

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 1887

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 6 September, 1887.

New Member.—Member Sworn.—Gaol Commission Report.—Motion for Adjournment—Civil Servants taking part in Elections—Laidley Railway.—Questions.—Duration of Parliaments Bill—first reading.—Formal Motions.—Electoral Districts Bill of 1887—first reading.—Endowment of Municipalities Amendment Bill—first reading.—Real Property (Local Registries) Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

NEW MEMBER.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that I have received from the returning officer for the electoral district of South Brisbane the return of the writ issued by me, with a certificate of the election of the Hon. Henry Jordan as a member for that electoral district.

MEMBER SWORN.

The Hon. HENRY JORDAN (Minister for Lands) was sworn in, and took his seat as a member for the electoral district of South Brisbane.

GAOL COMMISSION REPORT.

Mr. JESSOP said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to inform the Premier that I shall take an early opportunity of discussing the report of the Gaol Commission. I mention the matter now so that hon. members may be prepared to give it careful consideration.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not quite understand what the hon. member proposes to do. Does he propose to move a resolution? Does he intend to move the adjournment of the House? Or does he wish to call attention to the matter on going into Committee of Supply? I do not quite understand what he is asking for.

Mr. JESSOP said: Mr. Speaker,—I propose to analyse the report, but not at any great length, in order to bring it before the House. If agreeable I will do that on a motion for adjournment. I merely mention that matter now so that hon. members may read the report, and be prepared to analyse the evidence. It is a matter of considerable interest both to the House and the country, but I do not wish to bring it forward to the inconvenience of the Government or private members.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it would be most convenient that the matter should be discussed on the motion to go into Committee of Supply. That is the recognised time for calling attention to such matters, and I will undertake to put Supply at the head of the paper some day next week, of which I will give the hon. member early notice.

Mr. JESSOP: That arrangement will suit me.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

CIVIL SERVANTS TAKING PART IN ELECTIONS.—
LAIDLEY RAILWAY.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to refer to a matter which has excited public comment, and not very favourable comment either, and I shall conclude with the usual motion for adjournment. It is generally considered that Civil servants are not supposed to take any active part in elections. A large number of Civil servants have been debarred from voting, and those who still hold that privilege are not supposed to take any active part in politics. But there is an instance where

I think that has been done lately. I think it is particularly indelicate that an individual who is connected with a member of the present Administration should take an active part in an election, and it is the general opinion that Mr. Woolcock, the private secretary of the Premier, has actively interfered in politics for the purpose of securing the defeat of the Premier's opponent, and the return of his supporter, Mr. Drake. The country is paying that gentleman, and I consider that he should be kept doing the work he is paid for. If the Premier wishes Mr. Woolcock to act as his electioneering agent he ought to pay him out of his own pocket. I have been informed by one Enoggera elector—a business man in Queen street, in whose respectability and truthfulness I have every confidence—that he was stuck up on the way from town by Mr. Woolcock, who solicited his vote and influence for Mr. Drake. I notice that Mr. Woolcock is present at nearly every meeting in a prominent position on the stage, and it is public property that he is exercising his influence to secure the return of a supporter of the Government. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I suppose I must take some notice of the motion that has been made. The member who made the motion seems to have very erroneous notions or no notions at all as to what are the functions of a private secretary; he is not in any sense a Civil servant.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He is paid by the country.

The PREMIER: A sum of money has been voted for the last seven or eight years by Parliament to defray the salary of a private secretary to the Premier, who, it is well known, cannot undertake to execute the great amount of work that falls upon him. There is a great deal of work that cannot be done by Civil servants because it is private political work, and that work it is the function of a private secretary to perform. Hon. members who know anything about it know that. The private secretary does not hold office by appointment of the Governor in Council, but is appointed personally by the Prime Minister, and goes out of office with him. My private secretary has just as much right to take part in politics and political movements as myself, if I have no objection—just as much. If the House does not think it desirable that the Prime Minister should have a private secretary to attend to his business, let them say so and refuse to vote his salary; but so long as the private secretary performs the private secretary's work that is all that need be required of him, and if some hon. members do not know what that is they may very easily find out. I am sure Mr. Dickson will be delighted with the new champion he has got. Here we have the "whip" of the Opposition standing up in the House as the champion of Mr. Dickson. I think that is a remarkable thing, a very remarkable thing. I do not really feel called upon to say anything upon this matter. I have let Mr. Woolcock do as he pleases in this matter, and I have exerted no influence with respect to him. For myself I may say I wish the electors of Enoggera to be free to vote without any undue influence from any one party or the other. I am aware that some members on this side of the House, supporters of the present Government, are using all their influence in support of Mr. Dickson; and there are others also, supporters of this Government, who are using their influence against him. I do not think I am under any obligation to assist Mr. Dickson, under existing circumstances; considering that last week he did his best to turn the Government out of office by voting for a vote of want of confidence in them. I do not think I am bound to

give an active support to a gentleman who supported a want of confidence vote in the present Government and then goes to his constituents to ask them to endorse his action. I do not think I am under any obligation to support that gentleman under those conditions, and I think I am doing a great deal when I do not take any active part in the election at all.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the House and the country will be very much edified with what has fallen from the Premier. The hon. gentleman told us in the first place that Mr. Woolcock is not a Civil servant, and that to a certain extent is no doubt true. At the same time he is paid by the taxpayers of this colony. We all contribute to the support of that gentleman who is now doing the political work the Premier has no time to do himself. Not having time to "stump" the Enoggera electorate himself, to try and prevent the return of his late trusted colleague, Mr. Dickson, to this House, the hon. gentleman employs his private secretary to do the work for him. That is practically what the hon. gentleman has said. He does not see why Mr. Woolcock should not do the political work he has no time to do himself. I do not share the opinions of the hon. gentleman, and I think it would be a great deal better, if the Premier is so desirous, as he admits he is, and so anxious, to keep Mr. Dickson out of Parliament, that he should come forward himself and oppose Mr. Dickson and not send round his private secretary, an individual, who from his position with respect to the Premier may be in possession of certain knowledge which he may impart to the constituents in such a manner as he may think fit to induce them to vote in a way in which they otherwise might not vote. Perhaps after all it is safer for the hon. gentleman to make a promise through his private secretary than from himself. It may be almost as good as being "misreported," for if he made a statement himself he would have to carry it out, and any promise he might make he would have to keep. The hon. gentleman was kind enough to say—and he said it in a lordly way—that he wished the electors of Enoggera to be free. I myself, as an elector for Enoggera, feel deeply grateful to be allowed to be free, and I am perfectly certain the other electors of Enoggera will be equally grateful.

