

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 JULY 1887**

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 20 July, 1887.

Government Savings Bank.—Leave of Absence.—Days of Meeting.—Standing Orders Committee.—Joint Committees.—Address in Reply—resumption of debate.  
—Presentation of Address.

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

## AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of the following letter from the Auditor-General :—

" Audit Department,

" Brisbane, 19th July, 1887.

" SIR,

" In compliance with the provisions of the 6th clause of the Savings Bank Act of 1870 (34 Vic. No. 10), I have the honour to report to the Legislative Council that the Government debentures and other securities held in trust for the Savings Bank by the President of the Legislative Council, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and the Colonial Treasurer, were duly examined, counted, and audited on the 7th instant, and that they were found correct.

" The enclosed Statement shows how the funds of the Savings Bank were invested on that date."

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. T. Macdonald-Paterson) moved that the letter and Statement be printed.

Question put and passed.

The PRESIDENT also announced the receipt of the following letter from the Auditor-General :—

" Audit Department,

" Brisbane, 19th July, 1887.

" SIR,

" In pursuance of the provisions of the Audit Act of 1874 (38 Vic. No. 12), I do myself the honour to transmit herewith, for presentation to the Legislative Council, the Treasury Statements of the receipts and expenditure of the Consolidated Revenue, the Loan, and the several Trust Funds, for the financial year ended 30th June, 1886, together with my Report thereon.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the Statements and Report be printed.

Question put and passed.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The HON. J. S. TURNER moved—

That leave of absence for the remainder of the session be granted to the Honourable F. T. Brentnall.

The PRESIDENT: In putting the motion I again warn the House that it will have no effect whatever in case of an hon. gentleman's absence for two sessions.

Question put and passed.

## DAYS OF MEETING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That, unless otherwise ordered, this House will meet for despatch of business at half-past 3 o'clock p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday in each week.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: Is the motion intended to limit the days of meeting to Wednesdays and Thursdays only?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It will be observed that the motion contains the words "unless otherwise ordered"; so that we may meet on Tuesdays or Fridays if we decide at any time to do so. I may tell the Hon. Mr. Walsh that Wednesday and Thursday were agreed upon almost unanimously as being the most convenient days for conducting business here last session, and in view of last year's experience I think it would be unwise to revert to the earlier practice of meeting on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Question put and passed.

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members, namely :—The President, Mr. Hart, Mr. King, Mr. W. Horatio Wilson, and the mover, with leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, and with authority to confer on subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Assembly.

Question put and passed.

## JOINT COMMITTEES.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

1. That the President, Mr. King, and Mr. F. T. Gregory be appointed members of the Joint Library Committee.

2. That the President, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Wood be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management of the Refreshment Rooms.

3. That the President, Mr. A. C. Gregory, and Mr. Macanish be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management and superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings.

4. That the foregoing resolutions be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly by message, requesting that they will be pleased to nominate a like number of members from their body, with a view to give effect to the eighth Joint Standing Order.

Question put and passed.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY.

## RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—My friend the Hon. Mr. Walsh made some objection to my having proposed the adjournment of the debate without stating any reasons, but the hon. gentleman, I am sure, was perfectly well aware why I did not speak, and also that there were others, if necessary, ready to say why I moved the adjournment of the debate. In the morning Parliament was opened, and we met in the afternoon. The mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply, I presume, had an opportunity of seeing the Speech before it was put into our hands; but I do not think it is likely that any other hon. member had read the Speech before the House met. If hon. gentlemen will look over the debates on former occasions they will see that when the Address was discussed at once without any adjournment very few speeches were made; but, on the other hand, when the debate was adjourned, several members spoke, and spoke more fully. I think it would be a very good plan to always follow the same rule. I am glad to observe the hon. the mover of the Address in Reply in his place, because there are several matters that hon. gentlemen spoke of to which I should like to refer. With reference to the first clause, which speaks of Her Majesty's jubilee, I need not enter into that now, because we shall have another opportunity, when I have no doubt most hon. gentlemen will be able to speak on the subject. As to whether it was expedient for the Premier to leave the colonies for the purpose of entering into certain debates in England I am not prepared to say, but from what I have heard since my return to the colony it appears to me that he has been very much missed by his colleagues. My opinion is that it is a very good thing for us to join with the British service for the defence of the country. It is better than having a navy of our own; in fact, I do not think we are in a position now to defend ourselves without help from the mother-country. A further paragraph says :—

"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."

It appears to me that Ministers have had very great difficulty in excusing themselves for what has happened during their administration, but I do not see why they should place this before us as if they had done very much for the colony. This flood, there is no doubt, was very disastrous while it lasted, and caused a great deal of trouble, anxiety, and loss—even loss of life. It was a flood such as we have seldom witnessed before, still the Government had very little to do with it; it was the people of the colony who helped their fellow-sufferers in their distress. In the next paragraph reference is made to the large and increasing demand for occupation by *bonâ fide* settlers. I should be glad indeed to be able to agree with the Government in this respect. I think the Land Act of 1884 was a very bad Act in all respects, a worse Act for the farmer than for any other portions of the community, and I think that every remark which has been made on former occasions by hon. gentlemen opposed to the Government with respect to that Act has been fully borne out. I only wish that I could compliment the Government upon the Act having been a success. The hon. gentleman spoke a great deal of previous deficiencies having been made up by the sale of land. Now, I should very much like to be told what any business man would do if instead of making a profit he was creating a deficit in his business. I think he certainly would see what he could turn into money, and he would turn it into money at once. Here in this colony we have great quantities of land; the land belongs to the people, and, in my opinion, the best way of raising sufficient money to pay for interest on loans, and for other expenses of government, is by selling the land. We live under different conditions from larger countries. We have a population scattered all over the country; we have numerous public works in progress, railways going in all directions, the telegraph going to the extreme corners of the country, and, moreover, a very expensive postal system. With all these things going on how can it be expected that the people can raise sufficient money by taxation to maintain this expenditure? It would be impossible so to tax the people as to supply the means of carrying out all these works. On that account money has been borrowed, loans have been made, and, in my humble opinion, much more money has been borrowed than is at all good for the country. To a very great extent this country has been kept up by borrowed money, and when the capital is required to be paid there will be very serious difficulty in doing so. I am not going to find such very great fault with the Government for the deficit which has accrued. There is no doubt we have had very bad times, and under any circumstances there might be a deficiency which with care might be easily recouped. But there is one thing we must remember, and it is this—that whenever we have had a so-called Liberal Government in office, the country has always run into debt. On the other hand, when other Governments have been in office, they have left a surplus in their coffers. I do not think myself that it was so very advisable to keep a surplus in the coffers, for, in fact, they only gave ammunition to their enemies which they very soon expended. The hon. gentleman also said that the land did not realise its legitimate price. Now, I take it that the price of everything is the market value which it will realise, and the hon. gentleman has not, I presume, been sufficiently long in the colony to have seen the changes that have taken place in a number

of years. Sir George Gipps, at one time Governor of New South Wales, who was not by any means friendly to the squatting interest, gave it as his opinion that the value of an acre of land was more than represented by the very smallest coin of the realm. That was the opinion of a very clever man, and a good governor in those days. It is the population that increases the value of the land; we all know that. Look at Brisbane for example, and then going further afield, remember the original pioneers who in the first place were induced by the Government to go out and take up land, and who were actually forced into buying the land. Surely there are few people in the present day who come out here who know the position in which former settlers were placed, even when they paid only from 10s. to £1 for land on the Darling Downs. There were not the people here then to buy the land; there were no means of keeping up the Government unless their land was bought, and 10s. or £1 was at that time the full value of the land which was offered to early settlers. That money, however, which was paid in those days was of much more value to the country than the money which would be paid now for similar land in similar places. Some people who purchased those lands were ruined by their purchases, but those who have been able to hold on well deserve all the gains that they have made. Townspeople say a great deal about the unearned increment. Now, I have only been away a few months from this place, and in these very bad times—times which the Government deplore so much—I see magnificent buildings reared in every direction, and, at all events, it does not appear to me that Brisbane has suffered, for I have seen very few towns during my travels which are equal to Brisbane either in the way in which the population seems to go about its business, in the aspect of the place, or in the appearance of the people. In speaking of the unearned increment no one appears to have taken much notice of Ministers themselves, who have dealt in land, of supporters of the great Liberal Ministry who deal in land, and who have made fortunes out of the unearned increment, and have practically expended no labour whatever. On the other hand, unfortunate people in the bush have gone through a struggle that very few of the townspeople would dare to undertake. Some have made a good living, some have made fortunes, and some have been ruined. One property, which I know in this town, for instance, which was sold to the original proprietor for a mere trifle, has been sold since for £60,000. That property originally did not cost—I believe I am within the mark in saying above £200 or £300. There is something like the unearned increment which has accrued to persons who have done nothing for their money. There is another property not far from town which I remember to have been purchased for £1 an acre, and which has been sold for £50,000, much to the astonishment of the person who held it. We need only look around and see the property of an hon. gentleman about whom a great fuss has been made in this Chamber—the Hon. James Gibbon—and see what an immense sum has been realised by the sale of his land, and how improvements of all kinds now cover it. Now, hon. gentlemen, the Government make a great deal of the increase in the number of people who have, as they say, come upon the land as *bonâ fide* settlers. I have had something to do with land in my time, and I know something about it, and I think I can explain to hon. gentlemen how it has happened. For instance, in the first place we will take the grazing areas, the best feature, no doubt, in the Land Act of 1884. These grazing areas were formed for the purpose of attracting gentlemen and others from

home with a certain amount of capital which they would expend. There is no doubt that the land in those grazing areas is very good. In many places the land is excellent, but if you take the climate into consideration there are very few people with the money requisite to settle upon one of those grazing farms; and very few, knowing the nature of the country in the interior, would be induced to take up a 20,000-acre grazing area. I think I am not wrong in saying that the minimum amount required would be about £5,000. And what would a man in any other business expect to do with £5,000? Any merchant or tradesman commencing business in Brisbane with £5,000 would think himself entitled to have a good house and drive his buggy—in fact to live in what he would consider a proper manner; but the unfortunate man, especially if he is married, who comes from England and is deluded into settling upon one of these grazing farms, must begin with a small bark humpy, then fence his land, and purchase his stock, and if he has to keep his family in town he will have very little left for stock. In summer he has to contend against such pests as flies, sandflies, mosquitoes, and the intense heat, and in winter against fever and ague. I do not want to run down settlement upon these areas, because I consider it is about the best use to which the land can be put, but I want to say, as one who has had some experience, what the real facts of the case are. Within the last fortnight I have returned from the best part of that country, and I am sure that any hon. gentleman who went into that part of the country would be saddened by the appearance of the people who come down from the bush. What are those grazing areas fit for? We must look at the matter in a business-like way, because after all it is a question of pounds, shillings, and pence. These areas will be occupied, but not by the persons this Liberal Government intended should occupy them. Persons from the other colonies, finding our Land Act more liberal than theirs—people who have large stakes in the colony—will come here, and two or three together will take up their 40,000 acres, 60,000 acres, or more; and if those lands are in a good locality they will be used as fattening places for stock instead of having to drive their stock hundreds of miles as at present. People will use these grazing farms as depôts from which they will be able to send their stock to the various markets. Instead of increasing the population, that will be merely placing one grazier in the place of another, and I question very much how far that is equitable. Can any man having £5,000 or £10,000 keep his family in such a place as that? I say there is not one hon. gentleman of this Chamber who would attempt to do so. I say a grazing farm of 20,000 acres is not sufficient.

