

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 21 JULY 1887

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.*Thursday, 21 July, 1887.*

Formal Motions.—Bundaberg School of Arts Land Sale Bill—first reading.—Mineralogical Survey of the Logan District.—Valuation Bill.—Divisional Boards Bill.—Water Law Bill.—Copyright Registration Bill.—Address in Reply—resumption of debate.—Address of Congratulation to Her Majesty.—Joint Committees.—Adjournment.

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

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By Mr. CHUBB—

That there be laid upon the table of the House the correspondence between the Secretary for Public Instruction and the Bowen State Schools Committee relating to the closing of the girls' school on the 17th March last,

By Mr. ADAMS—

That there be laid upon the table of the House the report made by Messrs. R. Johnston and G. N. B. Geary, and all correspondence, relating to drainage of certain properties by the Goobarrun Divisional Board, North Bundaberg.

BUNDABERG SCHOOL OF ARTS LAND SALE BILL.

FIRST READING.

Mr. ADAMS moved—

That a Bill be introduced to enable the trustees of three allotments of land in the town of Bundaberg, granted for the purpose of a school of arts, to sell or mortgage the same, or any part or portion thereof, together with the buildings erected thereon, and to devote the proceeds to the building of a new school of arts.

Question put and passed.

Bill introduced, read a first time, and ordered to be printed.

MINERALOGICAL SURVEY OF THE LOGAN DISTRICT.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I find that the papers I have asked for in my notice of motion in reference to the mineralogical survey of the Logan district have already been laid upon the table of the House, and I understand that they are being printed. Therefore, with the permission of the House, I will withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

VALUATION BILL.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) moved that the Speaker leave the chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make better provision for the valuation of rateable land by local authorities.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER, in moving—

That it is desirable to introduce a Bill to make better provision for the valuation of rateable land by local authorities—

said the Bill proposed to be introduced consisted in substance of the valuation clauses of the Divisional Boards Bill of last year. It had been thought by the Government, for many reasons, that it was more convenient to deal with the question of the valuation of land by itself in a separate Bill.

Question put and passed; and, on the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair and reported the resolution to the House.

The Bill was introduced and read a first time, and, on the motion of the PREMIER, the second reading was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

DIVISIONAL BOARDS BILL.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to local government outside the boundaries of municipalities. I have to inform the House that I have it in command from His Excellency the Governor to communicate to the House that His Excellency, having been made acquainted with the provisions of this Bill, recommends to the House the necessary appropriation to give effect to it.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was affirmed in Committee of the Whole that it was desirable to introduce a Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to local government outside the boundaries of municipalities.

The Bill was introduced and read a first time.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—In moving that the second reading of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for Tuesday next, I may say, for the information of the House, that this Bill, although voluminous, does not contain much new matter. We have made arrangements to have it circulated to-morrow morning so that hon. members may have an opportunity to read it before Tuesday, when we propose to proceed with the second reading.

Question put and passed.

WATER LAW BILL.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House, in Committee of the Whole, affirmed the desirability of introducing a Bill to declare and define the law with respect to natural water.

The Bill was introduced and read a first time.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the second reading was made an Order of the Day for Wednesday next.

COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION BILL.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge), the House, in Committee of the Whole, affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make provision for the registration of copyright in books and dramatic pieces published in Queensland.

The resolution was reported to the House, and adopted.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of adjourned debate on Mr. Foxton's motion, "That the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted by the House"—

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—When I moved the adjournment of the debate last night, it was not with the view of prolonging the debate in any way, nor because there was not sufficient time to say what I had to say on the Governor's Speech on that occasion. I understood that certain statements had been made with regard to some hon. members which they required an opportunity to refute, and as there was no member present on this side of the House who had not spoken, except myself, I thought it only fair that I should move the adjournment of the debate to give them an opportunity of refuting those charges. While anticipating that the debate would have been closed last night, I thought no great harm would ensue by moving the adjournment, for the reason I have stated. I do not intend to make a lengthy speech, as I understand there is a general desire that the debate should be concluded by tea-time this evening. The first portion of the Governor's Speech relates to the Queen's jubilee. Although there are many who disagree with the way in which the jubilee was celebrated here, I hold the opinion that it was a very proper thing to do that the jubilee should be celebrated in the colony, and that a certain sum should be expended by the Government by way of emphasising the general feeling. The sum was not a large one, and whether it has been judiciously expended I cannot say, not having been present on the occasion, but I

do not think, at any rate, it was too much. It must be a matter of thorough congratulation to Her Majesty and to all loyal subjects to know that her jubilee was celebrated with such hearty good-feeling throughout the colonies. There was a genuine expression of affection towards her as Queen, and in no way connected with any present or past Government, or the way in which Governments have been carried on in the United Kingdom, or the effect they may have had on the colonies. With reference to that portion of the Speech alluding to the Conference lately held by representatives of the colonies in London, I may say I was always heartily in accord with that Conference. I think it was a very wise thing to have such a Conference, and that the colonies were justified in sending the best men they could to discuss the weighty questions brought before it. As far as we can see, the Conference has had good results in more than one way. It has shown us to what extent we can rely upon the Imperial Government for assistance in our defence, and in sums of money for the government of New Guinea. That in itself is a good thing. It has also shown the Imperial Government that the colonies are inclined to stand upon their rights; that they are not to be ignored in the future as they have been in the past. Reference is also made in the Speech to the disastrous floods that occurred throughout Queensland, more particularly in the Logan and Albert districts, last January. I think there is a misapprehension abroad as to the relief afforded by the Government in the first instance. It was not generally understood in Brisbane that any very great harm had been done by the flood, and a small steamer was despatched with anything but a large supply of rations, to give such relief as they could. Directly, however, it was understood that a great deal of suffering had been undergone on those rivers, the Under Secretary, Mr. Gray, acting, no doubt, under instructions, did all in his power to send relief, and a steamer was sent down loaded with supplies of various kinds; and some Government officers—I think, Mr. Beal, Mr. Ryder, and Mr. Lawson—were sent in charge of them. They were heartily welcomed, I need hardly say, by the settlers. They worked as hard as it was possible for any men to work in distributing the supplies, and afforded a considerable amount of relief, that gave the general public sufficient time to organise some efficient means of relief for the present and for the future. The people of the Logan will never forget the hearty response that was made by the general public. Considering the distressed state of the country from various causes, the sum contributed may be considered very large indeed; and when compared with the amounts raised recently in the older and richer colonies of New South Wales and Victoria for the Bulli fund, I consider that Queensland stands out better than either of them. The fund, I may say, has been most admirably distributed, when we take into consideration the great difficulty there was in arriving at the proper amount of relief to be afforded to each person. Indeed the fund could not have been better distributed, and the thanks of the sufferers, and of the colony generally, are due to those gentlemen living in Brisbane who have sacrificed so much of their time to distribute the fund. It is notified in the Speech that an Agricultural Department has been formed. I have always advocated the formation of such a department. I think the time has not only now arrived, but that it arrived some time ago, when a department of this kind should be formed. If it is properly administered, as I have no doubt it will be, the farmers, large and small, will derive the greatest benefit from it.

