Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 19 JULY 1887

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

FIFTH SESSION OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT,

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE, ON THE NINETEENTH DAY OF JULY, IN THE FIFTY-FIRST YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1887.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 19 *July*, 1887.

Member Adjudged Insolvent.—Vacancy during Recess.—Elections Tribunal Act of 1886.—The Leader of the Opposition.—Bill *Pro Forma*.—The Imperial Conference.—The Opening Speech.—Address in Reply.—Adjournment.

THE House met at 12 o'clock, a few minutes after which hour a message was conveyed by the Usher of the Black Rod that His Excellency the Governor requested the attendance of Mr. Speaker and hon. members of the Legislative Assembly in the Council Chamber.

The Speaker, accompanied by hon. members of the Assembly, accordingly proceeded to the Legislative Council, and having heard the Address of His Excellency, returned to their own Chamber.

The House resumed at half-past 3 o'clock.

MEMBER ADJUDGED INSOLVENT.

The SPEAKER said: I have the honour to report that by notice dated the 10th day of January last, signed by Mr. William Bell, Registrar of the Supreme Court, and published in the issue of the *Queensland Government Gazette* of the 15th day of the same month, it was publicly intimated that Alfred Midgley was on the said 10th day of January adjudged insolvent.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) moved—

That the seat of Alfred Midgley hath become and is now vacant by reason of the insolvency of the said Alfred Midgley since his election and return to serve in this House as member for the electoral district of Fassifern.

Question put and passed.

VACANCY DURING RECESS.

The SPEAKER said: I have also to report that since the termination of last session the following vacancy has occurred in the House—namely, by the resignation of Jacob Horwitz, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Warwick; and that upon the occurrence of the said vacancy I issued my writ for the election of a member to fill the same.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL ACT OF 1886.

The SPEAKER said: I have the honour to report to the House that, in accordance with the provisions of the Elections Tribunal Act of 1886, I have received the following letter from his Honour the Chief Justice:—

"Sir,—I have the honour to notify, in pursuance of the provision of section 12 of the Elections Tribunal Act of 1886, that the Chief Justice will be the Elections Judge to preside at the sittings of that tribunal during the coming year of 1887."

In accordance with other provisions of the Act, I lay upon the table the names of the twelve assessors who will form the court provided for by the Elections Tribunal Act of 1887.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg leave to intimate to the House that I have had the honour to be appointed leader of the Opposition. I also take this opportunity, the first I have had, to thank hon. members who so kindly granted me leave of absence during the whole of last session.

BILL *PRO FORMA*.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—In accordance with constitutional practice, before proceeding with any other business, I beg to present a Bill to amend the law relating to game, and move that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I have to ask the indulgence of the House to make a statement rather in the nature of a personal statement with reference to my absence from the colony during the recess. I believe it may be convenient to take the opportunity of saying a few words upon that subject now, not for the purpose of raising any debatable matter—for we are not in a position to debate anything but the fact of my absence at the present time—but because I think the information I can give may assist hon. members in the consideration of subsequent business this evening. I conceive there will be no objection to my doing so. Shortly after the close of last session, in December, it was announced by telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Australian Governors and the Governors of other possessions, I believe, that—

"A Conference is proposed to be held in London early next year with colonial representatives to discuss colonial defence, postal and telegraphic communications, and perhaps other important questions, but no political federation—which question is not yet ripe for discussion. The conference will be consultative only, so number of representatives of each colony is not material. It is suggested that they shall include, in addition to the Agent-General or other specially deputed representative, any leading public man with special qualifications who might be here."

Upon the receipt of that telegram this Government entered into communication with the Agent-General for some further information—the despatch on the subject not having arrived at the time—and also with the other colonies. The result of those communications was that it was clearly the opinion of the best authorities that could be consulted that it was desirable that at that Conference this colony should be represented by one of the Ministers, and the result, I think, has shown that it was very desirable that the colonies should be represented by gentlemen holding responsible office. The information given in the telegram was somewhat meagre, but the questions of defence and postal and telegraphic communication were certainly questions upon which there had been a great deal of negotiation without any satisfactory conclusion being arrived at, in consequence of continual changes of opinion, on the part of one colony or another, each of which occupied a very long time to discuss. My colleagues selected me to go, and I proceeded accordingly to England. I am very glad that two of the other Australian colonies were represented by leading members of their Governments—South Australia by the head of the Government, Sir John Downer; and Victoria by Mr. Deakin, the Chief Secretary, and a most distinguished member of that Government. The colony of Newfoundland was also represented by the head of its Government, and the Cape Colony sent Sir Thomas Upington, who, although he had recently retired from being the head of the Government, still retained a seat in the Cabinet, and was one of the most influential members in it. It was necessary to make immediate arrangements with respect to the representation of the colony at the Conference, the time before the meeting of the Colonial Parliaments being so short, and my going was arranged before the arrival of the full text of the despatch. In that despatch it was pointed out that—

"The question which is at once urgent and capable of useful consideration at the present time is that of organisation for military defence."

Then it was said that—

"Second only in importance to this great question is one concerning in a special degree the interests of the Empire in time of peace. The promotion of commercial and social relations by the development of our postal and telegraphic communications could be considered with much advantage by the proposed Conference. It is a subject the conditions of which are constantly changing. New requirements come into existence, and new projects are formulated, every year. It is obviously desirable that the question of Imperial intercommunication should be considered as a whole, in order that the needs of every part of the Empire may, as far as practicable, be provided for, and that suggestions may be obtained from all quarters as to the best means of establishing a complete system of communication without that increased expenditure which necessarily results from isolated action."

It was also suggested that it was not impossible that there might be other important questions which might probably and usefully be brought under the consideration of the Conference; adding that the Conference would be necessarily purely consultative. The objects for which the Conference was summoned were very much the same in kind, though perhaps different in degree, as the objects for which conferences have been held between the various Governments of Australia. We met together to exchange ideas, and to ascertain how far and to what extent the opinions of the different members of the Empire there represented were in consonance. Some persons appear to have supposed that the Conference had, or assumed to have, some binding authority — that its resolutions must necessarily be adopted by the Legislatures of the several colonies. That is entirely a misapprehension. The members of the Conference, in their representative capacity, agreed individually and collectively to certain things which they considered to be wise to be recommended for acceptance by the Parliaments of the colonies, and that is the extent to which their conclusions went. Two of the most important of those conclusions have been laid on the table—the agreement to provide for the naval defence of the Australasian Colonies—that is, a preliminary agreement for submission to the Australasian Parliaments, and the proposed draft Bill to indemnify the British Government with respect to the government of New Guinea. I take this opportunity, sir, of saying what I conceive to be the position with respect to disclosing in detail what took place at the Conference. It was in no sense a meeting at which members got up and made speeches. The business was conducted in a conversational manner, sitting round a table. All the proceedings, however—all that was said—were reported in full, and with the exception of some confidential matters, which anyone will see could not be reported from their nature, that report will be presented to Parliament in due course. With respect to the other matters there can be no objection to the publication of them. I have already referred to those two now laid on the table of the House, and upon which the House will be invited to take action It was arranged that the Press should not be admitted, and that information as to what took place should not be communicated to the Press. I have felt myself bound, and still feel myself bound, by that obligation; and though there is no doubt that with respect to a great many of the matters no harm would have been done by publicity, there were others as to which publicity would have been fatal to any useful results—matters of a diplomatic nature. And it was difficult to say in advance where the line should be exactly drawn. In the middle of some subject which apparently might be quite suitable for publication, some other subject might have been introduced and a reference made to matters which could not be published. The greatest value of the Conference must necessarily be in the interchange of ideas and opinions between the persons from different parts of the world sitting at that table, and the communication of those ideas

and opinions to the inhabitants of those parts of the world, and especially of their Parliaments. That was the great advantage of holding a meeting of that kind, and the information will, as I have said, be given very shortly. I could not trust my memory to relate every matter that came before the Conference, even if I felt myself at liberty to do so; and I shall not, therefore, either contradict or affirm or corroborate any statement that may have been made by anyone else as to what took place there. All the proceedings will be laid before the House in due time. But there are two or three subjects with respect to which I should like to say a word or two. The question of the naval defences of Australia is one that has been engaging the attention of the colonies for a very long time. There has been much correspondence on the subject, and there have been some informal meetings held in the colonies concerning it. But it was felt that the subject was one which required further consideration, and that that could be done much more conveniently where one of the principal partners in the proposed joint concern had its seat—I mean the Admiralty. It would not be convenient to discuss now the preliminary agreement arrived at on that subject by the Conference, which has just been laid on the table, because hon. members have not yet had an opportunity of reading it; but I may say in a few words that it is proposed to fit out, at the joint expense of the Australian colonies, five very fast cruisers and two torpedo boats, three of the former and one of the latter being kept in commission in time of peace, and the others being kept in reserve. The details will be found in the papers laid before the House. I do not profess to know what the views of the Parliaments of the several colonies on the subject will be, but I may say that the conclusions embodied in that agreement were unanimously recommended by the delegates. With respect to New Guinea, the propositions made by this Government, in conjunction with the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria, more than a year ago, were accepted, with the modification of the guarantee being asked for ten years instead of five. Very good reasons, I think, will be given for that, and ten years was indeed the term first proposed by us. With that exception the propositions then made have been accepted. The Bill to be passed by this Parliament as agreed to and laid before the Conference by the Secretary of State has been laid on the table. It embodies the terms which he was willing to accept on behalf of the Imperial Government. I think it may be convenient if I here digress for a moment to point out the position on that question of the Imperial Government. As appears from the latest correspondence they took up this position: that having assumed the sovereignty of the country they would be bound for all time to see that it is properly governed. They objected to a guarantee for a very short time, which might be subsequently withdrawn, leaving on their hands a burden they would never have undertaken if they had known what was to happen. On the other hand the colonies took up this position: it was impossible for them to give a guarantee for an indefinite term and an unlimited amount, because any scheme proposed now might turn out to be unworkable; so that it was quite impossible for them to give a formal definite—or rather indefinite—guarantee in that way. I then pointed out that the difficulty might be removed by the colonies, or Queensland on their behalf, formally acknowledging their obligation to indemnify Her Majesty's Government against the expenses of governing that territory, provided the government was carried on in a way they approved of; and I suggested that that might be carried out by embodying a recognition of the obligation in the preamble of a Bill to be passed by this Parliament. That suggestion was adopted, and it is in that form that the Bill has been drawn. I have seen it stated, with reference to the defence question, that something was agreed to with respect to the federation of the land forces of the Empire.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Mr. Speaker, I must rise to a point of order. I think the hon. gentleman is going beyond the indulgence that has been allowed him. He is arguing a question first on one side and then on the other, and this is something which he only can be seized of: he has information we have not got. I think you will agree with me that the hon. gentleman is going beyond the limits of a personal explanation.

The PREMIER: I know it is only with the permission of the House that I can proceed, and I am very careful not to exceed the limit of the indulgence which has been given me. I do not think the hon. gentleman will have occasion to interrupt me again. I do not, of course, complain of the interruption; I am perfectly aware that I am technically out of order. I was about to say that I have seen it stated that some conclusions were arrived at with respect to the federation of the land defences of the Empire. I may say that such a subject was never considered; on the contrary, it was understood that we should mind our own business with respect to land defences. As to various other subjects that were discussed, it would be idle to say what was done with respect to them, because they were simply discussed—opinions were exchanged. The most important, probably, were the establishment of coaling stations, the questions of the New Hebrides and Samoa, and postal communication. These were all matters upon which various representatives had a good deal of information to give to other representatives, and I think that practical results are likely to follow, now that the various difficulties are more clearly seen. Other subjects of a somewhat different character were considered, amongst which I may mention the commercial relations of the different parts of the Empire with respect to the recovery of debts, and the very difficult subject of the conflicting bankruptcy laws of the Empire. These are subjects which might involve negotiations extending over a long period of years before a satisfactory solution could be found, but the discussion threw a good deal of light upon them, and added a good deal to the knowledge of those who took part in it or who will have an opportunity of reading what was said. Another question which came up for discussion was the Continental system of sugar bounties and its effect on the sugar-producing colonies, and I think what was said on that subject will probably have a good effect. These are all matters which it is impossible to discuss now. Probably hon. members knew already a good deal of what I have said, but I desired to state in a formal manner the nature of the work the Conference undertook—to discuss, to exchange opinions, to let each part of the Empire know what other parts of the Empire were about, what their mutual wants and requirements were, and how far they could help one another. I am satisfied that the result has been that all parts of the Empire know one another better than they did before, and that it will now be found much more easy to carry on negotiations on matters of mutual advantage. With respect to the matters as to which papers have been laid on the table I shall say nothing further than that when they are ripe for submission to this Parliament—that is, as soon as the

other colonies are ready to adopt the agreements, which can only be carried out by common consent —this Government will be prepared to submit to the House Bills to give effect to them. I believe the holding of the Conference has been a very great event in the history of the Empire, that it will be the precursor of many more meetings of the same kind, and that when in future the members of this vast Empire have to deal with matters of common concern, the recognised way to treat them will be to summon a meeting of this kind, where, meeting all on an equality, they may come to some satisfactory understanding. I have to thank the House for its indulgence.

THE OPENING SPEECH.

The SPEAKER reported that the House had, in the earlier part of the day, attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chambers, where His Excellency delivered an Opening Speech to both Houses of Parliament; of which, for greater accuracy, he had obtained a copy, which he would now read to the House.

HIS EXCELLENCY read his Opening Speech as follows:—

"HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"It affords me much pleasure to meet you again, and to have recourse once more to your advice and assistance in the management of the affairs of the colony.

"The completion of the fiftieth year of Her Majesty's most happy and prosperous reign, which has been marked by unexampled progress in almost every branch of human knowledge, and by signal development in all the Australasian communities, has been loyally celebrated by Her Majesty's subjects in all parts of the British dominions, and I have been much gratified to observe the hearty manner in which the people of Queensland have joined in the general rejoicings.

"Shortly after the close of the last session of this Parliament, her Majesty was pleased to direct that representatives of the Governments of her several colonial possessions should be invited to meet in London to confer together upon matters concerning the common interests of the Empire. In response to this summons all the self-governing colonies sent representatives, and it was deemed desirable that one of my Ministers should proceed to England for the purpose of representing the colony in conjunction with the Agent-General. At the Conference which met in London on the fourth of April, under the presidency of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, many subjects of great importance were considered and dealt with.

"I have the strongest reasons for believing that the holding of this Conference will be productive of highly beneficial results. A more real appreciation of the essential unity of the Empire and of the community of the interest of its several parts has been created; and I have no doubt that, as a consequence of the cordial relations thus established, the conduct of negotiations between the Imperial and Colonial Governments will be found in future to be greatly facilitated. A full report of the proceedings will be laid before you, when received from the Secretary of State.

"Amongst the most important of the matters submitted for consideration was the establishment and maintenance of an additional squadron for the defence of floating trade in Australasian waters at the joint expense of the colonies. Upon this subject, respecting which, as you are aware, previous communications had taken place between the Australasian Governments, a preliminary agreement was arrived at, subject to the approval of the several Parliaments. This agreement, for which your sanction will be asked, I commend to your most careful consideration. I am convinced that its conditions are highly favourable to the colonies, and that it will, if adopted, secure, at an extremely moderate cost, a practical immunity from hostile attack.

"The proposals which were made last year by my Government, in conjunction with the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria, for the administration of the affairs of British New Guinea, and of which you have already expressed your approval, have been adopted by Her Majesty's Imperial Government, subject to the extension of the term of the proposed guarantee to ten years. Bills to give effect to these proposals will be at once laid before you.

"The disastrous floods which occurred in the early part of the year, and which occasioned a lamentable loss of life and property, have retarded to some extent the recovery of the colony from the effects of the long-continued drought. I have observed, with much satisfaction, the ready response which was made by the people of Queensland to the appeals for aid to the sufferers.

"I am glad to note the large and increasing demand for land for occupation by *bonâ fide* settlers. My Ministers are deeply sensible of the importance of encouraging agricultural settlement, by giving increased facilities to intending selectors for acquiring full information as to the nature and quality of land open for occupation, and by assisting in the collection and diffusion of practical knowledge as to the profitable cultivation of the soil. With this object, I have, in anticipation of your sanction, authorised the establishment of a Department of Agriculture, under the charge of the Minister for Public Lands.

"The result of the census taken in May of last year will be laid before you. They disclose, as might be expected, some inequalities in the representation of the people, which, with the aid of the information now available, you will be invited to remove.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"I have every reason to believe that the colony has entered upon a period of renewed prosperity, to which the largely increased development of our mineral resources that may be anticipated from the favourable attention now bestowed upon them in Great Britain, and the general influx of capital from that country, will largely contribute.

"The public finances have, however, not escaped the natural consequences of the long-continued adverse seasons, but I see no reason to doubt that with careful administration they will shortly exhibit their usual satisfactory condition. In the meantime strict economy will be necessary, and the Estimates of Expenditure have been framed on that basis.

"HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"Your early attention will be directed to measures for improving the administration of public business in the more remote parts of the colony, and ensuring an equitable distribution of public expenditure. I am confident that you, as well as my Ministers, are anxious to meet all well-founded demands that may be made in this regard.

"A petition for the division of the colony was last year presented to the Administrator of the Government, and forwarded to the Secretary of State for Her Majesty's consideration. Her Majesty, however, has not been advised to give effect to the wishes of the petitioners. I believe that the measures to which I have just referred will be found to remove all reasonable grounds for any renewal of this movement.

"Bills to consolidate and amend the laws relating to local government will again be laid before you.

"You will also be asked to deal with the very serious question of declaring and defining the law as to natural water, the importance of which, in a climate such as ours, cannot be over-estimated. In connection with the subject a measure providing for the conservation and distribution of water by local authorities constituted for the purpose will also be submitted to you.

"Your sanction will be sought for the construction of some lines of railway, for which the necessary funds have been appropriated.

"The following, amongst other measures, will also be presented for consideration—

A Bill to provide for the Registration of Copyright in Books published in Queensland;

A Bill to amend the Postal Laws;

A Bill to amend the Audit Act;

A Bill to make better provision for the Protection of Women and Girls;

A Bill to amend the law as to Fisheries in Queensland Waters;

A Bill to regulate the Manufacture and Supply of Gas;

A Bill to amend the law relating to Auctioneers;

Bills to provide for the Protection of Workmen and the Security of their Wages;

Bills to amend the laws relating to Diseases in Animals;

A Bill to shorten the Duration of Parliaments.

"My Government have for some time had under their consideration the desirableness of taking preliminary action with a view to the early completion of our admirable educational system by the establishment of a university. Such an institution, if founded on the wiser and broader basis adopted in the younger States of the American Union, would not only afford to our young students of both sexes an opportunity of obtaining that higher education of which they are now for the most part deprived, but would be the means of imparting throughout the colony scientific and practical instruction on subjects vitally connected with the development of the mineral and agricultural resources of the colony.

"I am sure that you will give your best attention to these and all other matters that may be brought before you, and I pray that the blessing of Divine Providence may continue to attend your labours."

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Mr. FOXTON moved—

1. That a select committee be appointed to consider and prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor, in opening this the fifth session of the ninth Parliament of Queensland.
2. That the said committee consist of Sir Samuel Griffith, Mr. Annear, Mr. S. W. Brooks, Mr. Macfarlane, and the mover.

Question put and passed.

The committee thereupon retired, and having returned, brought up the following Address, which was read by the Clerk:—

"To His Excellency Sir ANTHONY MUSGRAVE, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection to Our Most Gracious Sovereign.

"We rejoice with our fellow-subjects throughout the Empire at the completion of the fiftieth year of Her Majesty's most happy and prosperous reign.

"We thank Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present session.

"The various matters to which Your Excellency has referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, shall receive our most careful attention and consideration, and it shall be our earnest endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and welfare of the colony."