The PREMIER: Why do you misquote me?

Mr. MOREHEAD: I am quoting the hon. gentleman's own words. I suppose he did not wish that we should be incarcerated.

The PREMIER: Why do you not finish my sentence?

Mr. MOREHEAD: I took the words down, and the hon. gentleman said, "I wish the electors of Enoggera to be free."

The PREMIER: That is not the whole of the sentence.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I am sure the electors of Enoggera will not trouble very much whether they have the permission of the Premier to be free or not; they will probably vote as they please, Mr. Woolcock notwithstanding. It is a most indecent thing, and no precedent can be found for it in this House, where a private secretary for the time being of the Premier of the colony went round doing electioneering work for the Premier—for that is practically what Mr. Woolcock is doing. I must here express my deep regret at the way in which the Premier has spoken of his late colleague, Mr. Dickson. I myself can quite understand colleagues having a difference of opinion and yet parting friends, both giving credit to each other for the strength of their convictions. I think all credit is due to Mr. Dickson for having severed a connection of

many years' standing upon a question of what he considered principle, because, as far as I can understand, there has been no personal matter between Mr. Dickson and the Premier. I do not think it says very much for the friendship of the Premier to say that when a colleague dares to differ from him he throws the whole weight of his influence, through his private secretary, against a gentleman who has been so long his colleague, and so much respected by both sides of the House, as Mr. Dickson. I distinctly object, and if I can get sufficient support I intend to make my objection to any salary being voted on the Estimates to an individual who is to be used as a political agent for any person, even for the Premier, for the time being. I am sure I never imagined, and I am sure the House never did, that the private secretary for the time being of the Premier was to be a political private secretary, to be used for political purposes, and to exert political influence when contested elections are going on. I do not know whether Mr. Woolcock is an elector for Enoggera or not, but even if he were, his position, and especially the confidential position he holds with respect to the Premier, should have been a bar to his taking any action in connection with the election for Enoggera especially, or with any other election.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very much surprised at the speech which we have just heard from the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Have you read the letter in the *Telegraph*?

Mr. W. BROOKES: I think it is hardly fair that the leader of the Opposition should rise and make a speech that would be impossible if he had listened to what the Premier had said. The Premier distinctly repudiated the charge that he had in any way sought to influence his private secretary.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is too thin.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Of course the difference may be that I am on this side of the House, and believe what the Premier says; and it seems to follow logically that gentlemen on the other side do not believe the Premier, whatever he says. That is a function of the Opposition, I know; but do they not make themselves uncommonly stupid by bringing a matter like this forward? Why not raise the whole question of whether the Civil servants shall have the right to vote or not?

Mr. MOREHEAD: That would not prevent the private secretary electioneering.

Mr. W. BROOKES: It would go very far towards it. As the Premier said, his private secretary is in no sense a Civil servant, and as he is an elector for Enoggera—at least, I am pretty sure he is—he has certainly as much right to go and assist Mr. Drake's candidature as I have. I wonder hon. gentlemen opposite did not bring me into the question. It must be understood now that the Opposition are the champions of Mr. Dickson, and I confess I do not know any other retreat possible for him in this House.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It is a very good retreat.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I hope he will find it comfortable; at all events he has turned his back upon this side. The charge brought forward is really too absurd to be entertained for a single moment. There is another matter in connection with Civil servants which I would suggest to the senior member for Cook to take up, and in taking up which he would be showing a great deal more common sense, and that is, the fact of Civil servants doing work after hours to the injury of other people who are prepared to do it in their offices in town.

Mr. NORTON: Is that a herring you are drawing across the trail?

Mr. W. BROOKES: If it is, it is a very good substantial herring, and I am very glad to have drawn it across the trail. I hope we shall hear no more about this.

Mr. HAMILTON: You will hear a good deal more about it.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I have been present with Mr. Woolcock at Mr. Drake's meeting; and what did he do? He was simply a listener, like the rest.

Mr. NORTON: That is too thin altogether.

Mr. W. BROOKES: He does not speak at these meetings; he just quietly looks on and listens. Just look at the position of Mr. Drake. He is a private gentleman, unknown in the political world; he is really and truly, politically, a neophyte; and it is only natural that Mr. Woolcock, as his friend, should sympathise with him and go to his election meetings to see how he gets on, and to give him a word of encouragement. Surely there is no harm in that. Indeed, there is no one in the House who would be more ready to serve a personal friend in that way than the senior member for Cook himself. That is just in his line.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: But he is not paid by the State.

Mr. W. BROOKES: The argument that Mr. Woolcock should not attend Mr. Drake's meetings because he is the Premier's private secretary will not bear examination; if the Premier's explanation does not satisfy the leader of the Opposition and the hon. members on that side of the House, the public will see very clearly that no possible explanation would.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to take exception to some remarks that fell from the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, when he alluded to the late Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Dickson—remarks which I consider were quite uncalled for. He said there was no seat for Mr. Dickson in the House except on the other side. I have no doubt that before long Mr. Dickson will be again a member of this House, either for Enoggera or some other constituency; and I am perfectly satisfied that when he does come back he will be as staunch a supporter of the Liberal party as that hon. member himself. There will be plenty of room on this side for him, and a great many of us on this side will be very glad indeed to see him here again. The junior member for North Brisbane talked in a platform speech, the other evening, about old imbecile fossils. Just imagine the attenuated member for North Brisbane talking about fossils! It is about the most ridiculous remark I ever heard him make, and it shows that he has lost whatever little brains he once had. He, as the oldest member in the House, should have been the last to talk about fossils in connection with a gentleman who is as highly respected by all parties as any other gentleman either in the House or in Brisbane. I may say that I was anxious to know whether what Mr. Woolcock is doing in this matter was being done with the Premier's sanction, and I wrote to him yesterday to that effect; but he has not had the courtesy to answer me, or else he was too busy. What the hon. member for North Brisbane said about Mr. Woolcock's action at these meetings is quite a mistake. He is a good deal more than a listener. He goes on to the platform, and takes an active part in what is going on.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No, no!

Mr. KELLETT: One very influential elector of Enoggera told me that Mr. Woolcock asked him if he would assist him in working for Mr.