The Hon. J. D. MACANSH: Yes.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Though my hon. friend opposite is a very old colonist, for whose judgment I have great respect, I differ from him in this instance. I say it is not sufficient for a family to settle on, and I speak of it in a pecuniary sense. A farm of 20,000 acres may hold 1,000 head of cattle or the same proportion of sheep, but I do not think any man with a family could, as a man of refinement, or even as a farmer, bring up his family on that area. Time will prove that this land will not be taken up in those areas, except as I have stated, which was not the intention of the Act. There is another view of the question. Suppose two or more brothers go to this place, and one of them becomes dissatisfied with the sort of life: he cannot possibly make over his interest in the property to his brother, but must sell it. Therefore

it is impossible for anyone who takes up a 20,000-acre selection to increase his business unless he goes entirely outside to another locality. In any other business in which a person places his capital or his intellect, he is at liberty to increase that business, but our Liberal Government compels a man to keep on his 20,000 acres of land. In regard to the settlement on agricultural land it is said to be progressing. I can also explain that matter. I have no doubt that the Postmaster-General will not quite agree with me, but if he were to get statistics and go among the farmers he would find that I am perfectly right. As a rule, the lands which have been taken up have not been taken up by *bonâ fide* settlers with the intention of settling upon them. In reality, with the exception of certain lands, such as Cressbrook, and a few other good pieces of country which have been resumed, in the whole of East Moreton and the greater part of West Moreton, before I left the colony nearly every good acre of land had been taken up, and in a great measure by settlers who possessed land before. The greater part of it was taken up, not because it was good land, but because it was in the neighbourhood of people already owning land, and these people took it up because their stock had increased and if they did not take it up somebody else might do so. I have been told that myself, and that as soon as a Government with any common sense comes into power—a Government that knows the wants of the people—the land laws will be altered. That has been said, not by the squatting community, but by those who are firm supporters of the present Government. Now, how was this Land Act brought forward? As a fact, by a gentleman who ought to have known better. In 1884 a Bill was brought in to prevent the sale of a single acre of land in the colony, but what has happened? In the first instance, the measure was entirely altered, and the alteration was forced upon the Ministry by their own party. The Bill was altered not only in the other Chamber but in this Chamber also; and time has proven that those who opposed the measure were right. The Act was altered first of all *in transitu*, and no sooner was it put in force than the Government, finding how it tied them, brought in another measure to amend the Act. In the first place no land was to be sold; then areas of not more than ten acres might be sold under stringent conditions; now forty-acre areas may be sold; and the thin end of the wedge having been inserted, when pressure is brought to bear on the Government from one cause or another they will say they may sell as much as they like, and it will be done. For my own part I agree with what has been done in regard to the sale of lands, but it is inconsistent with the principle of the Land Act they introduced in 1884. We all remember how the Liberal Government when they wanted money forced lands in the Roma and other districts into the market, the consequence being that the holders of land in those districts were obliged to buy in order to protect themselves. I believe that the more land is sold the better it is for the country; and as for the acquisition of large estates, the largest estate must be cut up. In the first place land will become too valuable to hold in such large areas, and in the next place the owners cannot live for ever, and the land must be divided amongst the families of the owners and by them divided again. I, for one, have sold the greater part of my land, and I will sell every acre of land I have in the bush rather than keep it and be taxed for it in every way a Liberal Government chooses to tax me. Now, look at the large extent of country we have, and then look at the small population. I think I am correct in stating that the population is 322,853,

and that one-sixth part of the people live within six miles of where we stand. Then let us consider what we owe. I believe our debt at the present time amounts to 26½ millions of money, and if our population is the population as returned in the census, then each individual man, woman, and child is indebted £70. I hardly believed it before I made the calculation, but I find now it is a fact that they owe that, without counting the unexpended loan. Yet in the Speech there are more railways on the *tapis*—railways which are not at all necessary—which may, perhaps, be necessary by-and-by, but which with our present population and means of locomotion are not necessary; and I trust the Government of the day will have the caution not to bring them forward. Anyone could talk upon the present aspect of the country for a very long time, but I have already taken up sufficient time. There are many hon. gentlemen who will speak after me, and who will be able to follow up anything I have omitted. It was not my intention to speak at such great length, but I have dealt as forcibly as is within my power with a few of the principal topics of the day. I think if any man loves his country—a country of which there are very few equals in creation; for a person may travel a long way and come back here and be very well content with the country of his adoption—I say if any man loves his country—if the Government and each individual will only look straightforwardly at matters in a business way; if the Government would avoid all parties and strive to do what is best for the country; and if, on the other hand, all people would live within their means instead of living very much above their incomes; if the labouring people would accept labour, and go to places where they can get it, and with their wives and children live thriftily—I believe there is no country in the world which can in every respect make such a happy home as the colony of Queensland. With regard to education, I cannot help thinking that we are going much too far. I am an advocate for education; I should like to see every person in this colony able to read and write and have a certain amount of teaching in arithmetic, but I do believe that if the State has provided that much it is the duty of parents to pay for the higher education of their children. In education alone we spend annually nearly £200,000, and that is without taking into consideration the interest on buildings and materials, which are very numerous. I certainly think that £200,000 is the most that a colony with 320,000 inhabitants can afford to spend upon education, although, at the same time, there is no doubt whatever that the establishment of a university would be a very good thing indeed. We all of us would like many things we cannot get and have to work for, and I think, therefore, we may wait a little. Let us get over the very bad times we have passed through and wait for the tide of prosperity. Money is getting very plentiful, it can be had at a much lower rate of interest now than in former times, and I say that with honesty and perseverance on the part of the Government, and if they will only not strive to foster ill-feeling among the inhabitants by constructing works which are not really necessary, then the time will soon come when we shall be in a position to go in for many luxuries which, at the present time, we cannot afford.

The Hon. J. D. MACANSH said: Hon. gentlemen,—It was not my intention to have spoken on the Address in Reply at all but for the remarks which have been made by my hon. friend who has just sat down. I could not listen to what he said in opposition to the Land Act and give a silent vote. I look upon the Land

Act as the best Land Act in force in any of the Australian colonies. As my hon. friend himself said, people may probably come from other colonies because we have a very liberal Land Act.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: I referred to grazing areas.

The Hon. J. D. MACANSH: At all events, the hon. gentleman admitted that on account of the Land Act people might be attracted to this colony. Now, take the part which refers to the squatting interest. What more liberal terms could anyone have than the squatters have? They get a secure lease for twenty-one years at a very moderate rent indeed of one-half of the land, and in some cases of more than half, and the other half they have the use of until it is required for closer settlement also at a very small rental. In addition to that, they have got every encouragement to make the very best use of the land for their own benefit and for the benefit of the whole colony, because all improvements that they put upon the land are their own property, and when the lease terminates they will be paid for them. In New South Wales, on the other hand, it is very different. There is no encouragement of that kind held out to the Crown tenants. They may make what improvements they please, they have only a very short lease, and at the end of the lease they get no compensation whatever. With regard to the resumed portions of the land, which have been termed grazing areas, and which are to be cut up into 20,000-acre blocks, my hon. friend has tried to make out that it would be quite impossible for anyone to make a living out of 20,000 acres. I do not agree with him at all, and I think that men make a good living out of even a much smaller area of land. In the early days, when I came from New South Wales—about the same time that my hon. friend came—I knew of many families who were living comfortably on a very much less area of land than 20,000 acres, and I have no doubt my hon. friend also knew of those people—people who were living on 2,500 acres, and sometimes less, and doing well upon it. If those people coming upon these grazing farms of 20,000 acres expect to have all the luxuries that are enjoyed in towns, perhaps they may not get them, but we do not expect, nor do we want, those sort of people to settle upon the land. We expect, rather, people of the yeoman class. We expect families who will be willing to work together; who will be contented to live probably in a humpy or gunyah, as the settlers in the early days did. I have known many families who have lived in bark huts for many years, families who have been brought up most respectably, who have been educated well, but who, through all, have been able to live economically. Those are the sort of people we want to see settled on the land. Three or four brothers, or friends, may take up a larger quantity than 20,000 acres, and I see no objection to it whatever. If they even take 20,000 acres apiece—that would be 80,000 acres—what is the objection to it? My friend went on to make out that that is the only way in which the Land Act can be worked, and that there is no inducement to men of small means. But I really think that when the Act is thoroughly understood and people see that they can come here with a small amount of capital and make a comfortable living and be independent, they will come in large numbers. My hon. friend also speaks as if the climate of the interior was a climate in which white people could not live. He speaks of fever, of flies, of sand-flies, and a number of other evils; but the whole of the country is not like that. There are many places where the discomforts are not so

great, and it is only in a very few places where people suffer those inconveniences; in fact, I may go so far as to say that there are many parts of the interior that are as healthy and as comfortable places to live in as Brisbane itself, and I believe that the climate of the interior is, as a rule, even more healthy than the climate of the coast. Now, as regards the agricultural farms. What can a man wish for more than to get 1,200 acres of land at a rental of 3d. per acre? Instead of being obliged to pay down the whole of his capital, he gets the land on lease for, I believe, thirty years, and he has his capital with which to fence the land and buy his implements and stock. He surely is in a much better position than if he had to spend all his money in the purchase of the land. My hon. friend spoke of people having been forced to buy land, and no doubt many people have been forced, and I think most of those people who have been forced to buy regret it at the present day, and would be very glad indeed if they had been able to lease the land instead of having to spend their capital in purchasing it. My opinion, hon. gentlemen, is that the law certainly requires some amendment, but an amendment in an entirely different direction to that in which the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior would go. It is not by facilitating the sale of land that we can improve the Act. But I say by all means let us put a stop altogether and absolutely to sales of land. He spoke of land that had been purchased in Brisbane for a very small sum and afterwards sold at £60,000, and I should like to know whether that is not one of the strongest possible arguments for the non-alienation of land, because all the unearned increment that ought to belong to the country goes to enrich the man who has done nothing whatever for the country. A man buys an allotment of land in or near some town; he does nothing with it, but by the increase of population and the industry of his neighbours that land becomes very valuable, and he pockets a large sum of money without having done anything whatever for the benefit of the community. I consider, hon. gentlemen, that we ought to put a stop at once to all sales of land. Some people say that if the land is not a man's own property he will make no improvements, and he does not value it in the same way as he would value it if he held the fee simple; but I can point to many places here in Brisbane where valuable buildings have been put up on leasehold land, and not on long leases either, which goes to show that the people are quite willing to improve land when it is held under lease and they have it on fair terms. How much better off, then, would people be if they rented land from the State at a moderate rent and improved it, with the certainty that their improvements would eventually be paid for. I trust there will be no alteration made in the land law; at all events that no one will think of helping to abolish the present Act and revert to the old law with indiscriminate sales of land. With regard to the education question, I think it is time a university was established here. As the State pays for the education of the children, I think something more should be done than merely teaching them to read and write. In my opinion they should teach all the boys to be, by-and-by, defenders of their country. They should be taught the use of arms; they should be drilled, and that should be made compulsory, so that, in the course of a generation or two, every citizen should be ready to be called out, if necessary, for the defence of his country. And I think, also, the boys at school ought to be taught the rudiments of trades. The education that is given now teaches them, to a great extent, to despise the work that is performed by many of their