Mr. FOXTON said: Mr. Speaker,—In taking upon myself the duties which usually devolve upon a newly elected member of this House, I do so because it so happens that on the present occasion there are no gentlemen who have been elected to this House since the last time upon which the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech was moved. As is only natural, the Speech which His Excellency has this day delivered

refers in the first instance, and very properly so, to what is now known to most of us as "The Queen's Jubilee"; and His Excellency justly expressed his satisfaction at the manner in which the rejoicings upon that occasion were carried out by the populace of this colony. The probability is that we are not less loyal than any other part of the colonies, but inasmuch as we see so little or nothing of royalty, and our institutions are of such a character that we enjoy what may be almost termed unbounded freedom of action, we scarcely realise that we live under a monarchy. Except upon occasions when some prominent member of our community receives an honour at the hands of Her Majesty, or when our aspirations and desires are unable to be carried out owing to Imperial interests coming in the way—such, for instance, as the evacuation of the New Hebrides by the French, and other matters of a similar nature—we are scarcely conscious that we live under a monarchy. However, as the Premier has given formal notice of a motion upon this subject, it is perhaps unnecessary to deal with the matter any further now. The principal matter next occurring in the Speech is the reference to the Conference in London. It has been broadly stated here that it was improper for the Premier to leave the colony for the purpose of taking part in that Conference. I do not think that those who gave utterance to that expression fully realised the importance of the Conference, or the work that it was going to do, or the magnitude of the interests which were at stake, and which were to be discussed at the Conference. The inclination in certain quarters seemed to be to pooh-pooh the Conference, and to endeavour to impress upon the public that it was got up for the purpose of giving some prominent men a very enjoyable outing. I am not one of those who think that. It was also stated that the Agents-General of the Colonies could very well have conducted all the negotiations with the Colonial Office at that Conference, and could have efficiently represented the views of themselves and their respective colonies. Now, sir, the office of Agent-General has become such that that officer is in constant communication with the Colonial Office, and may almost be said to be an appanage of that office. I think our Agent-General, and those also connected with the other colonies, are in and out of the Colonial Office as often as they are in and out of any other place in London, and that a conference at which the Agents-General alone were to attend on behalf of their respective colonies would simply be a repetition of what goes on every day at that office. Therefore I am of opinion—and I am quite sure that the House and the country are also of the same opinion—that the colony could not have been better represented than it was by the Premier, nor could its interests be in safer hands. I maintain, then, that he was perfectly right in going home to attend the Conference, and that we could not in any other way have got our views better forwarded or ideas better represented to the authorities in England. As has been observed by the Premier himself, verbal communications are infinitely more satisfactory than written ones on such matters as were brought before the Conference. The agreement in regard to New Guinea is a striking instance of that. I am quite certain that had the Conference not taken place, and had the communications with respect to the government of New Guinea gone on in the old groove by despatches passing from one end of the earth to the other, it would have been many years before we should have arrived at a satisfactory conclusion with regard to the government of that portion of the British Empire, as I suppose we may now call British New Guinea. If I remember rightly, the Imperial Government were of opinion that an efficient government of British New Guinea could not be properly carried on for a less expenditure than something like £150,000 a year. We held the opinion that it could be governed very efficiently for about one-tenth of that sum, and it now appears that, by holding the Conference, the Imperial Government have at last been persuaded that the government of New Guinea can be conducted at the figure or thereabouts which this House has all along said that it could be done for. That alone would, in my opinion, justify the holding of the Conference. Evidently the most important question which has engaged the attention of the Conference in England was the question of an additional squadron for Australian waters. I do not wish to trespass upon the time of hon. members, but I feel that, as this is the most important matter that came before the Conference, I should not be doing my duty in moving the motion which I have to propose unless I were to deal with the subject at some little length, especially seeing that it forms a very material part of the Address of His Excellency the Governor. It will be in the recollection of hon. members that a considerable amount of correspondence was laid on the table of the House last session in reference to this matter. The correspondence commenced with certain communications between Admiral Tryon and the Governor of Victoria, and by degrees the whole of the colonies were induced to express their views. Admiral Tryon wrote several reports and memoranda, and the whole of the colonies appeared to be thoroughly of opinion that a squadron in addition to that which is now maintained by the Imperial Government in Australian waters was absolutely necessary. Anyone who has read the papers—and I have no doubt all hon. members have done so—cannot but be struck with the unanimity of opinion that prevailed among all the governments with respect to the necessity of strengthening our naval defences. The arguments in favour of the view that it is necessary to strengthen our naval defences are so well put by Admiral Tryon that I shall not prolong my remarks by going over them, as probably those arguments have been read by hon. members. But I would like to point out that the proposal which was finally made by the Imperial Government through Admiral Tyron was that there should be five cruisers of the "Archer" class and two torpedo boats, that their first cost should be defrayed by the colonies, and that the colonies should also maintain them. The first cost of the "Archer" cruisers was estimated at £106,486 each, or a total for the five cruisers of not less than £532,430. The torpedo boats were to cost £46,729, or a total of £93,458. The whole seven vessels would, therefore, cost something like £625,888. This, it was proposed by the Imperial Government, should be paid by the colonies. The maintenance was estimated by Admiral Tryon, for the "Archer" cruisers alone, at £127,280, besides some £3,300 for crews, and I think some £1,100 each for the torpedo boats. That would be simply an enormous sum—considerably over half-a-million sterling for the first cost, and an annual expenditure of something like £150,000 or £160,000. I mention these figures in order to show what the probable cost of this squadron would be to the colonies. From the papers which have been laid on the table of the House this evening, I understand that the Imperial Government is now willing, practically, to provide us with that squadron—to pay for it——

Mr. PATTISON: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to a point of order. Reference is made to papers laid

upon the table of the House but not yet received by members of this House. I am willing to listen to the hon. member so far as he may fairly go, but I think he is loading his speech in a very unnecessary manner.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member to a certain extent is strictly within his lines, inasmuch as one of the paragraphs of His Excellency's Speech refers to the additional squadron for the defence of trade in Australian waters. But as this was a question discussed at the Imperial Conference, and the papers are not in possession of the House——

The PREMIER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, they are on the table of the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD: We have not had them.

The SPEAKER: If the papers relating to the Australian squadron are on the table of the House, any hon. member is perfectly in order in referring to them.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—Speaking to the point of order, I submit that you are establishing quite a new precedent. Papers are brought down by the Premier and placed upon the table of this House, and a motion is made that those papers be printed; then immediately after that motion is made an hon. member, who cannot have read those papers placed there, is allowed to refer to them. No hon. member on this side of the House has had an opportunity of perusing them. If that is your ruling I am not going to dissent from it; but it may lead, I should think, to very serious complication in future.

Mr. FOXTON: I thank the hon. gentleman for the interruption. It gave me a little time to think. I was omitting a little that I intended to say.

Mr. PATTISON: I rise again to a point of order. I think it was a very proper interruption. I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but I will not allow an hon. member to refer to papers which I am not in possession of. I know nothing about those papers, and you refer to them.

Mr. FOXTON: I ask the Speaker if the hon. gentleman is in order in addressing me personally.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He made a mistake in doing that.

Mr. FOXTON: I thank the hon. member for Blackall for his second interruption.

Mr. PATTISON: You will get a third one directly.

Mr. FOXTON: I really forget where I was when the hon. gentleman interrupted me. On the third occasion when the hon. gentleman interrupts me, I shall endeavour to recall the exact place where I had to leave off. I recollect that I was pointing out that the Imperial Government are now willing, according to papers which are laid upon the table of the House, and according to statements which have been made in the Legislatures of other colonies—possibly that will suit the hon. member——

Mr. NORTON: No; it will not.

Mr. FOXTON: There is nothing out of order in referring to statements made in other Legislatures—I gathered my information from these as well. The Imperial Government are willing now to provide us with the whole of this squadron, as was proposed, but they pay for it themselves. The colonies will pay something like £120,000 a year, which includes a sum calculated at 5 per cent. per annum upon the original cost of construction, reducing the amount which we are asked to pay to this squadron for maintenance to something like £90,000 a year. I merely mention this to show that the conditional agreement which has been arrived at is a very satisfactory one for us, providing that it is admitted that the additional defence of our shores is necessary. I hold that we are bound in a measure, if it is admitted to be necessary, to pay the cost. We cannot ask the Imperial Government to continue to protect us and our shipping—that is, if we desire to hold a position which as a young nation we should desire. I do not know that it is necessary for me to mention every item in the Speech, Mr. Speaker, more especially the one which relates to the floods. We all know that very disastrous floods did take place, following upon a very disastrous drought. I see hon. members opposite are laughing at something, and will wait until they have finished their jocularity.

The PREMIER: I do not know what they are laughing at.

Mr. STEVENSON: Say something worth listening to.

Mr. PATTISON: Mr. Speaker,—I thought that I should have to rise upon a third occasion. I rise now to call attention to the Standing Orders, to show that I am right in doing what I am doing. I am only a novice in politics; but at the same time I do not like to be laughed at, and in fact I do not intend to be laughed at. I will call attention to the 5th paragraph of Standing Order No. 51, which says the debate upon a question may be interrupted—

"By a motion for reading an Act of Parliament, an entry in the Journal, or other public document, relevant to the question before the House."

This is not a public document, and before the hon. member can refer to it I want the production of that public document. It is a public document, I think, and with all due respect to you, Mr. Speaker, I insist that I am right in my action. The hon. Premier has referred to that document, and I do not think it is necessary that the hon. member for Carnarvon should have referred to it at all.

Mr. FOXTON: I am the best judge of that.

Mr. PATTISON: I am entitled to my opinion as well as the hon. member, and I call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to that Standing Order to show that I am strictly right in the action I have taken. I now beg to move that the document referred to by the hon. member for Carnarvon be read.

The SPEAKER: As I understand the point the hon. member has raised, it is that the hon. member for Carnarvon is out of order in reading a public document which has been laid upon the table of the House but which has not been circulated amongst hon. members. The fact that it has been laid by the Chief Secretary on the table of the House, and is incidentally alluded to in the Opening Address from His Excellency the Governor, justifies the hon. member in alluding to it. The hon. member proposes now that the document be read, but I would remind him that it is contrary to all practice of Parliament to intercept the debate upon a motion which has been put from the Chair by a motion of this kind. I am speaking now of the practice of asking the House to allow a document to be read, even though it might be in order to read it. I refer the hon. member to May, who says—

"The practice by which such documents have been permitted to be read after the commencement of the debate, though not absolutely without recognition in modern times, may be regarded as obsolete."

The practice is now practically obsolete in the House of Commons to allow public documents to be read in this way. I certainly think the hon. member for Carnarvon is perfectly within the rules of debate in referring to the document in the manner he has done, considering it is incidentally alluded to in the Governor's Opening

Speech. Hon. members must also bear in mind that so far as the debate upon the Opening Speech is concerned it always covers wide ground. It has been the custom in the debate upon the Opening Speech to discuss any subject except those upon which notice of motion has been given.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—Speaking to the point of order, I do not wish to dispute your ruling, but I would point out that if the practice prevails as laid down by you it may become a very dangerous one. You can yourself see that the Premier—or any Premier, for I do not wish to particularise the present Premier—may put a document upon the table of the House, which he may circulate amongst his own supporters and of which they may have full cognisance, and yet he may keep this side of the House in the dark as to the contents of that document. Simply by the Premier placing a paper on the table and moving that it be printed, according to your ruling it becomes a public document, though as a matter of fact, as in this case, it is a private document, which hon. members have not had an opportunity of perusing.

The SPEAKER: I would point out to the hon. member that the Chair is not supposed to know that a paper has not been circulated amongst hon. members. The hon. member for Blackall raised a point of order as to whether the hon. member for Carnarvon was justified in reading from a document. I gave my opinion, supported by authority, that the matter having been referred to incidentally in the Opening Speech and the paper itself having been laid on the table of the House and ordered to be printed by the House, the hon. member was quite in order in referring to it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Mr. Speaker,—I am not disputing your ruling for one moment.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—Perhaps the hon. member for Carnarvon will tell the House whether he has had an opportunity of reading the paper to which he referred. If so, the hon. member would have an advantage that this side would not possess, and such a privilege would put us in an inferior position.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think anyone would dispute your ruling so far as relates to the allusion by an hon. member to a paper laid on the table of the House; but what I contend is, that the hon. member for Blackall is perfectly within the bounds of debate in moving that the paper be now read, according to the 51st Standing Order—

"The debate upon a question may be interrupted—(1) By a matter of privilege suddenly arising; (2) by words of heat between members; (3) by a question of order; (4) by a message from the Council; (5) by a motion for reading an Act of Parliament, an entry in the journal or other public document, relevant to the question before the House."

Nothing could be more distinct than that, and you, sir, have decided that the paper to which the hon. member referred was relevant to the question before the House. I do not see how our Standing Orders can become obsolete as long as they are published here, and no action on the part of the House of Commons can override our Standing Orders. The practice of the House of Commons is taken in cases in which we have no Standing Orders; but this case is dealt with by our own Standing Orders, and I hold that the hon. member for Blackall is perfectly justified and in order in moving that the document to which the hon. member for Carnarvon referred be now read.

Mr. FOXTON: This is getting as instructive as it is diverting and entertaining, and I am sure I little thought when I got up that I should give rise to so much research.

Mr. PATTISON: I ask your ruling upon the question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. FOXTON: I thought the Speaker had given half-a-dozen rulings.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—I think the motion before the House is that moved by the hon. member for Blackall, that the paper be now read. It is certainly a public document on the other side, because I saw the hon. member take it up and refer to it; but so far as members on this side are concerned it is a private document.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—With the consent of the House I would like to say a word on this question. It appears to me that your ruling is quite correct—that reference may be made to a paper when it is laid upon the table; but it has not been the practice to discuss the matter of a paper immediately it is laid upon the table, for the reason that hon. members have not an opportunity of becoming aware of its contents. The hon. member for Blackall may have been misled by its being laid upon the table and ordered to be printed, as I used to be misled by the motion that certain papers be printed, forgetting that the papers had already been printed. We go through an obsolete form in moving that they be printed when we know they are printed. I may point out that it is most inconvenient to do more than refer to such a paper, and I think the motion of the hon. member for Blackall, affirming that when a paper is referred to in that way it should be read, is one the importance of which should not be ignored. If it is to be discussed at all before it has been circulated it should certainly be read.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—There seems to be some misunderstanding on the subject. The hon. member for Carnarvon made only a passing allusion to the paper laid on the table to-day. What he referred to more particularly was a paper printed and circulated last year; and the facts the hon member cited from the paper laid on the table to-day are facts which have been telegraphed to every newspaper in the colonies, and are well known to everybody who takes an interest in the subject.

Mr. PATTISON: Mr. Speaker,—I withdraw the motion I made, but I trust the hint will be quite sufficient to show the hon. member for Carnarvon that he must not travel outside the legitimate bounds of debate.

Mr. FOXTON: I do not think I am travelling beyond the legitimate bounds of debate, nor do I intend to do so. I may mention that when the hon. member for Normanby rose and asked me whether I had received those papers some time before, and how long before—papers which the leader of the Opposition said I had evidently carefully studied—I was just about to explain that the paper was only handed to me some little time after the document had been laid on the table of the House. The Premier happened to have a spare copy by him.

Mr. MOREHEAD: A happy coincidence!

Mr. FOXTON: That was the first time I had seen or knew of the existence of the document. The Premier is perfectly correct in stating that I have been quoting from documents which were laid on the table last session, and that I made the barest possible allusion to the paper laid on the table to-day, referring to the amount we were to pay under that provisional agreement. However, sir, the Speech then refers to "the real and increasing demand for land for occupation by *bonâ fide* settlers." I believe that is a fact. I know it is the object of certain politicians and of certain newspapers, and of a certain section of the community, to endeavour to make out that there is no demand for settlement, and

never will be under the present Land Act. I am aware of that fact, but I shall supply the House with a few figures, not quoted from any document which has only just been laid on the table, but which I have obtained from the Lands Department, and which I think will satisfy hon. members that the statement in His Excellency's Speech, that "there is an increasing demand for land for *bonâ fide* settlement," is perfectly correct. No doubt this will be an annoying fact to certain gentlemen who hold that the Land Act must be repealed if the colony is to be saved from utter ruin. That is the great cry put forward by hon. gentlemen on the other side and by a section of the community.

Mr. STEVENSON: And by some on your own side, too.

Mr. FOXTON: That section of the community of which I am speaking have opposed the present Land Act from the beginning.

Mr. STEVENSON: What does your friend, Kellett, say about it now?

Mr. FOXTON: I must request the hon. member not to address me across the floor of the House.

Mr. STEVENSON: You are addressing your remarks to us.

Mr. FOXTON: I am addressing my remarks to the Speaker. From these figures I find that in 1885 the area of grazing farms applied for was only 18,832 acres, and of agricultural farms 65,304 acres. But in 1886 the applications for grazing farms amounted to 242,140 acres, and for agricultural farms to 222,837 acres—being an enormous increase. The average rental of agricultural farms is 4d. per acre per annum, and the purchasing price about £1 5s. I am further informed by the officers of the department that during the last twelve months,—that is, during the last half of 1886 and the first half of 1887—I am not certain whether it applies only to West Moreton or to the whole colony,—the selections taken up have reached an area which is double the average for the previous nine years.

Mr. NORTON: Where is the revenue to come from?

Mr. FOXTON: These facts and figures, which I give on the authority of the department, and which I have every reason to believe are correct, clearly show that the Land Act is beginning to work as its supporters always confidently anticipated it would work, in facilitating the settlement of the colony; and that the outcry which has been so industriously raised against it in certain quarters has really no foundation whatever. A certain amount of dissatisfaction has been expressed about the working of the Land Act by persons who really did not know what they were talking about. I am not alluding to hon. members on the opposite side of the House, but to persons outside, who have lately had business to do with the Lands Department. I venture to say that a great deal of that can be traced to the unpopular and indiscreet way in which one officer in the department——

Mr. MOREHEAD: The Minister for Lands?

Mr. FOXTON: No; Mr. McLean has been in the habit of dealing with selectors. He is probably an excellent officer, but he has an unfortunate knack of falling foul of everybody with whom he comes in contact. I would also point out to hon. members that the Act which he has been administering, and which he has thus rendered unpopular, is not the Land Act of 1884, but the Land Act of 1876—the previous Act. Simple selectors say, "We cannot get our rights under the present Act"; whereas it is simply a stiff-necked, though perhaps thoroughly conscientious, officer who has rendered it more difficult for them to get their certificates of fulfilment of conditions, and so on, under another Act altogether. Now, sir, there is one thing regret to see is not contained in the Speech, and that is the introduction of a Bill to amend the Mineral Lands Act. I understood that was a matter which the Government would take into consideration and endeavour to deal with at an early period. That considerable hardship and great loss to the colony is occasioned by the provisions of the working of the Mineral Lands Act at the present time is perfectly certain; prospectors are particularly hardly dealt with. In fact, large areas of extremely rich tin land—I speak of that more especially because I am more familiar with it—are locked up simply because the way in which prospectors are handicapped precludes a man from going on the land unless he is a capitalist. We all know that the genuine prospector is generally somewhat an impecunious man—a working miner; and after he has made a discovery he goes to the capitalist and submits to him the prospects he has been able to obtain. He is quite unable to conduct his prospecting under the present Mineral Lands Act without a greater outlay than is usually at the disposal of an ordinary working miner. It is impossible, of course, to speak of what the contemplated provisions of the measure for dealing with northern portions of the colony may be; but that such a measure is needed no one can doubt, and that it will really satisfy all demands, and cut away from under their feet all the grievances of which Northern men complain, I am perfectly confident. It was not to be expected that the petition for separation would be altogether ignored in the Speech; but it appears to me that the movement has been, so to speak, squelched. Nor can it be said to have died altogether a natural death. It may have a resurrection in the future—I do not know; but at present it appears to be defunct. It does appear to me that a great opportunity has been lost by the advocates of separation, and those who say that the Government have never done anything but endeavour to deal out injustice to the North. I wonder it has never occurred to any of them that the visit of the Premier to London had something to do with the imposition of those sugar bounties. What a great opportunity it would have been to have found that he had gone over to Paris, and had some intrigues there with officials on the Continent! What a splendid opportunity it would have been to cry out that this again was another injustice to the North, and another attempt on the part of the Government to strangle the sugar industry! I cannot resist the temptation to refer to the manner in which the sinews of war have been provided for the separation movement. It appears to me that a grand national movement of this sort, such as it is claimed to be, ought to be provided with sinews of war by some more legitimate means than the proceeds of concerts, tea-fights, and so on. I have heard that at a late meeting of the Separation League at Mackay it was stated that there was a deficit of £30, which they sincerely trusted would be wiped off by the proceeds of certain entertainments to take place during the race-week at Mackay. I can only hope, for the sake of those gentlemen who have pledged their credit for that £30, that there will be a large attendance at the race-meeting at Mackay, and that the entertainments to take place at Mackay will be highly successful financially. A number of Bills are promised in the Speech, which it is not necessary to enumerate at the present time. No doubt when they appear they

will be found to be of a valuable and useful character, including the Local Government Bills, with which we are already familiar, and the promised Water Bill. I think, sir, no one can overrate the value of any measure which will provide a good and sufficient supply of water, if that be possible, to our arid plains. We have had a splendid season latterly—almost too much water—but I scarcely think that the House will regard that as any reason why vigilance and energy should not be shown in dealing with this subject in the event of the occurrence of further droughts. The Triennial Parliaments Bill, or the Bill to shorten the duration of Parliaments, is one which was to be looked for in this session—one to which the party at present in power is pledged. An endeavour, of course, was made to pass it during a previous session, and it was thrown out on the ground that it did not apply to this present Parliament. The time has gone by when this can be made a triennial Parliament, and possibly all parties may be inclined to agree to pass the Bill at the present time. The concluding paragraph of the Speech refers to what I regard as a very important matter; that is, the establishment of a university. I know that a very large number of persons in this colony, especially in outlying portions of it, hold that the establishment of a university is an expensive luxury, and only likely to be of value to the richer portion of the community. Now, sir, that is a great mistake, and the sooner that error is corrected, I think, the better. The university, as it is proposed here, is apparently to be established on the lines of some of the American universities, which are very far-reaching in their benefits. They are of such a character that not only classics and mathematics are taught in them, but they are to be the means of instructing the workers of the community in developing their knowledge of their various occupations, special reference being made to "scientific and practical instruction on subjects vitally connected with the development of the mineral and agricultural resources of the colony." Now, sir, anything that tends to develop our mineral and agricultural resources cannot be anything but beneficial to the colony, so that I think a great deal of the opposition to the mere idea of a university which now exists in some parts of the colony will vanish when it becomes more thoroughly known what the nature of the proposed institution is to be. I have much pleasure in moving that the Address in Reply, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted by the House.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—In rising to second the adoption of the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech as delivered to-day, I will expresss the hope that hon. members will meet this question in the same fair spirit that they have at all times met it heretofore. It is too soon, I think, Mr. Speaker, for us to begin to quarrel to-day. I shall not, sir, in the few remarks I have to make, quote from any document except the Speech itself as delivered by His Excellency to-day, and I am sure that the license which you, sir, very properly said has always been given to other hon. members, will be extended to a young member like myself. I pass over the opening clauses of the Speech until I come to clause 4, where it is stated:—

"I have the strongest reasons for believing that the holding of this Conference will be productive of highly beneficial results."