Drake. I know that for a fact, and can give my authority for it, if necessary. The question with me was, whether he is doing this with or without the Premier's consent; and I should have been glad to have been told that it was without his consent, and that he himself was taking no part in the contest in any way. A great many electors think it is being done with the Premier's consent. Although Mr. Woolcock may not be a Civil servant in the generally accepted sense of the word, yet he is paid to do certain work, and not to go about electioneering for the Premier's friends. If ever a private secretary's services are required in the Premier's office, surely it is now, while there is a political crisis; and if his services as private secretary are of any value, he will not have much time to go about canvassing.

The PREMIER: He is in my office all day long.

Mr. HIGSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I have been present at some of these meetings, and I can assure the House that Mr. Woolcock never interfered in the election in any way whatever. What he has done any man is perfectly entitled to do, whether he is a Civil servant or not.

Mr. PATTISON said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for North Brisbane endeavoured to put a very moderate complexion on Mr. Woolcock's action in this matter. Whatever Mr. Woolcock may have done at public meetings I can form no opinion about, but it is a well-known fact that Mr. Woolcock was driving Mr. Drake through the electorate of Enoggera on last Sunday, pulling up at very many homesteads, and canvassing for votes for him—the outcome, I suppose, of his very religious training. This can be proved by at least fifty witnesses, and the gentleman whom I had it from is a highly respectable man, and a man whose word will pass quite as well as Mr. Woolcock's, or the hon. member Mr. Brookes's, or anyone else's. That is a positive fact, and therefore it is no use the hon. member for North Brisbane smoothing the thing over as he has endeavoured to do.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I agree with the senior member for Cook that it is a highly improper thing for the Premier to allow his private secretary to interfere in an election in this way. Although not nominally, he is actually, a Civil servant, because he is paid by the State.

The PREMIER: So am I.

Mr. MURPHY: But you are paid as the political chief.

The PREMIER: And he is paid as political attaché.

Mr. MURPHY: But he is not paid as an electioneering agent for your party. It is highly improper that the Premier should allow this gentleman to go about canvassing for Mr. Drake, as he has been doing most openly. I have it from a most reliable authority—from one who is a member of Parliament—that Mr. Woolcock has been seen canvassing during the daytime in the electorate of Enoggera, and that he makes arrangements for gentlemen to occupy the chair at meetings, and does other work of that kind which is only undertaken by strong political partisans. A man holding the position that Mr. Woolcock does—a confidential position, a position which may put him in possession of information which Mr. Dickson, who has just left the Ministry, might, from a sentiment of honour, be precluded from revealing to the electors.

The PREMIER: No, he is not.

Mr. MURPHY: He may reveal certain Cabinet secrets, and by that means influence the electors, which Mr. Dickson is precluded from doing.

The PREMIER: He knows nothing about the Cabinet proceedings.

Mr. MURPHY: In any case it is highly improper, I hold, for the Premier to allow his private secretary to interfere in an election as Mr. Woolcock is doing. Had the Premier himself taken an active part in it he would have been quite within his rights, and he would have been fully justified in assisting Mr. Drake in every way; but it is quite a different thing for him to allow his private secretary to do so. The office of private secretary is not a political appointment in any shape or form.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Oh, yes; he is the political attaché.

Mr. MURPHY: He is simply appointed to assist the Premier in his official duties—

The PREMIER: Oh, no!

Mr. MURPHY: And not in his political work. Besides, it is very hard on this constituency that it should be "Bulcocked" on the one hand and "Woolcocked" on the other. That is about the hardest thing in the whole transaction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—It is evident that hon. members on the other side fear the result of this election.

Mr. MURPHY: Not at all; it does not affect us.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: My hon. friend the member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, seems especially anxious about it.

Mr. KELLETT: He does not fear it at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As for the doctrine that Mr. Woolcock should not be used by the Premier for political purposes, I say that he is the very man the Premier would use at a general election, and I suppose that but for his friendly feelings towards Mr. Dickson he would have made use of him on this occasion. I know that if I were in his place I would make use of Mr. Woolcock to the utmost in trying to defeat Mr. Dickson, because it is not a personal matter; it is a matter of political principle between Mr. Dickson and the Ministry. If Mr. Dickson chose to separate himself from the Ministry on a question of political principle, he is certainly a fair object for opposition on the part of the Government. The hon. leader of the Opposition said he did not agree with the opinion of the Premier. I should be surprised if he did—on this or any other subject. I would just remind hon. members sitting on the other side of what took place at the last election. Did not the then Government use railway contractors as electioneering agents? They most certainly did in my electorate—and used them to very good purpose too. How much money did they pay O'Rourke and McSharry over the Leichhardt election—not out of their own pockets, but out of the funds of the country? I may say that that is a fact—that they paid O'Rourke and McSharry's electioneering expenses out of the funds of the country. I believe it was not only in my electorate that that was done, but there I know it was done. I am pretty certain, too, of the way in which the payments were made. I am not going into that now; there will be other opportunities for doing so. If I am ever a private member of this House I will bring that matter up and have it sifted to the bottom—and not as regards that one occasion only, but half-a-dozen others. I am very sorry indeed that the Premier has not made use of Mr. Woolcock, and that that gentleman has only been exercising his own undoubted right to influence those electors in the direction which he thinks right.