fathers. You will find, in many cases, intelligent boys, the sons of mechanics or labourers, who look down upon their parents with contempt because they are not as well educated as themselves. For that reason I certainly would advocate the teaching of the rudiments of trades. The more intelligent boys should certainly get a higher education, but I think some inducement should be given to the youths of the colony to follow in the footsteps of honest labour, and that they should be taught to respect work, whatever it may be.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—It is not my intention to more than briefly refer to three or four heads of the Speech now under consideration. With regard to the Conference recently held in London, I am very much in accord with what has been said, so far as I am acquainted with what has taken place. I believe we should work as one harmonious empire, for if the empire is consolidated every part of it will benefit from the strength of the combination. It is all very well to say Australia is rapidly marching on and becoming an important part of the civilised world by itself; but I believe that, in order to arrive at that consummation, the most certain and ready means will be for the colonies to unite with the mother-country in one bond of empire. The next matter that requires our earnest consideration is the question of the colonies joining in the protection of their local trade, by helping to maintain a squadron in Australian waters. It is all very well for people to say that Great Britain derives so much benefit from the trade of her colonies that she can reasonably be expected to bear the expense of protecting that trade, but that is a narrow-minded and fallacious argument. Great Britain is, no doubt, in some respects more interested than we are, but we have other interests than merely the maintenance of our trade, and with a united empire we shall be able to protect ourselves under any circumstances likely to occur. It would, therefore, be very paltry and mean on our part to throw the whole of the onus of protecting our trade upon the mother-country. Care, however, should be taken that the money subscribed from time to time for the maintenance of a squadron in these waters should be judiciously and wisely spent, and we should have some voice in its distribution, though not to the extent of meddling with the arrangements necessarily made by the Imperial naval authorities. With reference to New Guinea, it strikes me it would be but reasonable that we should extend the term for maintaining the administration of affairs in New Guinea to ten years, because a less time would be almost useless. The arrangements necessary to be made are such that to establish them properly would require some extra expense in the beginning in order that they might be carried out economically afterwards. The distress caused by the floods has been spoken of very much as if it was one of the causes tending to retard the progress of the colony and form an important part of the depreciation of revenue along with the drought. The drought was a gigantic evil, and the revenue has suffered very much from it, but to nothing like the extent it has suffered by the maladministration of the finances. Anyone of observation and experience can see that the flood was a local matter, and that the sufferers were cheerfully helped by a considerable number of people without any great strain on the Treasury. In regard to the land question I shall simply say that the idea of people being able to live on 20,000 acres of pastoral land in Australia is simply ludicrous. There is not one selection that could be made out of 500 on which a person would attempt to get a living unless he was totally ignorant in regard to pastoral matters. It is possible that within 100 miles of the coast a man might get a living on 20,000

acres; but if I had just enough money and had just come out to the country prepared to start life with the knowledge I now possess I should consider myself a fool—little less than an idiot—to take up a selection of 20,000 acres and expect to make a living. A large quantity of the land in the interior is good enough, and there is generally plenty of grass; but where is the water? Without water it will never pay to take up those small areas for grazing purposes. Coming to the establishment of a Department of Agriculture, I will only observe that up to the present time throughout the Australian Colonies it has been a melancholy failure. Ornamental gardens in the principal towns are well enough, but a Department of Agriculture, when the finances of the colony are in such a depressed condition, will be worse than useless. The day may come when something of the sort may be done with advantage, but now is the wrong time to attempt it. Reference is made in the Speech to the census, and I should like to know why it has been kept back more than a year. The census taken last May has not been available to the public so far as I am aware, except by way of very crude references, up to the present time. Some years ago I happened to take the trouble to go into some details of the census, and I know that the whole thing could have been completed without any great expense, in a few months from the time the census was taken, and this House and the public ought to have had the information last year. In the parts of the Speech addressed to the Legislative Assembly, reference is made to the finances of the colony, and anyone not knowing the facts is apt to be misled by the statement that the public finances have not escaped the natural consequences of the long continued adverse seasons. That is a reiteration of what has been said over and over again. Why did not the Government when they found the revenue was failing and the people getting less and less able to bear the burden of taxation—why did they not at once curtail expenditure? Year after year they promised a reduction of expenditure, saying that the Estimates would be framed on the strictest lines of economy, yet session after session they go on showing us that they have expended a quarter of a million more than they have received. The present Government began with a quarter of a million to the good. The first year they consumed the whole of that, and each succeeding year they have been a quarter of a million to the bad. They have had plenty of time to reduce expenditure so as not to leave this burden on the country, but they have not done so; and even the improvement of the condition of trade—agriculture, the pastoral industry, and the mining industry—has not resulted from the legislation of the present Government. The reference made to the improvement in the administration of public business in the more remote parts of the colony comes rather late in the day, and, but for the fact that the Secretary of State for the Colonies could not recommend Her Majesty to permit the division of the colony, would have been too late to be of the smallest use. Why was it not proposed before? Surely the North had some right to be considered? As for the attempt by the construction of railways to try and give them some advantages and increase the expenditure in the Northern districts, the wants of those districts have never been fairly and equitably attended to. Out of the enormous expenditure by the present Government a very undue proportion has been expended within a very limited distance of the metropolis; in fact, the whole end and aim of the Government during the last three years has been to pander to the wishes of their immediate supporters. It is essential, as has often been said, that a Queen-street Government should consult the wishes of those who are

just within reach of the metropolis. Centralisation has been the great evil of colonial legislation, and Queensland, so far from claiming to be one of the least offenders in this matter, has for years past transcended the other colonies; and until some equitable distribution of the electorates has been made on something like the same basis as in the mother-country, so long will the evils of centralisation be felt. There is a short paragraph of two lines which I will read before I make any comment upon it:—

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

Now, I think I am right in saying that the only three lines that money has been voted for, and which have not already been approved of, are three which have been rejected by this House, and are lines which will entail upon the country enormous expenses with a correspondingly small benefit. Now if the Government, after the extravagant expenditure they have gone into, are going to make a further effort to construct any one of these lines, they will plunge the colony into financial disaster such as it will take many years to retrieve. I earnestly warn hon. gentlemen to fairly consider this matter in time so that they may not be taken by surprise, and if these measures are brought up for the purpose of expending something like three millions of money upon lines which will give no adequate return, to pause and consider the consequences. A Bill to shorten the duration of Parliaments is one upon which I will say nothing now. Except that if we take the past history of Parliaments I do not think it will be found that such measures materially alter the condition of things, as very few Parliaments, except by some unusual course of circumstances, extend beyond three years. Otherwise I certainly should not be inclined to support any diminution of the period for which Parliaments are elected. The last question is that of the establishment of a university in Queensland. Now, I have always been highly in favour of doing everything possible for the establishment of the very best class of education for members of the community within reasonable limits, but I deny that it is the duty of the Government to spend large sums of money in going beyond the usual introductory elements of education such as would qualify a man to work his way in the world and take his proper place. As for attempting to teach the higher branches of knowledge, I say that at present those who require it should do so by means of scholarships, for I look upon the expenditure of money in this direction as not being justified considering the bad times we have passed through, and the importance of other matters requiring expenditure. While I should like to see the country so far advanced as to be able to establish a university—and I have gone so far as to personally attach my name to a petition that we consider it desirable that a university should be established—yet I am bound to qualify that by saying that it is not right to establish such an institution until the country is out of debt or until our annual revenue admits of some appropriation of funds towards it. I would go further and say that if there was a fair prospect of our being able to pay the interest on our national debt, then we might even start such an institution with borrowed money, but as matters stand I should look upon the project as certainly premature. The idea of teaching handicrafts in a university is quite new—or rather new to us—for I understand that is done in some American universities. Taking the Speech altogether, I can simply say that, as usual, there is very little to cavil at, but a great deal to draw forth the opinions of hon. gentlemen as to whether the course which the Government are

about to pursue is desirable, unless so far modified as to avoid the possibility of involving the country in disastrous debt.

The HON. J. C. HEUSSLER said: Hon. gentlemen,—I cannot refrain from saying a few words before the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech is agreed to. The first paragraph of the Speech refers to the happy and prosperous reign of Her Majesty. No doubt we are all rejoiced that Her Majesty has been spared to rule over her people for so long a period, and congratulate ourselves upon the great advances that have been made during the past fifty years. Not only out here but in all the colonies all over the globe the same rejoicings have taken place, and justly so. This has not been confined to Her Majesty's subjects alone, but all the civilised world has taken occasion to congratulate Her Majesty. It cannot be denied that Her Majesty has afforded a noble example to her subjects, and has effected, not alone to her subjects but to the whole world, the greatest possible good throughout her Empire. Having said so much, I shall now make a great jump to the subject of land settlement, in which we all take a particular interest. Not only have I always taken a deep interest in the subject when before the House, but I have on other occasions formulated my view upon the subject of the settlement of the land. Now, hon. gentlemen, I have nothing to say against the Act itself, but I have something to say against the carrying out of the spirit of the Act of 1884. You all know that I am not a partisan of any Government. I always thought that we were here for the general benefit of the country and not for party purposes. Of late years I have had a sort of hatred of party and parliamentary government, and I am glad that of late years my opinions are shared by many others, and amongst them by no less distinguished a man than Lord Brassey. Now, if you will allow me, I will give you some information on the question of land settlement. During the time that Sir Samuel Griffith was in England I took the liberty of addressing the Acting Chief Secretary upon the subject, and I venture to hope that what I am now about to read will be of some little interest to hon. members:—

"I do not think I need to apologise for doing so, inasmuch, though in my place in the Legislative Council not a partisan and sometimes a critic of any Government, I always advocated the fostering of the producing interest and a close settlement on the lands of the colony wherever practicable. and since your Government, before coming into office and afterwards by the introduction of the Land Bill, pronounced that policy, I gave it a warm support, which the late Postmaster-General, now Mr. Justice Mein, and the present, Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, will, I think, readily testify; moreover, when I represented the Government as Immigration Agent on the Continent of Europe in the beginning of the independence of Queensland, I introduced between the years 1861-66 some 8,000 to 9,000 people, chiefly from Germany, and was instrumental to settle them—being chiefly farmers—on the land. They formed the nucleus of a most thriving farming population, and with additions since constitute now not an unimportant factor in that direction. Mr. Jordan did then work on a much larger scale in Great Britain, and had it not been for the unsuitableness of land in the agricultural reserves provided under the then otherwise excellent Land Act, chiefly brought about by the shortsightedness of a domineering class, afterwards in many instances bitterly regretted, the colony would have quite a different aspect by the present time. Both systems, as I will show, were, besides being the most efficient, the least expensive. Mr. Darval, Registrar-General, in his report of 1866 (if I remember rightly) testified that with regard to my work, and the parliamentary papers of 1867 affirm it in great length of the work of Mr. Jordan"—

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I rise to a point of order. The question this House has under consideration is the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech, and we are not here to listen to the reading of letters written by the hon.

gentleman and addressed to some member of the Government. If our proceedings are to be conducted properly, and no notice is to be taken of such digressions, then we might all indulge in the same practice. I might read copies of letters that I have written to the Government during the last ten or fifteen years. Of course it is a question to be determined by hon. members whether they are going to have the private correspondence of the hon. gentleman read out during the progress of such an important debate as this.