The hundreds of thousands of pounds that have been wasted by farmers in this colony in endeavouring to find out the best description of seed and the best ways of tilling the soil amount to a really enormous sum. That this department, if properly administered, will be the saving of very large sums of money in the future I have very little doubt. The redistribution of seats, or the alteration of the boundaries of electorates, has also been alluded to. I think it very necessary. In a young and growing country like this, it is a thing that should be done at very short intervals of time. The interests get so diversified—they alter so much in a few years—that the boundaries stand in need of alterations, certainly, I think, every five or six years. This is not only felt in the South, but it is also very much felt in the northern and western districts. Those outside districts have increased so much since the last redistribution, that it is only fair they should have an opportunity of sending more representatives into Parliament. With regard to the southern districts the same thing may be said. The population has increased rapidly in some parts, and the construction of railways has altered the interests of different parts so very much, rendering them in some cases diametrically opposed to one another, that it that it is time the districts should be divided. I hope the principle of single members will be adopted—that is, one member for each new electorate. Of course, in the case of large cities that is almost an impossibility; but in the country districts, unless the district returns one member it stands a good chance of being practically disfranchised. One argument used against this is that the minority should be represented. If the minority should be represented the majority should be represented twice over to make it fair. What earthly use is there in having a majority who will return one member, if the minority is to send in one member also? I am very glad to see that there is some probability of decentralisation being carried out with regard to the government of the colony; and I hope the measure will be so comprehensive and sound that it can easily work, and that it will do away with the cry for separation which at present is so strong in the North. I may be considered rather sanguine in saying I hope it will do away with this cry; for if what we hear is true, the advocates of separation are determined to fight it out to the bitter end. I need hardly say that I am not at all in favour of separation. I do not think it would be a good thing for this part of the colony, or for the whole colony. The further we can go in the very opposite direction the better it will be. The less the colony and the whole of the colonies are split up the greater chance there is of a general federation in the near future. That it will come eventually I sincerely hope, and I have very little doubt. We are promised in the Speech that strict economy will be carried out in the Government departments, and I hope that will be the case. There is no doubt that, from various causes, the colony has drifted into a very bad way; and one way of getting out of it will be strict economy. We are not told how this will be effected; but reference has been made to the Estimates, and it is only reasonable to suppose that it will be in the reduction of salaries, though we have no other indication that this will be the case. Some hon. members have suggested that a commission should be appointed to inquire into the working of the Civil Service, and determine whether the officers now employed are all necessary—whether the number should not be reduced. Whether that is necessary I am not prepared at once to say; but I think it would be a very good thing for the colony if a Civil Service

Board such as they have in Victoria were appointed to determine the appointment of Civil servants. It would do away with a great deal of political patronage, and probably ensure a greater number of good servants in the various departments than we have at the present time. We have already passed the first reading of several Bills which I am very glad to see brought forward; they are all intensely useful, and from the discussion last year I have no doubt that the tenor of them will meet with general approval. There is some mention of a Bill being introduced to shorten the duration of Parliaments. Well, sir, if that is the Triennial Parliaments Bill, I should be very glad to see it introduced; I think it is a very great pity that it was not carried when it was introduced before. I have no reason to alter the opinion I then expressed, that it should have been put in force at once. I think in a country like this, where things change so rapidly, triennial parliaments are not at all too short. If the Government have five years' tenure of office, with a strong party at their back, they are hardly so likely to be careful of their ways as if they knew they had only a short tenure of office. The country should have opportunities at shorter periods than five years of saying whether they are satisfied with the Government or not. The same thing may be said with regard to private members. The different districts may find out, and in many cases do, long before the end of the five years, that they are not properly represented, and they should have an opportunity of giving effect to their wishes. With regard to the proposal to found a university, I say that so long as it does not take the form of a vote of a large sum of money I shall give it support. If it is endowed with a large area of land, as was suggested by the Hon. John Douglas some few years ago, it will have my hearty support; but I cannot see that at the present time we are justified in spending a large sum of money in the higher education of our youth. The Chinese question has been introduced by more than one hon. member during the debate, and I am rather glad of it. I was under the impression that there was a commercial treaty at present between Great Britain and China which might affect the Chinese question in these colonies; but I understand that such is not the case. I think this would be a very good opportunity to impose a very much heavier poll-tax—to put a much greater restriction on the immigration of Chinese. There is no doubt in my mind that the visit of the Chinese Commissioners is with a view to making some provision in a treaty with Great Britain as to the treatment of Chinese when they land here—the immigration of Chinese to Australia. If there is no treaty bearing on the subject at present between Great Britain and China the probability is that any Bill imposing a very heavy poll-tax would pass, whereas if a treaty is once entered into it might raise an effectual bar. I have no doubt that we shall have other Bills during the session than those indicated in His Excellency's Speech, and one more of this description might very safely, I think, be added to the list. Now, sir, there has been a good deal of discussion as to the propriety of the Premier leaving the colony to attend the Conference. When I first heard that the Conference was proposed I was very glad to hear it, and when I heard that the Government of this colony had decided to send one or more representatives I was still further pleased. I may add that I do not think we could have sent a better representative from Queensland than the Premier. He is thoroughly up in the state of the colony, and in all those large questions which affect Queensland and Australia generally. We know very well that

on one or two questions connected with the formation of an Australian navy, the government of New Guinea, and the occupation of the New Hebrides by the French, he was thoroughly in accord with the general feeling of the colony. That he has done good work while he has been in Great Britain I have not the slightest doubt. Those who know his ability and his thorough application to work may rest thoroughly assured of that. That his name has not been brought so prominently forward as one or two of the representatives of the other colonies, I am not very much surprised at. I do not think we need attach any great importance to that. If the hon. gentleman took a very active part in the Conference, there is no doubt he made a decided impression; if he did not take an active part, no doubt he had sound reasons for not doing it. As soon as we receive the report of the Conference we shall see what was done. As far as I am concerned I am thoroughly satisfied that we were well and properly represented on that occasion by the hon. the Premier.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—It is not my intention to criticise each paragraph or each Bill mentioned in the Governor's Speech, but rather to confine myself to one or two matters concerning ourselves. In passing over the two first paragraphs I will merely say that it is not from any want of loyalty to the throne that I do so, but simply to economise the time of the House. I therefore pass on to the paragraph where the colony is congratulated on the increased demand for land. I heard the Land Act of 1884 characterised on one occasion as "Dutton's baby," that ought never to live to see ten years of age. When that Bill was passing through the House I gave it very hearty support, and said that in a few years it would prove itself not only to be a strong baby, but that it would grow into a strong robust man, and would on some future occasion astonish the colony with its results; and I think the progress made during the past year bears out my opinion. While I cannot approve of everything that has been done in reference to the administration of the lands during the last two or three years, I think we are now entering upon a new course which will tend very much indeed to make the Act of 1884 a great success. I refer to the Department of Agriculture which has been established. I was very sorry to hear the mover of the Address in Reply say some very strong things with reference to the Commissioner for the East and West Moreton districts, and attribute the partial failure of the Act of 1884 to the action of that Commissioner, in consequence of the stiff-necked way in which he fell foul of settlers in that district. Now, sir, I know that Commissioner, Mr. McLean, as well almost as any member in this House, and I can say that so far from being stiff-necked, I know that he is not only willing at all times to give advice to selectors, but to put them in the way of getting redress when they are called upon to show cause. If they had a good case they never had any difficulty. He never had any fighting with people who were willing to show cause. His fight all along had been with persons who entered into an agreement with the Government to fulfil certain conditions, and refused to do what they had agreed to do. These, however, form a very small portion of the total selectors of the district. As has been observed by some hon. member, I think on this side of the House, it is not the Act of 1884 that has caused the difficulties, but the Act of 1876; and why should we run down the Act of 1884 for what has resulted from the Act of 1876? If the Act of 1876 had been administered as it ought to have been by the previous Government there would not have been the difficulty of working it by the present