Mr. MOREHEAD: This is the Liberal policy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know whether he has done that, but he had a perfect right to do it, and I think he ought to have done it.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the hon. gentleman who has just sat down raised rather an unfortunate question when he accused members on this side of the House of having used the railway contractors at the last election. What did that hon. gentleman do? He sacrificed his principles from top to bottom, and promised a railway that he had told the people half-a-dozen times before he did not believe in. He did that in order to bribe his opponent and bribe the people of the district, and he succeeded in doing so. He had blamed the last Government for proposing such a railway, but he sacrificed the whole of his principles in order that he might get a seat in this House. Of course it had the effect of causing his opponent to withdraw from the election. He knew that the people, having got the promise of the railway, would support the hon. gentleman, who had then been appointed Minister for Lands, and was in a better position than his opponent to carry out the promise, which he has done, of course. I do not think there is any need to say anything further about Mr. Woolcock's action, or the action of the Premier in allowing Mr. Woolcock to stump this electorate. Mr. Woolcock has been talking a very active part in the Enoggera election, and I do not think, as he is paid by the State, that he has any business to do it. Considering the confidential position which he holds with the Premier, I think it would have been more consistent with good taste if the hon. gentleman had done his own work, instead of sending his private secretary to do it.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. the Minister for Works has stated that from his personal knowledge the late Government employed railway contractors to canvass the Leichhardt district in opposition to him, and in favour of the person who opposed him. Now, as I happen to be the person who was running in opposition to that hon. gentleman, I can state most distinctly and decidedly that if there was any arrangement between the Government and the contractor I never heard a word of it until this moment. I deny that I had anything to do with it in any shape or form, or that I knew the Government had anything to do with it, nor do I believe they had anything to do with it. I believe it is an invention of the hon. gentleman's own brain—a creature of his fertile imagination. I was in the electorate most of the time the election was going on, and had there been anything of the sort it would most certainly have come to my ears.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I regretted to hear the remarks made by the hon. the Minister for Works, and I think that in his calmer moments he will regret that he used those words. If he had been less excited I do not believe he would have spoken as he did—I give him credit for that—because the charge he has made against the late Government is one of a very gross kind if it is untrue. So far as I am personally concerned—and at the time the election took place I was in the Works Department—I am not aware of McSharry and O'Rourke being employed as political agents and paid out of Government funds. The hon. gentleman appeared to be very excited, and I give him the credit to believe that if he had spoken calmly he would not have made that statement; and having made it I feel sure he will highly regret it. Having made it, he should certainly either substantiate it or withdraw it. If, as he says, he knew of it at the time, he

should have brought the matter forward at once. I very much regret that the statement was made; I believe myself that it is untrue. I know nothing about it, and I do not believe that any member of the late Government was in any way concerned in the action the hon. member attributes to them. Now, with regard to the question which has been raised about the private secretary to the Chief Secretary. I think we are somewhat running away from the point at issue. The question is not what sort of business the Chief Secretary thinks he may employ his private secretary to do, but what sort of business the House thought he was to do at the time they voted his salary.

The PREMIER: I suppose what private secretaries do all the world over.

Mr. NORTON: I do not think that a majority of members of this House think for one moment that the private secretary to the Premier was to be employed as an electioneering agent. Now, that is what he is. Simply an electioneering agent, and nothing more, and an electioneering agent having the authority of the Chief Secretary. I am satisfied that when the House was asked to vote a salary for that officer they never dreamt that he would be employed on that kind of work.

The PREMIER: His predecessor did the same.

Mr. HAMILTON: He did not.

The PREMIER: He used to go to political meetings and take part in them, and quite right too.

Mr. NORTON: I agree with the Chief Secretary when he says his private secretary was appointed to do certain political work, and certain semi-political work also; but I do not think for one moment that anyone, except perhaps himself, ever dreamt that he would be employed to do the work he is doing now—work that is generally passed on to some other person not placed in an official position of any kind whatever. He is simply acting as a political agent for the Chief Secretary in this matter in a way which it is impossible to overlook. I ask hon. members, when the salary was first voted for that officer—that was when the late Government were in office—if they believed for a moment that they were voting a salary for the private secretary of the late Premier, who was to act as his political agent in elections? I am quite sure they did not think anything of the kind. We all understood that it was necessary for the Premier, he having so much work to do, that he should have a private secretary to assist him in the work of his office, and we all cheerfully voted the salary for that officer. For my part I can only say that if it is to be understood that the private secretary is going to act as a political agent I shall oppose his salary, whoever may be Premier at the time.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—Reference has been made to myself as having special knowledge of political frauds. So I have, and I gained it at the expense of showing up the most outrageous political outrages that were ever perpetrated at any election in any civilised country. I refer to the election at California Gully, where 196 papers actually came out of the ballot-box, the result of the votes of fourteen men; and also to Halpin's, where sixty-two papers came out of the box where twenty-two men had voted. With regard to what has fallen from the Minister for Works as to the conduct of the railway contractors on the Central line, I can endorse his statement. I was on that railway line immediately after the election, and heard people who had been engaged in that way boasting of how they had carried thirty-six voters from one place to another to vote. They

had voted ten miles from Bogantungan, Tipperary Gully, or some such place, and they took them down and used them again at Withersfield. It was a notorious scandal.

Mr. SCOTT: Not more than six men voted there altogether.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I cannot say the exact number at this distance of time, but the men boasted of having committed that fraud.

Mr. STEVENSON: You did not believe them.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I believed it, and everybody in the district believed it. The hon. member for Rockhampton believed it. We know the same thing was done in the Maranoa by Macdonald, Fraser, and Co. We know that they employed their men and their ballast waggons in assisting in double voting and personation. And we know that the elections on the last occasion were a disgrace to the colony; so much so that it was found necessary to bring in a Bill to purify the elections and prevent such practices. My colleague may laugh, but when he goes back to the Cook electorate he will find that these kind of tricks will not be so easily worked.

Mr. HAMILTON: He does not want them.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: With regard to turning the private secretary or attaché of the Premier to work of this kind, I hardly think it is a good thing to do; but there is certainly nothing in it like the fraudulent practices that occurred during the late elections. Electioneering is not a very pleasant business at all, and for my part I shall be very glad to give it up altogether.

Mr. STEVENSON: It will give you up.

Mr. HAMILTON, in reply, said: It appears to me that this is worse than "Dear Pat," because in that case a prominent member of the Legislature had the courage, at any rate, to canvass personally, but in this instance the Premier is doing it by his private secretary, who is paid by the State for doing certain work. Practically, a Civil servant is exactly the same as a private secretary. Each is paid by the State, and therefore the same reason which exists against Civil servants taking an active part in electioneering should also exist against a private secretary doing so. In fact, more so. He is appointed to assist the Chief Secretary in his official duties, and certainly members of the Opposition did not vote his salary as an electioneering agent for that gentleman. As to the remarks of my hon. colleague, of course we know he is mad on the subject of California Gully; but at the same time he must recognise this—which everybody knows is a fact—that even giving him every one of those cases of personation and double voting, and in addition to that the benefits of all the frauds he perpetrated himself in the district, one of which was that twenty-seven men voted for him in a place where only one man existed, the electors considered that he was the greatest fraud of the lot, and must be got rid of. Therefore, they did not return him on that occasion. With the permission of the House I beg to withdraw the motion.

LAILYLEY RAILWAY.