The HON. J. C. HEUSSLER: I may point out that it was merely for convenience that I was reading the letter. If I am not allowed to read it I shall have to express my views in some other way, but I think that I do not in any way transgress the rules of the House. As far as I am able to see, I am adopting the best course to bring before hon. members the ideas I wish to convey. I wish simply to point out to this House how close settlement of land can be effected, and what is the most desirable policy to pursue at the present time. Of course if hon. members do not wish me to finish I shall not proceed, but I cannot see that I am in any way out of order, and I simply place myself in the hands of the hon. the President.

The PRESIDENT: Is my ruling wished for on the subject?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: In speaking to the Address in Reply to the Speech from His Excellency, considerable latitude is always allowed to every hon. member, but I must say that, in my opinion, the hon. member is going beyond the latitude ordinarily allowed by reading letters addressed by himself to the Acting Chief Secretary, which, as it were, are semi-official documents. If, however, it is the wish of hon. members to hear the hon. gentlemen I cannot interfere.

The HON. J. C. HEUSSLER: Well, I will read a few more extracts if hon. gentlemen will allow me, and I shall not take more than ten minutes. What I wish to point out is the economy of immigration, and I believe it is a very interesting subject.

The HON. W. HORATIO WILSON: There is nothing about that in the Speech.

The HON. J. C. HEUSSLER: I will just continue to read portions of the letter which I have written:—

"In my case, the cost to the Government was only an £18 land order for each statute adult landed in the colony. Mr. Jordan, on the other hand, brought out within the same period (1861-66) 36,054 persons, with a pretty correctly ascertained money capital of about £1,000,000 sterling. Of these colonists were 12,550 full payers who got land orders, 6,222 assisted passengers, 17,282 free passengers, including navvies, which were especially ordered by the Government. The assisted paid £8 per statute adult, by which payment £53,605 12s. 5d. was received—sufficient to pay all the costs of his mission—clerks' salaries, office rent, lecturing and advertising expenses, and left a revenue of about £3,000 to the good, while, if I remember rightly, the average cost for immigration of the last four years is £280,000 a-year, for which the colony got about 12,000 immigrants, chiefly consisting of labourers, and therefore not settlers in the first instance, and small taxpayers.

"When the revenue is in a shrinking condition, as it undoubtedly is at the present, and yet it is dangerous to the progress of the colony to curtail expenditure for public works, it is apparent to me that some device should be resorted to, aiming at a sound equilibrium of revenue and expenditure to avoid the *cul de sac*, and, naturally, I turn in the absence of better—or, indeed, any efficient, sound expedients—I turn my eyes back to a system which brought us so surprisingly a start to development and prosperity in former years.

"The present immigration is unpopular—indeed in some measure an additional burden to the colony, inasmuch as the new comers swell the rank of artisans



and day—i.e., unskilled—labourers, who are not able to find employment; but there cannot be, and is not, any objection to the introduction of the yeoman farming class of Great Britain, which brings besides their personal labour more or less capital in money, and settle almost immediately after arrival on the land.

"From New Zealand it is recently reported that about 200 families of that stamp, with an imported money capital of some £10,000, have been lately settled on the land, and more are expected.

"This is the only sort of immigrants (with the exception, perhaps, of miners) at present suitable to our condition, being taxpayers, to help us to bear our burden, while the undoubted prosperity of our farming fellow colonists augurs success to them.

"The last Land Act Amendment Act provides for the issuing of land-orders by the Agent-General or other person, clearly indicating that some officer may be appointed by the Government to carry out the provisions.

"Without detracting from the merits of the Agent-General, who, under the present altered condition of the office, has plenty other work for himself, or the Immigration Lecturer, Mr. Raudall, who without any slur on him can continue in harmony to lecture, it is my firm opinion that no other person in Queensland is so well qualified as Mr. Jordan to fill that office as special emigration commissioner with advantage and some success.

"It is, perhaps, only necessary to keep that office for a few years to revive the old principle under altered circumstances of the colony.

"Mr. Jordan had acquired all influential connections essential to a mission of that sort, which to a great extent could be brought by him into usefulness again, and last, but not least, his heart is still as warm as ever on the subject.

"The first requisite is the selection and survey (even if only feature) of good agricultural and partly pastoral land, wherever it can be found near towns or lines of railway, in farms of, say, 40 to 1,280 acres—the small ones, of course, all fit for tillage; the others to have a proportion, the remainder grazing land.

"Most squatters (if I am rightly informed) have brought their runs under the Land Act of 1894, so that a large area has been set free for settlement. It is only reasonable to suppose that this circumstance provides a very large quantity of land suitable for small capitalist farmers.

"Then again there are the facilities given under the Land Act of 1894 for settlement on small squattages from 5 to 20,000 acres for purely pastoral occupation, and may be with tillage for feeding of live stock, to be pointed out to the intending emigrant farmer.

"Of course there should not be any of the vexatious hindrances which were placed in the way, during the first mission of Mr. Jordan, for settlement or unreadiness when the people arrived, and which I personally and with assistance partly overcame, as in the case of the German settlement on the Logan River, by placing the people on the land, although it was not properly surveyed."

The Government have lately appointed an Under Secretary for Agriculture; and if he does what has been pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Gregory he will be worse than useless, but if he points out to farmers the land which is suitable for their purpose he will do some good. It has been said that it is a miserable existence to live on a small grazing farm, but I deny it, and I am sure that no class in the colony is so well off as the farming class. When they come out here they have very little, but after cultivating their twenty acres, thirty acres, forty acres, or fifty acres, for a few years they are able to come into town with their horses and carts, and are very happy. I have a great respect for the old pioneers, the squatters. I know they have had hard work, and have not been remunerated in many cases as they ought to have been; but even for those very pioneers it would be a very good thing if we had on suitable land in their neighbourhood some sort of settlement, the closer the better. It has been said that a family could not exist on a 20,000-acre selection, but I happen to have a personal friend who has made a competence on such an area. He began with a few hundreds of his own and a good credit at the bank, and

after working for fifteen years he is now a rich man, if the possession of £30,000 makes a man rich. The great object of land legislation is to settle people on the land, because there is room for all. There is room for capital, room for labour, and room also for the middle man; and if there are difficulties in the way of settlement it is the duty of the Government, especially a Government that professes to do so much in that way, to remove those difficulties. If they cannot do so they will stumble and break. With regard to the administration of public business in the remote parts of the colony, I think that comes at the eleventh hour, very nearly at the twelfth hour; but it is better late than never, and I hope that the measure brought forward will pacify the North. My humble opinion is that if there is to be a new Minister, or if one seat in the Cabinet becomes vacant his place should be supplied by a Northern and not by a Queen-street man. I believe that by doing so the Government would get a new lease of power and if they do not take the hint and do what is best for themselves I suppose they will stumble and break. With regard to the university, I do not think it necessary to spend a large amount all at once on such an institution, though it is very desirable that we should always progress in the matter of education. I agree very much with a letter which appeared in the Press to-day criticising a speech made in the other House last night. We are not in India where they have castes; we are in a Christian country, where one is as good as another, and where one's vocation is as good as that of another, and where there is no restriction to progress. A shoemaker who makes a shoe is as good a citizen as the lawyer who holds a brief; perhaps the shoemaker is better than the lawyer, because he produces something, whereas the lawyer is only a middle-man, or parasite.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh!

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER: I call myself a parasite. Merchants are parasites as well as lawyers, because they are middle-men. I do not use the word in an offensive sense; I simply mean that we live upon one another. The agricultural labourer, the mining labourer, and the manufacturer produce something, but the others are parasites. Such an institution as a university may be only small in the beginning and grow by degrees. It would be a very good thing for the Government in the meantime to select a fine elevated site in the vicinity of Brisbane and reserve it for the future lecture room, and in the meantime they may build a simple wooden barn and the lecturers may go and speak in that barn; but let us by all means have the lectures.

The Hon. P. MACPHERSON said: Hon. gentlemen,—I do not intend to detain the House at any length. I have very much pleasure in following my hon. friend Mr. Heussler, on account of our intimate relations with the German Empire, and because that Empire has in him a most able, eloquent, and untiring representative. With reference to the first paragraph, I add cordially my humble felicitations on the subject, and I am delighted that the colony has been so ably, and I may say powerfully, represented at the Conference by our Premier. I do not believe we could by any possibility have had a better representative, but I accept simply and without prejudice the statement in the Speech that—

"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."

I accept that for the present until I have had an opportunity of reading for myself what has transpired. Like my hon. friend Mr. Heussler, I will now take a jump. His Excellency says:—

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

So am I. I have a great deal of land suitable for occupation by *bonâ fide* settlers without the performance of any conditions except the payment of cash, and I shall be glad to see as many people settled upon it as possibly can. I may tell the House confidentially that there is a mortgage upon it, but that does not matter. I have no doubt that if Government land is to be settled upon, mine will be also. Now I come to one part that perhaps I have no right to allude to, and that is—

"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."

My hon. friend Mr. Gregory, in alluding to this subject, alluded to the well-known term "the Queen-street Government." I think after this they ought to be called the "Queer-street Government." That would be a most appropriate epithet. As the late Sir R. R. Mackenzie said after an abortive pyrotechnic display, "The weather confuses everything." Now, the weather has confused the Government. The other day I met a gentleman in the street in rather distracted attire and imbecile countenance and a heavy deficit on one side of his legs; I said, "What is the matter, old man?" "Oh," he said, in a voice husky with emotion and drink, "it is all the weather; it is all the terrible season; it will be better to-morrow." It strikes me that that is all the Speech tells us. The weather has been terrible; the finances have suffered. They generally do suffer from a long drought or a heavy wet. The Government suffer in the same way, and then say the weather has been bad and that it will be better to-morrow. The finances will be better by-and-by. Well, I accepted the excuse of the gentleman I met, and no doubt we will accept the excuses of the Government and possibly we will give them another chance. Now I will take another jump—

"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."

What is meant by "natural water"? Is it the natural direction of the water? I always understood that all water was natural. Is it intended to refer to the conservation of water or not? I do not know whether we will really get this measure, for we have been promised it for the last seven or eight years, but it will be a great boon to the country. I shall be glad myself to see "a Bill to provide for the protection of workmen and the security of their wages." That is a Bill that ought to have been passed years and years ago, and the sooner the better. I shall also be glad to see "a Bill to amend the law relating to diseases in animals," in order that the long-suffering squatter may have some protection for the remains of his flocks. As regards the question of education I may say I am thoroughly in accord with the Speech in that respect, and I believe that, to use its own language—

"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 have been a little discursive in my remarks, hon. gentlemen, and I hope I have not wearied the House. I shall not object to the motion.

The PRESIDENT: If any hon. gentleman wants to address the House, and will intimate the fact, I will resume the chair at 7 o'clock if it will suit their convenience better.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH: I would suggest as there is no necessity for closing the debate to-night, and as we have nothing else to do next week, that the debate be adjourned.