Government. The difficulty has arisen almost entirely from persons getting certificates too early, without fulfilling the conditions. I will say, that so far from Mr. McLean being stiff-necked, he is one of the most conscientious, hardworking, and well-disposed men with whom I ever came in contact. I said many years ago in this House—over five—that the great difficulty selectors had in selecting land was in going to the land offices to find land suitable for them, being met over and over again with rebuffs. I was taken pretty severely to task by the land officer in Ipswich for my remarks in the House on that occasion; but now that the Government have come to the conclusion to appoint a Secretary for Agriculture, and if, as the Minister for Lands said last night, one of the principal things this department will do will be to select land for agricultural purposes, and give advice to selectors—if that is faithfully carried out, I have no doubt that the Land Act of 1884 will prove a greater success in the future than it has been in the past. To my mind the number of selectors every succeeding year will be an ever-increasing quantity from the very nature of the Act. I have heard certainly a good number of complaints with reference to the administration of the lands in our own district; some of them seem well founded, and many I know are very frivolous; but I am inclined to pardon past offences from the expectation of the great results to follow from the establishment of this Agricultural Department. The next paragraph relates to the public finances. Now, Mr. Speaker, some people can find no excuse whatever for the deficit that took place during the last year. If it were a commercial undertaking they could find plenty of sufficient excuses for success not attending the undertaking. I was amused the other day with reference to the position of the Tramway Company. It appears the company promised last year that the shareholders should get a dividend this year, but none was declared, and the excuse given was the floods, which had caused so much damage to the roads that no dividend was possible. Now, we hear hon. members and some of the Press outside finding no excuse whatever for the deficit in the Treasury last year, but they can find plenty of very strong reasons for such companies as the one I have mentioned. The State may be looked upon as the parent of the whole colony and compared to the father of a large family. If that family were in full work the father could make pretty safe calculations as to what his income would be, but if, bad times came and one son was thrown out of employment altogether, another was put on half-time, and so on, his calculations would be entirely thrown overboard, and at the end of the year instead of having in his possession the good round sum he expected he would find the balance on the other side of the ledger. So has it been this year with our Treasurer. I am not, therefore, at all surprised at the deficit; I am rather surprised that it is so small when I consider the experience the colony has passed through, and what its people have suffered. How could the people contribute to the revenue of the State when they themselves were not receiving an income equal to their estimate of the previous year? The railway returns were deficient last year because the people were not in a position to travel, and the Customs receipts were reduced because the people were content to do with less goods than they previously consumed on account of being actually unable to purchase the necessities, let alone the luxuries, of life. It is perfectly reasonable, then, that the calculations of the Colonial Treasurer should not be realised; that the revenue should not have come up to his expectations;

and that, consequently, he finds himself with a deficit at the end of the financial year. There are, in my opinion, three things that the Government will have to do if they intend to make both ends meet. The first thing necessary is that the Treasurer should try to make his expenditure less than his income. That seems to be a hard thing to do; but people in business can do it, and I do not see why the State should not be able to do it also. And this should be always kept in remembrance: that all the wealth of the colony comes from the land, either from its surface or from mines, and the State should encourage agriculturists and miners and manufacturers. We must have producers. Unless we have producers the colony will never thrive, and the Treasurer will always have a deficit. What would any sane man think if he heard a person proclaiming to the world that we were increasing in population, but the colony was not increasing in wealth? It is quite possible to largely increase our population and yet not add to our wealth, simply by encouraging the immigration of non-producers. Suppose, for instance, that you increase the Police Force by 100 men in one year, what do you do? You do not add to the wealth of the colony, because they are non-producers. It is the same if you increase the number of warders in asylums and gaols, because those men are non-producers. To increase our population by introducing persons of this class tends rather to poverty than the increase of wealth. The more we encourage the increase of population of this kind the more harm will be done, and the less will the prosperity of the colony be advanced. Nor is our position improved by an increase in the number of Civil servants, because they too are non-producers. What we want is producers settled on the soil, and until we encourage agriculturists in a different manner from what we have done up to the present time, the colony will always suffer. There are many other non-producers, but they are non-producers who are required. Clergymen are non-producers, and so are schoolmasters, but with this difference: that schoolmasters provide the training which will assist the people in the future development of the resources of the colony, and therefore, in one sense, they may be called producers. We should, I repeat, encourage agriculturists, miners, and manufacturers, so that money may be raised in the colony, instead of having to go abroad for it. I do not intend to occupy much of the time of the House, and will, therefore, only refer to one other matter mentioned in the Speech. I had noted down some remarks in reference to the Bill to define and declare the laws with regard to natural water, which has been laid on the table to-day, and also in reference to the Bill for the protection of women and girls, a measure which has already become law in England; but as that is to be dealt with on Tuesday next I will not now discuss the subject; I will simply make a few observations on the proposal to establish a university in Queensland. I think many members of this House will feel, like myself, the deficiency and want of a university education. I am not ashamed to confess that the want of the higher education is greatly felt by persons representing constituencies in this House. I have, therefore, been in favour of the higher education, and always have supported the establishment of grammar schools, and would like to see a university founded on the same principle as that adopted in the case of grammar schools—namely, by the people collecting a certain amount to build the university and for securing a certain income, which amount should afterwards be supplemented by an annual grant from Parliament. On these conditions I shall be

very glad indeed to see a university established; but to call on the Government to find all the funds for the foundation and maintenance of the institution is more, I think, than can reasonably be expected in a young colony like Queensland. If the people who are anxious to see a university established—and I am one of those—are willing to do something and make some sacrifices in the way I have indicated to secure this higher education—then I will encourage the movement all in my power. I hope a university may some day become an accomplished fact. I do not think that will be within the next two or three years, but no doubt as we increase in population and in wealth, the desire to have a university will become stronger. I will not detain the House with any further remarks, but will now give an opportunity to other members who may wish to take part in the discussion.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—In my parliamentary experience I have always noticed that in a debate of this kind when there is no want of confidence motion before the House the leaders on both sides of the House generally exhaust the discussion, and very little is left to be said by the rank-and-file, who can, as a rule, only repeat what has been already advanced. But as there is one point that has scarcely been touched upon in the course of this debate, I shall briefly advert to it. I do not intend to say much this evening. The point I wish to refer to has reference to the land-grant principle. During the discussion yesterday the leader of the Opposition asked whether anything would be done on the land-grant principle in connection with the American irrigationists. The Premier made no reply to this question. I can say that the hon. gentleman would have nothing to be ashamed of if he had stated that in case a proposition was made by these irrigationists the land-grant principle would be resorted to in the matter. But hon. members must bear in mind that there are two sorts of land grants. There is the land grant for which we can get a *quid pro quo*, and there is the land grant for which we can get nothing. When the transcontinental railway scheme was before the House, it was proposed that a syndicate should construct a railway on the land-grant principle. But what was the principle in that case? We were to give the syndicate 11,000,000 acres of land in alternate blocks, and they were to build a railway, and have both the land and the railway. That is quite different from what I would suggest in connection with a land-grant irrigation scheme for the colony. We know that South Australia and Victoria have adopted the land-grant principle in this matter. But what is the nature of the scheme? The American irrigationists who are to carry out the work are to receive 250,000 acres of land, but only 50,000 acres are to be granted by the Government, while the remaining 200,000 acres are to be paid for. The 50,000 acres will be granted in fee-simple in blocks when the firm are able to prove to the satisfaction of the Government that they have spent a certain amount of money on the land, and have secured a certain amount of settlement. There we have a *quid pro quo* for the 50,000 acres, and as they are prepared to give £1 per acre for the other 200,000 acres we have certainly a *quid pro quo* there also. If the proposition is made to the Government by these American irrigationists it should be, at any rate, entertained and adopted, and not be put down as if the colony of Queensland were going to discard everything in connection with land grants. We are richer in land than either Victoria or South Australia, and we can well afford, and never miss, 100,000 acres, especially in a grant for the purpose indicated by me in connection with the