Then the next clause says:—

"Amongst the most important of the matters submitted for consideration was the establishment and maintenance of an additional squadron for the defence of floating trade in Australasian waters at the joint expense of the colonies."

Well, sir, up to the present time we have no details of what this floating squadron is to be, or of what its cost is to be to the colonies. I am of opinion, sir, that we may get a little bit too much of Imperialism altogether, and I think that hon. members should well consider this scheme before the Parliament of Queensland pledge themselves to an expenditure of that kind. What are the colonies doing for Great Britain? Last year we imported into the colonies of Australasia £17,000,000 of the products of Great Britain, and I hold, sir, that it is their bounden duty to do something for the colonies. What are they doing for the colonies? What are they doing for the colonies, sir, as illustrated by their action in regard to the occupation of the New Hebrides by the French? Why, they have cavilled at every representation made by the Governments of Australia. They have done nothing at all. Therefore I say that we should be extremely careful before we have any more of the Imperial yoke placed upon our shoulders. We in these colonies are building up a nation of our own—a great Australian nation—which I dare say will be as great in a few generations to come as the States of America or Canada are at the present time. And I am sure, sir, that in time we shall be as able to resent such treatment as we have received from the Imperial Government as the Americans were to resent the occupation of Mexico by the French. The Americans told them, "This climate is not congenial to you; we would advise you to find some other climate;" and the French went, and have no authority in Mexico to this day. We are free Australians here, and in that spirit I hope we shall meet this question. I come next to the floods which occurred recently, and I am sure that every hon. member must be highly gratified at the public spirit displayed by the inhabitants of the colony in coming forward to afford relief to the sufferers by that calamity. The committee in Brisbane have done a great deal of hard work, and I feel sure that they dispensed the money entrusted to their care in a fair and impartial manner. The next question, Mr. Speaker, is, I suppose, the most vexed of all questions—that is the settlement of the people on the land. The Speech states:—

"I am glad to note the large and increasing demand for land for occupation by *bonâ fide* settlers."

Well, sir, from my travels during the last few weeks in this colony, I can say there is no doubt that settlement is taking place on the lands under the Act of 1884 and the amending clauses which were passed last session and in 1885. There is one thing, sir, in this Act which no other Act ever passed in this colony ever effected before: it prevents land monopoly. Land monopoly has been the curse of this colony until this Act came into force, and I am glad to have information from the Premier to-day, and from the Minister for Lands, to the effect that the clauses introduced into the Land Act last session on the motion of the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan, are now being put into operation. The hon. the Premier informed me to-day that the Agent-General in London is receiving a large number of applications from people who want to pay their own passages to the colony and to come under the clauses introduced by Mr. Jordan. If such be the case no doubt we shall get many of the same class of people who came here during the first three years that Mr. Jordan acted as Emigration Agent—people who came here paying their own passages, and who, on the average, brought out in each ship from £25,000 to £30,000 through the savings bank of this colony. That will be a great improvement on the system of immigration we are carrying on at the present time; and it

must be gratifying to hon. members to know that a large number of people throughout Great Britain are applying to the Agent-General to come under the clauses to which I have referred. Another clause of the Speech, Mr. Speaker, says :—

"I have every reason to believe that the colony has entered upon a period of renewed prosperity, to which the largely increased development of our mineral resources that may be anticipated from the favourable attention now bestowed upon them in Great Britain, and the general influx of capital from that country, will largely contribute."

Well, I do believe that we are entering upon a renewed period of prosperity—that we have now rounded the corner; and I am sure that the results which we shall see during the course of the next few months will be far beyond the anticipation of many hon. members. What is the position of Queensland at the present time compared with that of some of the other colonies? I maintain that it is a very pre-eminent one, especially when we consider how seriously it has been affected by the drought under which we have suffered for upwards of three years—a drought which is admitted by every member to have been one of the most serious that has ever been inflicted upon the Australian colonies. Why, when we look at New South Wales, we find that at the present time there are 4,000 unemployed in and around Sydney, costing the Government £30,000 per month, engaged in clearing Government lands at the Field of Mars. They say in New South Wales that 3,000 of these are their own people, and that 1,000 have come from South Australia, Victoria, and Queensland. That is the system which is being carried on at the present time in New South Wales, and that system is to be further perpetrated; because, as you will have seen, a motion was moved the other day by Mr. Copeland—a prominent member of that Assembly—to the effect that £250,000 be set apart to employ the unemployed, and that motion the Government of the day accepted. Now, sir, we have not come to that in Queensland. We have no unemployed meetings at the present time in this colony.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Yes.

Mr. ANNEAR: I say that any man willing to work can find work. The other day, when I was at Maryborough, an agitation was raised there because it was said some men in the depôt could not find employment. These men had been fed by Mr. Booker and others for about three weeks. When these men were brought to me I had only to look in the local paper, and saw that Messrs. Stevens and Bunn were advertising for men to come to their works. I had only to take them to the contractors, who at once gave an order for them to come to work, and said, "Bring fifty more, if you like; we have plenty of employment for them." These men only wanted a guiding hand to show them into one of the many channels of employment which are open to them in this colony. At the present time there are a number of unemployed men in South Australia, and the Government propose to put them on to the construction of forty miles of railway. We have not yet come to that in this colony. We are constructing any amount of railways by contract, let to men who are carrying out the work at most fair and reasonable rates. I do think, however, that we shall have to pause in the construction of our railways if we continue to pay the interest on the money so expended out of the general revenue of the colony. We shall have, I think, ot find some other source from which to obtain the interest; such, for instance, as that which I advocated last session—of selling some areas of land in suitable localities at their proper value. Some such course will be necessary to meet the large expenditure we have undertaken in this connection. There is another scheme mentioned in the Speech—namely, the decentralisation scheme—and it is promised that a Bill will be introduced this session dealing with the subject. Every hon. member is aware that there are very serious grievances under which the people of the North labour, and I believe and am sure that this House is determined to do what it can to redress those grievances, and to redress them as quickly as possible. The question of separation has, I think, been ably handled by the Premier. Certainly we did not see much about his action in the papers, but, nevertheless, I believe that he had a good deal to do with the settlement of the question, and I hold that if the Premier's visit to England has done nothing more than to prevent the dismemberment of the colony, it was quite justified, even if the visit cost the country £20,000. No doubt the hon. gentleman's work has been very effective in that respect, although it has been done quietly. Had it been otherwise—had he failed—the papers opposed to him would have flaunted his incapacity before the people, and have said, "There was a nice man to send home." But we have, I hope, done with the separation question, and we are all glad that the eighth of the population—who, when the £10,000,000 loan is spent, will have received £7,000,000—have not had their wishes gratified, because, if they had, the effect would have been disastrous to the southern portion of the colony. I am pleased to see that a Bill to amend the law with respect to local government outside the boundaries of municipalities is to be again introduced. It is a great pity that this measure did not pass last session. I know that the whole of the divisional boards throughout the colony were looking forward to the passing of that measure, which they considered a very good one indeed. I notice that there are also several other Bills to be brought forward. One of the most prominent among these is the Bill to provide for the protection of workmen and the security of their wages. Every member knows that there are unscrupulous employers in every country. Some of these exist in Queensland. I am, therefore, very glad to see that the Government intend to introduce a measure whereby the wages of workmen will be secured. There is one other measure foreshadowed in the Speech to which I will briefly refer, and that is the proposal to erect a university in this colony. I suppose, from what we have seen in the papers on this matter, that that means that those interested in the establishment of a university will come to Parliament and ask for a large grant of money for that purpose. I hope Parliament will refuse to vote a large sum of money to erect another huge establishment in the city of Brisbane. I hope that the Government will, on the other hand, see the great necessity that exists for the establishment of schools of mines in the different mining centres in the country, and also for the establishment of schools of agriculture throughout the colony. I maintain that the agricultural interest is our wealth, and we should see to it that the people are settled on the land. The hon. member for Port Curtis asked the question just now—when the hon. member for Carnarvon was quoting figures—"Where was the revenue to come from?" Why our revenue, like the revenue of every country that has come into existence and prospered, must be obtained by settling the people on the land. The people are the wealth of any country. I firmly believe that the Land Act properly administered is a good measure, but hitherto it has been badly administered. I have had occasion to bring several grievances under the notice of the Minister for Lands, and he has redressed them

at once; so that we do a little good sometimes going about the country and hearing the grievances of the people. I think I have now touched on all the more important matters referred to in the Speech of His Excellency, and I have no doubt that they will be well discussed. The proposal with respect to providing an additional squadron will, I am sure, receive full consideration. If I had my way with the little navy we have on our waters, I would sell it to the Emperor of China, who believes in having little things of that kind in his establishment. We are in my opinion doing a great injury to the colony, in expending the large sums we are doing on our naval and military forces, and I hope we shall do something this session to remedy that evil, for it is, I believe, considered an evil by a large majority of the people of the colony. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I think I am probably one of the oldest, if not the oldest, member of this House, except yourself, sir, and I must say that I do not remember having heard an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne moved and seconded in the way it has been done this evening. From the mover of the motion we had the speech of an enthusiast fairly well informed, indeed I may say exceptionally well informed, who is a member of the legal profession, which is, I think, the prevailing element in the present Ministry; but he made to my mind a sort of blundering speech, notwithstanding the brief he had had put into his hands. Then we had the Address seconded by an astute, and, as we on this side of the House were led to believe, strong supporter of the Government. These gentlemen, it is said, are not without aspirations for high office. In fact, it has been stated that both aspire to the same office. One, however, is, I am told, barred by his legal training, and I think, after hearing his speech this evening, he is fortunately so barred. With regard to the seconder of the motion, I speak now with freedom, as he is not a new member of the House, and we do not use the same language towards neophytes as we do with respect to those who have appeared before the House on many occasions: and what do we find in his speech? On almost every material point he is opposed to the policy of the Government. We find that the mover of the Address in Reply is a gentleman of strong legal and military instincts—I am told that he is a captain, having risen to that high rank in the colony—and, like a war horse wishing to go to battle, he is anxious that the people of the colony should contribute large sums of money to the Imperial Government to support an Imperial navy on our coasts. On the other hand we find the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, condemns such a course of procedure. We further find that not only do they differ on this point, but also on various other matters. The hon. member for Carnarvon has nothing but good to say about the Government, while the hon. member for Maryborough, with some small exceptions, has nothing but evil to say about them. The Government appear to have selected the wrong man to second the adoption of the Address in Reply. They seem to have reversed the position of the ancient Hebrews. On one occasion, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, as I believe you are a member of the Church of England Synod—I may say that the Colonial Treasurer is in a somewhat similar position—a certain prophet was sent to curse, but instead of that he blessed. The hon. member for Maryborough was sent out to bless but has cursed. That pretty fairly shows the constitution of the majority who support the Government at the present time, and the extraordinary positions assumed by the mover of the Address in Reply, and the seconder, in dealing with the Speech itself. The commencement of the Speech deals, of course, with the Jubilee of Her Majesty, in which, of course, we all rejoice; there is no doubt about that. I think there is no member on either side of the House who does not feel almost a strong personal regard for Her Majesty, and for the way in which she has conducted the affairs of the kingdom during her lengthened reign. Then the Speech goes on to tell us about the Conference—or rather not to tell us, as the Premier himself has admitted to-night that matters in connection with the Conference cannot be discussed until we get the documentary evidence before us. I myself, and other members of this House, would wish, before we can discuss the question, to have a full statement of what took place at that Conference. I admit that I do not share the glowing views expressed by the hon. Premier regarding it. I do not myself think that we are within such an immeasurable distance as he thinks of a complete combination of the Empire, or that his visit to England has had the effect he thinks. While on this subject I would point out this: That in regard to the hon. gentleman's attitude yesterday—I do not say it was improper, I shared it with him—concerning the influx of Chinese into this colony, he does not recognise, or if he does, he has failed to give publicity to the difficulty that may arise from the attitude taken up by the colonies in regard to the matter. I feel as sure as I stand here that the outcome of the position taken up by the colonies as regards the introduction of Chinese into this colony will lead to a rupture between these colonies and the mother-country. There are treaty rights in existence between England and China that England cannot give up. She will have to choose one of two positions. She will either have to recognise the treaty rights with China and act with her as an ally—and there is not an hon. member who does not know that China is the only ally England will have in the East against Russia—or she will have to accept a position as regards China which I do not think she is prepared to accept. Those are my views, and I think myself, with all due deference to what the Premier said to that deputation, that he committed himself a great deal too much in his replies to the Anti-Chinese League. He should have pointed out that it was not as bad as it might be thought; but instead of that he took the whole thing *in globo*. With regard to this squadron, upon which there is a difference of opinion between the mover and seconder of the Address, I most certainly, so far as I can see, agree with the view of the seconder, and I held that view when I was in England, where I heard the matter fully discussed. I certainly think that a full case has not been made out why the taxpayers of this colony should be called upon to pay a large sum of money to protect the British trade. The thing is almost wholly and solely for the good of England, and no one knows it better than the hon. member himself. When that question comes on, so far as my lights at present go, I shall not be prepared to vote any considerable sum of money for a line of defence which is not essential to the well-being of the Australian colonies, but certainly is essential for the existence of English trade. Now we come to the question of those disastrous floods which the Governor in his Speech, or rather in the speech which was put in his mouth by his Ministers, is almost pathetic over. Have those who suffered from the floods anything to thank the Govern

ment for in the matter? They have nothing to thank them for. They have to thank the people of Queensland for the way in which they put their hands into their pockets to help them. Sir, the Government have no right to put any such paragraph into the Speech. I am perfectly well aware that the Premier and almost every member in this House tried to minimise, as far as they could, the losses suffered by those people, but the State did nothing, and therefore the State ought not to allude to the matter at all. It is preposterous. That is one of the things that the Government hugs to itself on every possible occasion. It pats itself on the back when it cannot get anyone else to do so.

The PREMIER: There is nothing in the paragraph about the Government.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I repeat that the Government should have done something at the time. But they did nothing—in fact they did worse than nothing. The hon. the Premier will hear the history of these floods when the time comes—I am certain he will hear of the mismanagement on the part of the Government when they were asked to send down steamers and relieving vessels, and of the disgraceful way in which the Colonial Secretary's Office was managed. It was a way that is very well known here.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Tush!

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman may say "Tush," but I would rather take the view of the public Press of the colony than his own. Now we come to the keynote, as it were, of the Speech:—

"I am glad to note the large and increasing demand for land for occupation by *bonâ fide* settlers."

Of course this is, I take it, so far as my lights are concerned, and so far as I am competent to judge, simply putting a falsehood into the mouth of His Excellency. The hon. member for Carnarvon quoted certain figures, but I only took down one of them; I took down the one that most readily caught my ear, and I assumed the statement to be correct. I assume the hon. gentleman had the *entrée* into the Lands Department, and I have no reason to doubt the statement. He said that during the year 1885 there was a bit of slackness, owing—this Government always has something at its back—to the continued drought. Whenever this Government is in power it always has some excuse. The drought was the excuse at that time. That excuse was not urged by the hon. member for Carnarvon when he stated what had happened during the year 1886. What did happen? According to the hon. gentleman's own statement—and he repeated it at my request, because the figures were so staggering that I thought they wanted repeating—in the year 1886 there were 242,140 acres of land taken up as grazing farms. The hon. member opposite me, the leader of the Government, knows the maximum area which may be taken up under that celebrated Act, which has done more harm to the country than any Act ever passed. The maximum area is 20,000 acres—so that during the year 1886 twelve grazing areas were taken up, or if their areas were 10,000 acres there were twenty-four. It seems to be a subject for congratulation to the hon. member for Carnarvon, to know that twenty-four people, at the outside, have been settled upon grazing areas in the year 1886. It is certainly a triumph in land legislation. I think every hon. member must admit that a man can go down to his grave happy, knowing that in one year he absolutely settled no less than twenty-four people upon the soil. I think it is time the Premier introduced a short Bill to enable us to have a mausoleum for the great men in this colony, and the epitaph of the Minister for Lands might fairly be—"In one year, I, as Minister for Lands, settled twenty-four people upon the soil." I think that is an epitaph any man might be proud of, and the Minister for Lands, at any rate, may look upon it as describing the greatest success he ever achieved in his life. Now, with regard to the appointment of this Under Secretary for Agriculture. We are told here that the Government, without the sanction of Parliament—that, of course, we knew before they told us—appointed an Under Secretary for Agriculture. That appears to me to be a very high-handed proceeding, with a dissolution looming in the immediate future. They should have waited until the new Parliament decided whether it was necessary to create such a department. What was the reason for the action? Simply to provide a billet for certain people, I believe. The hon. Minister for Lands was not satisfied with being king of the Survey Department. He wanted to be the Ministry, and to have the Lands, Survey, and Agriculture under the sole sway of this heaven-born Minister. He was strong enough to create the office; but whether the House will vote the salary for the officer when it comes on is a matter for the House to determine. I say this act stands alone in the history of government, that such a thing should take place without the consent of Parliament and in the absence of the head of the Government, unless he had given secret instructions before he left the colony, which possibly he had. While on this question I would ask the House whether they think this action on the part of the Minister for Lands is calculated to benefit the public service, or to get the best men to enter the Civil Service in this colony. We all know the history of this Mr. McLean. I admit that at one time he held the portfolio of Minister for Lands, for three weeks, I think. I admit he is an electioneering power as one of the heads of the Good Templars. I admit that he may have given assistance to the present Ministry, and he is made Under Secretary for Agriculture, or whatever the title may be. Then comes the question of filling his vacancy. What happens then? This: The Minister for Lands has done what I believe no other Minister would have done, except a member, who is nameless, in another place, and who, I fancy, never bothers himself much about anything. Would any man do what the Minister for Lands did? He appoints a man, who may be perfectly fitted for the position, and I know the man very well, but this man is passed over the heads of dozens of men in the Lands Department, who have grown grey-headed in the service; and I ask whether that is a proper way of promoting in any department of the Civil Service? Hon. members may chaff, but do they know that the hon. gentleman billeted his brother-in-law on the country? Is it not known that the hon. gentleman's brother-in-law has been appointed Railway Arbitrator?—a man who is no more fit for the position than the paper I hold in my hand. It is only necessary that these things should be known, and the hon. gentleman will have to come out of that hole in which he has remained so long and go back to that obscurity from which he should never have emerged. The statements I have made in this House are facts. Mr. Norman Rule was undoubtedly promoted over the heads of dozens of others in the office who should have attained the position which he received. Mr. Dutton's brother-in-law, Mr. Thomson, was appointed Railway Arbitrator when numberless other persons should have received the position before him; and it is a position which he is utterly incompetent to occupy from my knowledge of him for many years past, and not only from my knowledge but from the knowledge of many other members. Then there was

a failure in the act of administration on the part of the Minister for Lands also. His co-mate and brother in exile, or at all events his co-learner in the Toowong Debating Society, was to have received the position which Mr. Rule has since got, only he withdrew his application in order to save the Minister for Lands from getting into difficulty with his colleagues. These are not secrets at all, but are facts known to every member in the House, and I mention them just to show how improperly the patronage entrusted to the Minister for Lands has been dispensed in the absence of the Premier. However, if the Premier chooses to go home and have a holiday with the Queen he is at liberty to do it; and I suppose the boys, under the more genial influences of the acting Chief Secretary, did pretty well as they liked while the chief was away. I have seen the same thing happen in schools before. Now we come to this paragraph in the Speech—

"The results of the census taken in May of last year will be laid before you. They disclose, as might be expected, some inequalities in the representation of the people, which, with the aid of the information now available, you will be invited to remove."