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE said: Hon. gentlemen,—In rising to speak on this motion I will have a few words to say upon some of the matters that are referred to in the Speech. Nearly every hon. member who has spoken has referred to the first paragraph and the satisfactory manner in which the occasion of Her Majesty's jubilee has been signalised throughout the colony. I think there can be no doubt in anybody's mind that the manner in which this jubilee has been celebrated throughout nearly all the civilised world where the British have effected settlement, shows that the laws and system of government under which we have lived are such as have stood the test of time, and that the people living under them are, on the whole, fairly satisfied with their system of government. There are, of course, some exceptions which it is unnecessary to mention here; but it is to be hoped that even these will in a very short time disappear. It is perhaps an invidious thing to refer to one incident which has rather an unpleasant bearing upon this matter. I think it has a bearing because this year, and I may say almost about the time of the celebration of Her Majesty's jubilee, we have signalised in this colony for the first time in our history, the execution of a female. I felt at the time a very great anguish at the announcement that it was definitely decided that this unfortunate woman should be executed, but those who have had some opportunity of seeing that woman have very great doubts indeed as to the extent of her guilt, or of her guilt being sufficiently shown to have caused her execution. I think that under the circumstances, if mercy could be shown in any case, especially in the case of a female, it might have been shown upon an occasion which occurred during the time of the rejoicings throughout the world at Her Majesty's jubilee. Looking through this Speech and bearing in mind the strong feelings which have been growing and have grown up for some years, and to a very large extent during this last year or two, it seems to me that the aspirations of all those people who look forward to the full development of Australia as Australia, will be somewhat disappointed with the Speech. The tenor and tone of this Address is, one may say, almost entirely from the point of view of the Imperial Government. Measures which will have the effect of benefiting the Imperial Government considerably are advocated, and in the opinion of many persons the true interests of the Australasian colonies are to some extent forgotten. We must remember that although we appear at the present to be almost entirely self-governed communities, we are not so. We are communities existing entirely by the sufferance of the Imperial Parliament, which may pass measures at any time derogating seriously from the privileges we now enjoy. The late Conference is attributable to a great extent to an agency called the Imperial Federation League, which claimed the credit of having suggested it, and also claimed that some of its principal members should be allowed to join the Conference on the ground that they suggested its institution. I have read a great many publications of the Imperial Federation League, and from beginning to end there is one

current of thought, which shows a feeling of regret that in times gone by the people of Great Britain were induced to part with the control of the Australian colonies. At the time they did so they set very little value upon these possessions; but now they see their folly they appear to be anxious to regain the control of them. There is no way in which they can get that except by inducing the people here to believe it will be for their benefit to place themselves again under an outside power, even in the matter of legislating for themselves. If we are to be placed under a Council or an Assembly composed of people from all parts of the British dominions, our individual voices will count for very little, and it is futile for those who advise us to go further in the matter of Imperial federation to urge that we shall gain anything by it, because what we gain in benefits will not compensate for the loss of privileges we shall sustain. Again, in the question of defence by the establishment of a fleet, it appears to me that the Imperial Government are getting a good bargain. Apart from any assistance which the colonies are willing to give the Imperial Government, so long as we retain our relationship of dependency, the mother-country is bound in honour to provide for our defence; and if we as colonies not represented in the councils of the Empire are to suffer loss in the future, through wars initiated by the English Government without our concurrence, they will be morally bound to compensate these colonies for the loss sustained. By this proposed measure they get the colonies to bear a very large proportion of the cost of protecting Australian trade in Australian waters, and to this I have two further objections, one of which is that so long as we depend on the Imperial Government for the defence of these waters so long shall we be removed from any chance of appearing in the councils of the Empire on anything like an equal footing. If the protection afforded by Great Britain is removed we shall be defenceless; and as one who believes that Australia should be for the Australians I trust that if this arrangement is adopted it will be regarded as only temporary, and one that will be replaced in the early future by an Australian navy, consisting of ships built in Australia and supplied with munitions of war from Australian arsenals. Till we go that length we shall not be in a position to talk of federation, because people who federate must be those who have a choice of assenting or not assenting to what is done. So long as we have to pay the Imperial Government for supplying ships and men to protect our trade so long shall we be in such a weak position as to be obliged to accept any terms the Imperial Government wishes to dictate. Under those circumstances federation of the Empire so far as we are concerned can be nothing but a sham and a farce. Another reason why I do not approve of this, at any rate as a permanent system of defence, is that we should as soon as possible cultivate amongst our own people the feeling that we ought to be able in every respect to defend ourselves, whether on land or at sea, and I believe whatever sacrifices we may be called upon to make as national communities for the purpose of establishing our own system of defence, those sacrifices will be more than compensated in other ways. I think when that time comes we shall be able to speak with greater authority on questions affecting Australian interests. If we were not in the comparatively helpless condition we have hitherto been our protests in regard to the New Hebrides and New Guinea would have received attention at the proper time. These colonies are now growing so rapidly that it is impossible to say what the population will be in fifteen or twenty years, and we must look forward

to the fact that it will be impossible to expect Australia in future to submit, with comfort, at any rate, to the disabilities which we can now without much inconvenience put up with. It will be quite natural for the people of these colonies in the future to insist upon a more complete system of self-government than we have hitherto enjoyed, and the sooner we come to realise that fact the better it will be for us and the whole of the British Empire. There have been a good many things said about the land laws, and the Government claim that there has been a great demand for land for occupation by *bona fide* settlers. I believe there has, but I believe at the same time the demand has not been satisfied by the Government, that their system of land legislation is not able to satisfy that demand, and so long as the present law exists that demand cannot be satisfied. I do not agree that it is well not to alienate any of the land; I believe that until we have alienated almost the whole of our land to an inhabitant population in fee-simple we shall not have the proper elements for the constitution of a nation. Until you have land bound to the occupiers by a tie which no leasehold ever gives you will never be able to rely upon a settled population, and until you have that settled population you cannot rely upon the men of the colony to step forward in any movement for the enforcement of the rights of the colony. If hon. gentlemen wish to see this system of leasing carried out to its logical and complete conclusion I recommend them to read the description of that system by Mr. McGahan in his journey during the campaign on the Oxus. The system has been in force there for many centuries, and the result is that the people are merely nomads—in no way attached to the soil—and useless for the purpose of any national life or anything else, except to exist in a state of ignorance many degrees below ordinary civilised beings. That is the logical outcome of a complete system of leasing; and unless a man is attached by something better than temporary occupation he is no citizen, and never can be one. We may discuss now, with very little profit, the conditions of holding land, because I believe that within the next five years we shall see such a change in the conditions of the country as to set at naught all our experience and all our theories. The face of this country will be changed before long I hope by those systems of cultivation which have done so much for America; and I believe that until an extensive system of irrigation is introduced into this country we shall never see it completely occupied. I am very pleased to hear that it is the intention of the Government to introduce a measure, though it may be but a tentative proposal, for the conservation and distribution of water. The establishment of a Department of Agriculture is not, I think, a matter upon which the Government may be congratulated. It has been stated in another place that the gentleman who is to have the control of the department is one who has an unfortunate knack of falling out with everyone with whom he comes in contact, and that is a very bad omen for the success of the department. To create a Department of Agriculture for the purpose of getting rid out of another branch of the service of an unworkable official seems to be very bad policy, and as if the Government were not really in earnest in the objects by which they profess to be actuated in the establishment of the department. I think my hon. friend the Postmaster-General must have felt somewhat awkward when the Hon. Dr. Taylor, in moving the adoption of the Address in Reply, recognised the fact that the majority of the people now believe that the land system of the present Government is a mistake. He set himself strongly

to apologise for the failure of the Act and to advocate the re-establishment of its main principles. That is the reason, I suppose, why so much of this debate has been occupied by the land question. When a measure upon which the Government staked their existence is so treated by the hon. gentleman who moves the adoption of the Address in this House, it seems that they must have a very bad case. Furthermore, the Government seem to have come to the conclusion that they have been quite long enough in office, because one of the last measures they promise is one providing for triennial parliaments. This measure seems to come very strangely from a Government that has been in existence for more than three years, and the logical conclusion is that they have satisfied themselves that three years is long enough for any Government to be in office. I quite concur with what has been said about the delay in placing the information obtained by the census before the Houses of Parliament. I think we ought to have been in possession of that information long ago. It would then have been found in what an unnatural condition the colony had been existing. One hon. gentleman has stated that one-sixth of the population of the colony resides within a radius of five or six miles from the place where this building stands, but I think the proportion is even larger. Unless my memory deceives me, the number of people reported to reside within five miles of the General Post Office is 72,000, which is about one-fourth of the population of the whole colony. What is the proportion of those who are actually engaged in production? I think the remarks made by my friend the Hon. Mr. Heussler have not received that attention they deserve, and I am of opinion that his division of the population of the colony into producers and non-producers, who are, as it were, parasites, is not at all misplaced. Probably there is not more than one producer for every twenty non-producers in the colony, and that shows that we are driving the people into the cities, and leaving the country neglected. Our legislation should make provision to remedy such a state of things, and until we do something in that direction we shall not return to that prosperity which is spoken of in the Speech of His Excellency. As to the question of separation, I was one of those who made some remarks about it when the subject was before the House last year. At that time the Government took no steps to remedy the complaints which were made by the people of the North, but now that Her Majesty's Government have not advised the granting of the prayer of the petition, they think it is their duty to provide for the redress of the grievances which exist. I think those grievances should have been redressed before the petition was sent home. The steps to remove the cause of complaint should have been taken long ago. By coming forward with their proposals now the Government acknowledge that there are reasonable grounds for complaint on the part of the people of the North; it is an admission that the expenditure is not equitable, that there are difficulties in the administration of the affairs of the colony which bear harshly upon the people of the North. Either the Government have been ignorant of these difficulties hitherto, which would be a very great slur upon them, or being acquainted with them they have neglected to remove them, which is not creditable. From either point of view the administration of the affairs of the colony do not reflect credit upon the Government. I have been rather surprised that some hon. gentlemen should have expressed so great antipathy to the establishment of a university in this colony. I really did not

expect that there would be any member of this House opposed to the foundation of a university in Queensland. I was looking forward to an almost unanimous support being given to the project by the members of the Legislative Council; and I trust that when the measure does come before us it will not be received with the coldness that has been manifested by some hon. members here to-day. The benefits which would accrue to the colony by the establishment of a university are very great, and it is unnecessary, I am sure, that I should allude to them in detail in a speech addressed to gentlemen who are members of this House. I think some hon. members have stated that we have already gone too far in free education, and that it would be going too far to give a free university education also to the youth of the colony. I am not aware that it is proposed that the education to be given by the university should be free. I would not support the establishment of a free university, because the expense would be very much more probably than the country would be prepared to bear. As I have the honour of being one of those who have taken part in the movement for the promotion of this scheme I would point out that at the present time any young man who requires to go through any course of education above the ordinary level of that afforded by the State or grammar schools is obliged at very great expense to proceed to some other part of the world to obtain it, when such an education ought to be obtainable at his own doors. Such an expense as is entailed by having to go elsewhere is sufficient to prevent many promising young men availing themselves of a more liberal education. If a university were established merely for the purpose of imparting instruction during certain hours of the day when young men are engaged in business there might perhaps be some objections to the scheme, but I think it has been put forward before the public as part of the project that the university should afford opportunities for instruction not only to young men not engaged in any employment, but also to those who are actually following some occupation, and can devote their evenings to the acquisition of further knowledge, so that the benefits of the institution would not be confined to a small section of the community. How can we estimate the advantages of a university in money? Even if the university did cost £200,000, as has been suggested by one member, its real value to the colony would be far more than that.