American irrigationists. Speaking of the American irrigationists, I may mention that a few days ago I received a letter from those gentlemen—Chaffey Brothers—apologising for the delay, on account of the enormous amount of work they had before them in South Australia and Victoria, in visiting this colony; but it is to be hoped that in a short time they will be able to fulfil their promise and pay us a visit. To show you, Mr. Speaker, what the people of Victoria think of these irrigationists, I have recently observed in the papers that already there are several families pitching their camps at Mildura, waiting for the first allotments to be allotted to them, and they are prepared to pay £20 per acre. I merely mention this *en passant*. I wish to say a few words in connection with our land administration. I have been only to-day informed, Mr. Speaker, that in West Moreton there have been lands thrown open in grazing areas of something like 4,000 acres each. I think that is a mistake. I think that the position of West Moreton in the settled districts is such that the survey of land into blocks of 4,000 acres each is undesirable. If men are prepared to select such large areas as that as grazing farms, we shall by-and-by not be able to supply the number of grazing farms which may be required in the course of time. All the land may not be first-class, but the position of it is so good that it would be taken up for fruit-growing and other things where it is not required to be of such good quality. In regard to the university, we have been told by the Premier that it is not to be a university at all; but it is to be a school of mines and an agricultural college. If it is to be conducted on that principle I shall certainly give it my hearty support. A Water Bill has been introduced, and I am sure it will be acceptable to both sides of the House, and it is a step in the right direction. I understood the hon. member for Bowen to say yesterday that this Water Bill should be delayed until the next Parliament; but I do not think there is any necessity for that. This is the right time to introduce it, and if a Bill of that kind had been introduced ten years ago it would have been better for the colony. In regard to the Agricultural Department, I have to congratulate the Government upon taking the first step in this direction, which is a great desideratum in agricultural farming. I believe the hon. gentleman will have to extend the usefulness of that department to make it any good. He will have to conduct it upon a much broader basis than was shadowed forth by him yesterday. He will have to go in for experimental farming and go in for agricultural education to make it any good, and useful to the country. I have not much more to say; when these Bills come before the House we will have more time to digest them and to speak upon them. There will be a Redistribution Bill, which will have become a necessity before the end of the session. With these few remarks I will sit down, reserving to myself the right, when the Water Bill comes before the House on its second reading, to make my remarks upon it *in extenso*.

Mr. BROWN said: Mr. Speaker,—I did not intend to take part in this debate, as after our leaders had spoken I looked upon it as the discharge of a blank cartridge; but as there seems to be a little time left I will touch upon one or two points mentioned in it. I consider the principal part of His Excellency's Speech, from a Northern man's point of view, is the allusion to the separation question, and the intimation that the Government are going to devise some measure, or measures, which will to a great extent remove any cause or necessity for separation. I do not think any measure likely to be brought before this House will have that effect. It will

have to be a very comprehensive one—so comprehensive, I should think, that the Government will hesitate to give it to us. It is not a matter of mere administration of revenue, Mr. Speaker. What the people of North Queensland want is the right to frame their own tariff. The conditions of the North and the South are so totally distinct that until North Queensland is allowed to frame its own tariff the population there can never improve their territory in the way they would like. It would be tedious to go into that question now, and I do not desire to do so. I merely mention that I believe the people of North Queensland have no idea of throwing up their hands at the present stage. Personally, I may say, I shall look with great eagerness to the measures the Government have promised us. I say so without committing the Northern members to any action. I shall be glad to give the fullest consideration I can to them all. In speaking on the question of separation, the hon. member for Charters Towers laid considerable stress upon the fact that he sent forward a petition which contained 2,000 signatures adverse to separation. I myself think that is an admission that a very large majority of the people in North Queensland are in favour of separation, as the petition in favour of it contained 10,000 signatures.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I said those 2,000 signatures were obtained in the one locality.

Mr. BROWN: I simply remark that I do not think that that petition was submitted to the same test as the other. The total adult population of Charters Towers is 1,727, exclusive of aliens, so that it is difficult to see how a petition, which it is admitted was signed by only residents in that district, could contain 2,000 signatures. In regard to the Conference which has recently taken place in London I have merely to say that, if it was necessary that anybody should go from this colony to attend that Conference, it was certainly desirable that the Premier should go. I think he was undoubtedly the proper man to go. We already see the disadvantages laboured under by those colonies which were represented by others than Premiers. At least I take it so from the little I have read on the subject. It is a curious coincidence that it was during the sojourn of the Premier in England that our petition for separation was refused. I did not hear him say so, but I believe the Premier stated that he took no active part in bringing about the refusal of our petition; but still it was a curious coincidence that the arrangement about New Guinea, the visit of the Premier, and the refusal of the separation petition, should arise simultaneously. Naturally, I inferred that the arrangement to take charge of New Guinea was part and parcel of the arrangement under which the British Government were to refuse the separation petition. It may not be so; it is only an inference. Although the Premier personally might not have taken any action, no doubt his Agent-General was very active in the matter. We may at least infer that, because all through the time this matter was being discussed in Great Britain the Agent-General had been very active. I think it premature to offer any observations on the subject of the squadron proposed to be established in Australian waters at present, and there will be time enough to touch upon that subject when the question of the division of expense is being discussed. To touch upon a matter of more general interest, the Land Act: we have had that Act criticised very severely both inside and outside this House. The leading journals of the colony have condemned it, and speakers in this House have attributed the present deficiency

in our revenue, to a great extent, to the operation of that Act. I know I am not quite in accord with hon. members on this side in regard to that Act. I have said here before, and I have said outside this House, that it is a mistake on the part of the Government to sell the Crown lands in the interior of the colony before they have made their railways. Although our revenue from land may have diminished during the last few years, we must bear in mind that we still have the land. The proper test to apply, I think, is this: Take the most favourable year, 1882, when there was general prosperity all through the colonies; our land revenue that year was higher than in any other, and in 1885 it was worse than in any other. If we compare our revenue from the land in the years 1885 and 1882 we shall find that in the aggregate the loss of revenue was £78,000. Some hon. members in this House are inclined to say that that loss of revenue is entirely the fault of the Land Act introduced by the present Minister for Lands. I do not think it quite fair to blame the Land Act for that loss of revenue, and for these reasons: If we turn to the colony of New South Wales we find that in 1882 their revenue from land amounted to £2,300,000, but in 1885 their revenue from the same source amounted to scarcely more than half that sum. So that, comparing the two periods, we find the loss of revenue in New South Wales was to the extent of £1,000,000, while in our colony the loss of revenue reached but £78,000.