As to the nature of the information that is now available, we are kept in the dark. We know the results of the May census, but our knowledge on the subject is, I suppose, to be supplemented by some secret information which the Government do not at the present time choose to make public. We are entitled to some statement from the Premier as to what this particular paragraph means. Does this reference to a Redistribution Bill mean that a readjustment of the boundaries of the constituencies is necessary, and that the number of members will not be increased; or does it mean that the number of members of this House will be increased, and that in addition to a Redistribution Bill we are also to have an Additional Members Bill? I take it that in either case a dissolution will take place immediately after the passage of that Bill.

The PREMIER: How could it until the electoral rolls are made up?

Mr. MOREHEAD: The electoral rolls will not take a very considerable time to complete. The hon. member knows that, and he will remember that when a certain Redistribution Bill was introduced to this House he was then in opposition, and strongly opposed the contention—which, however, was carried—that a redistribution Bill did not necessarily entail a dissolution with it.

The PREMIER: You were a member of that Government.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I was not a member of that Government. At that time, however, I believe I supported that contention, but whilst I have got wiser since, the hon. member seems to have travelled in the other direction. What I contend is this: that if the Government and the majority of this House are of opinion that the colony is not properly represented under the existing constituencies, as soon as a change takes place in the nature of those constituencies, and so soon as the House shall have passed such a Bill, the House itself should be dissolved. I think it goes without saying, that if we cease to be a representative Assembly we should at once cease to be an Assembly; and from this paragraph in the Speech I see the Government have come to the conclusion that the colony is not properly represented at the present time. So much for that point. The next paragraph says:—

"I have every reason to believe that the colony has entered upon a period of renewed prosperity."

I only hope that that is true. I am perfectly certain that if we could only get rid of the present occupants of the Treasury bench, who have always brought ruin and disaster to the colony, there would come a renewed period of prosperity; but until that happens I am not altogether sure of the truth of the opinion expressed in that paragraph. The next paragraph is one of the most delicious that ever was put into a Governor's Speech; and I fancy I can recognise the "fine Roman hand" of the hon. gentleman who wrote this:—

"The public finances have, however, not escaped the natural consequences of the long-continued adverse seasons"—

and "the policy of the Government" might have been very fairly added—

"but I see no reason to doubt that with careful administration they will shortly exhibit their usual satisfactory condition."

What is their "usual satisfactory condition"? Has the condition been usually satisfactory during the occupation of the present Government? Surely the Colonial Treasurer knows that, according to his own showing, after cutting and paring it down in every direction, he came into office with a credit balance of £174,000, but which really was a great deal more; and does he forget that at the present moment also, according to his own showing, he has a deficit of £469,000, but which is really a good deal nearer three-quarters of a million? That is the record of the Liberal Ministry. They came in with an admitted surplus of £174,000, but as a matter of fact very much more, but that is the amount they admit to.

The PREMIER: I was under the impression that the amount was £311,000.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The actual amount of the surplus at that time was £311,000, but the Colonial Treasurer cut and pared it down to make it appear like a surplus of £174,000; and now the hon. gentleman comes before the House with an admitted deficit of nearly half-a-million. How has this been brought about? I say distinctly by the grossest mismanagement. I go further, and say by the grossest misrepresentation to this House on the part of members of the Government, and notably the Minister for Works—whom I am sorry not to see in his place, and still more for the cause of it—and the Minister for Lands. They quite deluded that unfortunate gentleman who is now Colonial Treasurer. They led him to believe that that wonderful Land Act was to bring in such a revenue that it would be difficult to know what to do with it. The Minister for Works said distinctly that those railways would not go on unless the interest on them was derived from the public lands. Where are the public lands, and where is the revenue from them? The only puzzle to me is to see the Minister for Lands to-night standing there in his place at all. The financial position of this colony, as you, Mr. Speaker, know as well as I do, is a most unfortunate one. I do not know what fiscal scheme the Colonial Treasurer is going to propose; but if one may judge from the public utterances of the Premier as reported in the Press—but as he is being so constantly misreported I have a delicacy in alluding to anything the newspapers say about him—he is reported as having expressed a strong feeling towards protection. I have reason to believe that the opinions of the Colonial Treasurer do not lie in that direction; nor do mine. Then we may have possibly a conflict of opinion between those two Ministers on that point. There is another way of raising the revenue, which may lead, unfortunately, to the Minister for Lands ceasing to occupy his present position—

that is, having recourse to that most awful business, selling the public land. I must admit that the Minister for Lands is getting weaned of his old love to a certain extent, and possibly he may abandon his old views after all. I say that because we know that throughout the colony, wherever there is a chance of selling land in centres of population—where land is most valuable to the inhabitants—the Minister for Lands has taken advantage of the fact to put up those lands at auction, in the vain attempt to fill the depleted Treasury—a course which, two years ago, if he had been true to his theory, he would have scorned to adopt. Take the case of the Brisbane railway station, which you, Mr. Speaker, pass every time you go to or return from Toowoomba. The hon. gentleman resumed land there that was actually required for railway purposes, cut it up into twelve-perch allotments, and sold it to the highest bidder. Then we find that the Colonial Secretary, the Minister for Lands, and the Minister for Works, at the present time, when not employed in the duties of State—which do not altogether occupy them—are employed in running deposit banks, in order to enable the struggling artisan to have, not a leasehold, Mr. Speaker, but a freehold. They buy large freeholds themselves, cut them up into sixteen-perch allotments, and sell them to the unsuspecting working man. That is the awful atrocity of "syndicating" which they have so roundly abused during the last two years. And these banks offer enormous sums of interest, and in some circumstances under very inviting terms, as the Colonial Secretary knows. I am stating what is the fact. Those upholders of the Georgian theory do not believe in it, or else they find it to their own advantage to depart from it in their own private affairs. The Minister for Lands cannot deny that, as a fact, he is in intimate relations with a deposit bank, whose chief business it is to buy estates and make a large profit out of them by selling them in small lots to working men. I have a word or two to say with regard to two gentlemen connected with the administration of the lands—one, I believe, appointed on account of personal friendship; the other with regard to political considerations and other considerations well known to this House. The one is Mr. Golden, the dividing commissioner, who is a very old friend, I believe, of the Minister for Lands, and who, I believe, has proved himself to be, without exception, the most inefficient dividing commissioner that has yet been appointed—with the exception of the other one, who was appointed on political grounds. Mr. Golden, as is well known to all those who have had any experience as to the management of the division of runs, has proved himself to be certainly one whose recommendation has been most generally upset by the Land Board. The other gentleman, Mr. W. S. Paul, who was a member of this House at one time, is, I am told—I am liable to correction if I am wrong—shortly to be got rid of on account of his supreme incompetency. I believe he obtained the position in recognition of his services in compiling, or assisting to compile, with the hon. Minister for Lands, the celebrated yellow pamphlet.

Mr. HAMILTON: He was secretary.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I believe he was the secretary and treasurer. At any rate, I believe he has to go. He is one of the hon. Minister for Lands' colleagues that has to bite the dust, if I am correctly informed. Now, sir, we will go on to the latter portion—this paragraph addressed to the gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, who, I think, after all, Mr. Speaker, you will agree with me, have a certain controlling power over the legislation of this country. I wish to say nothing disrespectful of the other branch of the Legislature—

"In the meantime strict economy will be necessary, and the Estimates of Expenditure have been framed on that basis."

Have the occupants of the Treasury benches only now arrived at that opinion? Have they only now arrived at the opinion that "in the meantime strict economy will be necessary"? Do they not think that strict economy should have been exercised during the last three years? I ask them to point out, if they can, whether it has been shown. I maintain that it has not. It is like the old proverb—locking the stable door after the steed is stolen. The strict economy to be exercised now may possibly, and I hope will, bring us back to the position that we were in when the present Government took office; but, sir, why did they not exercise it before?

"And the Estimates of Expenditure have been framed on that basis."

That, of course, Mr. Speaker, tells this House that the Estimates have been framed, and, therefore, I ask that no time whatever will be lost in placing those Estimates on the table of the House, and that no time will be lost by the Treasurer in giving us his Financial Statement, because that is after all the most important thing that we have met here to consider. We know that we are in terrible straits for money. We know that the last loan was very nearly a failure. We know also, Mr. Speaker, that there were some errors of judgment undoubtedly committed in launching that loan on the British market at that particular time. Errors of judgment, of course, may be committed by any Government, but I fail to see that there was any particular necessity at that particular time for placing that loan upon the English market. We know that after it was put on the market it rose to a very considerable premium beyond that which it reached on tender. We all know that, and therefore I think that some explanation is due from the Treasurer, because I hold him to be primarily responsible. I think the Premier was away in England at the time, and the Acting Chief Secretary is therefore primarily liable for the launching of that loan, and the consequent loss of a good many thousand pounds to the colony. I say it is the duty of the Treasurer to explain to the House how that mistake was made—for mistake I hold it to be, and mistake it is held to be by many others beside myself. Now we come to the next paragraph:—

"Your early attention will be directed to measures for improving the administration of public business in the more remote parts of the colony, and ensuring an equitable distribution of public expenditure. I am confident that you, as well as my Ministers, are anxious to meet all well-founded demands that may be made in this regard."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would ask this House is there anything new in this? Is this a sudden discovery on the part of the Ministry? I think I shall be prepared to prove that it is, because when we come to the next paragraph we find the two running together:—

"A petition for the division of the colony was last year presented to the Administrator of the Government, and forwarded to the Secretary of State for Her Majesty's consideration. Her Majesty, however, has not been advised to give effect to the wishes of the petitioners. I believe that the measures to which I have just referred will be found to remove all reasonable grounds for any renewal of this movement."

Why, or how, sir, did this movement—this renewed movement—start? The question of separation was practically dead. It was raised

many, many years ago, as you know, Mr. Speaker, but had died out, and it has been revived, sir, entirely through the action of the Premier, and the Government and the side of the House that support him. That is a fact. The Premier may look astonished, but it is so. How did this sudden outburst come about? Was there any such outcry while the late Government or preceding Governments were in power? I say no, and I repeat that it is due solely to the action of the Government that the cry for separation has arisen.

The PREMIER: What action?

Mr. MOREHEAD: What action! The hon. gentleman knows well what action. He knows that the Government of which he is the head have always disregarded the claims and rights of the North.

The PREMIER: In what respect?

Mr. MOREHEAD: In every respect. I will not say in any one; I say in all respects. They have always tried to deride and put aside the rights of the North, and what do they do now, sir? I do not wish to bring in a simile that might in any way be made use of by a skilful politician such as the hon. the Premier; but I say that this Government have treated the North from beginning to end in a way very similar to that in which another Government of the Empire has treated a section of that community. They have made the offer too late; after the trouble has arisen. I appeal to the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, if I am not right in saying so? I say that a great wrong, and a continuous wrong, has been done by the present party in power to the North—and the hon. member for Charters Towers, the Attorney-General, knows it—and that no sufficient consideration has been shown to the claims of the North by the present Government. Hence the cry for separation. It was an admirable move on the part of the Premier to go home to England to assist in checkmating this movement. Whether he has checkmated it or not I do not know, but he has stalemated it at any rate—stopped it in the meantime. Whether he has successfully stopped it I do not know, but this paragraph in the Speech is an admission—a direct admission—on the part of the present Government that they have been doing wrong to a portion of the colony, which they now expect to cease its efforts for separation by some legislation that we are yet to see. There can be no doubt about that—no member of the House can deny it—the words are too clear in the two paragraphs I have read. We come now to the question of the conservation of water, which I suppose is one of the most important measures it is possible for any Government to introduce. We know that the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, has taken great interest in this question for many years past. We have also read that a certain firm—Messrs. Chaffey—have come across here, and have been sent out under the auspices of the Government. Am I right? There is no answer; then I assume that I am. They were sent out under the auspices of the Government to inspect certain lands. Do I understand that the Government have nothing to do with it?

The PREMIER: I am not aware that they have come here.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) and others have brought this matter of water conservation before the Government, and certain gentlemen have gone down to the Macintyre River, accompanied by a Government official, to look at certain land, with, as far as the general out side public are led to believe, the idea that a certain grant of land will be made to them for irrigation purposes on certain terms and conditions. If I am wrong, let me be told so.

Mr. KATES: Quite right!

Mr. MOREHEAD: I am glad to hear it, Mr. Speaker, for more reasons than one. I am glad to find that the Government have got to such lengths in their borrowing powers that they have to resort to that monstrous principle, as described by them, of going in for the land-grant system. We are told, and I believe it is true, that grants of land are to be made to these gentlemen in consideration of their performing certain services in connection with water conservation. It was proposed by the Government of which I was a member to make railways on a similar system. I do not blame the Government for their action in this matter. I applaud them for it, and for having seen the error of their ways. I am glad that they have found that, when their borrowing powers are worked out, the colony may be benefited by grants of land, which cannot run away, but which will always be here as a taxable commodity. After this we have not many Bills mentioned in the Speech of any material importance. except to members on the Government side of the House. With regard to the measure for the protection of workmen and the security of their wages, we are, of course, in the dark as to what may be the nature of its provisions, as it has not yet been submitted to the House. The last Bill mentioned in this list is one that, to most members of Parliament, appears to be of considerable importance. I refer to the Bill to shorten the duration of Parliaments. I assume that it is the reintroduction of the Triennial Parliaments Bill that is intended, because I believe the Premier is so consistent that he would not change his views on a matter of this sort, and the arguments in favour of triennial Parliaments remain unaltered. I am not at all surprised that he is taking this action—that is, if my assumption that it is proposed to reintroduce the Triennial Parliaments Bill is correct. It is of a piece and parcel with his whole conduct as Premier of this colony. Most of us remember that when he introduced the Triennial Parliaments Bill in the first instance we on this side of the House tried to move an amendment on the measure, so as to make it apply to the existing Parliament. The Premier opposed that amendment. What is the meaning of the reintroduction of the measure now? Does the hon. gentleman think that his tenure of power is getting short? Does he therefore wish that the next Parliament should only have three years to run? Will the passing of a Redistribution Bill entail the dissolution of Parliament? The hon. gentleman will soon have been five years in office. Does he wish that those who come after him should only have three years? Why did he not accept the position as it was first put to him? Why is he so anxious to restrict other Governments to three years and hold office himself for five years? Now we come to another question, a very important one, and one that may be raised at elections—namely, the establishment of a university. The question has been raised by the Chief Justice, and he has been assisted by other members of the community. I am not prepared, and will not be prepared until the revenues of the colony are in a very much better position than they are now, to vote for any such monstrous expenditure of the people's money. The Education vote at the present time is like a drag round the neck of the people of Queensland. It is a charge which they can hardly sustain, and now on the top of that we are asked to support a university and give a

higher education to the lads who are growing up in the colony. I maintain, and say in my place in Parliament, and will say it outside, that we are over-educating our people. We are raising up in a small population such as we have, a class of both men and women who are ashamed to follow the occupations their fathers and mothers followed. I say that without fear of contradiction, and am prepared to say it on any platform in the colony. I may mention one instance as an illustration of my remarks. It was a case in which a friend of mine advertised for a domestic servant in Brisbane. How many applicants do you think there were for the situation, sir? There was only one. This same friend invited applications for the position of governess. How many applications were there in answer to that advertisement? Eighteen. I repeat that we are educating the children of this colony too highly. I do not say they are too highly educated if you have means of putting them into the grooves for which they are fitted, but I say that at the present time they are over-educated, and we should be content with teaching them the three "R's." We know what has happened in the other colonies from over-educating the people. I am convinced that a lot of the crimes committed in the other colonies are owing to the educational sytem that prevails there. The hon. Premier may laugh. The children do not receive a technical education in order that they may be fit to enter into the position of artisans; they all desire to be clerks. I will ask the hon. gentleman opposite if he has ever read a book which is now in the Library, or rather, which is in my house, on crime in England, written by a man who knows nothing about our educational system? The writer of that work points out that it has been shown that if the State educate the people to a certain extent—that is, to a point where they cannot get positions suitable for their educational attainments—the people turn on the State and say, "You educated us, now you find us positions; you did it, and we are not to blame." I promise the hon. gentleman's university scheme —I am speaking now for myself, not for the Opposition, as I have not discussed the question with them—my unrelenting hostility. That scheme will involve the taxation of a population scattered over an enormous territory, and I will therefore do all in my power to prevent such a measure becoming law at the present time. Now, I have dealt with the Speech, but I think before I sit down I should say a word or two with regard to the conduct of the Government, not only while the schoolmaster was away, but during their whole occupancy of office. I think I have plainly put before the House the surplus that existed when the Government took office. I gave their position in the most favourable figures I possibly could, and I think the Treasurer will admit that that is so. I have pointed out how we have drifted into an enormous deficiency, and I want to know why. Hon. members opposite will no doubt say that we have had a period of depression, that we have had a period of drought, that there are numbers of reasons to show why this state of affairs should exist. But can they show us that, in the face of this depression, any action has been taken by the Government which would tend to lift the colony out of the condition into which it is falling? They have done nothing. The Minister for Lands, backed up by the Premier and a facile majority, has crippled at one blow the great pastoral industry. By the Land Act of 1884 they crippled the pastoral industry in this colony. The revenue shows that; there can be no denying the fact; figures cannot lie; there they are.

The PREMIER: What figures?