The Hon. P. MACPHERSON: That is the cost of the present system of education.

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE: I thought that sum was mentioned as the probable cost of establishing a university. The present annual expenditure on education is no doubt very great. Whether it can be reduced is not a matter for us to discuss. There are some inequalities in connection with it which I should like to see removed. But whatever the cost of the university may be I think it will amply repay it. Similar objections to those now urged against this proposal were raised in New South Wales and Victoria when it was proposed to establish a university in those colonies, but no one would now dream of attempting to abolish those universities. There are some other measures referred to in the Speech which are very badly wanted. We have had no intimation of the object of some of these Bills. I think I may safely say that a Bill to amend the laws relating to fisheries is very much needed. This is a subject to which I have given some attention lately, and I believe that with proper legislation we shall be able to establish a valuable industry which will give employment to the unemployed labour in the colony, which is now of very great

magnitude. I am not aware in what particular the law relating to auctioneers is proposed to be amended, nor am I aware of any evils that have to be removed in connection with that branch of business. With regard to the proposed legislation for the protection of workmen and the security of their wages, I concur with my friend the Hon. Mr. Macpherson that it is deplorable to see unfortunate men prevented by the bankruptcy and other laws from recovering their wages. We have already passed measures which have some bearing on this subject and which have been of considerable benefit, but I think further legislation is still necessary, and I shall, therefore, be glad to see such a measure as that referred to passed into law this session.

THE HON. W. F. TAYLOR said : Hon. gentlemen,—With the permission of the House I would like to make a slight correction. In my speech yesterday I am reported to have said that the majority of the people of the colony believe the Land Act to be a mistake. What I did say was that a large number believe the Land Act is a mistake. I do not think that the majority of the inhabitants of the colony are of that opinion.

THE HON. G. KING said : Hon. gentlemen,—The Address has been so fully debated that there is very little left for me to say upon the Speech, and I will only make a few remarks about our much-condemned Land Act. It is by no means a new departure in legislation, for the pastoral tenants, under her Majesty's Orders in Council, were equally precluded from purchasing land ; they were not allowed to buy an acre, but merely had the use of the grass and water. It was not until empirical legislation interfered with our lands that alienation was permitted. When free selection before survey was introduced in New South Wales then the land scramble began and agrarian conflicts ensued. It is from that period that the acquisition of land by the pastoral tenants dates ; they were obliged, in self-defence, to buy, and a great misfortune it has been for them that they have been so obliged to buy, and to pay interest on millions of money invested in their purchases. If they had been able to devote the money so expended to the improvement of their properties, and had been satisfied with half the extent of their runs, a vast amount of loss which has been entailed upon them would have been spared, and the country would have been all the richer for it, because the great bulk of the freehold land has been purchased with foreign capital, and the interest on that money has gone out of the country to English capitalists. Far be it from me to undervalue the benefits of English capital. Its effects have been most beneficial, and one may almost say in the words in which mercy has been described that "it blesses him that gives and him that takes." But there is a limit to all things. By following out the system of wholesale alienation we should be fostering that system of absentee landlords which is causing so much distress and ill-will in Ireland, it is only substituting the word "interest" for "rent." It is also one of the great social evils of the present day all over Europe. Everywhere the agrarian question comes to the front, and it is not an imaginary difficulty ; it is one which springs up from the natural course of things. The population in Europe is augmenting to such an extent that it becomes a difficult question where to place the people. During the next fifty years Germany alone will have to provide for a surplus population of 37,000,000, England of 27,000,000, France, stricken by sterility, of about 4,000,000. It is a question with statesmen now where they shall place the surplus population, and it is for this purpose that Prince Bismarck desires to take up land ;

he wishes to acquire more land not for the sake of conquest, but in order that he may be able to find room for the ever-increasing population of Germany. In some parts of that country there are 515 inhabitants to the square mile, while in other parts throughout the land the average is about 212 persons to the square mile, and in other countries of the Old World the population is increasing to the same extent. Therefore it is a very serious question to decide how those people shall be provided for. Now, by not alienating our lands, by keeping them free, that is to say by not selling them, by doing away with private proprietorship in country and letting them, they can always be resumed and made available for that large influx of population which necessarily we have a right to expect to come here, and that perhaps at a much earlier period than we anticipate. Even in America there are large tracts of lands possessed by private corporations, and the question is now actually forcing itself upon public attention, how are those tracts of land to be got back? A few railway companies now hold 330,000,000 acres of land, and the real difficulty is how to recover that land, and probably very drastic measures will have to be resorted to in order to make it available to the people. But actually with all her vast territory the United States are in the peculiar position of being hard up for land. I do not think we have much fault to find with our Land Act, and certainly in one respect it has been very beneficial. For instance, we must take into consideration the large amount of private indebtedness to English capitalists and to our local financial institutions. If the sale of land had been continued it would by withdrawal of the land for sale have weakened the very securities upon the faith of which these institutions have lent millions of money. It has been a most fortunate circumstance that, during the long protracted drought we have passed through, our financial institutions have given such liberal assistance to squatters and others ; it is highly creditable to these institutions, and says much for their good management and stability, and we should do everything in our power to make them perfectly secure. Then there is another thing that should be taken into consideration. Assuming that the Government, in order to show a good balance, had sold some million acres of land, who could buy it? We would have had to borrow again, and our debt would have increased. Then what would have been the result if, during those five most disastrous years, in which the losses in Queensland alone are estimated at £20,000,000, further pressure had been put upon our financial institutions? I think it is a most fortunate thing that the Government could not sell land during that period. The Hon. Mr. Thynne has said that 500,000 acres of land have been taken up for occupation. Well, then, these 500,000 acres convertible into freehold at the option of the holders at from 20s. to 30s. per acre would, in eight years, more than cover this deficiency of £410,000 on last year's revenue. Surely a surplus cannot be expected when individuals, as well as the State, have suffered great losses. It is evident that when people individually suffer the revenue of the country must necessarily fall off in a corresponding degree.

THE HON. W. H. WALSH said : Hon. gentlemen,—I had hoped that I should not have had to take up your time at all in addressing myself to this Speech, and I must confess that it is with considerable pain that I rise. Of course, I feel impelled to do so, especially on account of the last speech uttered by my old friend, the Hon. Mr. King, and also in reply to that uttered by another dear friend of mine, the Hon. Mr. Thynne. I must confess

that I never, in any British assembly, listened to any two speeches that have given me so much cause for regret. If I did not know my hon. friend, Mr. Thynne, I should really have supposed that I was again in the House of Commons listening to the Home Rulers monopolising the time of the House. I should never have dreamt that I was listening to a gentleman who is sitting here in consequence of the honour done him by the Queen of Great Britain in giving him a seat in this Chamber. I should never have dreamt that such a speech could possibly have been delivered by an hon. gentleman who has the honour to occupy a distinguished position in Her Majesty's forces—a gentleman, I do not hesitate to say, who has done more to resuscitate public favour with respect to the Volunteer Force than almost any other individual connected with it. But I never could have dreamt that a gentleman occupying these dual positions, and bearing in mind the fidelity which he owes to the country, could have preached to us for half-an-hour nothing more or less than a very severe lecture on our duties towards Home Rule. Well, I am bound to say I should consider myself a coward to my country if I were not at any rate to combine this duty—that while I join in the expression of favour towards the allusion that has been made in this Speech to the glorious epoch we have just had—that is, the Victorian jubilee—I should consider myself, I say, a coward if I refused to express the opinion that I little dreamt that before that epoch had passed away I should have had to listen to a gentleman occupying two high positions in Her Majesty's service, both as a representative in this Chamber by Her Majesty's favour, and as an officer in Her Majesty's forces, utter remarks which, if they do not amount to sedition—

THE HON. A. J. THYNNE: I rise to a question of order. The hon. gentleman accuses me of sedition; I ask that the hon. gentleman should withdraw that expression.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman was on the point of qualifying what he had said when he was interrupted.

THE HON. W. H. WALSH: I did not accuse my hon. friend of anything of the sort. I do not remember precisely what I was going to say; at all events, I was going to absolve my hon. friend from absolute sedition. I think, however, that he has been misled by pernicious counsels. While I am not prepared to discuss the Address with which we have been favoured by his Excellency the Governor, I do say that I think there is a great deal in the Speech which might have been left out. It seems to me to have been written for the express purpose of provoking discussion, irritating, as it were, the Opposition; and yet I do not know that I mean irritating, because when the Opposition is led by an hon. gentleman such as the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior, there is no chance of anything approaching irritation. But still I do think that the Speech itself is not such as can commend itself to our approbation. My hon. friend, Mr. King, did make use of platitudes, and gave vent to opinions respecting the Crown lands that I was perfectly astonished at. Now, the hon. gentleman seems to be all of a sudden greatly in favour of the non-alienation principle in regard to the Crown lands. I would like to know how long the hon. gentleman has been of that opinion.

THE HON. G. KING: Always.

THE HON. W. H. WALSH: Well, he has piled up his quantities, and he has piled up his broad acres upon broad acres, and now the hon. gentleman, having filled himself to the very brim with these acres, comes down here, like

many others in a similar position to himself, and protests against the alienation of Crown lands. And, hon. gentlemen, I protest against it, too, as far as my own pocket is concerned. I have so much land to sell that I absolutely protest against the Government of the colony becoming a competitor in the market. But I am very much afraid that with all our patriotism, with all the patriotism of the Hon. Mr. King, he will not buy, even although the land does not belong to the Government. However, I think the Hon. Mr. King was also a little out in his historical remarks. The free selection of land in New South Wales had nothing whatever to do with this colony. There was no free selection in this colony at the time there was free selection in New South Wales, and therefore the argument is not applicable in the least degree. We could buy no land here at all. The first effort to throw the land open to the people of the colony was made by Mr. Macalister, and was violently rejected by the Government of the day. That was the first effort when he introduced in 1865 a resolution providing for free selection, and for the sale of the lands of the colony at 5s. per acre; that effort was defeated. Thus it was positively a fact that the resolution was violently rejected when he wanted to give access to the lands of the colony to all the people of the colony at the rate of 5s. per acre. That was rejected by the squatting party and the Darling Downs people in conjunction with the Brisbane people. Had free selection set in then this would have been the most prosperous colony of the whole bunch. After that I admit that whenever the colony wanted money the Government used to put up the lands and sell wholesale, and I need not go very far out of this Chamber to have that fact verified. And now I will tell hon. gentlemen an anecdote of what did happen in those days. I happened to go into the Lands Office one day, and I passed my friend Mr. Macalister coming out, and as he went out the officer in charge of the department said, "What do you think he has been here for? He tells me that his Treasurer says he must have so much money at a certain date—by the following September—and he has instructed me to get so much land ready for sale. I have got to get ready for sale a certain amount of land at a head station on the Darling Downs." Well, now, when that was done it was an absolute necessity on the part of the squatters to protect themselves. Those lands were put up for the purpose of compelling the squatters to buy by auction. They came down to Brisbane—went to their financial agents and supporters—and then went back to buy land much against their will, subjecting themselves a little later on to tremendous obloquy for being monopolisers of the lands of the colony. Nearly all the lands on the Darling Downs were put up under such conditions, when the squatters were compelled to buy them. That was the way those lands were disposed of—put up by indigent Ministries one after the other with the certainty that the squatters must buy to protect themselves.