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to make a personal explanation with regard to the Lailyley branch line, as I have not made myself perfectly understood upon that matter. I do not like to complain of the reporters, sir, because they have certainly behaved very well to me for some time past; and yet three little words have been omitted from the report which are required to make what I said any-

thing towards what I intended or meant to say. It is here, sir: that I was "enraged that they had put the line beyond the Seven-mile." Three little words are wanted here. It should be, that "I was enraged at the way that they put the line beyond the Seven-mile." Perhaps, sir, I may make an effort to give hon. members some little idea of the difficulty that has arisen beyond the Seven-mile in that way. From the Seven-mile backward the creek comes to a ridge. It follows the ridge for a clear mile, and the bank of the creek forms a shelf which the ridge in some places abuts upon. In other places it retires for a couple of chains and forms a swamp at the foot of the range, leaving a shelf that is above flood-mark and perfectly level, where there is no need for any expense but simply to lay down the line. Well, the trial survey was put down on this shelf, and bounded by the creeks. Ultimately the Chief Engineer, who never inspected the survey, ordered it to be put through the spurs in the ridge and round by the swamps, cutting through rocky points and following up the swamp. That is what put me in a rage.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. MELLOR asked the Minister for Works—

Is it the intention of the Government to introduce new mining regulations this session?—if not, will they give attention to any suggestions made by the wardens by which practical effect would be given in restricting Chinese from goldfields?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

The consideration and adoption of new mining regulations will require more time than is likely to be available this session. Without new regulations no further restrictions can be imposed on Chinese.

Mr. MELLOR asked the Minister for Works—

1. When does the contract time expire for construction of first section to Caboolture, North Coast railway?

2. When will the same be opened for traffic?

3. When will the plans and books of reference of the second section to Mellum Creek be laid upon the table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

1. 30th September, 1887.

2. It is expected the line will be ready for public traffic about the end of December next.

3. Parliamentary plans will be laid on the table of the House within a month from the present date.

The HON. G. THORN asked the Minister for Works—

Will the Government be prepared to assist the Goolman Board in the erection of a bridge on the main road over the Teviot leading to the railway station at Dugandan, from the unexpended Loan Bridge Vote?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

As the proposed bridge would not be on a main road, the vote for bridges, main roads, is not available for the purpose.

Mr. BLACK asked the Premier—

When will the "Lytton" be able to commence dredging operations at the Pioneer River?

The PREMIER replied—

I am unable to say when the "Lytton" will commence operations in the Pioneer River. The Government do not propose to commence such operations until the receipt of Sir John Coode's report, which is expected in October. In the meantime the "Lytton" will be employed on the Burnett River.

DURATION OF PARLIAMENTS BILL.

On the motion of the PREMIER, leave was given to introduce a Bill to shorten the duration of Parliaments.

FIRST READING.

The PREMIER moved that the Bill be read a first time.

Question put and passed, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By the HON. G. THORN—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, copies of all tenders—showing amount of each tender—as received by the Government, also all correspondence between the Government and the contractor as to the delay and the probable extra cost, for the Logan Bridge.

By the HON. J. M. MACROSSAN—

That there be laid on the table of the House, all papers, minutes, and correspondence relating to applications for the following gold-mining leases on the Charters Towers Gold Field, with the warden's reports thereon, viz.:—Gold-mining leases Nos. 905, 945, 959, 960, 981, and 983.

By Mr. PALMER—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a Return showing the amount of duty collected on machinery in the different ports of Queensland since the passing of the Customs Duties Act of 1885 to the 30th June, 1887.

By Mr. NORTON—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a Return showing—

1. The number of officers in the Lands Department who have received notice that their services are about to be dispensed with.
2. The number of these who have been employed on the permanent and temporary staff respectively.
3. The salary which each of the above officers is now receiving, and the date upon which each received his appointment.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL OF 1887.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker, — In moving for leave to introduce a Bill to make provision for additional and better representation of the people of Queensland in Parliament, I propose to follow the examples set on previous occasions in explaining briefly the nature of the changes proposed to be made in the electorates, because I think that by doing so it may assist hon. members in afterwards considering the Bill itself. Some hon. members, I believe, think the present number of members of this House sufficiently large.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: As an abstract question I am not prepared to dispute that proposition; but you cannot start to frame an Electoral Districts Bill on the basis of any fixed number. If hon. members look at the first of the tables circulated this afternoon they will see how the present representation stands upon the basis of population—upon both bases of population, the total effective population, and the total effective adult population. When I say effective population, I mean the population, exclusive of Chinese, Polyne- sians, and other alien races, prisoners, lunatics, and the inmates of benevolent asylums, who do not count anything for electoral purposes. I may say at once that I have never recognised, and the members sitting on this side have never recognised the adult male population as the sole basis for representation. We maintain that general population is the true basis; but that rule is subject to modification according to the circumstances of a country. In a country where the population is homogeneous and evenly settled, I think population pure and simple is the proper basis. That is the basis in the United States, which is a very good example for us to follow in that respect; but in a country where a large proportion of the population is nomadic, or where a large proportion of the population consists of adult males, some larger allowance should perhaps be made for the male population than in the other case. In fact, in dealing with the question in a country like Queensland, we must take into consideration the various circumstances of the country. Starting with general principles, the first rule is that population should be the basis so far as that rule

