOKTOWN TO MAYTOWN EXTENSION.

The SPEAKER: I have to report a further message from the Legislative Council intimating that they approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Cooktown to Maytown Railway, section 3, from 50½ miles to 67½ miles, in length 17 miles, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 4th instant.

TREASURY BILLS BILL.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received a message from the Legislative Council intimating that they agree to the Treasury Bills Bill without amendment.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received a message from the Legislative Council intimating that they agree to the Appropriation Bill No. 2 without amendment.

PROROGATION.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—It is proposed that Parliament shall be prorogued on Thursday next. I therefore move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn till Thursday morning next, at half-past 11 o'clock.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to 6 o'clock.