Mr. MOREHEAD: The revenue shows it. What has the hon. member done for the sugar industry? He has killed it; he has destroyed it. And as to the mining industry, has he ever helped it in any way whatever? The mining industry has got on in spite of him, and it is the industry that has saved the colony, despite the opinion to the contrary uttered by a high authority not very long ago in the North. Every possible injury that could be done to the country in a period of depression has been done to the colony by the present Ministry. To come to details, we will take the Colonial Secretary. What has his career been since the schoolmaster was away? Why, the first thing that commended itself to my notice when I came back to Brisbane was this: that something very closely approaching an outbreak took place at St. Helena. The Colonial Secretary was summoned by the prisoners and he immediately attended, and a deputation of prisoners waited upon him. No doubt the Colonial Secretary believed that something very wrong had taken place and he received the deputation of prisoners, and what did they ask him for? I am sure the Chief Secretary cannot know it. Does he know it? They asked for a chaplain, and the Colonial Secretary seriously considered it. He could not see that even the very felons in the colony were poking fun at him. He could not even recognise it, and he promised that their wants should be attended to. Whether they have been or not I do not know. I am certain that if the Chief Secretary had been in the colony it would not have taken place. Now, so far as the Colonial Secretary is concerned, that is all I have to say against him, probably because he has two admirable Under Secretaries in the shape of Mr. Anderson and Mr. Gray, and I maintain that they could run the offices pretty straight themselves. As regards the Attorney-General, I think the same remark should be made about him as was made in regard to the late Governor of New South Wales, who was at one time Minister at Berlin. I am told that Bismarck has a correct record of all British Ministers who have been there, and he remarked in regard to this gentleman—I may as well specify his name, Lord Augustus Loftus—"Then we had Lord Augustus Loftus." I propose to deal with the Attorney-General in the same way. He is like a chip in porridge, neither good nor harm; but he would do harm if he possibly could. To come to the Colonial Treasurer, I think I have pretty well developed him; I think I have shown that he has made an enormous mess of the finances of this colony, and I have also shown that in this Speech there is no mention made of how this enormous deficit in our revenue is to be made up. No doubt he is still evolving it out of his inner consciousness. What the result will be we shall know, I suppose, when he gives us his financial statement, which, I take it, will not be very long delayed. There is one matter I had almost forgotten in regard to the doings of the Colonial Secretary—one most important matter also in connection with gaols. It is rather an unfortunate thing that all my reminiscences of that gentlemen should be in that direction. But there was a wonderful gaol commission appointed. One of the members—Mr. Cribb—was a man whom all respect who know him. The other was a gentleman called Kinnaird Rose, and the principal reason why he was appointed was this: I believe that he wrote a most elaborate, and, I am told, slightly incorrect description of the Premier of this colony. He described him as one of the finest men the world had ever seen. I never read it, but I am simply speaking from hearsay. I believe it is a most interesting paper to read, and fairly untruthful. However, it

was sufficiently good to enable the Government to appoint the man one of the Gaol Commissioners. Mr. Cribb, for reasons best known to himself—I do not know them — considered it was better that he should give up the position; at any rate he resigned, and I believe another brother-in-law was appointed. This is a great Government for brothers-in-law. It might, I think, considering the amount of legal talent there is in it, be called the "Law and brother-in-law Ministry." That would be an appropriate name for the present Administration. The hon. Premier does not seem to understand it, but we will educate him as we go on. The hon. gentleman has been in the company of royalty lately, and the triumph has put his memory out. At a later period—possibly when the Estimates come on—we will elaborate and explain the matter to him possibly more than he will care about. That is another of the Colonial Secretary's appointments. I am very sorry to have to say what I am about to say in the absence of the Minister, because—I say it with no lip-service—I am exceedingly sorry that a very old friend of mine, the Minister for Works, should not be present. But there is a very serious charge, to my mind, to be preferred against him, not as an individual in any way, but as an administrator, and that is the letting of the contract for the Cairns and Herberton Railway to Mr. John Robb, whose name is slightly against him. What I think the Premier of this colony ought to do is to look very carefully into this matter. If he should he will find that a gross injustice has been done to Mr. Carey and all the other contractors who were invited to tender for that railway. The matter has been described as an "unmitigated swindle." These are the words I heard applied to it. The same remark applies in a minor degree to the Stanthorpe contract, Mr. George Bashford's. I think, if the Premier will take the trouble of looking into these things——

The PREMIER: I know all about it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Does the hon. gentleman know all about the Robb business?

The PREMIER: I was in the colony.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then you are a partner to the crime, and must bear the responsibility?

The PREMIER: I accept the responsibility.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You do! Then I say if the hon. gentleman accepts the responsibility he accepts a very serious responsibility. He accepts a responsibility which will shake the confidence of the contractors of the southern colonies who have anything to do with Queensland works, and anyone else who knows what will be discussed later on. It is not necessary to go into details now. The outside public will be of the same opinion as that which I have expressed. I could probably occupy the hon. gentleman and the House for some time longer by exposing what I believe to be crimes of omission and commission on the part of the Ministry; but I look upon this broad fact, that the present Ministry came into power in the full tide of prosperity. Whether it be that "God fights on the side of the strongest battalions" or whether God fights against them—as the Ministry seem to assume he does—I do not care. Whether it is the result of drought or any other acts of Providence—as Ministers claim it is—the bare fact remains that whenever what they call the great Liberal party is in power it means disaster and depression to the colony, and very nearly its destruction by almost losing the northern part of it in the present case. I have stated what my views are in the matter, and the country will judge between us. The record is written in the reports from the Colonial Treasurer's Office, and hon. members may look at them and see the difference when the colony is managed by the Conservative party. We are the party who are conservative with the people's money, whilst the so-called Liberal party are the party who are liberal with other people's money.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I am sure we are all very glad to see the hon. member for Balonne back in his place, and we are glad to see him again in the position of leader of the Opposition, a position which he occupied during one session before. If that hon. gentleman will only sober down to his work and give us the benefit of his real abilities, which are very great, he will be of very great assistance to legislation in this country and of very great use to the colony of which he is a distinguished ornament. But the hon. member must become a little more serious than he has shown any indication of being this evening. The hon. member, of course, was expected to make an indictment against the Government and to charge them with all the crimes they had committed during the recess, or indeed going back further than that. I expected to hear of a great many more wicked things we had done than he has been able to tell us. I was quite disappointed with the meagre array of charges he was able to bring forward. He had to go back to old charges of three years ago, and he had evidently not taken the trouble to read up the history of the colony during the time he was away. He has taken up things where he left them nearly a year and a-half ago. The hon. member will find out that he must learn to educate himself up to the time, and that it will never do to be always going back three or four years. He must learn to deal with things as they are, and not as they used to be. How many times have we been told that this Government came into power on the full tide of prosperity with an enormous surplus of £311,000? for that is what I understand the surplus to have been. And here I might say, Mr. Speaker, by way of parenthesis, that the amount of the surplus is stated by some kind correspondent of the Sydney Press, who appears to amuse himself by spreading false reports about the Government of Queensland, at £2,000,000, which we are said to have dissipated in three years. Of course this is a digression, but it occurred to me to deal with it now. I do not often see the Southern Press, but I am told a terrible article appeared in the Southern Press lately, commenting upon the enormous extravagance and incompetence of the Government, because in three years they dissipated a surplus of two millions of money. I suppose in time the Southern Press will take the trouble to secure reliable correspondents in this colony, and not be content with such correspondence as has been sent within the past few weeks, and which is a disgrace to the persons who sent it. Of course we do not know where the information comes from, but I have had occasion before to comment upon the apparent existence in Brisbane of some kind of Press agency that has made it its business to disseminate false information in the northern parts of this colony, and I had occasion once in Victoria to call attention to some agency of the same kind that made it its business to disseminate false information in Victoria. There is one satisfaction in the matter, and it is that all their efforts up to the present have not succeeded in doing any harm, and, as has always been the case with such actions, their evil effects have only recoiled upon their own heads. Before dealing with any other questions, I propose to say a word about

these serious charges of maladministration made against the Government; but when I look at my notes of them they reduce themselves to one. I will really not waste time in referring to the charge made against the Colonial Secretary for hearing a request from the prisoners in St. Helena for a chaplain. It may be owing to a lack of the sense of humour in me, but I admit I cannot see where the wickedness comes in in the prisoners of St. Helena asking for a chaplain, nor do I see any special wickedness in consenting to appoint one. With respect to the Cairns contract, I may say that just before the tenders were called for the work the Minister for Works was unfortunately not very well, or for some other reason was away from the office. The second section of the Cairns to Herberton railway was a work of peculiar difficulty and of peculiar magnitude, and Mr. Miles asked me when going away from the office, and before the tenders were in, to go through the specifications, and particularly the specifications for bridges. I was tolerably familiar with the country, and I did go carefully through the specifications and descriptions of the bridges. I do not mean to say that I went into the engineering details, but I saw the plans of the bridges, and some of those I saw appeared to me to be absolutely impossible of construction. I was so impressed with that fact that I telegraphed to the Engineer to come down and consult with me before the tenders were received. Some alterations were made, and it was found necessary to make some special stipulations in the conditions. Then the tenders came in, and in my opinion all of them were to a very great extent of a speculative character. From the nature of the specifications, and from the nature of the country where the work was to be done, they must have been of a speculative character, for it was almost impossible for any man to discover accurately what that work would cost. I daresay if we had taken six months longer before calling for tenders that might not have been the case, but the Government had promised the people of the district that they would call for tenders at a certain time, and we felt we were bound to keep that promise. When the tenders came in all of them largely exceeded the Engineer's estimate and largely exceeded the amount that the Government thought might fairly be expended on the work. Under the circumstances, the Government did not feel justified in accepting any of the tenders. They were then in this position: We could either call for fresh tenders, involving a considerable delay and an apparent breach of faith on the part of the Government in dealing with the people in that part of the colony, or we could take an extreme course—for I admit it is an extreme course—such as was taken once by Mr. Miles before in the case of the Stanthorpe Railway—to the very great pecuniary advantage of the colony, however—and make a bargain with one of the contractors. Soon after that time Mr. Miles came back and entered into communication with Mr. Robb. The result was that Mr. Miles informed the Government that he believed he could get a tender from Mr. Robb for somewhere about the amount of the Engineer's estimate. In a case of that kind, where, as I say, the tenders were necessarily to a great extent of a speculative character, and the work of extreme difficulty, and where, if we did not get a thoroughly reliable contractor, the work would almost certainly be thrown upon the Government, and all sorts of claims for extras and all sorts of difficulties arise, the Government recognised the importance of having a competent and experienced contractor to undertake the work, and one who would be able to carry it out no matter what it cost.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Was not Mr. Carey competent?

The PREMIER: That was the position, and for my part I did not think, nor do I think now, that the contract can be carried out for anything like the amount of the tender. Under the circumstances the Government thought it desirable to deal with Mr. Robb, who made an offer to do the work for a sum about the Engineer's estimate. Of Mr. Carey I knew nothing. The Government may have made a mistake in that respect. It is true Mr. Carey brought a letter of recommendation to me from a gentleman connected with a financial institution in another colony, and an intimate friend of mine, but we knew nothing about him as a contractor, though I have learnt a good deal more about him since.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Anything against him?

The PREMIER: Nothing against him, and I have learnt nothing against him since, but at that time he was a stranger, and we knew nothing of him as a railway contractor.

Mr. NORTON: Did he offer to comply with the conditions of the contract?

The PREMIER: I say that the Government had determined to reject all the tenders. We were then in this position: We could either call for fresh tenders, which would cost us considerable delay and involve a charge—perhaps not well founded, but certainly a plausible charge—of breach of faith on the part of the Government with that northern part of the colony which the hon. member says the Government have set to work to deprive of all justice since they have been in office. The Government had to choose between that and making a private bargain, and the Minister for Works suggested that a private bargain might be made with Mr. Robb, who is known as one of the most experienced contractors in the colonies, who has always done his work extremely well in all the colonies, and is well known to have sufficient means to carry out the contract whatever it may cost. I have placed before the House exactly the conditions under which the matter presented itself to the Government. We were aware of the unusual character of the step we were taking, and the undesirableness under ordinary circumstances of making private bargains without tender; but in the circumstances we thought we were justified in following the course we did. Those are the facts. I take the responsibility—of course every member of the Government shares the responsibility of everything any member of the Government does—what I meant when I interjected just now was, that individually I had as much to do with the matter as Mr. Miles, and am personally prepared to take any blame that may attach to it. I am sure we made the best bargain we could for the country, and saved a great deal of outlay in the construction of the line, and I do not think we did any injustice to anybody. My own private opinion is that Mr. Carey may congratulate himself that he did not get the contract. I have stated the facts, and hon. members may form their own conclusions. I am prepared to admit that under the circumstances many people will blame the Government for departing from the ordinary course, and we were perfectly well aware that we should be blamed; but there are occasions when people should not hesitate to expose themselves to blame. There were two courses open to us, and we took the one which, under the circumstances, seemed the least objectionable. If we made an error, it was an error of judgment, and nothing else. I do not think, however, that we did make an error of judgment, and I am satisfied that we did nothing inconsistent with any moral obligation that can be suggested. Certainly we secured the construction of the line—a very important

line for the development of that part of the colony—more speedily and more satisfactorily than would have been done otherwise. That is practically the only charge of maladministration brought against the Government, unless we include the charge of delay in sending a steamer to relieve people during the floods. That took place during my absence; but though I have read full accounts of what took place then, I have not seen any complaint on the subject. Before dealing with the particular subjects mentioned in the Speech, I wish to say a word or two with respect to the re-hash of the old story against the Government. The hon. gentleman has taken up the story where he left off about two years ago. We used to hear this in 1885—that the Government crippled the pastoral industry, crippled the sugar industry, and did nothing for the miners. We have done nothing positively bad to the mining industry, and that is satisfactory; we have tried to do all the good we could; and if we have not succeeded, we have done as much as our predecessors. At any rate, we are not responsible for what I believe to be the most abominable Act ever passed with respect to mining—namely, the Mineral Lands Act.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You amended it last session.

The PREMIER: We are not responsible for it, but we have done what we have been able to do in a short time to assist the mining industry. With respect to crippling the pastoral industry, the hon. gentleman says that is proved by the revenue returns. Does the hon. gentleman know what he is talking about? If we have crippled the pastoral industry, how has it affected the revenue?

Mr. MOREHEAD: By the employment of men for one thing!

The PREMIER: I do not know whether the hon. member knows what he is talking about. That we have crippled the pastoral industry is shown by the revenue returns! If we have done so, I suppose the pastoralists would have fared so badly that they could no longer afford to pay rent.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The rent must be paid.

The PREMIER: But in fact the revenue from rent has increased. Does the hon. gentleman mean that the return of wool has been less? because I believe it has been very much less. That, no doubt, has occurred during the tenure of office by the present Government. The returns from the pastoral industry have been very much less; and we are quite prepared to accept all the blame attributed to us. We know very well that we killed all the sheep and all the cattle; we procured a drought. We know we did all that. But surely it is too late for the hon. member after his absence for a year to come back and tell us all that stuff which we were told in 1885, and of which every intelligent man in the colony has been heartily sick for the last two years. We expect something new from the hon. gentleman. Then we killed the sugar industry. We were told that too in 1885—last session's statement about that was rather more moderate—and since then I observe that the principal exponents of that doctrine, who used to expound it here, speaking in other places, have entirely changed their story. How did the Government kill the sugar industry? Of course by their interference with black labour.

Mr. PATTISON: That is not all.

The PREMIER: Perhaps the hon. member for Blackall knows some other way. Of course we know we arranged with Bismarck to propose a sugar bounty; but that, like King Charles's head, we may leave out; and the only thing that remains is the regulation of the black labour traffic. Now, will any honest man in the country dare to stand up and say that the Government did anything wrong with respect to the regulation of the black labour traffic? Is there anyone in any of the British dominions not interested in blood traffic who will say the Government did anything wrong in that matter? I say that all over the British dominions, wherever the name of Queensland is known, there is one unanimous consensus of approval of what the Government did in that respect. If that killed the sugar industry, all I can say is that any industry resting on such a foundation ought to be killed, and the sooner the better. But what is the story the exponents of that old doctrine get up and tell now at the other end of the world? That the black labour question is settled in Queensland; that the cause of the depreciation of the Queensland sugar estates has been the unfair competition of the European beet sugar; that the black labour question is quite settled in North Queensland, that nobody there has the slightest desire to see sugar cultivation carried on by black labour, and that the future success of the industry depends on the cultivation of the cane by small settlers and the introduction of the central mill system. That is the story told now by the gentlemen who used on that side to get up and tell us we were killing the sugar industry by interfering with black labour.

Mr. PATTISON: Name!

The PREMIER: Does the hon. gentleman not read the newspapers?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Perhaps they were misreported.

The PREMIER: They may have been, I do not know; I did not hear those speeches made; but I have been watching with great interest for the last eighteen months to see how they were going to get out of the difficult position they got themselves into. On the one hand they were denouncing us for killing the sugar industry by not allowing them unlimited supplies of black labour, and in another part of the world they were saying they have not the slightest desire to introduce black labour. When a little more than a year ago I had an opportunity of doing so in the northern part of the colony I invited them to reconcile these two statements, because I was curious to know how they would do it; and from that time to this the story has greatly toned down, until it has now reached the condition I described a few minutes ago. We have heard enough about killing the sugar industry. The Government have done all in their power to assist it by legitimate means, but hon. members are like the old Tory party—they can learn nothing.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Gladstone was wrong on the Irish question, according to your San Francisco statement.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member for Balonne wishes to attack the Government on the Irish question, I am quite prepared to meet that charge also. If he means that we are responsible for the present disorganisation in the House of Commons I admit that we are, quite as much as for some of the charges he has brought against us. We are told that we came into office on the full tide of prosperity, and that we have since brought the colony into hopeless trouble. But what is the fact, Mr. Speaker? We came into office at the end of some very good seasons, and just then the seasons began to get very bad. "A full tide of prosperity" may be the exact and proper way of describing that state of

affairs, but I do not think those are the circumstances to which the term is usually applied. We had a credit balance of £311,000, which we did not squander in ordinary expenditure, but we appropriated, as our predecessors proposed to do, a sum of £300,000, and expended it on special works which would ordinarily have been charged to loan.

Mr. MOREHEAD: £240,000.

The PREMIER: Well, I do not know the exact sum. We appropriated the money just as the late Government proposed to do had they remained in office; so that, as a matter of fact, we started with a clean sheet, and so would our predecessors have started from that time. And what does it come to after all? That after three years of the most disastrous seasons that the colony has ever known we are £450,000 to the bad. Now, that is the wrong which has been brought upon the colony by the present Government. The revenue has fallen short of expenditure by £450,000. I can only say I wonder it is no worse.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear! I share that opinion.

The PREMIER: I believe if the gentlemen opposite had been in power during such seasons —if they had had the misfortune to be in power under similar circumstances, which they have never had—the colony would not have been in any better position whatever, although we know too well what they would have done to get out of the difficulty. We know very well that their panacea for all evils is to make away with the land, sell the land, get rid of the land. A million or two of acres at 10s. an acre, and sold without competition, would have made an apparent surplus, and then we should have had a thrifty Government. That is how they would produce prosperous finances, but at what cost? At the cost of the future. Well, sir, I think, under the circumstances, and comparing the difficulty of the finances at the present time with those of other colonies, we may congratulate ourselves on the condition in which we find ourselves. I will now pass to the hon. member's comments on the matters mentioned in the Speech. The hon. gentleman did not say very much about the Conference in London, but I gather that he does not share the same views that I hold with respect to the effect of that Conference. I believe myself most firmly that its effect will be more far-reaching than even anybody anticipates. Certainly this I can say—and I feel more free to speak now than when I spoke with the indulgence of the House this afternoon—that its effect will be very much greater than anybody anticipated in London; that when the Conference was summoned it was not supposed for a moment that its success would have been anything like so great. I am sure that the representatives of the colonies of the Empire produced a very considerable effect upon public opinion, not only among officials whom they met in the Conference—officials of nearly every department of the State—but they had very considerable opportunities of impressing public opinion in London. Now, I maintain that the Empire is one not only in name, but it is really one and indivisible; and that no single part of it can be taken from the Empire without very serious loss and injury to the whole. That is a doctrine which everybody will admit theoretically, just as if you ask a man his catechism, and whether he believes so-and-so, he will answer "Yes." But there is a great difference between holding an abstract opinion, and holding it as a real doctrine which is always unconsciously present to the mind, and governing the conduct—doctrines which are part of the organism of our mind without our thinking of them or consciously applying them, and that is the sense in which the doctrine of the unity of the Empire ought to be held by the people of the Empire that it may have the effect it ought to have. I am sure all the representatives of the Empire in London held that view, and although I am afraid that opinion is not held in the old country as strongly as it ought to be, yet a very great step has been taken towards bringing about a diffusion of that idea. Now, with respect to the proposed agreement for an Australasian squadron, I maintain, and always will maintain, in and out of office, that a community such as Australasia, with three and a-half millions of people, ought to be ashamed to hold on to its mother's apron-strings and look for everything to her. At the present time the taxpayers of the United Kingdom pay about £200,000 a year for the squadron maintained in Australian waters, to which we contribute absolutely nothing. I can quite understand the British taxpayer saying, "Why should we do this? Why should this rich community that boasts—is so fond of boasting—of its riches, be supplied free of cost, and at our cost, with a squadron to protect its shores?" I think there is a great deal of force in that argument; but that we must be protected is certain, and I believe the force that is maintained is insufficient. But it is as much as the British taxpayer should be called upon to pay for, and anything more we should fairly pay for ourselves. I am not going into details, but that is the point of view from which we ought to regard the question; not in the sense of paying any subsidy to the Imperial Government. I believe anything like paying a subsidy would be a very vital mistake. I believe an agreement to pay a fixed sum of money would be a mistake, and, as hon. members will see when they come to consider the question, that is very carefully avoided in the proposals that are made. I was rather sorry to hear the hon. member say that the connection of this part of the Empire with Great Britain may lead to trouble in dealing with the Chinese, but I will not follow the hon. member in the direction in which his remarks were tending. I do not think so. I do not think that there are any treaty rights which would interfere with our putting restrictions upon the Chinese. I am satisfied there are no such rights. We thrashed that question out ten years ago; the contention of the Ministry, of which I was a member, was finally accepted and effect was given to our contention. But I am quite certain that the Imperial Government were never less disposed to make any sacrifices of the interests of the colonies than they are at the present time. I am quite sure they would strain every effort to retain the goodwill of the colonies. They have gone a long way in the case of the Newfoundland fishing question, and we need anticipate no difficulty in dealing with the Chinese question. And if in the future, as I anticipate, England and China will be in alliance for many purposes in Asia, I do not think there is the least reason to fear that that alliance will be accompanied by any stipulation that will interfere in any way with the power of the Australian colonies to deal with any Chinese question that may arise. The hon. gentleman, of course, referred to the Land Act, and says he does not know anything about the large and increasing demand for land for occupation by *bonâ fide* settlers. But the hon. gentleman is not omniscient. He remembers that in 1885 there was no demand; but in 1885 the Act had hardly come into operation. But last year the demand was much greater, and during the present year, unless my information is strangely wrong, the demand is almost surprising. I believe that in some districts it is larger than it ever was before. Now is the time when we may expect to see the Act come into operation. One result of the Land Act is, I

believe, this: that people do not care to buy country lands, because they can get them under more favourable circumstances under the Act.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Your colleagues have started deposit banks to supply their wants.