can be adopted. That must be subject to modification, however, in districts in which, owing to the character or condition of settlement, there is a large proportion of adult males, and, consequently, of contributors to the revenue. Then we must be guided to a great extent by geographical considerations, and endeavour to combine districts whose interests do not conflict with one another; and finally, the metropolitan constituencies cannot expect to claim a full share of representation in proportion to their population. Those are the general rules which may be laid down for dealing with a matter of this kind; but when it comes to applying these rules in practice difficulties arise. You may start with any number you like to work up to, and you may divide the country into that number of electorates or groups of electors returning precisely that number of members; but we shall find that we produce some extraordinary anomalies if we do. We should put together places that have no connection whatever with one another, and the result would be a scheme that no Parliament would look at for a moment. If hon. members will look at the first of these tables they will see what the present distribution is, and they will see that it contains some grave inequalities. The other table shows the population in the proposed electorates according to the census of 1886. I may say, Mr. Speaker, that in regard to these figures we have only the last census to go upon. For, of course, any calculation made since by the Registrar would be purely hypothetical. We only know how many people have come into the colony since. We also know, in a general way, which electorates have increased and which have diminished in population, and which have increased most, as well as anybody else can tell us. That is another thing to be taken into consideration in adjusting the boundaries. The tendency of the population in different districts to increase or remain stationary has to be considered. At the present time, in the Northern division of the colony, that is, the district to the north of the line proposed to be drawn under the Financial Districts Bill, the total effective population is 48,256, and the adult male population is 19,449. That division returns ten members, giving an average for each member of 4,826 total population, and 1,945 adult males. Coming to the Central division we find a total population of 37,828, and an adult male population of 13,602. The division returns eleven members, giving for each member an average of 3,439 total population, and of 1,237 adult male population, which is very much smaller than the average in the Northern division. Turning to the Southern division we find a total population of 212,388, and an adult male population of 59,337, giving an average for each member of 5,589 total population, and of 1,561 adult males. It has always been the practice to consider the Southern division of the colony for this purpose as divided into groups—the Wide Bay and Burnett group, the Darling Downs group, the West Moreton group, the East Moreton group, and the metropolitan group. There are also the Southern pastoral group and the Western pastoral group. These have been compared also in this table, and it will be found that in the Wide Bay and Burnett group there is a total effective population of 38,506, and an adult male population of 10,780, returning seven members, and giving an average to each member of 5,501 of total population, and 1,540 of adult male population. In the Southern pastoral group there is a total population of 13,128, and an adult male population of 5,482, returning three members, and giving an average of 4,376 total population, and of 1,827 adult male population, to each member.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Considerably over the average.

The PREMIER: Yes; considerably over the average. Evidently an increase of members is necessary there. Turning to the Darling Downs group, we find a total effective population of 33,604, and an adult male population of 8,247. The group returns nine members, giving an average of 3,734 of total population and of only 916 of adult male population.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: That is over-represented.

The PREMIER: Of course there is evidently too large a proportion of representatives at the present time. In the West Moreton group we find there is a total population of 33,140, and of 8,617 adult males. The group returns seven members, giving an average to each of 4,734 total population, and of 1,231 adult males. That is about the general average in the colony. In the East Moreton group we find a total population of 46,102, and an adult male population of 12,085. Six members are returned, each having an average of 7,683 of total population, and of 2,014 adult males. They are evidently under-represented. Now, turning to the Metropolitan group, we find the three metropolitan constituencies have a total population of 47,908, and an adult male population of 14,126, returning six members, with an average for each of 7,984 of total population, and 2,354 of adult male population; a much larger average than in any other case. Then there is the Western pastoral group—that is, the districts of Burke, Gregory, Warrego, Mitchell, and Barcoo. These have a total population of 21,302, and an adult male population of 12,285, returning five members, each representing an average of 4,260 total population, and 2,457 of adult male population.

Mr. DONALDSON: One of the largest.

The PREMIER: That also requires alteration, Mr. Speaker. These figures show, sir, that the present adjustment of representation is certainly very uneven and unequal, and that the time has come to modify it. As I said before, if we start by saying that the present number of members is the right number—fifty-nine members—it is quite clear that, starting upon that basis, we shall have to take away a great many members from some districts and add them to others, and to do that we should be obliged to introduce some very arbitrary boundaries. It is really impracticable however to do that. This is not the first time I have had to do with a scheme of this sort. In 1878 a scheme was brought in, which is the Act now in force, and which I was concerned in preparing. In 1872, being a private member of the Opposition, I had the satisfaction of proposing an additional electorate, which was adopted by the then Government. In dealing with the present scheme, I propose to start where hon. members will find it most convenient—with the northern part of the colony. It is convenient to start at the top of the map. Turning to the northernmost part of the colony we find the electoral district of Cook, which is at present extremely large and unwieldy. To the north of that we find Thursday Island, which, with the fisheries around it, is entirely unrepresented. It is clearly necessary to divide the Cook, and what is proposed to be done is, first of all, to make one district coming down as far as the Palmer Gold Field, and to Cooktown, including the Blomfield River, the settlement upon which belongs to Cooktown. That is proposed to be the boundary, and that will be the new district of Cook. We then have to deal with the southern part, which includes the coast districts of Cairns and Port Douglas, and the mining district to the west of it. Difficulties present

themselves here in respect to population. We had practically to choose between two courses. Either we must have taken Cairns, and thrown Cairns and Herberton together, so making an electorate which would have a fair average population, in which case we should have had to throw Port Douglas in with the Hodgkinson and the Etheridge, with which it has no concern—and although that would adjust the population fairly, it would not be at all a convenient division—or, which is the other alternative, we must make the coast districts one electorate and the mining districts another. It is proposed to take the country on the coast between the range and the east, including Cairns and Port Douglas and the agricultural lands there, and make it a district under the name of Cairns. Then we take the mining district on the west, including the Etheridge, and form that into another electorate. This it will be seen from the tables placed in the hands of hon. members adjusts the population very fairly. The population of Cook will be considerably larger in adult males than the average, but it includes about 400 persons on fishing stations. The population of the Cairns electorate under the proposed division is rather small, but we know that it is a continually increasing population, and I have no doubt that at the present time, irrespective altogether of the men who are employed on the railway works in progress in the district, the settled population is very much larger than it was when the census was taken. I pass now to the other great district immediately to the west of the one I have described—the Burke district. It is proposed to make one electorate of the country comprised in the Normanton and Croydon districts, and such country as should naturally be attached to them, under the name of Carpentaria. That, according to the census returns, has a total population of 1,730, and an adult population of 1,115. We know, however, that the population is now nearer 5,000 or 7,000 than those figures, and that there is a very large adult male population. At the same time the population is still a floating one, and we do not know exactly what the fixed population will be. In the meantime the boundaries proposed are, I think, reasonable, and I am sure no objection can be made to giving the district one member. For the remainder of the Burke district—that is the purely pastoral part—there will be one member. It is rather an unwieldy district; it extends from Burketown to Cloncurry and to Hughenden, and its southern boundary is the division of the Northern and Central districts of the colony. I may add here that Hughenden is a very difficult place to deal with. It is in a small corner by itself, and we cannot join it with the Kennedy mining district on the east, or with the Croydon district on the north, so that there seems to be no course left but to let it stay where it is, attached to the pastoral district of Burke. I come next to the district of Musgrave, which now includes part of the Herberton Tin Fields and all the coast land down as far south as the Burdekin River. It is proposed, as I have said, to throw the mining part of that district into the new electorate, which, I omitted to state, will be called Woothakata. I may here observe that we have endeavoured to adopt native names as far as possible for new electorates.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Why did you not do that before?