THE HON. W. D. BOX: A Liberal Ministry?

THE HON. W. H. WALSH: I am not referring to a Ministry; I am referring to facts which have never been sufficiently dwelt upon, in my opinion, but which should be noticed when old colonists like my hon. friend Mr. King get up and forget such facts. With such facts staring them in the face I cannot conceive how men, speaking as statesmen, can adopt the non-alienation theory as a sound foundation upon which to reason. Such a principle as the non-alienation principle has no business to remain the land law of the colony. It is the greatest curse of any country to have a

political landlord. They feel it in Ireland, we feel it here, and if we do not please the landlord of the day—that is the Government of the day—we are punished by the introduction of very illiberal land laws. Why, all the land laws that have ever been introduced have been brought forward to bestow political favours in the towns. We know that very well, but how men of great ability in other respects can consistently advocate the keeping of the Crown lands in the hands of the Government is to me decidedly inexplicable. I am utterly unable to fathom their reasoning. One would think that the moment the Government alienated 1,000 acres that land was lost to the colony; that it was taken out of the colony. I maintain that the moment the Government have alienated 1,000 acres of waste land they have devoted it to the best of all possible purposes. They have sold it to an individual who takes a deep interest in it and who turns it to the very best account. If he turns it to no account, even then my argument is strong, because it then goes to prove that commercial interests are of no value, but still the country has reaped something from that individual. I cannot find words, hon. gentlemen, to express my opinion on this subject. To think that we lock up countless millions in land, through some extraordinary idea that it belongs to the people! Who knows but that in twenty years hence the Russians may own that land? It is within the bounds of possibility. If I had my will I would give the Crown lands of the colony to the very first man I met in the street. He would deal with them rationally; he would introduce people on to them; he would deliver them over to the people; he would not hold them for ever. An application now goes in for a piece of land and it has to go to the Minister, and before he dare grant the application he has to consult his colleagues and then their supporters to know whether it will be an acceptable application. It is well known that immediately a man puts in an application for a piece of Crown land he has to run the gauntlet of his opponents' opposition. I have gone through it; everyone of us has gone through it. We know by our experience the process that is gone through, and that, as soon as an application is made, some political or personal opponent is liable to lodge a protest against that land being alienated under such circumstances. Well, is that the curse this colony is to remain under for ever? Are we to have a Government landlordism ruling over us? And let me call the attention of the Hon. Mr. King to this fact. He is an old politician, with plenty of experience, and I would ask him, does he know of any finality in Land Acts? Is he simple enough to believe in the finality of them? Does he believe in indefeasible leases? Does he believe that the much-lauded and much-condemned Land Act of 1884 will be in existence ten years hence? Will he believe that the engagements entered into by the Government of the present day will be carried out by Governments of the future if it does not suit them to carry out those engagements? He cannot believe it, if he judges by his past experience. I am sorry, hon. gentlemen, that I have been obliged to dwell upon this subject, but I do think that of all the fallacies that have been promulgated since the colony was a colony this policy of the non-alienation of lands is the most monstrous. I say let the lands be untrammelled; let us do away with this theory of non-alienation; let us throw the lands open to the people for them to do with them as they like. What has been going on about Brisbane? In every direction are there not instances of it? Suppose the Government of the day, when Brisbane was in its infancy, had locked up all the

land within half-a-mile of Queen street, would it have become the large town it has become? Of course, we know it would now have been a comparatively sterile region. Now, let me tell you a little of my experience of the Land Act of 1884 while in England. When parents and sons there came to consult me about going to Queensland with a few thousand pounds, I had to confess that they could not, except from private individuals, acquire land in fee simple; and that shut up the pockets of the parents and damped the ardour of the sons. There is nothing so attractive to a European population as the fact that by coming to a colony they can become the absolute possessors in fee simple of land. The Land Act has destroyed that idea in England, and prevented the inflow of such capital as we want—namely, that possessed by those who wish to settle on 8,000 acres or 10,000 acres of land, and devote their lives to eking out an existence on those areas. It is no figure of speech when I say that I know of numerous instances of the bad effect of doing away with the total alienation of Crown lands. It appears to me that there is something like an omission in the Speech, showing an utter indifference of Ministers to one of the great industries of the colony. When I was at home, if there was one thing more than another that excited the cupidity of the English people, it was the account of the discovery of the Croydon Gold Fields, which I believe are as unique in their way as Mount Morgan is in another respect. I believe, however, that there is probably fifty times, or 50,000 times, as much gold and other minerals to be found at Croydon as at Mount Morgan; yet this discovery is not alluded to in the Speech, except in the most inferential manner. I have known Croydon as a gold-producing district for years, and I know that the people there have been studiously refused permission to occupy mineral selections. People used to write to me to know why their applications were not allowed to be received by the clerk at Normanton, and for three or four years I could get no reply; but at last an official in the office in Brisbane said the Minister had given instructions that no application should be received until a certain event. What that event was I do not choose to state. For three years the Government of the day absolutely refused to allow their officers to accept applications; and that treatment of what I consider the brightest gem possessed by Queensland is followed up by the present Government making no provision for the wants of the people on the field. I regard the Croydon Gold Fields as more likely than anything else to restore confidence in the financial position of the country, more likely to induce immigration than our immigration system; yet the place has no postmaster, not sufficient officers to issue miners' rights, nobody to keep law and order, and is in a state of chaos. I trust that the Postmaster-General will see that the wants of that district are attended to, and that post office facilities and other conveniences may be afforded to the residents in that important district.

The Hon. W. PETTIGREW said: Hon. gentlemen,—The hon. gentleman who has just sat down says that if the present land law had been applied to the city of Brisbane—that is, the leasing system—it would not have been such an important place as it is now. I have known Brisbane since it was a very small place, and I differ from the hon. gentleman, because I believe it would have advanced in a far greater degree. Under the leasing system the land required by individuals for their own use would have been taken up bit by bit, and settlement would have progressed in a regular manner; but instead of that there are great gaps here and there, and a good deal of land is held by people who do not use it. I know one



place that was purchased thirty years ago, and is lying idle now. I will say nothing as to what would have been the effect of the leasing system in the country, because I do not know. Of late years we have suffered from droughts; and since we last met we have suffered from pretty severe floods. Some three or four years ago an Act was passed to facilitate the drainage of land in the country, but how far that has been taken advantage of I do not know. I can refer, however, to an Act passed in England some forty years ago—an Act which proved of immense benefit to Scotland. It enabled people who had not the means, or whose estates were encumbered, to borrow money for drainage purposes, and repay principal and interest in fourteen years. Drainage is what is needed to prevent damage by floods, and we ought to have a law of the same sort here.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—I had not intended to say much on this occasion, but I think, after what has been said, it is requisite that I should address myself to what I may term a difference of opinion on certain points. With reference to the Croydon Gold Field, it is unusual to refer to the discovery of a new goldfield in any particular locality in this colony, especially as it is no extraordinary occurrence. The Croydon Gold Field is a new one, and we are all glad to believe that it will prove an extraordinary field; but other fields in the colony also have prospered, and we have numbers of other areas in the valley of the Fitzroy deserving of equal mention with Croydon.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH: No.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Yes. If the hon. gentleman wants fifty acres of reefs I can show him where to find them. I know of acres of reefs yielding from half-an-ounce upwards. I am glad the hon. gentleman has drawn attention to this goldfield, for it may just as well be advertised through the hon. gentleman's speech as through the Speech of His Excellency; but the subject-matter is embodied in a general way in the Governor's Speech, where it 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."

There is a declaration that our mineral resources have been largely developed. What more does the hon. gentleman want? Does he want a schedule of goldfields and of the returns of crushings detailed in His Excellency's Speech? I know the hon. gentleman does not mean that; he is too well developed and astute a statesman to advocate the introduction of such details into an important document of that character. I shall take the opportunity of telling him that there is no justifiable ground of complaint with respect to the postal and telegraphic work on the goldfield of Croydon. From the very moment it became evident that the establishment of a post office was justifiable one was erected there, and a telegraph line has been pushed on with more than usual vigour. Before I left for the South recently one of the last things I did was to give instructions to offer a premium to anyone who would discover the carrier who had the telegraph stores for Croydon, so as to enable telegraphic communication to be established. The wires were already erected, and the necessary stores and instruments were stopped in transit owing to the heavy floods. Every effort was therefore made to establish telegraphic communication with the Croydon Gold Field, and indeed with every other part of the colony where it was justifiable. Going back to what fell from the Hon.

Mr. Gregory in relation to the question of centralisation, which he declared was, and had been, the absolute and emphatic policy—perhaps those are not the exact words—of all Liberal administrators, I must point out that the hon. gentleman is greatly in error. Centralisation, he declared, was the policy of all Liberal Governments. If ever there was a Ministry in this colony that consistently advocated decentralisation, it is the Ministry now holding the reins of power in this country. Where is the centralisation in the expenditure of large sums of money on public works in the South, as was declared to be the case by the hon. gentleman? Where has the money been expended which he stated had been spent at the doors of what he called a "Queen-street party"? Let him point to any works that will justify that assertion, or to any public buildings that have been erected in the city during the past three or four years. The block of buildings on the Treasury square, which are now in the course of erection, should have been built three or four years ago. They will take the place of other structures now used for public offices, and which are more like barns than anything else. Is the erection of important buildings like those, in which the business of the whole of the colony will be conducted, centralisation? If the hon. gentleman desires to see centralisation let him look at Sydney, where every public man for the last quarter of a century, if not longer, has endeavoured to bring every railway, every turnpike road, every steamboat from all parts of the world to that centre. There is no such policy in Queensland, and there never can be. We have numerous good ports on our coast, and I think that all Governments—I do not now speak concerning the present Ministry, but of all administrations—and I say that, with the exception of two, every administration from the time of separation up to the present has consistently advocated the equal development of all the ports on our eastern coast, together with the advancement and opening up of the territory and trade which naturally belongs to those ports. Is it centralisation to say that a railway is being constructed to Southport, which will open up communication with the border of New South Wales? Are there any other public works going on in the South with the exception of the railway to connect Gympie, the Ballarat of Queensland, with the metropolis, and which had the unanimous approval of this Chamber? Do any of those works justify the statement that the policy of the present administration is centralisation? I say, in replying to the hon. gentleman, that public works are going on at a rapid rate in the northern section of the colony, and that the observation made by the Hon. Mr. Thynne that the Government are chargeable with an unequal distribution of the public funds in that part of the colony is unproved and incorrect. The Government has never admitted that.