Mr. MOREHEAD: There have been changes in legislation in New South Wales, the hon. member must remember.

Mr. BROWN: Taking into account the difference in population, that, I think, is a fair comparison to make and shows that we have not fared as badly as our neighbours.

Mr. MOREHEAD: They have not had the same legislation in New South Wales.

Mr. BROWN: If somewhat similar legislation took place, then to my mind some advantage is to be gained in legislating in that direction. I do not mean to say it is in my province or power to fairly review the Land Act, but I merely say that the Land Act has not been so disastrous as some people in this House would lead us to infer. Some hon. members may think it has, but I do not agree with them. In New South Wales, in the number of selections in 1882 and in 1885 we find a marked difference, and a loss of revenue to the extent of £500,000, so that there must be some other cause for this falling-off in land selection besides our legislation. I think the severe depression we have passed through during the last three or four years may have something to do with it. I mention these things because I do not consider it reasonable to attribute all the deficiency to a bad Land Act. I think the Act is worthy of a fair trial.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It has had a good long trial.

Mr. BROWN: I think it has scarcely yet had a fair trial.

Mr. STEVENSON: It has already had to be amended.

Mr. BROWN: I say the main principle is still the same. I consider that the revenue derived from the operation of the Act in the year 1886 is to be multiplied by twenty before we can fairly compare it with the receipts for 1882, because in one case the land was sold outright, and in the other case an annual rent was established which may go on for ever. At any rate, I think it would be a mistake on the part of the Legislature to attempt to interfere seriously with the Land Act until it has had a trial of a few years more.

A statement is made in the Speech with reference to a university, and, of course, that means a university in Brisbane, and as a Northern member I shall certainly object, in the present state of our finances, to a large sum of money being set apart for a luxury of that kind. We must recollect that a large proportion of the population of the colony live away from Brisbane, and if people in other parts of the colony want to send their sons to a university they will send them to Sydney. Brisbane is 500 miles from Sydney, and Townsville is 750 miles from Brisbane, so that the people of Brisbane are better off now with respect to the university of Sydney than the people of North Queensland would be with regard to a Brisbane university. While I admit that a university is desirable, we should approach the subject with caution and recollect that our finances are not in a condition to indulge in a luxury of that kind at present. A suggestion has been made which I think is a good one, that a certain area should be set apart as an endowment; but I think a similar area ought to be set apart for a university for North Queensland. If the Government deal with the subject somewhat in the way in which the public schools are dealt with, and vote sums of money in proportion to what is locally subscribed, for a university for North Queensland, I should not be surprised to see one established there first. I notice that a cathedral is to be established there, and some persons have given as much as £1,000 each towards it. I think it will be the duty of the Government to make provision for a university in the North, as well as here, and, with such a public spirit as I have mentioned, I should not be surprised to see the first university established in the North. I am sure the people of the North are not going to send their sons to an—I will say, inferior university, established in Brisbane or Ipswich, rather than to the universities of Sydney and Melbourne.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The "Modern Athens."

Mr. MACFARLANE: We had the first grammar school, and we ought to have the first university.

Mr. BROWN: That is all I shall say, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—In one of the opening clauses of this Speech we are informed that beneficial results have accrued from the Conference which met in London. I fail, sir, to realise what those highly beneficial results are. They have never been explained to us by any member of the House, and the population of the colony are in the same position; they also are ignorant of what those beneficial results are. Then look at the reception of the Premier on his recent return from London. I do not allude to the very cool reception, to use a mild term, which he received at the railway station, but to the reception at the Town Hall, which, by the way, was a sad contrast to the reception he received in the same place some years ago on his return from an unsuccessful attempt to blacken the character of his successful political opponent. The other day, in this town with a population of 70,000 inhabitants, not more than 600 persons could be got to attend at the Town Hall to receive the Premier.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They shut the doors.

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes; and persons on the Opposition side were not allowed to enter. Many people have personally informed me that they were refused admittance. But when the doors were shut the room was only two-thirds full; there was plenty of room at the back part of the hall for people to walk about. But the feeling

against the Premier is not confined to the southern part of Queensland. The northern portions of the colony are, if anything, more dissatisfied with the conduct of the Government than the southern part appears to be. The cry for separation proves that. During the time of the previous Government that cry was simply a flickering flame. Now it has burst into a blaze which it will require a great deal of money to put out. It is stated, I notice, that—

"Your early attention will be directed to measures for improving the administration of public business in the more remote parts of the colony, and ensuring an equitable distribution of public expenditure."

That same promise was made last year, and the Premier explained, in his letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the separation question, that pressure of public business prevented him from fulfilling the promise. What was that pressure of business? During that year the Opium Bill was brought in, and a Bill to regulate the supply of gas, and a Bill for the protection of oysters. Therefore, it is evident that these measures were considered by the Premier far more important than the promise he made to give the North that justice which he admitted they required. The very appearance of this clause, both this year and last, is an admission that the North has not had fair play. Turning to another matter, the same old excuse appears in this Speech which has appeared in every Speech that has been addressed to the House ever since the present Government came into office. It has generally been the drought; now the floods are accused. We are told that—

"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."

This excuse is absurd, because, although certain losses have occurred in the Logan district and near Warwick, these are the only parts of the colony where any appreciable loss has taken place on account of the floods. At Maryborough and Bundaberg they have actually refused assistance, showing that they did not require it. But although there was some loss, the benefits accruing to the colony from the floods far exceed them. The real cause of our present financial position is maladministration and the manner in which money has been squandered. We have a revelation of how it is done in the letter written to "Dear Pat," as read to us last night, where one constituency is offered a million and a quarter of money to return a certain representative. The loss from the floods in the Logan district, at an outside calculation of one of the members of the floods relief committee, was put down at £50,000: and here "Dear Pat" is promised by a gentleman of good position in the other House, a strong supporter of the Government, and the mover of the Address in Reply, a million and a quarter of money to put in a member for Warwick. We can assess the value of the place by the result of that election, when 469 persons was the total number who rolled up to vote.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is about £300 apiece.

Mr. HAMILTON: The present Government are splendid theoretical financiers. They told us when they were borrowing the ten-million loan that the interest on it would have to come out of the revenue. The hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Brown, told us just now that the Land Act requires a trial. But it has had a trial—a trial of three years—with the result that it has been condemned unanimously. Let us look at the Colonial Treasurer's anticipations of revenue from the Land Act. The first year he anticipated a revenue from it of £10,000; the