The PREMIER: I have not heard that any banks have been started for selling the freehold of country lands. One result already produced by the Land Act, which the hon. member probably does not appreciate, is that it has entirely killed the business of selection speculation. As the Land Act does not provide for leasing town lands, I fail to see the relevancy of his interjection. The land taken up under the Act represents not only a continuous yearly rental, but a continually increasing yearly rental; and although it is not, I admit, increasing so rapidly as we wish to see, still it is increasing, and in a few years' time will bring in a magnificent addition to the revenue of the country.

Mr. MOREHEAD: When?

The PREMIER: Before very long. The hon. member does not seem to be able to see further than the year after next, or even as far as the end of one financial year.

Mr. NORTON: We have seen all along what would happen.

The PREMIER: And I hope we shall not again have the spectacle of public men in this colony being held up to ridicule for thinking of the future. The hon. member says that we are in terrible straits for money. I have not heard of that. He also referred to what he calls the failure of the last loan, which he attributed to errors of judgment. I do not think there were any errors of judgment in the matter. At any rate the very best advice procurable was procured. At that time the affairs of Europe were extremely unsettled, and the best opinion was that war was likely to break out in the spring. If war had broken out, the prospects of floating a colonial loan would have been almost nothing. It was an extremely anxious time for the Agent-General and the gentlemen with whom he consulted. No doubt if the loan had not been floated then, and had not been brought out till a month or two later, it would have realised a much larger price. But on the other hand, if that had happened which most people anticipated it would have realised no price at all. That was the position the Agent-General was in. I know it was a very anxious time for him, and in speaking of the matter with him I could easily discover the anxiety in which he had been placed. I believe that under the circumstances it was the right thing to do. It is very easy to be wise after the event; but do hon. members know what independent authorities think of the cause of the low price of that loan? I have here a magazine called the *Banker's Magazine*. Probably the leader of the Opposition has heard of it, an old-established magazine in London. In it appears an article commenting on that loan, and on two other loans floated about the same time by Victoria and New Zealand, and in which the results of the loans floated this year with the previous ones are compared. Of course it is very easy to give all sorts of reasons for the failure of the loan.

Mr. STEVENSON: What is the date of the magazine?

The PREMIER: March, 1887. I will read a short passage from it. After stating the facts as to the amounts of the loans, the article proceeds:—

"Had the fall, for which the market quotations hardly prepared us, occurred in the instance of one particular colony, it would have been open to us to argue that the credit of that one particular colony had declined; but the movement appears to be so general that we may take it for granted were other colonial Government issues to make their appearance at this time they would be similarly affected. The reasons are not altogether on the surface, though reducing the foregoing particulars to tabular shape, and adding the market rates for money at the respective dates of issue, will supply us with two of the most obvious. Here is the comparison:—

—	PREVIOUS LOANS.			LAST LOANS.		
	Market Rate for Money.	Amount of Loan.	Average Price Obtained.	Market Rate for Money.	Amount of Loan.	Average Price Obtained.
	Per Cent.	£	£ s. d.	Per Cent.	£	£ s. d.
Victorian 4 per cent. inscribed	$1\frac{3}{8}$	1,500,000	106 9 0	$3\frac{1}{4}$	3,000,000	102 19 4
Queensland 4 per cent. "	$1\frac{3}{4}$	1,500,000	105 7 9	$3\frac{1}{3}$	2,500,000	100 0 10
New Zealand 4 per cent. "	1	1,500,000	00 6 2	3	1,567,800	97 5 0

Here it will be seen that the market terms for money have, at the dates of these three last loans, averaged $3\frac{1}{5}$ per cent., as compared with only $1\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. as the average of the previous issues; and this difference in the case of the market is a more important element in the price of a loan than at first sight appears."

The market price for money is a most important element in the price realised by a loan.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Everybody knows that. What we say is that the loan was put on the market at the wrong time, when money was dear.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is really very clever. When he was speaking, he said it was all the fault of the Government.

Mr. MOREHEAD: So it was, in putting it on the market at the wrong time.

The PREMIER: I am stating the reason for putting it on the market at that time.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Because money was dear?

The PREMIER: No; but because it was anticipated that in a month or two months' time it would become much dearer.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Well, I am satisfied if the public are.

The PREMIER: The loan was placed on the market because if we had waited three months longer, and if that had happened which everybody supposed would happen, we should not have got it at all. But of course, according to the hon. member, everything the Government does is wrong, and his condemnation of it in this respect will be taken with that discount which it deserves. I pass on to another matter which the hon. gentleman referred to, the redistribution of seats. He asked me to say whether there would be any more members or any fewer, whether we should dissolve immediately after the Bill passed, and a number of other questions to which I do not feel called upon to give an answer. If the hon. member will take the trouble to look at the census returns he will find that while the proportionate representation of the different parts of the colony at the present time is very fair, yet there are inequalities within the districts themselves, some constituencies being under-represented, while others are over-represented.

Mr. MOREHEAD: We will take the Warrego and the Balonne.

The PREMIER: The Balonne is over-represented.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Quite correct.

The PREMIER: And the Warrego is under-represented. Of course I am speaking on a numerical basis. I think the Warrego is well represented. I do not think the hon. gentleman has ever had the pleasure of dealing with the subject of redistribution practically. It is a delightful task to deal with the whole colony and divide it into districts, with equal population; I have gone through it more than once. I am not prepared to say at the present moment what the number of members will be. I may say this: that probably there will be some small increase in the number. It is practically impossible to make an adjustment with due regard to vested rights without some small increase in the number of members. I do not at all share the idea that because the present representation is not perfect, therefore a dissolution must follow immediately on an amending Act. Of course it could not follow immediately. If there is any material change in the boundaries of constituencies, new electoral rolls must be prepared, and that is a matter which must occupy a considerable time. A general election should certainly be based on complete rolls. However, that is a matter we can deal with when we come to it; the measure will be presented to the House before very long. I do not remember the contention the hon. member refers to in 1872; I do not remember that question being raised at all; but I remember what was done on that occasion very well. The hon. member next referred to the petition for the division of the colony, and he says the Government started with the determination to do no justice to the North in any particular. These are big words, but they are not supported by fact. As I said before, if the hon. member would only think a little more, and take the trouble to read a little more and investigate things before he asserts them, he would be much more useful, and his words would have much more weight. I challenge any member of this House, or any man in this community, to point out any instance in which the Government have not done the fullest justice to the North—have not endeavoured to do everything possible to meet their wishes, except in one particular, and that is black labour. Now, sir, what was the origin of this movement? Because the Government would not do justice to the North? The origin of this movement, as I have said before, and as I always shall say, and as everybody knows, was the black labour question and nothing else. All the asseverations that are made—the protestations that that has nothing to do with it—are simply idle words. That the movement has received the adherence of people who did not join on that ground I admit; but the origin of it is that and nothing else. As to the injustice to the North, the actual facts and figures as to the expenditure in that part of the colony show that they have received the very fullest justice from the pecuniary point of view at any rate—if anything, more than justice; so it is idle to say that the Government have not tried to do justice to the North. Then the hon. member says, referring to the mention of a measure to deal with the altered circumstances of the North, that that is a confession that the North has hitherto been unjustly treated. It is nothing of the sort. What we propose to do is to ensure that they shall continue to be justly treated. While this Government has been in office they have been justly treated. What are the statements they now make when they are speaking of the alleged injustice? They say they do not refer to the two or three years that the present Government have been in office, but to the preceding period. That is the argument—it is a basely ungrateful argument I admit—but that is the argument that these persons actually use in London officially at the present time. Now, sir, let us hear no more about injustice to the North. Let us have some consistency. Inconsistency has been very well said to be not to change our opinions sometimes, but to profess two different opinions at the same time; and when men profess in this House one set of opinions and in another part of the world another set of opinions upon the same set of facts, their arguments cannot be expected to have much weight.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Who are the men?

The PREMIER: The spokesmen of the separation agitation in London, as they are reported in the papers. They say they do not refer to the present period. There is no use referring to the present period; because for the last two years certainly—I did not pursue my investigations beyond that—the two financial years antecedent to this, from within a few months after we came into office—during those two years for which alone we were fairly responsible—they have had nothing to complain of. The circumstances of the northern part of the colony have altered, and are continually altering; it is continually increasing in importance. The Government have fairly recognised that, and have declared their intention to do all they possibly can to remove all fair grievances. There are grievances there; but I venture to say the complaints that come from places very much nearer the capital are very much louder, and nearly always better founded, as to the delay in getting attention. As far as my experience of the departments goes, it is the more distant parts of the colony that get best attended to. But very much more might be

done, I think, in the way of local administration; I believe very much of the local administration might be carried on without reference to the departments in Brisbane. Some of the principal departments in the Government—I am not prepared at this moment to say which—might have branches in the principal cities of the Central and Northern districts, where the administration could be carried on as at the present time it is carried on in Brisbane. I believe if that is done and the administration is carried on with a desire to meet the fair wishes of the different parts of the colony all genuine cause of complaint will vanish, if at the same time there is secured what we propose to secure—that is, to continue what has been going on for the past two years, a proper expenditure of the revenue raised in those districts within their boundaries.

Mr. NORTON: Financial separation.

The PREMIER: I do not like the term; but it is what is sometimes called financial separation. I am glad that the hon. member acquiesces with our views about the water question. It is a question of very great difficulty, and we shall want all the assistance we can get. It is not a party question: it is a matter in which we are all equally interested.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Is it the land-grant system?

The PREMIER: The hon. member has land grant on the brain. The other day he was making a sort of preliminary speech as the coming leader of the Opposition, and the burden of it was the land-grant system.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I said you had forced the colony into that by your reckless expenditure.

The PREMIER: Yes, of course it is the Government. When we go out, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. member comes in, whenever that may be, he will be obliged to do all sorts of abominable things, which will all be the fault of the present Government. We are to bear the blame for everything; we are to bear the blame for all that went before us, we are to bear the blame for all that comes while we are in, and we are to bear the blame for all that comes after us. Well, we are prepared to take all the blame that the people of the colony will attribute to us. I was sorry to hear the hon. member speak as he did with reference to founding a university. The speech of the hon. member might have done in the dark ages, but it is a strange thing in a democratic country to hear a man depreciating the advantages of education. The hon. gentleman spoke on the basis that it was the duty of every man to remain in the state to which it had pleased God to call him. He spoke exactly as if for a man to desire to move out of the position in which he was born was a sin to be discouraged by the State. That was the spirit underlying the hon. member's argument. Whether there should be a university established in this colony at the present time is another question altogether; but I maintain that to speak in that way of education is to express a view that I am sure is not shared by many people in this House or in this country. In what way does education unfit a man who is employed at any handicraft or other occupation for his position, I should like to know? If a man beginning farming—a labourer—is enabled to understand something about farming, by reading books and studying botany, will that make him less useful? The hon. gentleman's contention is that a farm labourer should be always a farm labourer; because, if he were educated so as to be able to read treatises and works on farming, he would be unfitted for his position as a farm labourer.

Mr. NORTON: No; you are distorting.

The PREMIER: I do not think I am distorting in the least. It is simply carrying the hon. gentleman's arguments to their legitimate end. I say they are essentially unsound arguments; and, whatever may be the opinion as to the question of a university, I do not like to hear arguments of that kind with regard to education in this House, without saying what I think of them at once. As to a university, the hon. gentleman has evidently got the idea of an old-fashioned university—an idea that I confess I had myself for a good many years—that it must consist of a great establishment, with costly buildings, a costly staff, and be located in one place, and the benefits of which will be confined to the people who are able to attend in that one place. I hold an entirely different opinion of a university now. My view of a university at present is an institution with able, competent men as the governing body, to give instruction in all parts of the colony in which it is situated. That is what universities are now in the United States. They do not confine instruction to Latin and Greek and mathematics, and abstract science. In some of them they scarcely teach them at all; what they do teach is applied science.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They don't call them universities.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is wrong; they do call them universities, and that is what a university means in all parts of the United States at the present time, except in some of the older Eastern States where the old-fashioned universities are established. And that is the kind of university we should establish here, an institution that would give life not only to learning—that would be the least important part of its functions—but that would give life to the instruction that can be given in agricultural and mining pursuits. An hon. member has given notice of a question about schools of mines. It is very difficult for the Government to establish mining schools without the supervision of some competent governing body, but in my opinion instruction in mining ought to be given in all mining centres, whether in what is called a university or by some other name I do not care. The hon. gentleman talked about the money that it would be necessary to vote. Well, there will be no need for a building at all events. I do not know what is in the minds of hon. members on the point, but if they will break away from the idea that a university must be an old-fashioned one it will be a very good thing. I confess that I have my doubts whether the time is ripe for the establishment of such an institution as the hon. member is thinking of. But I think that we may well institute a central governing body to supervise the giving of instruction in practical science throughout the colony.

Mr. MOREHEAD: There is not a word about that in the Speech.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman has not read it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I have.

The PREMIER: He saw the word "university," and at once ran away with the idea that he had twenty-five years ago, when he and I went to the university together—that it was that kind of institution; and did not take the trouble to read any more.

Mr. MOREHEAD: "Our admirable educational system."

The PREMIER: Our admirable educational system goes a very little way. We teach a child to read and write. We give them no instruction in applied science. We give them little more than reading and writing.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. member for Bulimba gave them testaments the other day!

The PREMIER: I have said all I have to say with reference to the speech of the hon. member. I confess I am pleased to find that so little can be said against the Government—so little that is new. As to the old stories, we have heard them so often that they have ceased to affect us. I hope that we shall do good work during the session. There are many matters to be dealt with upon which there may be differences of opinion; upon these I hope we shall fight amicably; upon others there may be room for difference of opinion, but they are not party questions, and upon these I am sure we shall endeavour to work together and try to make the best laws we can for the advancement of the country.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman who has just sat down invariably commences and ends his speeches with the same remark—that the Opposition have brought forward nothing to answer; but somehow or other he has found a very considerable amount to answer during the course of his speech. Before I refer to the general questions mentioned in the Governor's Speech, I wish to make a few remarks in connection with a subject that was referred to by the leader of the Opposition and was answered by the leader of the Government—I mean the contract for the Cairns Railway that was given to Mr. Robb. The hon. gentleman has had to admit that at the time the contract was made comments very unfavourable to the action of himself and his colleagues were commonly made, and I think that what took place with regard to the Stanthorpe Railway ought to have been a warning to the Government; that after the disgust which was expressed by some of the contractors from the other colonies on that occasion, they ought not to have followed the same course in connection with the Cairns line. But, sir, they were not guided by the clear evidence that what they did on that occasion was wrong, and to the detriment of the best interests of the country. As the hon. gentleman himself explained, a promise had been made to the people of Cairns that tenders for this line of railway should be called by a particular time, and the Government did not wish to break that promise, and before, perhaps, they had had the time and opportunity of ascertaining all the details in connection with the work tenders were called for; but when the responses were sent in it was found that none of the tenders were eligible. Well, what was the result? They avoided the unpopularity which they thought would be brought upon them by the apparent breach of their promise to the people of Cairns; they went behind the tenderers—behind the gentlemen who had sent in tenders and selected one, and that one not the lowest tenderer, and asked him to make an offer for the work. Is that fair? What was there against Mr. Carey that he should have been passed over? He was the lowest tenderer; and I contend that if any of the tenderers were invited to send in fresh tenders he should have been. Some of the tenderers came from the other colonies and went to a great deal of expense in connection with the work which they had to do preliminary to sending in tenders, and was not every one of them entitled to the same consideration as Mr. Robb? Are we to let our railway contracts to our own contractors for ever? Do we want to frighten away contractors from the other colonies? I say if anyone was entitled to the consideration that was given to Robb it was Carey, because he was the lowest tenderer. The Premier argues the point in this way: He knew nothing personally of Carey; he said he had brought him a letter of introduction, but he did not know him, and they applied to Robb. Carey had complied with all the conditions the Government demanded when tenders were invited, and what more could they ask? The Government made their own terms and said, "These are the terms; we will give you the contract if your tender is approved." What more can be asked? If they are not satisfied with the reputation a contractor holds let them seek for further information respecting him elsewhere, and if he gives all the information they require him to give and complies with their conditions, then it is the fault of the Government if he is not a fit man to carry out the work. But I say that in this case, and I say it without the slightest hesitation, the giving of that contract to Mr. Robb behind the backs of the other tenderers who came and, at considerable expense, sent in their tenders, has done the colony an immense deal of harm. Nothing could be worse for the country than that men who came from other colonies should be driven away after having incurred great expense in sending in tenders for public works. They should be treated honestly by the Government. And these tenderers were not treated honestly; they were treated in an underhand way by the Government selecting one from among those who competed for the work, simply on the ground that he had carried out other contracts in the colony. I ask hon. members whether, if the Hon. Mr. Macrossan had given a contract in that way, or if I had done so as Minister for Works, we should have been able to satisfy hon. members? Of course we would have taken the responsibility of the action if we had done it, but would we have been able to satisfy hon. members that it was a proper course to pursue? It is possible that someone would have got up and brought forward all sorts of accusations of dishonesty against us simply on the ground that we had in that way acted unfairly towards the other tenderers. The hon. gentleman presumes on our straightforwardness, and knows we are not going to charge him and his colleagues with corruption.

The PREMIER: There is no ground for it.