The PREMIER: We did not think of it before. We propose to take the rest of the district of Musgrave and form it into a separate electorate, which will extend from south of the Mulgrave River, which belongs to Cairns, down to the Houghton River, and will take in the coast country on the Johnstone and Herbert, and right

down past Townsville, including also Cardwell and the back country that comes into Cardwell, and has no connection with any other part of colony. At present that country is attached to the Kennedy or Charters Towers district, to the great inconvenience of everybody concerned. Then, following the order which I have adopted, we come to the district of Townsville. We propose to leave that as it is, returning two members. Coming to the district of Kennedy, it is proposed—first, to carve out a constituency to be called Charters Towers, returning two members, and having a total population of 8,342 and an adult male population of 2,769; that is about the proper average. Another electorate is to be made, to be called the Kennedy, which will include also that part of the present electorate of Bowen which consists of the mineral fields of the Cape River, which have no connection with Bowen at all. The electorate of Bowen it is proposed to extend on the northward, across the Burdekin River, which is its present boundary, to the Houghton River, and to cut it off on the south at the Suttor River, which is really the natural boundary separating the country going to Bowen from the country going to Clermont; it is the divisional board boundary, and the same which hon. members will see defined in the map of the proposed Financial Districts, which has been laid on the table. Then there remains to be dealt with in the Northern division the electoral district of Mackay. Mackay is rather small for two members and a great deal too large for one. It is, however, proposed to give it two members, and not to divide it. It would be desirable, if practicable, to divide it into two electorates, town and country; but the distribution of the people, according to the census, is such that it is not practicable to make an equitable division; at any rate, it does not appear practicable with the information available to the Government. That is what is proposed to be done with the Northern division of the constituencies. I will pass on now to the Central Division, which at present returns eleven members, which is too much, of course. We know that there are three very singular anomalies in that part of the colony. The electorate of Leichhardt returns two members, with a total population of 4,261 and a total adult male population of 1,339. The electorate of Normanby has a total population of 1,690 and a total adult male population of 673. The electorate of Clermont has a total population of 1,864 and an adult male population of 607. It is proposed to alter the boundaries of these to a very considerable extent. Clermont is to be extended to the westward to the Dividing Range, so as to take in part of the electorate of Mitchell which does not properly belong to that district, and it is to be extended to the northward, taking in part of the present electorate of Bowen which belongs to it geographically, and taking in also such parts of the electorate of Normanby and Leichhardt as should properly and conveniently be included in that district. The electorate of Normanby is to be extended to the south so as to take in part of the electorate of Leichhardt down to the railway line, also taking in part of the present electorate of Blackall, up to the Fitzroy River at Yaamba, and to the suburbs of Rockhampton on the west. The electorate of Rockhampton is to be altered by extending it slightly to the west. Another electorate is to be created on the north side of the river, and named Fitzroy, taking in North Rockhampton and the coast country there immediately to the east—Yeppoon and Emu Park. The electorate of Mitchell will not be altered except by taking off from it the excrescence which now belongs to it, and which is to be added to Clermont; and on the south to make the boundary the Barcoo River instead of the

watershed of the Barcoo and Thomson, which is practically undiscoverable. The electorate of Barcoo will not be otherwise altered except by excluding from it the heads of the Belyando, which more properly belong to Leichhardt. The Gregory district it is proposed to cut off on the south at the boundary between the North and South Gregory pastoral districts. The other districts to which I have to refer in that part of the colony include Leichhardt, which it is proposed shall include the remainder of the present electorate of Leichhardt, that is south of the railway line, and including that part on the railway line around Emerald, and exclude the present district of Taroom, which now belongs to the southern district of the colony. The district of Port Curtis, which is at present extremely small, having a population of 2,467 and an adult male population of only 813, is proposed to be extended up to the railway line as far as Westwood, and that will give a population which is still small, but which will justify its having a member. It must also be borne in mind that the actual population there now is larger than it was at the time the census was taken, in consequence of the additional work being done there on the gold-fields. The population there is rapidly increasing, and I hope before long those fields will be entitled to a member of their own as well as the Charters Towers and Gympie Gold Fields. I come now to the Southern division, and I think it will be convenient to deal, first of all, with the Wide Bay and Burnett group, then with the Western group, after that with the Darling Downs group, and lastly with the metropolis. Now, with respect to the Wide Bay and Burnett group, the present electorate of Burnett is too small, with a total population of 1,589 and an adult male population of only 512. The population of Mulgrave, on the other hand, is very large—enough to entitle it to two members; and the population of Gympie is also very large—nearly enough to entitle it to two members. What is proposed to be done is to diminish the electorate of Mulgrave, by cutting it off on the west at the range which is a continuation of Dawes Range and to take that part into the Burnett. It is proposed, also, to cut out from Mulgrave a town constituency by the name of Bundaberg. That will be rather small in point of population, but the population is increasing, and I think there can be no objection to that on the point of fairness. It is proposed further to extend the Burnett by taking in a part of the Isis—the agricultural settlement on the Isis—and that will make the population of that district, which will be quite homogeneous, up to 3,248, with an adult male population of 1,124, and that will also be an increasing population. It is proposed to leave the electorate of Maryborough as at present, returning two members, and to divide the present electorate of Wide Bay by a line going on the eastern side south of Tiaro, and on the western side going north-west from that town; boundaries which are, I believe, convenient, and make the division of population almost equal. It is proposed also to extend the boundaries of Gympie, so as to take in the Gympie Gold Field, and give it two members, to which according to population it will be entitled. In dealing with the Southern and Western group, it is proposed to divide the enormous electorate of Warrego into two; the western half to be called the Bulloo and the eastern half the Warrego. In the Bulloo it is proposed to include the part of the Gregory taken off that electorate, and which now forms part of the South Gregory pastoral district, and the Warrego will really consist of the basin of the Warrego River and its tributaries. The Maranoa it is

proposed to alter only by the inclusion of the Taroom district, which has not a large population. The population of the proposed district of Maranoa appears large, but it was largely increased at the time of the census by large railway camps. The district of Balonne will include that portion of Northern Downs south of the Condamine River, and it is proposed to exclude from it Goondiwindi and the district about there, which it is proposed to add to the Carnarvon district. The remainder of Northern Downs, which at present is shown by these tables to have an extremely small population of 2,573 with an adult male population of only 907, it is proposed to add to a portion of the electorate of Dalby, which also has much too small a population to retain a member for itself—a population of only 2,449 with an adult male population of 543 only. It is proposed to deal with these two constituencies of Northern Downs and Dalby in this way: Part will be taken into Balonne, to which it conveniently belongs; the eastern part nearer to Toowoomba is proposed to be added to Aubigny, and a small portion south of Dalby will be added to one of the Darling Downs districts. The population of the new district, proposed to be called Chinchilla, will be 4,294, with an adult male population of 1,233, a sufficient population to entitle it to a member.