real revenue was £627. The next year he informed us that, taking into consideration the drought, and the state of the colony at the time, he expected a revenue of only £30,000; the actual revenue was £3,700. In the third year he told us we were to get £29,000; the amount was actually £6,931. The total revenue for these three years was £11,258, while for the same time the cost of only nine of the men appointed under the Act was £27,000. There are seven land commissioners at £1,000 each, and the board costs £2,000, making altogether £9,000 a year, or £27,000 for the three years. Seeing such a melancholy result, the Government endeavoured to replenish the exhausted Exchequer by running away from the principles they advocated in this House, and selling the land. We know well that the present is a very bad time for selling land, and no business man would attempt such a thing, when money is becoming cheap, and everything is rising in value. And yet this is the very time which the Government have chosen for selling land, which is rapidly rising in value, in the vicinity of the Roma-street railway station—land which will actually be required for railway purposes, and which will have to be bought back at a ruinous price. They have also sold land just below the Boys' Grammar School, in a swamp—a place that would breed death and disease to the entire colony. Indeed I may say that ever since the Government came into office they have been slowly taking away the lungs of this city. They also manage in another way to evade their principles. Whenever they wish to sell land they proclaim the place a township; they don't care whether close settlement exists there or not, so long as they can find an excuse for selling the land. Now, sir, with regard to those grazing areas. Twenty thousand acres is the maximum amount; that is larger than one block of country. A block of country contains 16,000 acres, and is frequently taken up as a station. Now, any person taking up this grazing area, whether in a settled or unsettled district, has to pay $\frac{3}{4}$ d. and sometimes $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. an acre. Not only has he to pay that, but he has to reside there, either personally or by bailiff, and make improvements. On the other hand, you can take up a run in the unsettled districts for twenty-one years and pay $\frac{3}{4}$ d. an acre, and no residence or improvements are required, and still that is used for exactly the same purpose as a grazing area. This is the Government that poses as the poor man's friend, that actually handicaps the poor man in this way. Now, the Minister for Lands pointed triumphantly last night to the manner in which the last Government were to be blamed for their action in the Cairns district in allowing monopolists to take up land. Does he not know that the present Premier was a member of the Government that passed the Land Act of 1876, under which this land was taken up? The land was taken up under that Act, and is now rented to Chinamen. It appears that all classes are dissatisfied with this Land Act. A gentleman belonging to the Liberal party—one who was a Premier of that party, Mr. Thorn—stated, in an address which I noticed in the *Brisbane Courier* only to-day, that members of the board did not know what good land was. He said that some of the best agricultural land in the colony was gazetted as grazing land, and some of the worst grazing land in the colony was gazetted as agricultural land. He also objected, and very properly, to the locking up of the land for thirty years. That is the statement of one of the Premiers of this Liberal party, and that is his verdict on the last Land Act introduced by them. The Act in the first instance is bad, and the administration is bad. What could we expect when we find how it

is administered? Take first Mr. McLean, a very estimable gentleman, who was pitchforked over the heads of other hard-working, efficient members of that department into a billet of £700 a year, simply because he was a supporter of that party, and because of his strong political connection among Blue-Ribbonites. He failed in his province of detective when he was sent up to capsize some selections made by prominent members of this party. He failed on that occasion, but his politics, and the services it is perfectly well known he can render to his party from his connection with Blue-Ribbonites, have no doubt been considered in the disposal of this very fat billet. Mr. Rule again, who was Crown lands ranger at £225 a year, has been appointed commissioner for dividing runs at £1,000 a year. His qualification, I suppose, is that his brother is a neighbour of the Minister for Lands. Then, again, Mr. Paul was appointed commissioner for dividing runs at £1,000 a year. He was never in the service before, and he was appointed to this position over efficient men. No one can assert that his qualifications are superior, because I believe that now he is to get his *congé* for not being able to do his work. Why was he appointed? Simply for his services in connection with that defamatory pamphlet, for which he was secretary and treasurer. Then, again, there is the Gaol Commission. We recollect that one gentleman—a very nice gentleman, too—wrote an article upon the Premier, describing him as a perfect angel; and he also has been paid—first by his appointment on some blackfellows' inquiry, for which he received £500 or £600, and now by his appointment to the Gaol Commission. Again, Mr. Thompson, brother-in-law of the Minister for Lands, was appointed Railway Arbitrator at a very high salary. He was never in the service before, and that is his qualification. If, as the hon. member for Bowen said last night, there had been no efficient men in those departments, and the men appointed had evidently superior qualifications for the positions in which they were placed, then there would have been some excuse; but that is not the case. There are men in those departments, who are highly efficient, who would have filled those offices with credit. I will not mention their names, because I know that there is such a reign of terror in the various departments now that if I even mention the names of those gentlemen they will very likely suffer for it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. HAMILTON: That is the case; it cannot be denied. The term applied by the leader of the Opposition to this Ministry the other night is a very happy term—that is, "The Ministry of law and brother-in-law"—a term which I believe will stick to them too. I notice that in one of the clauses of the Speech the colony is congratulated upon the renewed prosperity which is owing largely to the increased development of our mineral resources. Now, what thanks are due to this Government for the increased development of the mineral resources of the colony? None whatever. We will take Croydon, for instance: I am continually receiving letters from experienced miners, and in their opinion Croydon is one of the richest fields ever discovered in Australia. Now, years before Croydon was discovered, there was a telegraph station within twenty-five miles of the centre of the goldfield, and it was only last month that the twenty-five miles were bridged over, although the field has been proclaimed for nearly two years. A warden was appointed against whom I have nothing to say personally—he was a gentleman, I believe—but he had no knowledge whatever of mining laws, and that, in the opinion of

good authorities, has been the cause of many persons having unjustly lost very valuable claims. Look at Herberton, again. Four or five years ago we were promised a railway, and money was put on the Estimates for it, but up to this time only seven miles have been made. Here is one of the richest mineral districts in the colony, where it is known that a railway would pay, and it is languishing for want of a railway. At Cooktown, again, a railway was projected to the Palmer before this Ministry came into power, and the present Minister for Mines had actually so little interest in it that the third section was going in a different direction. He informed us that the third section was made in the direction of the goldfields; but some mining members contradicted him in spite of his authoritative statements, and he found he was wrong. If he had not been watched that railway would have gone to another part of the district. What have we to thank the Government for with regard to mines? The imposition of the machinery tax. The Premier was consistent in that matter, because when the Macalister Government proposed to remit that duty, at a time when they had a surplus of £240,000, the Premier voted against it; and now he has imposed it again. Then, sir, when it was proposed the other day that a sum of money should be granted for prospecting—it was not a very large sum—that was opposed also. Although the benefits that have accrued from the development of our mineral resources cannot be denied or depreciated, still, what have the Government done for that industry? We are to have a new Secretary for Agriculture, but there is nothing about a new Secretary for Mines. I notice that the Attorney-General took credit to himself last night for the action of the Government with regard to the Chinese, but, sir, whatever action they have taken in that question has been forced upon them. Many years ago, when there were thousands of Chinese in the northern portion of the colony, the danger of an inroad of those people was forcibly pointed out by many hon. members—by Mr. Macrossan and others—who proposed to take action to prevent it, but nothing was done; an influx of Chinese took place in consequence, and when it was too late some restrictive measures were taken. After that there was little danger of a fresh influx until some time since, when it was found that the Chinese were coming into the colony for the sugar-planters. Then it was evident that fresh restrictions were necessary, and they were forced upon the Government by both sides of the House; but those restrictions were not half so prohibitive as the Opposition wished. Last night the Premier attempted to give some explanation of the action that was taken with regard to the Cairns railway—in accepting Mr. Robb's tender. With regard to Mr. Robb, he is a personal friend of mine, and I feel confident that he will carry out that contract properly. He is not blameable for anything the Government have done. What was the explanation given by the Premier. He said:—

"I was tolerably familiar with the country, and I did go carefully through the specifications and descriptions of the bridges. I saw the plans of the bridges, and some of those I saw appeared to me to be absolutely impossible of construction. Then the tenders came in, and in my opinion all of them were to a great extent of a speculative character. They must have been of a speculative character, for it was almost impossible for any man to discover accurately what that work would cost. All of them exceeded the Engineer's estimate. Under the circumstances, the Government did not feel justified in accepting any of the tenders. Mr. Miles informed the Government that he believed he could get a tender from Mr. Robb for somewhere about the amount of the Engineer's estimate. In a case of that kind, where, as I say, the tenders were necessarily to a great extent of a speculative character,

and the work of extreme difficulty, and where, if we did not get a thoroughly reliable contractor, the work would almost certainly be thrown upon the Government, and all sorts of claims for extras and all sorts of difficulties arise, the Government recognised the importance of having a competent and experienced contractor to undertake the work, and one who would be able to carry it out, no matter what it cost. Under the circumstances the Government thought it desirable to deal with Mr. Robb, who made an offer to do the work for a sum about the Engineer's estimate."