Mr. NORTON: I do not say there is ground for it, but I say it is quite possible that if other gentlemen had been Minister for Works and done the same thing under the same conditions, most disgraceful charges would have been made against them, and that if brought against members on his side of the House the hon. gentleman would probably have sat in his seat as he has done before, without saying a word. In taking the course he has in this matter, he has established a precedent which may be used very badly indeed at some subsequent period, and there is no one who knows that better than the hon. gentleman himself. I do not know that I need discuss the matters connected with the Imperial Conference. We have nothing before us respecting the proceedings of the Conference; then how can we discuss them? We had a telegram in the paper this afternoon to the effect that an expurgated edition is to be sent out here for our benefit. I do not know whether we are to accept an expurgated edition. I do not know what the Conference wants, except one thing, and that one thing is publicity, and the more publicity it gets the better. We are asked, and are to be asked, I presume, from what fell from the hon. gentleman himself, to accept an official record of the proceedings of the Conference. Surely there are in England papers reliable enough to give a true report of what took place there just as they do of anything else! While admitting that there may have been

subjects brought up at the Conference the discussion of which it would not be desirable to publish to the world, I contend that nothing could do more harm to the Conference, nothing could tend more to destroy its good effect, than shutting out the Press from its deliberations. But instead of having a report from men absolutely unfettered, and having no object whatever to mislead the public as to what took place, we are to have a report from some official who may be under pressure or influence of some kind. I say that under any circumstances that must be unsatisfactory, and I regret that the Premier consented to that condition instead of adopting the wiser course, and advocating the admission of the Press as far as possible, and allowing them to report the discussions on those subjects which might be published. For my part I do not agree that it was necessary for the Premier to go home to represent the colony at the Conference. We have been told by one gentleman—I forget whether it was the mover or the seconder of the Address in Reply—that it was essential that the hon. gentleman should go, because the Agents-General are in the habit of communicating continually with the Colonial Office, and it would be the same thing over and over again for them only to represent the colonies. But I do not think our Agent-General has lost touch with the people of the colony, or that he does not know the requirements of the colony. And even if he did, he would be kept informed of our requirements by the head of the Government. Nor do I think the Agent-General has lost interest in the affairs of the colony; if he had, I am sure the head of the Government would insist upon his taking that interest in them that he ought to take, as a member of the Government. The evil effect of the Premier having left the colony at the time he did is shown by the kind of administration that went on while he was away. I do not wish to say one word against the Colonial Treasurer, but the hon. gentleman is not so strong a leader as the Premier, and I believe his colleagues had a great deal more of their own way under his rule than they would have had if the Premier had been in the colony. The petty, paltry kind of administration that they indulged in brought the Government into disrepute. Fancy the Colonial Secretary, with his puritanical notions, keeping the Sabbath holy! Why, a man who went out for a walk with his wife and children could not even buy a bottle of gingerbeer for them. Is that administration? Are not actions of that kind too paltry for Ministers to have anything to do with? We know from the papers that a deputation waited upon the Minister to ask him to close the shops, but it appears that he had made up his mind to do so before he received the deputation. And after that decision was arrived at, what happened? A Government officer went round to the back of a shop, bought a fig of tobacco, and then pulled up the shopkeeper for selling on Sunday; or he bought a bottle of lemonade, and the unfortunate man who sold it was summonsed to appear at the court, when this lemonade and other washy stuff could be bought in the public-house even without a man going five miles from his own home. It is well known that in many licensed houses not only is soft stuff sold, but very hard stuff, and the police admit that they cannot stop it. Is it not a piece of folly then, not for one minister only, but for a number of ministers to meet together and approve of such a paltry interference with the public as was that of closing soft-drink shops on a Sunday? Did any good come of it? I believe it has been abandoned now. But my friend, the leader of the Opposition, spoke of a deputation of prisoners having invited the Colonial Secretary to go down to them, and complained that they wanted a chaplain. Of course, when they found that the hon. gentleman was so piously inclined, and had such Sabbatarian views as to close those shops on a Sunday, it is quite intelligible that, in a spirit of fun and satire, they should send for one prepared to carry out extreme Sabbatarian views, and ask him to provide them with a chaplain. Of course it is very right that they should have a chaplain. I am not saying that they should not. But those who know anything of the ways of the world know that the prisoners at St. Helena, if they want a chaplain, want him for some other reason. Not for their own piety or improvement or anything of that kind; but because they think they will get some benefit from it—that they will get some relief or some concession of some kind. I say that the whole thing is simply consequent upon the paltry interference with the necessary sales which took place on Sundays, and which were so grossly interfered with by the Government. Then there is another matter of administration to which I would call the Premier's attention. We all know that the hon. gentleman takes a great interest in the Defence Force, and the whole defence system. But does he know that before he came back persons holding appointments in Government offices were threatened with a fine if they dared to attend at the Lytton encampment? Their official pay was to be stopped if they went there. That was the way in which they encouraged these men to take an interest in defence matters relating to the colony. They were told, "You go there and we will stop your pay all the time you are away." The Government might do that, but is there a firm in the town whose clerks are engaged as volunteers which would be guilty of the meanness of stopping the pay of those men during the time they went down to Lytton? We know very well, Mr. Speaker, and it is generally understood, that some members of the Cabinet are very much opposed to this defence system altogether, and they did what they could to impede the movement by threatening these young men with a stoppage in their pay during the few days they were down at Lytton. I hope the Premier has heard of that before, and I hope he will lay it to heart; because I think if he wants to encourage the defence system of this colony the sooner that sort of thing is stopped the better. There is one matter upon which the Premier spoke with more distinctness than another, and that was in regard to the Conference question and in relation to the expenditure of money the colonies were to make in connection with the naval defences of the colony. Of course that sounds very well. We are to pay amongst the colonies, I believe, £120,000 a year to the Imperial Government on the condition that they supply a number of ships in addition to what they have at present for the defence of the coast. What does it mean? The hon. gentleman is a strong advocate for federation. Does that assist in that direction?

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. NORTON: I would like to know how. If there is one thing which could induce these colonies to federate—I do not mean to say that they will not join in a sort of system which includes a picnic to Tasmania during the summer—but what I mean by federation is real federation, and there is only one thing that could induce these colonies to federate in anything like a genuine spirit—that is the necessity for self-defence. Let us combine, not for the purpose of paying a sum to the Imperial Government to defend us, but let us combine, if we are going to federate, to

support a fleet of our own, of which we will have full control, which will be supplied by our own officers and by our own seamen, and which will belong to the colonies.

The PREMIER: The men will be rusty in three years, and the officers too.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What about the Defence Force?

Mr. NORTON: I hope, if we have a fleet of that sort, the men will be rusty and we shall never have occasion to use it. If such a fleet is started it will be necessary to supply officers from the British Navy, but surely we shall be able to raise up something amongst ourselves to take their places. Have we no young men growing up, whose difficulty it is to find an outlet? Are not the professions crowded with young men, many of whom can scarcely make a living? I say for them as officers, and for the sons of our labouring men as seamen, it is necessary if there is to be a fleet here, we ought to have control of it, and those men should have the vacant places. The hon. gentleman who moved this Address spoke of this as a young nation. Is the young nation to go and ask its mother to defend it? Is it to go and ask its mother to do what it ought to do itself if it is to be a young nation? If we are going to call ourselves a young nation, we ought to have the spirit of a young nation, and we ought to encourage that spirit in every way.

The PREMIER: You will find that is exactly what has been done in that agreement.

Mr. NORTON: I am glad to hear it; but the hon. gentleman did not let anything fall from him which suggested that idea, nor has anything I have seen which has fallen from other members of the Conference who have spoken, nor has anything been mentioned in the public prints which has encouraged that idea at all. I speak as one whose interests are Australian interests. I quite admit the truth of the hon. gentleman's statement when he says that the general feeling is that the British Empire is one, and shall remain one. I hope it will; but let me point out this: that if war should take place we will have to defend ourselves against those who come here in consequence of a war into which Great Britain has involved us. They will come here as the enemies of Great Britain and not as ours. They will attack us, not because they wish to do us harm, but because they wish to do Great Britain harm, and they will attack us as a portion of Great Britain. Let me call the attention of the hon. member to certain facts which he seems to have passed over lightly. Take the capital of these colonies: does it all belong to Australians? What is all the shipping? All the shipping that comes here is British shipping with few exceptions. Hundreds of thousands of pounds of the capital invested here is British capital. Dividends are drawn from these colonies and sent home. Nearly all the banks are started with British capital. Nearly all the loan societies belong to British capitalists. Hundreds of thousands of acres of freehold land and innumerable blocks of property in town belong to British capitalists, and we are to defend them. Take the trade of the colonies which is carried backwards and forwards in British vessels, and the employment of innumerable British ships and seamen. What is that trade to us compared with what it is to Great Britain? I believe the exports to Australia alone—I am not certain in regard to the figures, but I believe the exports from Great Britain to Australia are as large as the exports from Great Britain to the United States. How is the trade between Great Britain and the United States protected in the event of a war? The British protect it themselves as best they can, and it is their own interests they are protecting. If a war breaks out in which we are involved, it will be a war created by the Imperial Government, sanctioned and entered upon by the Imperial Government, and one with which we have had nothing to do; and we are to be asked to pay to defend British interests. It is well to mention these things now, because I speak not simply as one born in Australia, but as one of those who has Australia at heart and soul, and who recognises the responsibility of the connection with great Britain and appreciates that nation. We are not simply Australian born, but men who have come here and settled here and become *bonâ fide* settlers, whose heart and soul are in this country, and who attach to it the same importance as to the country in which we were born. I say that this Australian interest, I will call it, is growing stronger and stronger; and if there is any disposition on the part of the gentlemen who went to that Conference from Australia to assist anything which may to the smallest extent interfere with the growth of that interest, I for one, and I believe innumerable others, will very strongly oppose it. I will pass on now to some other matters. Of course, we are not in a position to discuss matters in general with regard to that Conference, as we have simply nothing before us but the very meagre statement of the Premier. The hon. gentleman has told us that he was not at liberty to make a full statement of what took place, but I say if we are not allowed to ask for it I should like to know who is. We certainly had a right to ask him when he went home not to bind himself to keep secret what he was doing there, unless he was engaged in some consultation upon matters which ought not to be published; but the hon. gentleman has published nothing. The statements we have seen in the papers, or a large number of them, we took for granted to be moderately correct, but since the hon. gentleman has come back I have seen statements attributed to him to the effect that the reports sent out here as telegrams from home are not correct representations of what took place. Therefore we have nothing before us at all. The hon. gentleman is responsible to this House and the country, and we have a right to demand that he should keep nothing secret except those matters which for State reasons it is not desirable should be published. With regard to the unfortunate financial position we are in at the present time, the Premier has spoken of it as lightly as he possibly could. He said we are not in any money difficulties, but we are in difficulties for the want of money. We were left at the end of June with a deficit stated at £410,000. But it is not a deficit of only £410,000, because the Treasurer when he came into office so altered the system of keeping the public accounts that it is impossible for the public generally to know what the deficit really is. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman had a design at the time, looking forward to the deficit left by all the Treasurers of his party, in so altering the system of keeping the accounts, but I think he must have had some design in it. At any rate the mode of keeping the public accounts was altered in such a way that money was treated as belonging to the consolidated revenue which no more belonged to it than the money in the Savings Bank. Under the old method by any previous Treasurer, there is a sum of £59,000, balance of unexpended appropriation, which would have been added to the £410,000. The hon. gentleman knows that that money can only be expended on the particular objects for

which it was voted. The Chief Secretary spoke of the Government statement as being like an ordinary bank pass-book; but it is nothing of the kind, for this money being special appropriation must be devoted to a special purpose, and can no more be applied to the purposes of ordinary expenditure than the money of the Savings Bank. If it is so used it must be replaced. So that under the old system of keeping the accounts this £59,000 would be added to the £410,000. When the hon. gentleman floated his last loan, some time about the end of the first quarter, in order to get a higher price for his debentures, he undertook to pay the interest from the 1st January, then past. The consequence was, he got a higher price for his debentures, because so much interest had accrued at that time. The hon. gentleman coolly appropriated the £30,000 he then had to pay on the 30th June as interest, and which should have been taken from the consolidated revenue—he coolly appropriated that money from loan, and charged it to the expenses of floating the loan. That is what he has done this time also. I do not know what sum he has appropriated. However, on looking through all those accounts I make out that a large sum of money is deficient which was paid from the Treasury, and which amounts to nearly £30,000; therefore, we stand now in the somewhat unenviable position—of having falsified our accounts, I was going to say; but I do not wish to accuse the hon. member of having purposely dealt dishonourably. The effect of treating the accounts as he has done has been to leave a false impression on the minds of the people of the colony. It has led them to believe that there is a deficit of £410,000, while the deficit is really about £118,000 above that. If the old system of keeping the accounts had been followed, the deficit at the end of June, 1887, instead of being £410,000, would have been £528,000—or, considerably over half-a-million. The hon. gentleman knows well that I am right in what I say, although he may not agree with my arguments. I feel bound to congratulate the hon. gentleman on the fact that the deficit is not very much larger than it is. I did not believe the hon. gentleman could curtail the expenditure as he has done during the last quarter.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: By book-keeping!

Mr. NORTON: Apart from the book-keeping the hon. member has, I believe, seriously and honestly tried to curtail the expenditure as much as he could, and he has succeeded to a very considerable extent. He also had the advantage of having an increase in revenue during the last quarter to help him on. Had it not been for that, as I pointed out to my constituents—if the expenditure for the quarter had exceeded the revenue as much as the expenditure of the last quarter exceeded its revenue—we would have been landed with a deficit of three-quarters of a million. I give the Treasurer credit at last—in the eleventh hour—for having seen the necessity of reducing the expenditure in every possible way he could; and I admit that he has succeeded to a large extent, and I am glad to see that the revenue is so much improved as to help him to a better position. However, I may say that the apparent deficit—I think I may speak of an apparent deficit as the hon. member has previously spoken of an apparent surplus—the apparent deficit of £410,000 is really, according to the old mode of keeping the accounts, a deficit of considerably over £500,000. We have heard a good deal this evening about the demand for land. The hon. member for Carnarvon told us that really there was getting to be a very large demand for land. He told us that had been the case during the last twelve months; but when I asked him what the revenue was he said he had not taken that into consideration. I point out here that the keystone to the arch of the building the Government proposed to raise was the large income they were to derive from the land. The success of their whole policy depended upon their expectations from that source. They were to raise so much money from the land that there was to be no more taxation. One gentleman said we would be able to do away with the Custom House by-and-by; but we have not done that yet. We have kept up our credit, such as it is, by the imposition of fresh taxation year after year. Looking at the last Treasury Returns, the revenue from Customs for the last quarter appears to be considerably larger than the revenue during the same quarter in 1886, but it is not much larger. The revenue has not increased very much in reality, because the increase is derived from additional taxation. We must not run away with the false idea that the tide of prosperity has already set in as shown by the Customs revenue, because the large increase is owing principally to the 2½ per cent. *ad valorem* duty imposed some time ago. Deducting one-third of the amount received as *ad valorem* duty, it will be found that the revenue of the last quarter was only about £5,000 more than for the corresponding quarter of the previous year. I blame the Land Act more than anything else for this large decrease of revenue. I am not one of those who blame the Government for the drought. I am prepared here and elsewhere to make every allowance for the large difficulties in which the country has been involved through the drought, but I say that the passing of the Land Act when it was passed did more than anything else to involve the country in its present difficulties. We know perfectly well what the expectations of the Government were. The Treasurer never expected a large depreciation of revenue in consequence of the adoption of this new system. So far as runs are concerned revenue has increased, but the decrease in regard to selections has been something extraordinary, and the mistake the Government made in regard to rents under the Act of 1884 is something lamentable. The hon. member for Carnarvon spoke about the large amount of selection, and I asked him whether he could not give the result from the revenue returns. He could not do so, but from the Treasurer's own figures I have taken a note of the revenue expected and the revenue derived from selection under the Act of 1884. The first year that Act was passed, the Treasurer put down £10,000 as his estimate of the revenue it would produce. Then the Act was supposed to come into operation at once. The Government did not consider it would take time to come into operation, but there was some delay in passing that Act, and instead of receiving £10,000 they received £697. That was a paltry sum—an infinitesimal sum compared with the decrease which took place under the Act of 1876. The next year the hon. gentleman was so sure his sweeping new law was going to scoop in the dollars that he put down £30,000 to be derived from selection; but we received only £3,708. That was a come-down; and at the same time that small sum was received a large decrease took place from the falling-off of rents under the old Act. Last year the hon. gentleman expected to receive £20,000. He was more moderate than before, because he found that the Act would not come into operation—either there was not enough time, or it would not operate. The Act is something like a Magaethon's machine that a gentleman brought out to New England from home a good many years ago. It was expected to do wonders. It was to travel from Maitland through the district, put down its own rails, draw wool one way and provisions another.

It travelled first-rate on the metalled roads, but when it got off them it was soon bogged, and it took two teams of bullocks to move it. I believe it is now stationary where I saw it on the station owned by the gentleman who brought it out. And this Land Act of 1884 is like it, because it will take two teams of bullocks to drag it, and then it won't move. During the first three years we have received from it £11,266 instead of £60,000 as anticipated by the Treasurer. What is the good of hon. gentlemen getting up and saying there is a large demand for land and that so much has been selected during the year, when all the revenue produced by selection was less than £7,000 during last year? That is evidence of failure; and the principal object of the Act of 1884 was to derive a large amount of revenue from the land to meet the interest on the big loan we were going to ask the British capitalists to advance; but instead of getting the interest on the loan people have had to be taxed every year. In spite of that, the large surplus which was in the Treasury at the time the Government came into office has been exhausted; and in addition to that, by the Treasurer's own showing, there is a sum of £410,000 now short. That shows the operation of the Land Act, and not the statements of hon. members that it is going to be splendid by-and-by. We cannot wait for by-and-by. Is there any private firm that would transact business on the expectation of profits which they could not see even in anticipation? I have been through my own electorate during the recess recently, and I may tell hon. members who care to know how the operation of the Land Act is regarded there. We have heard of the large demand for land. I addressed a small gathering of people at a place called Raglan, and when the meeting was over a man brought me a note; he had written about four months before to the Lands Department, inquiring if he might be allowed to take up a selection, which had been forfeited, as an agricultural farm. Well, time went on and he was tired of waiting. He was a married man with a family, and waited on and on in the hope of getting this little patch of scrub land. I promised to do what I could, and I waited on the Minister for Lands when I came down, and he said he saw no objection to the man getting the land, and he referred it to the Land Board. From them it went to the commissioner for report, and I am sure I do not know where the objection was to a forfeited selection being taken up. The man wanted the land for agriculture, and therefore I say there ought to have been no difficulty in letting him have it at once. He ought to have got it directly the application came in, and the Government ought to have been precious glad to let him have it. Yet a man of that kind is not allowed to settle on the land where the Government profess to desire settlement, and they do not even get the paltry revenue which it would bring in. That is how the Land Act is worked, and in other parts of the same district the one cry is, "Unlock the land." That is the cry to a Government that have come forward with the great object of settling people largely on the lands of the whole colony. They have divided the runs. Half of the runs in the settled districts and one-third in the unsettled districts is resumed; but why is not that land thrown open as portions are thrown open in places here and there? Some of the land is fair, and some is good, but I do say that in many of the districts where there would be selection, the land is simply locked, and the people cannot get it. And why is it, Mr. Speaker? "You may have that land or you may have none." That is what they are told. The selectors cannot go out and take any portion of any half of a run open to selection, because if they did that, the first thing the Government would have to do would be to declare that that land was open to selection. If they do that they would lose a third of the rent, which they would get from the resumed half. That is where the shoe pinches. The Treasurer knows the difficulty. They dare not throw open one half of the runs because they are afraid the demand is not large enough; therefore they would get no revenue from selectors, and they would forfeit the third of the revenue which they get from the lands resumed. That is how the Land Act is affecting the country in the district I have been in, and in many other districts. We know what the effects are perfectly well, and it is no use attempting any disguise. I do not blame Mr. Dutton for holding his extraordinary opinions about land. I do not blame the Minister for Lands for having his opinion; I blame his colleagues for having accepted those extraordinary opinions, and I blame beyond all others the Chief Secretary, to whose influence over his supporters and through whose popularity at the time he came into power he had the strength to force upon this House and the country an Act which nobody likes and which will not in twenty years settle the people on the land in the same numbers as if the old Act of 1876 had remained in force. What do we gain by an Act which does not deal with the fee-simple, but which simply leases? We get a small annual revenue which is liable to be raised, but that is not what will induce people to settle. It is that which keeps them off the land. There was a resident from the electorate of the hon. member for Carnarvon in town the other day. He was a man I had never seen before, and he came up to me and said, "Can you tell me what the Government are going to do with that Land Act?" He said the people up there were willing to take the land if they could get it. He said, "My own feeling is that I want the land for myself; I want to leave it to my family when I die, and do what I like with it now." It is the right to hold land in fee-simple which induces people to come to the colonies—which induces thousands to go to America and Canada—that they may be in a position which they could never be in Great Britain. Now, in place of giving the fee-simple we have substituted this leasing system which people do not like. We get a small income from the lessees in place of a large revenue such as we had under the old system, and this revenue under the present Act increases so slowly that instead of being a blessing to the country the Act is no advantage at all. And what does it matter whether we part with the land or continue to hold it, and what difference does it make whether we have a land tax or a leasing tax? As I said, I do not blame the Minister for Lands for his views, but I do blame the Government, and especially the Premier, who, because he came into power, popular, with a strong party and personal influence, accepted this immature measure and thrust it on the country. While on this subject I may as well confess to a mistake I made when speaking on this subject in public a short time ago. I then spoke of the homestead clause as if it was necessary for the selector to occupy the land for ten years instead of five. I had the mistake pointed out to me, and I take the first opportunity of publicly correcting the error. I daresay the hon. gentleman will take me up on that, but the mistake was quite unintentional.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is not the only mistake.