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: The Speech does.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No inference of that kind can be drawn from the Speech. Surely the Government have proved most conclusively in the reply of the Cabinet upon the separation petition that the northern portion of the colony has not only received an equal share of the expenditure, but a great deal more than it was entitled to. There are members of this Council who know that I have always advocated the policy I have indicated—namely, that every part of the colony should receive its fair share of public moneys for the prosecution of public works, as well as for the development of the territory and the settlement of a large population upon the land. The Hon. Mr. Gregory also



adverted to the subject of finance, I was somewhat pained to notice that while giving credit for the bad seasons, the seasons of drought, and while he characterised the floods as a blessing, he suggested, if he did not assert, that there was no loss of revenue from the floods, although he practically admitted that there had been considerable loss of revenue from the drought. Now, hon. gentlemen are aware, as it has been published in the newspapers for weeks, that we had almost a cessation of business in parts of Queensland for an average of three months. The farmers lost heavily by the destruction of their crops. I am speaking now by the book, because I have conversed with these men in different provinces some two months ago. I have met men in the central districts—on the Gregory and about Isis—graziers, with whom I include squatters, and farmers who combined both grazing and farming; I have also conversed with others on the Darling Downs, and in the southern portions of the colony, about Ipswich, and their testimony is that tens of thousands of pounds worth of stock and crops have been lost. After the drought stock were so weak that when the rains came they could not stand the cold and wet, and they perished; and this is the experience of hundreds of men in the country. There was, therefore, much capital lost, much purchasing power destroyed both among farmers, graziers, and squatters, and as a natural result the railways lost traffic that they should otherwise have obtained. Indeed, as I have already said, there was almost a cessation of business as regards hundreds of men throughout the length and breadth of the colony. Could we expect the railways to produce revenue or the Customs to receive duty on goods passing through bonds after years of drought followed immediately by disastrous floods? I think any business man will see that my conclusions are correct. The Hon. Mr. Gregory further stated that the Land Act, which he described as a very bad one in all respects, would not attract men to the colony and induce them to take up 20,000-acre farms 600 or 700 miles west from the coast. I don't think that the people of this country who believe in the Land Act expect that the first settlement of grazing farms will begin 600 or 700 miles from the coast on the plains of the west. I think it will take a good many years to settle the land between the coast and 500 miles inland. I am not an advocate of men going out 700 miles west—that is beyond Charleville in the southern part of the colony, and beyond the Hamilton in the central district—to take up grazing farms, nor would I encourage men to go out there even if they had that round sum of £5,000 which the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior spoke of as the minimum amount with which a new chum, a gentlemanly, refined man, could possibly start a 20,000-acre farm. I can hardly think the hon. gentleman was serious in the remarks he made on this subject. He has had no practical experience on the western lands, and though he has visited the districts occasionally, as I have done, his knowledge of the climate has been obtained from hearsay, just as is the case with myself.

THE HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: I was there a fortnight ago.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That just corroborates what I said—namely, that the hon. gentleman has visited the country. I maintain that a man of the character described by the Hon. Mr. Macanish—a man with willing hands, a plucky heart, and a thrifty wife and family, can go on a much smaller block than 20,000 acres, and with industry build up what will be a little fortune. I can give the hon. gentleman cases if he desires—I have scores of them at my finger ends—in which men have

become most prosperous on a very much less area and under a very much less favourable law for the successful settlement of people on the land than our present Land Act.

THE HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Where?

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: In various parts of the colony. Moreover, it was never intended that we should have gentlemen of refinement taking up those lands. We desire to see them occupied by hard workers, men who can use the plough and fence, and who do not expect that the luxuries and comforts of life are to go with them in their pioneering. One hon. gentleman has stated that the Government expected a particular type of men, with a capital of £5,000 each, to settle on grazing farms. In reply, I may observe that it was never anticipated that we should get men from another walk of life, unaccustomed to working on land, to leave their calling, and for the first time enter upon the occupation of what we may term the wilderness of the West. Those are not the people the Government expect, because if they go on the land they will prove themselves failures. We believe that we shall get a great number of suitable men from the other colonies when the provisions of the Act are better known. At present I know that in Victoria and South Australia our Land Act is totally unknown; many of the legislators there are unacquainted with its provisions, and numerous merchants and bankers do not understand them. I assert that the Land Act, and the amending Act, are not known at all, even in the Australian colonies. The seasons have been unpropitious since the Act became law; the drought has been followed by floods, and these have prevented many people from viewing the country and seeking out selections. But the work has begun; there are people going on the land; they are going slowly at present, but they are going. If the hon. gentleman will look at the arrivals and departures by steamers, to say nothing of those coming and going overland, he will see that the tide has turned. In Brisbane it will be seen that the arrivals exceed the departures by 50 to 150 a week. These are people who are coming to work our agricultural, pastoral, and mineral lands. Everywhere in the south Queensland is spoken of as being the most promising colony in the southern seas, and I endorse that view. We have a great future before us, and I think he is an ill-bird who will attempt to fasten upon this country maladministration of the public finances. There has been nothing of the sort; there has not been an item of expenditure that sound judgment would not approve, and I was surprised when I heard the observations made just now, knowing, as I do, that the greatest scrutiny has been observed in the distribution of the public moneys of this country. If a consistent and moderate expenditure of the loan fund at the disposal of the Government means maladministration, I admit it at once. I think that, although it is popularly understood that this question of finance is one that is excluded from discussion in this Chamber, that doctrine should be received with qualification. We, as members of the Legislature, take a deep interest in the welfare of the colony, and the question of finance should be as much discussed in a matter of policy as anything else. I say, then, that if the Government of the day had abstained from a courageous and continuous expenditure of loan moneys during those periods of great depression when so many men were unloosed, as it were, from other works—north, west, and south—they would have been unworthy of the position they held, and it would have been the duty of the Opposition to have endeavoured to turn them out of office upon that score alone.

We have interpreted the circumstances of this colony from end to end with a diligent scrutiny of the position of every interest, and if we have failed to please everybody, or if we have made enemies of others, it has not been brought about by a desire to do either. It has been from error of judgment, but I think that the general policy that has been pursued in the matter of finances will stand the closest research, and I hope in another place it will receive all that, and I am sure that the Government will come out of it with every credit. The matter of a deficiency of £400,000 odd has been dwelt upon in a manner which I think too serious altogether. When we know of the strain which has been brought to bear upon every industry in the colony; when we know that the banks have been obliged to draw the strings somewhat tightly of late; when we think of other circumstances, such as the low price of wool; when we think of the millions of sheep that are no more, and the tens of thousands of cattle that did exist; I say, when we think of these things, the wonder is—to use the expression of a leading gentleman in Victoria who has large interests in this colony, himself totally unconnected with politics—the wonder is Queensland presents so good a front as she does. Why, in reading this afternoon—it was purely accidental that I happened to look at the Victorian *Hansard*—I notice that the Hon. Mr. Zeal, speaking of the other colonies of Australasia and the depreciation and loss, and disastrous financial position in which other colonies now find themselves—never spoke of Queensland. Queensland was never once referred to, although our financial position is as well known as we know it. Our Treasury returns are telegraphed instantly to the other colonies, but that gentleman knew that the difficulties of Queensland was a subject really worth at most only passing notice. South Australia and New South Wales were referred to, but Queensland was not uttered in the same breath. I think we have not too high an opinion of our country, and that its depreciation on the part of some old colonists in order to create a feeling of despair and distrust, is totally unwarranted by the financial prospects of the colony. I would like now to say a few words about what fell from the Hon. Mr. Prior, namely, that the Land Act only put one grazier in the place of another, and I will tell him that the policy of the Act is to put many graziers where only one was before, and that that is taking place though at present slowly. I would also like to say in reference to the forcing of sales of land, to which he referred as having taken place in connection with the Roma railway construction long ago, and which he deplores, that I think it is most unfair on the part of any public man to put the sins, if they be sins, of a former administration on any following administration running under the same flag. Is this Ministry to be responsible for the sins of the late Mr. Macalister? These are not arguments, and it is not creditable to bring up these matters. Let the Government stand on its measures or fall by them, but to fix upon the present administration the forced sales of the Roma lands and not to tell what other administrations did which were running under another flag, is not fair. I can tell this Chamber of other Governments under which there were forced sales of land, advisedly forced—cases in which lands were put up in blocks of 640 acres and upwards, and it was well understood that those lands would be bought in by the station owner. These are well-known facts, and I think it justifiable on my part to complain of this treatment. If the land policy of one Government is to be held up to scorn and

ridicule and condemnation, by all means tell what other administrations have done, and then you will be able to judge between the policy of the one and the policy of the other. It was with sincere regret that I heard the Hon. F. T. Gregory condemn the establishment of the new department of agriculture. He spoke of the expenditure as unnecessary and unjustifiable.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY: Just so.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Now, I think if hon. gentlemen will look into the question for a moment, they will discern in this department a potency for great good in the immediate future. It is not proposed to establish a large staff with a host of clerks and all that kind of thing. There will be the Under Secretary, who will take the salary of the office he held previously, and there will be a clerk or two who will be charged with doing what the Speech indicates, and that is what I respectfully desire the hon. gentleman to notice—

"I am glad to note"—

says His Excellency—

"the large and increasing demand for land for occupation by *bona 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."

Now, that is a point in which this colony has been somewhat deficient for many years: it has been drawn attention to, year after year, that strangers in the colony cannot reach the exact character of soil or area which they desire, and they have gone away disgusted at not being able to find what they sought. This will give the facilities referred to, and it is believed will result favourably, and will direct many people to spots which they could not find out for themselves, but which the department now charges itself with placing at their disposal. I sincerely hope that free passes on our railways will be given to intending selectors, and that every facility will be given to them to take up the land. There are a good many other matters, hon. gentlemen, that I would like to refer to, but I think I have dwelt upon the most prominent. I desire to say on behalf of the Government that personally I am extremely gratified to find in this Chamber that hon. gentlemen who have spoken have admitted many points in favour of the Speech and the Government policy. Especially pleased was I to hear the Hon. F. T. Gregory say that he saw nothing much in the Speech to cavil at. That is a great deal from that hon. gentleman. One of the most pleasing circumstances of the debate is that we are all agreed that the times that have gone by have been very trying, and we are also agreed that we have great reason to be hopeful for the immediate future of the colony. I sincerely trust, however, that what was said by the Hon. Mr. Prior with respect to finding revenue from sales of land to cover every expenditure that the Government is liable to will never become the law of this country.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: That is one way of putting it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Those were the hon. gentleman's own words, and if the hon. gentleman did not intend to convey that meaning I will say nothing more about it. I only hope that is a doctrine that will not be received with much approbation at present at any rate. Of course, followed to its logical conclusion it means the abolition of Customs, Excise, stamp duty, and *ad valorem* duties. One other reference to that matter, and I have done. I hope some hon. gentleman will endeavour to find some good philosopher who has written and spoken on the land question, and tell us whether he has found someone who recommends the sale of land as revenue and whether

land should not be regarded as capital. I believe land is capital. If it be capital then every country and every individual will perish who will attempt to live on the sale of its principal. Were it not that I am suffering from a cold I should feel it my duty to go at length into other subjects, but, under the circumstances, I think a longer speech will not be expected from me.

THE HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: I rise to explain. I did not like to interrupt the Postmaster-General in his eloquent speech, but he put quite a wrong construction on my words with reference to grazing areas. I alluded not only to gentlemen, but I included all those people, whether married or single, who had already been spoken of in this House by the Postmaster-General and others. I did not refer to selections 600 or 700 miles away, but I referred particularly to those parts which I knew the best—in the western country, at Aramac, Muttaborra, and in that direction—and in respect to my great want of knowledge of that district I can only say that part of my family have long resided in that part; and that, further, I am pretty capable of giving an idea as to the climate, both from my own experience and that of others.

Question—That the Address, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted—put and passed.

#### PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the Address, as adopted, be presented to His Excellency the Governor, at Government House, by the President, mover, and seconder, and such other members as shall be present to-morrow at half-past 3 o'clock.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 9 o'clock.

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