Then the Premier went on to say that he thought Mr. Carey might congratulate himself that he did not get the contract. He commenced his explanation by saying that he was tolerably familiar with the country. I felt inclined to doubt that statement, and consequently I sent two wires to Cairns, one to each of the editors of the papers there. One stated shortly in reply that the Premier had never been over the country. My wire was this:—

"Was Griffith ever along the route or even near the upon which Robb is making railway line. Griffith says he considers nature of country will cause Robb to lose money in performing contract. What is Robb's opinion also the Engineer's opinion?"

The reply is this:—

"Griffith turned first sod less than half-mile from post-office."

You must recollect that the second section of the Cairns railway commences eight miles from Cairns, and finishes at over twenty miles.

"Am reliably informed by residents he never traversed line within eight miles of beginning Robb's section. General impression here amongst railway men and from Robb's conversation is that section will pay beyond expectation tunnel work being much less difficult than anticipated. Hannam and Robb's people out of town. Griffith went up inlet by steamer to Port Douglas by road but never saw country traversed by line."

The PREMIER: I had been to Cairns twice before that, and over the range in two different places.

Mr. HAMILTON: I have been over the range in several places far more frequently than the Premier; but I have never been over the line, and everyone who has been there knows that the line is a long way from the road, and is quite different and far more difficult country in comparison with that along the road. The Premier always stuck to the road, and is therefore not familiar with the country over which this railway is being made. The Premier's statement that the bridges were impossible of construction is an unmerited slur upon Mr. Hannam, a gentleman who is as high in his profession as an engineer as the Premier is in his as a lawyer. The contractors do not consider them impossible, and as to the "speculative character of the tenders," what is the meaning of that? It is simply absurd. Mr. Overend and another gentleman, a valuator of Mr. Robb's, went carefully over the country; they examined it for themselves far more than the Premier did, who was never near it, and after doing so they sent in their tenders. If they had required more information the Engineer would have had to give that information before they put in their tenders. The hon. gentleman stated it was considered that great loss of time would have occurred if fresh tenders were called for. No more loss of time would have occurred if two or three of the tenderers had been asked to send in fresh tenders than if one had been; and if anyone was singled out to be asked to send in a fresh tender, most certainly it was the man who had sent in the lowest, all other things being equal. It is well known that Mr. Carey has carried out important contracts in the other colonies most successfully. He was £22,000 below Robb, and Robb's last tender was £30,000 less than his first. Therefore, Robb's last tender was

about £7,000 below Carey's. Now, the Premier stated that Robb's last offer was near the Engineer's estimate. If such was the case then Carey's offer must have been about £7,000 above the Engineer's estimate, or about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. above that estimate. Does anyone believe for a moment that the Government refused to accept Carey's tender because it was $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. above the Engineer's estimate, especially when the Premier tells us that he believes Robb will lose money? I am also informed that Carey wired to the Government at the time telling them that he would take the contract at the same price as Robb; and seeing that his tender was £22,000 below Robb's, he was certainly entitled to that privilege. Mr. Overend, one of the first railway contractors in the colony, is perfectly satisfied that he will make a profit out of the work. If Mr. Robb found, when he tendered for the work, that he could only carry out the contract for a certain sum, how is it that he subsequently comes to the conclusion that he can do it for £30,000 less? He must have been offered some inducement. We all know that by substituting one class of work for another any railway contract may be made to pay if Minister and contractor are in collusion. The matter clearly requires some explanation. I believe I know why it was done. If we look at the past we can form a very good idea as to the cause. It will be remembered that Messrs. Robb and Overend carried out the Charters Towers Railway, and that the Attorney-General owes his position in this House to the exertions of Mr. Overend, one of the cleverest political agents in the country. I believe that is the reason, and that it is thought possible he may do similar work in the Cook district when the next election takes place.

Mr. CAMPBELL said: Mr. Speaker,—I had no intention of speaking on the Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor. I think that almost more than is necessary has been said already. I agree with many hon. members on this side that when there is no want of confidence motion before the House, and two or three leaders on either side have spoken on a debate of this kind, the thing is pretty well thrashed out. But I wish to say a few words in reference to an assertion made by the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, when addressing the House. He stated that if necessary the irrigation scheme would be carried out on the land-grant principle. Whether he had any authority for the statement I do not know; if he had no authority for it, the sooner it is contradicted the better. I maintain that if the land-grant principle is to be applied to irrigation, the Government might just as well apply it to the construction of railways. The principle is directly opposite to that upon which the Government came into office, and I trust that they will give the statement their denial. But if they have given permission to the hon. member to use the words, the sooner the party sitting behind them know it the better.

The PREMIER: He spoke without any communication with the Government.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Then I have nothing more to say.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I will not detain the House for any length of time, and I would not rise on this occasion at all were it not to correct one or two misstatements which were made last night by the hon. member for Normanby, and repeated this evening by the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton. I will not attempt to go over the Speech, because it has been discussed so ably and well on both sides of the House that there is little or nothing left to be said on the subject. In due course there

will be an opportunity to discuss the various matters referred to in the Speech, and no doubt members will avail themselves of the occasion. The statement made by the hon. member for Normanby has reference to the flood. He defied anyone to say that there was any damage whatever done by the floods at Bundaberg, and also stated that the flood was confined to the valley of the Logan, and three or four miles round Warwick. As I have been a member of the floods relief committee from its creation up to the present time, I am of course acquainted with the various districts where floods unfortunately have taken place, and I can state that there was a severe flood at Bundaberg, also in the Wide Bay district, on the Mary River, on the North and South Pine, on the Caboolture, at Oxley, in and around Brisbane on the low-lying lands, from the source to the mouth of the Logan, on the Albert, in Tingalpa, on the Coomera, and Nerang; also at Warwick, and slightly at Toowoomba, and to a considerable extent around Ipswich. I may have omitted some place, because I have perhaps forgotten it, but I know that in the districts I have mentioned severe floods were experienced, and that relief was given promptly and munificently by the people of Queensland. A large sum of money was collected, subscriptions came pouring in from all directions, and it is greatly to the credit of the colony that such unbounded charity existed, and I suppose still exists. It has also been said that the Government were not prompt in acting on the occasion. I happen to know that they were prompt, that no time whatever was lost in sending supplies away to the Logan. A steamer was sent at once, and another steamer followed immediately. Private individuals also sent away their steamers laden with provisions for the relief of the unfortunate sufferers, while special mention may be made of one gentleman, Mr. McDiarmid, who owns the steamer "Fanny," which he generously and promptly sent away for the relief of the sufferers. Mr. Hamilton made the same statement as the hon. member for Normanby.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He should not be described as Mr. Hamilton. He is member for a certain district, I think.