Mr. NORTON: Yes; that is the only one. With regard to the question of redistribution, I

do not think it is necessary to say very much, because we do not know on what principle the Government intend to bring in the Bill. When we know the principle of the Bill, then I think it will be time to discuss the scheme. For that reason I pass over the question. With regard to the Northern question, I do not think there is any occasion for me to speak, because there are a number of gentlemen here who are on what is called the "Separation Committee," and they are doubtless in a position to discuss the question more fully than I am; but there is one thing I will say, that it strikes me as an admission on the part of the Government that they have neglected the North when they are prepared to come forward now with a Bill to make concessions to the North. They propose to make concessions to the North; officers are to be appointed up there who are to be called Government residents. I do not know whether it will do a bit more good to call them Government residents than police magistrates. They will be Government officers, officers of the State; and if the object is to multiply the staff of officers, then I say the thing will be a failure. It will not only be a failure but a discredit to the Government. They will probably have the same number of officers then as they have now; they may extend the powers which are already possessed, but why not call them by the same old names? I have heard it stated in this House, I regret to say, and I believe the hon. member who made it has regretted it, that they had neither money nor brains in the North. But in the North they are not such fools as to be satisfied with a sop like that. They will know that the distinction is a fictitious one and not a real one; that it does not matter what we call an officer if he has to do certain work. They will be the last men in the world to be satisfied with that. How far the Northern grievance has arisen, as the Premier chooses to state, from the desire in some Northern towns to get coolie labour, I do not pretend to know. Certainly, in some instances, where I have heard men speak on the subject, their particular desire was to get this black labour; but I am very far from thinking that the people of the North who are in favour of separation were actuated by that motive, and I am quite certain that no movement could be successful if that was the object, since if separation was obtained the men who did not want black labour are quite powerful enough to prevent its being introduced. That, I think, is a sufficient answer to the question of black labour. Before leaving the subject of land administration, I may say a word or two on the formation of an agricultural department. I believe in the formation of an agricultural department. I think it will be a good thing, and that it may be carried on without the appointment of another Minister, and that it may be conducted with advantage to the colony. But I do not believe it will be conducted with advantage to the colony so long as it is to remain under the control of the Minister for Lands and his subordinate, Mr. Peter McLean. What interest have they shown in agriculture to qualify them to conduct an agricultural department? A few years ago we had a splendid plantation of pines on Fraser Island, under the special care of Mr. Surveyor McDowell, who took an immense interest in everything concerning it, and a certain amount was voted on the Estimates every year for its maintenance. Now, the vote has been allowed to lapse, and a caretaker is considered sufficient to look after the plantation. Is that the spirit which is to animate the agricultural department? Or are we to take as evidence of the manner in which it is to be conducted the action taken in connection with the model farm at Yeulba? After a large sum of money had been expended on that farm, Mr. McLean was put in charge of it. I speak not from any want of regard for Mr. McLean, whose personal character is thoroughly honourable and to be admired, but as the manager of a department of this kind—and that model farm he wanted to manage as a selector would manage it. That would have been simply a waste of money, and the natural consequence was that by refusing to allow the man in charge to have proper implements to carry out the work of the farm as it ought to have been carried out, the whole thing was allowed to go to wreck and ruin, and I believe that now the bailiff lives in the house, and makes use of the farm as his own. That is the way in which agriculture is encouraged. We had the means of giving information of the kind most wanted to settlers, and it was simply destroyed, and we are going to substitute something else which we call an agricultural department. I can only say, Mr. Speaker, that I do not think my hon. friend, the Minister for Lands, is very well up in that subject; I do not think he cares for it; and although Mr. McLean is a very good man, I do not believe he knows anything about scientific agriculture. If he does, he does not know how to apply it so as to give the requisite information to the people who want to learn. With regard to the university, we seem to be getting a little mixed over it. After the explanation made by the Premier, I feel inclined to think that it is a sort of university that we have not had clearly put before us yet. It is to be nothing like the universities recognised as such in the British dominions. It is to be something else—a sort of agricultural department, a sort of technological college, and a number of other things mixed up together. I was asked recently to be a consenting party to a memorial from the Synod of the Church of England to this House, asking that steps be taken to advance the movement for a university this session. I protested against it, because I think that nothing of the kind should be done unless we have money with which to do it. I objected at a time like this, when the revenue is too small to meet the demands of the Colonial Treasurer for his expenditure, to anything of the kind being supported, because it would involve fresh taxation. And we have too much taxation already, partly owing to the extravagant expenditure of the Government, and partly because they consented to follow my hon. friend there in his extraordinary land ideas. The position is such that instead of their expectations being fulfilled they had to commence with taxation very shortly after they came into office, and, as I pointed out to my constituents a short time ago, by carrying that new *ad valorem* duty of 2½ per cent. they have reduced the value of the sovereign to 19s. 6d. That is about the long and short of it, and I object under any circumstances to being burdened with fresh taxation for such a university. You, Mr. Speaker, are an advocate for the establishment of a university in the colony, but your argument on a former occasion—I think it was when we were discussing the Estimates—was founded on premises which are totally misleading, and the arguments used by other gentlemen, both inside and outside this House, were founded on premises which were equally misleading. Let me take one. It was stated that there are so many scholars at the grammar schools who would readily go to a university here; and that would be so unless their friends were sufficiently wealthy to send them elsewhere. But do you suppose that those who could afford it would send their sons to an entirely new university with half-a-dozen professors, who could teach them very little more than they could obtain at the grammar schools? They will send them to Oxford or Cambridge or anywhere rather than to universities in the colonies, because

they believe that by going there they can get a better education than here. Even in New South Wales the sons of resident gentlemen do not all go to the Sydney University. That university is now in a prosperous condition, simply because large bequests have been made to it by private individuals—notably that by Mr. Challis, which amounted to £120,000 or more; but for a very long time it was, to my own knowledge, an intolerable burden upon the country. For years the attendance was exceedingly small, simply because the Government would not find the funds to provide a sufficient staff of professors. I say it is perfect nonsense to talk of starting a university here, at which we will have a set of professors—I daresay very eminent men in their way, but whose teaching would be a mere nothing compared with the teaching even in the other colonies. If the proposal is brought forward for an expensive university of that kind, I, for one, will do my level best to prevent its being carried—I do not care who supports it, I do not care if it is brought forward by the most eminent men in the colony. If they wish to see a system of this kind carried out, why can they not put their hands in their own pockets and contribute towards it? They are men who have made their money in this colony for the most part, and I say let them contribute their own money towards starting it, and not come to the Government to tax the people all through the colony, not one per cent. of whom would derive the slightest advantage from it. In my own district there are numbers of men who have to pay for the education of their children out of their own pockets, notwithstanding the fact that we have an educational system which costs over £90,000 a year. Are they to be taxed more heavily to support a university here? I heard the other day a speaker say that it would be for the benefit of the working classes of the colony. How many of the working classes of the colony could send their children to a university in Brisbane? Where is the money to pay for their living here during the time they were attending? I maintain that if a university of that kind were started here, the only working men who could send their children to it—in consequence of the cost of maintaining them during the time they were there—would be those round the place. Are people all over the colony to be asked to bear taxes to have that carried out? I hope, Mr. Speaker, that it will not be attributed to me that I undervalue the advantages of education. I have experienced in my own person the disadvantage of not having a university education. I got the best education that I could get at the time, so far as I chose to avail myself of it—and boys do not always make the best of it—but I have had to pay through the nose for that since. I have had to work sometimes for hours to be assured that I was right, in circumstances where, if I had acquired my education at a university, I should have known at once. So it is through life, that the men who most value these things very often do not get them. At the same time I do not think it is fair, for the sake of giving a university education to a few—and a poor education it would be here for many years—I say it is wrong to talk of imposing fresh taxation for that purpose. I did not mean to say so much on this subject, but such high influence has been brought to bear in connection with the matter, that I think it is only fair and reasonable to speak plainly what one means. I find I made a mistake just now in speaking of £90,000 a year as the cost of education. My hon. friend Mr. Morehead has been looking at the Estimates and finds it is £120,000 a year.

Mr. MOREHEAD: For State schools alone.

Mr. NORTON: I say that there are a large number of people in the colony—not people well-to-do, because they can afford to send their sons to school, but people who have to labour for their daily bread, engaged in hard manual labour—I say numbers of them get no education for their children except what they pay for out of their own pocket, because they live in scattered portions of the country, and there are no schools near. Yet they are obliged to contribute to keep up this educational system; and for that reason, and because the country is in a depressed condition at the present time, so that fresh taxation cannot be imposed without being an intolerable burden, if a scheme is brought on which will involve any expenditure at all I shall do my level best to get it thrown out.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to make any extended remarks, but I hardly like to allow the speech of the hon. member for Port Curtis to pass without some comment. I think the hon. member for Port Curtis is singular in the opinion he expressed that it was unwise of the Premier to visit Great Britain in connection with the Imperial Conference.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No; he is not at all singular in it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I fully believe that there is almost a perfect consensus of opinion that the Premier took a wise and correct step in proceeding to England entrusted with such an important mission. I am sure that if the colony were polled to-morrow there would be an overwhelming majority in favour of the opinion that the Premier did the right thing—that he was the right man in the right place, and that he did good service to the colony.

Mr. NORTON: We do not know yet what we got by it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am sure the country will recognise the advantage of its leading statesmen going home and holding a conference with the Imperial statesmen, and making Australia to be felt, as it were, in touch with the mother-country.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He did not discover Australia.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Hon. members on the other side of course may reply and endeavour to prove their case, but still I am convinced of this: that the majority of the people of this colony will recognise the fact that the Premier did the right thing in going home, the opportunity being presented of holding an Imperial Conference; and that it will mark a new period, not only in the history of Australia, but in the history of the British Empire I am convinced that a new page is turned in the history of the colonies, of the Empire, and Great Britain by this Conference, and that when the matters which have been discussed are more fully placed before the colony, the people will recognise the very great importance of it, and also of the position to which the colony has attained by having been represented by the hon. the Premier on that occasion. I do not intend to enter into the subjects touched upon this evening in connection with the Conference. The hon. member for Port Curtis has, however, referred to the naval squadron which is to be temporarily formed, and, while I agree with him in believing that the Australasian colonies should eventually possess their own naval forces and not rely on any mercenary squadron, still I think that under present circumstances it is highly desirable that we should endeavour to get the most efficient defence we can at the least cost; and that can only

be accomplished by obtaining from the mother-country that increased strength of naval armament which it is wholly beyond the financial ability of the Australian colonies to supply at the present time. The disadvantages of acquiring a large naval armament, particularly at a time when those armaments are in such a state of transition that possibly vessels which are of the most efficient class to-day may become obsolete in two or three years, are so obvious that it would be simply absurd to contemplate that the Australian colonies should acquire anything like a large fleet without involving themselves in indebtedness and liability wholly beyond their strength at the present time. Therefore, if it be advisable that the colonies should be protected from hostile attack by an increase of naval force, I think the course suggested, and which has indeed been partially approved by this House, is the only one practicable and reasonable, and will be the least strain upon the financial means of the country. Of course this matter will be more fully discussed hereafter. It is all very well to talk of a large naval force of our own, but that means money, and our financial position at the present time is a full answer to that suggestion. I do not at all go with an hon. member in his proposal that we should sell our own fleet to the Chinese power, and get rid of it in that manner. I think it forms the nucleus of a very useful defence, and although it has cost us something large, still at the same time it is an assurance that we are determined to protect our possessions. We must recognise the fact that these colonies will have to acquire means of defence and protection. They are every day accumulating wealth and importance, and presenting a greater prize to any hostile power whenever the mother-country becomes involved in war. I recognise a certain amount of force in the remarks of the hon. the leader of the Opposition that Great Britain has a very large stake in the commercial maritime trade of her colonial possessions, and undoubtedly it is only right and proper that she should be called upon to protect the interest which she so supremely enjoys with the colonies. She has to a certain extent done that by maintaining the squadron at present in Australian waters, so that it may be a question whether the duty does not lie with us to provide for the additional naval strength which is to be used solely for the protection of our shores. That is a matter which may fairly be open to discussion when the papers are before us, as to the relative proportions of expense that should be borne; and I recognise the fact distinctly that considering the great importance of the Australian trade to the mother-country, she ought not to be niggardly in protecting her commercial interests, which are of such immense advantage to her manufacturing industries. However, I do not rise with the intention of going into the paragraphs of the Speech, which have been pretty well dwelt upon by the hon. the leader of the Opposition, who has been fully answered, I am sure, by the Premier. But the hon. member for Port Curtis caused me to rise by his remarks upon the financial position; and I shall briefly reply to him, and also to the comments made by the leader of the Opposition, upon the want of knowledge and judgment shown in floating the last loan. I think, sir, that we have from time to time been thoroughly nauseated with the statement about the large amount of surplus that was in the Treasury when the last change of Government took place. That surplus has been variously stated by different authorities.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I put it at the very lowest from your own figures.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: According to some authorities we have squandered two millions of money that we inherited.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That has not been stated here.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It has not been said in this House, but it has been stated recently in a leading southern journal. I am quite prepared to accept the hon. gentleman's statement that there was a surplus at the end of 1883 of £310,000 or £311,000. We all know that that £310,000 was appropriated with the full consent of this House, and the great sin I have always been charged with by hon. gentlemen opposite is that that money was not expended sufficiently fast; in other words, that it was not withdrawn from the consolidated revenue in the lump sum, which would have caused the consolidated revenue to exhibit a debtor balance continuously since that time. Now, sir, we have expended the whole of that £310,000. It was not done merely by us, but with the full consent and concurrence of hon. gentlemen opposite. They approved of the allocation of the money.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. gentleman is not correct. They did approve of the allocation of the money, and it was expended, not squandered. It has been spent on purposes for which otherwise we should have had to obtain loan money. And what is our present position? We have a debtor balance of £410,000, the whole of the £310,000 which was allocated in 1883 having been paid. In addition to that we have expended £100,000 from surplus revenue, which accrued in the meantime, on rabbit fencing and other things which might very fairly have been charged to loan. And having done so we find ourselves at present with a deficiency of £410,000 only. Well, I say, Mr. Speaker, considering the disastrous seasons which have visited this colony, that I am really gratified to know that the deficit is not larger. Anyone who travelled through this country during the last two years, and who saw the state of the interior, which was a perfect desert for hundreds and hundreds of square miles, can only be amazed that the colony has not more perceptibly and tangibly felt the tremendous depression that has been experienced. I believe, however, that we have turned the corner at the present time.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You are always turning corners.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I believe we have now turned the corner, and that there is every probability of a return of better times. I am not, however, prepared at the present time to enter into any anticipations with regard to the revenue, or to unfold what plans the Government may have to relieve the financial position. I may state that I think the country has every reason to be satisfied with the present financial position, considering what we have passed through, and it is satisfactory to know that during the last six weeks or two months there has been a decided improvement in the revenue returns, indicating a revival of prosperity, which, I trust, will be more tangibly felt during the year upon which we have now entered. Of course the great cry against the Government is this deficit. That is the head and front of their offending, and I am quite prepared to accept the responsibility. The deficit has been caused by circumstances so well and widely known that hon. members cannot throw dust in the eyes of the country.

Everyone knows how it is the revenue has shrunk and prosperity been delayed; the causes are too familiar to all for it to be necessary for me to repeat them. With regard to the sale of the loan, I consider that was a success. We sold that loan at par, and I am one of those who believe that if we get a hundred pounds for a hundred pounds stock it is a very good transaction. We sold the loan in February, and interest commenced about six weeks previously. I may say, with regard to what has been stated about the payment of interest, that the consolidated revenue has paid interest at 4 per cent. on every penny of the instalments of that loan from the date on which they were received——

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then the loan was not sold at par?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The loan was sold at £100 1s., I think.

Mr. MOREHEAD: At £100 0s. 10d.?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The loan was sold at something over £100, and the revenue paid the full amount of interest from the time the loan was paid into the bank to the credit of the Government.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then the price obtained was not par?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The sale of the loan, taking all the circumstances into consideration, was a success, and if we had always in the past obtained anything like the same amount for our stock, our Loan Fund would be in a very different position at the present day.

Mr. MOREHEAD: In a worse position.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Well, so much for the sale of the loan. As the Premier has stated, the best financial advice in London was obtained. It has been stated that the sale would have been better if we had waited for a month or two longer, but it must be remembered that there was also this alternative: that the loan might have been unsaleable a few months later. Had a general European war ensued and the sale of the loan been delayed, the consequences to the colony would have been most disastrous. We might certainly have made a larger profit by delaying the sale, but the chances against it were too heavy to risk it. I have only one other matter to refer to, and that is the remarks which have been made in connection with that paragraph of the Speech concerning the university. I consider a university in this colony inevitable; it will come, sooner or later, and it is just as well to educate public thought in that direction. I have always advocated the establishment of a university in Queensland. I advocated it very many years ago, even before some of those gentlemen who now come forward and support it openly expressed their desire to see it established. Nevertheless I do not at the present time say that the financial position of the colony is such as would justify any large donation of money out of the public exchequer for that purpose; but I consider the Government are only fulfilling their own convictions by representing the matter to the country and submitting a proposal on such a basis, as I have no doubt will be submitted by my hon. friend the Premier, that the Treasury will not in the meantime be affected. If a large foundation is to be laid, I say let those who appreciate the advantages of higher education be the first in the movement. Let those men who have obtained for their children the good education afforded by the State show their recognition of the benefit their children have received by providing an endowment for a large foundation, if that is to be the form in which the university is to be established, before they come to the State for assistance. If the university is to assume the dimensions advocated in former years, and a large vote is asked, as Treasurer of the colony I should refuse at the present time to give any assistance to the proposal. I quite recognise the benefit of founding a university, but I consider, now that there is such a large section of well-to-do people in the colony, whose children have been benefited by the education provided by the State, that they should put their shoulders to the wheel and subscribe a handsome amount, and then perhaps come to the State and ask for a donation to supplement it. I hold that if the State were at the present time to give a large donation it would arrest private benefaction, and instead of getting that support from the public which it ought to receive, the university would be solely dependent on the generosity of the State. I also recognise the fact that there are a large number of our fellow-citizens who would not be benefited by a university if established in the form it was recently intended. I further recognise that it is a fact that our educational system will not be complete without a university, and that while the present state of affairs exists there will always be a chance of our intellectual young men going away to the other colonies or elsewhere. At the present time there are sons of old colonists, who, having taken high degrees in Melbourne and Sydney, have implanted themselves in those colonies. I would like to keep those young men of marked intellectual ability in our colony. However, the scheme has yet to be more fully explained by the Premier, and in the shape in which it is now presented it is of such a character that it may very fairly be favourably considered when it is thoroughly understood. I do not think it would be unwise at all to set apart an endowment in the shape of land.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What, alienate land!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes: for the future endowment of institutions of that sort. But that is a matter of detail. It has been stated that the functions of the university as an educational establishment will be to assist the application of the sciences in connection with our mineral and agricultural resources, and will fulfil the requirements which have been suggested by gentlemen representing mining and agricultural constituencies. I do not, therefore, regard that paragraph in the Speech as a matter which we must assume an objection to at the outset. When the matter is fairly considered hon. members will regard it in its true light as a mark of intellectual progress in the colony, and not being by any means an undue strain upon the national resources, which I must agree with hon. members opposite are not capable of affording any large grant to endow a university at the present time. I did not intend to occupy the time of hon. gentlemen to such an extent as I have, but I have answered what I considered the salient points in the remarks made by hon. members. I can agree with the Premier in expressing my pleasure at seeing the hon. gentleman at the head of the Opposition in his place, and criticising in his usual pleasant manner the measures brought forward by the Government. I have no doubt that these criticisms will be fully replied to by hon. members in dealing with the different subjects, and that the country generally will be able, by the instrumentality of the hon. gentleman I refer to, to sift the Government measures, so that the people of the colony may be much more satisfied of their soundness.

Mr. CHUBB: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move that the resumption of the debate stand an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that the House adjourn until to-morrow at 3 o'clock.

Question put and passed.

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