Mr. SHERIDAN: I mean the member for Cook. I do not think the misstatements were made wilfully in either case, but that both hon. members made them because of their want of knowledge in the matter. I therefore deem it my duty thus early to contradict the statements.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I have the honour to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor will receive the Address in Reply on Tuesday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, it was ordered that the Speech of His Excellency the Governor be taken into consideration at the next sitting of the House.

ADDRESS OF CONGRATULATION TO HER MAJESTY.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider an Address of congratulation to Her Majesty on the completion of the fiftieth year of her reign.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Fraser,—I am sure all members of this House desire to take the opportunity afforded them to offer their respectful congratulations to Her Majesty on the completion of the fiftieth year of her reign. Other Legislatures of Australia have had the advantage of meeting during the fiftieth year, and I believe the addresses that they have agreed to were presented at the same time—on the 21st June or about that time. We were later in meeting,

and have had not an opportunity of presenting our congratulations on the most appropriate date, but we take the first opportunity afforded to us after meeting to do so. I do not think it necessary to refer at great length to the events that have happened during the last fifty years. Many of us were not then alive, and those of us who were—the few of us who were then living—were extremely young men or boys. But the face of the world has in many respects changed entirely since that time, that is in the civilised parts of it. Australia in those days was a small outlying settlement principally consisting of Sydney, whereas now the Australian dominions of Her Majesty contain a population of over three and a-half millions, and are as important as the United States were when they severed from England—as large in point of population and much more important as regards their trade and wealth. The draft address which I have now to submit proposes to refer briefly to one or two of the changes that have taken place in the Empire, and which more particularly affect us, and I think it is right that we should refer to them in that way. I do not think it is necessary to pass any eulogies upon Her Majesty. All of us who know anything of the subject—and I suppose we all know something—know that the personal influence of a monarch in a constitutional monarchy, even of the most limited kind, may be very great—an influence tending to moderation and wisdom, and preventing extreme courses being taken by parties; and those who are in a position to know, know best how great an influence Her Majesty has exercised in that particular on many occasions when the interests of the Empire were seriously involved. I propose that we should, in this address, commence with a renewal of the assurance of our loyalty and devotion to Her Majesty's throne and person, that we should offer our dutiful congratulations on the prolongation of her reign for a period reached by few of her ancestors, and which has been marked by a continuous advancement and prosperity in all parts of Her dominions, and by unexampled progress in almost every branch of human knowledge. I think we may then properly make recognition of the benefit the Empire has received from the personal influence Her Majesty has exercised in the government of the Empire and in the development and maintenance of the free institutions under which we live, and conclude by expressing a hope that through the remainder of Her Majesty's reign—which we pray may long be continued—she may witness an ever-increasing prosperity of all portions of the Empire, and a still closer union of its several parts under the common bond of allegiance to the throne, and that Her Majesty may enjoy every personal blessing. I think that an address of this kind ought not to be altogether colourless, and that in expressing ourselves thus we shall give nothing more than a plain expression of the views we all must hold. For my own part, I hope Her Majesty may live many years longer to govern the Empire, and that her guiding hand—for it is a guiding hand—may continue to conduct it in the same way as it has done during the past. I have much pleasure in moving the adoption of the following Address:—

“MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,—

“We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire, on the occasion of the completion of the fiftieth year of Your Majesty's reign, to renew the assurance of our loyalty and devotion to Your Majesty's throne and person.

“We offer to Your Majesty our dutiful congratulations on the prolongation of Your

Majesty's reign for a period reached by few of Your Majesty's ancestors, and which has been marked by continuous advancement and prosperity in all parts of Your Majesty's dominions, and by unexampled progress in almost every branch of human knowledge.

“Fifty years ago this province of the Empire was an almost unknown portion of the colony of New South Wales, containing only a few hundred people; and when, less than twenty-eight years ago, it was erected into a separate colony under the name which Your Majesty, to the great satisfaction of the inhabitants, was pleased to confer upon it, the population was still hardly 25,000, a number which in the succeeding portion of Your Majesty's reign has increased nearly fifteenfold.

“There is no portion of Your Majesty's wide dominions that enjoys greater freedom or happiness than that for which we speak, and we are deeply sensible of the gratitude which we owe to Your Majesty for the personal influence which Your Majesty has exerted in the government of the Empire and in the development and maintenance of the free institutions under which we live.

“We earnestly hope that through the remainder of Your Majesty's reign—which we pray may long be continued—Your Majesty may witness an ever-increasing prosperity of all portions of the Empire, and a still closer union of its several parts under the common bond of allegiance to the throne, and that Your Majesty may enjoy every personal blessing.”

MR. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Fraser,—I feel that it is almost unnecessary for me to preface the few remarks I have to make by stating that the resolution and composition of the hon. leader of the House will be most cordially accepted by the members of the Opposition, because whatever our views politically may be, whatever differences we may have, so far as colonial politics are concerned, it will at any rate be admitted that we are all loyal subjects of the Queen, and that we all feel that not one word too much has been said by the Premier in moving the adoption of this Address. I, sir, individually would prefer that the phraseology of this Address might be a little altered. It appears to me a little too ornate. I do not, however, propose to alter it at all, as I am told on good authority that it is rather an expurgated edition of the addresses adopted in the other colonies. I would not like to make any alteration in the phraseology that would savour of disloyalty to the throne. At the same time I think the Premier, in moving this Address, was a little unfortunate in his allusion to the fact that at the present time these colonies contain a population about equal to the population of the United States when that country ceased to be an integral part of the Empire. It is an extraordinary circumstance that that severance took place during the reign of one of the few sovereigns who have reigned over England for a similar period to Her Majesty. The allusion was consequently, I think, particularly unhappy and unfortunate, and I can only say I should be very sorry to see a similar accident happen during the reign of Her Majesty. I have only to express, on the part of the Opposition, their hearty concurrence in the resolution proposed by the Premier, and I speak also for the Opposition when I say that I hope Her Majesty will have a long life, and

continue to sustain the glorious reputation she has already achieved as a queen, a mother, and a woman.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Address, as reported from the Committee, was adopted by the House.

The PREMIER moved that the Address be signed by Mr. Speaker and presented to His Excellency for transmission to Her Majesty.

Question put and passed.

JOINT COMMITTEES.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move—

1. That the following members of the House be appointed members of the Joint Library Committee, namely :—The Hon. the Speaker, Mr. Brookes, and Mr. Norton.

2. That the following members of the House be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management of the Refreshment Rooms, namely :—The Hon. the Speaker, Mr. Aland, and Mr. Black.

3. That the following members of the House be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management and superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings, namely :—The Hon. the Speaker, Mr. Stevens, and Mr. Mellor.

4. That these appointments be communicated to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form, in reply to their message of yesterday's date.

These are the same gentlemen who served on the respective committees last year.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that the House on its rising do adjourn till Tuesday next, at 3 o'clock, to proceed to Government House, there to present to the Governor the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER : The business paper for Tuesday will be arranged in the following order :—First, the two Local Government Bills, the Divisional Boards Bill, and the Valuation Bill ; and after them the Copyright Registration Bill and the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. I move that the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at eight minutes to 6 o'clock till Tuesday next.