Mr. JESSOP: Why call it Chinchilla?

The PREMIER: Because it is a well-known name on Northern Downs. It is a native name and is associated with the district. The electorate of Carnarvon it is proposed to increase by taking in a portion of the Balonne, geographically connected with it, and which will bring the population of Carnarvon, which is now much too small for one member, up to 3,571, with an adult male population of 1,062. I have referred to the larger country electorates, and I will now refer to the changes proposed to be made in the more closely settled portions of the colony. I will deal first with the Darling Downs group. It is proposed to extend the electorate of Aubigny to the west so as to take in a portion of the electorate of Dalby, and on the north so as to take in a portion of the electorate of Stanley which really belongs to it—that is, Cooyar Creek, Emu Creek, and Crow's Nest; and, on the other hand, to take from the electorate of Aubigny a portion which is proposed to be added to the electorate of Drayton and Toowoomba, which is at present rather small for two members; and another portion to be added to one of the electorates to be made out of the electorate of Darling Downs. It is proposed to increase the electorate of Drayton and Toowoomba—taking in some of the country immediately adjoining—to bring up the population to the proper basis. The present electorate of Warwick is in rather an anomalous position, having a total population of 3,445, and with an adult male population of 740. It is proposed to extend it on the westward so as to take in the agricultural settlement about Sandy Creek, bringing up the total population to 4,276, and the adult male population to 1,046. The remainder of the Darling Downs district it is proposed to divide in two, by a line running down King's Creek from the Main Range and thence by Talgai Gold Field to the south. Of these two new electorates, it is proposed to call one Cambooya and the other Cunningham. Cambooya has a total population of 4,006 with an adult male population of 975; and Cunningham has a total population of 4,654 with an adult male population of 1,104. I would here say, Mr. Speaker, that I was not aware, or, rather, that I had forgotten, when the Government proposed to call this electorate Cunningham, that a similar proposition was made in 1872 by Sir Arthur Palmer, and I am

very glad to find that the proposal we make now is so well supported. I now pass to the West Moreton group, the population of which has been slightly decreased by taking some people into the electorate of Aubigny from Stanley. It is proposed to divide the electorate of Stanley, which is at present very large and unwieldy, into two, by a line which I cannot accurately describe without referring to the schedule—a convenient boundary running north of the railway line. The southern half it is proposed to call Laidley, and the northern half Stanley. Another portion of Stanley is taken off and thrown into the Moreton district. That is the part about Woodford, and those parts which at present belong to the Caboolture Divisional Board, and which have no practical connection with Stanley. The result is to make the electorate of Laidley rather small. The adult male population is just under 1,000, while the total population is about the average. But it is an increasing constituency.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: And the most northern are decreasing constituencies, I suppose?

The PREMIER: The result is that the West Moreton group will retain its present number of seven members—the average total population being 4,385 and the average adult male population being 1,128. Passing on to the electorate of Rosewood, the present population is too small—total, 3,994, and adult males, 899—and it is proposed to extend the electorate to, I think, the Bremer River, the part taken in being from the present electoral district of Bundamba. The remainder of that district, it is proposed, shall remain under that name as a new electoral district. It is rapidly increasing in population, having a great many coal-mines within its boundaries. The Ipswich district it is proposed to leave as it is, returning two members. The electorate of Fassifern, which is at present very large, it is proposed to divide by a line which practically separates the part attached to Ipswich, and having commercial dealings with it, from the other part which comes to Brisbane by Beenleigh—the western end being called Fassifern, and the eastern end being part of a proposed new constituency. It is proposed to throw that part of Fassifern in with the southern part of the district of Logan, making a constituency, to be called Nerang, the boundary between the new district of Logan and the district of Nerang being the Pimpama River, and a line to the westward. Then it is proposed to throw together the remainder of Logan, on the south bank of the river, and the agricultural settlements on the north bank of that river as far as Redland Bay, making a constituency of a purely agricultural character, and with a population entitling it to a member. That part will be taken from the district of Bulimba, the remainder of which it is proposed to continue by that name. Oxley it is not proposed to alter at all. It is proposed to alter the district of Moreton by adding to it that part of Stanley to which I have already referred, and to make it end on the south at the South Pine River. We have then to deal with a very thickly-populated country—all round Brisbane on the north. It is proposed, from the remainder of Moreton, and a portion of the present electorate of Enoggera extending to Nundah and Zillman's Waterholes, to make a new constituency, including Sandgate, South Pine, Zillman's Waterholes, and Nundah, to be called Nundah; to make a new constituency of Toowoomba, and to divide the remainder of Enoggera into two by the Bowen Bridge road—the western end containing Enoggera Creek and the people round it, and being still called Enoggera, and the eastern end, from the Bowen Bridge road across

Breakfast Creek to the mouth of the river, to be called Toombul. The populations of these districts are shown in the tables, and it will be seen that they are all very large. With respect to the metropolitan constituencies—North Brisbane, South Brisbane, and Fortitude Valley—it is proposed to make some small changes. The district of North Brisbane will be altered by making the boundary between it and Fortitude Valley Rogers street instead of Boundary street. It is a more convenient boundary, and it will divide the people of North Brisbane from the people who belong to Fortitude Valley. It is proposed to extend Fortitude Valley, on the other hand, a little bit further, so as to take in the very thickly settled population as far as the hill where the hon. member for Balonne resides, known as O'Reilly's Hill. It is proposed to divide South Brisbane into two, making the portion to the west of the Ipswich road into one electorate, and calling it still South Brisbane, and making the district to the east of that into a new district, to be called Woolloomgatta. The population of these districts will be seen to be very large, and they are very rapidly increasing. Those, sir, are the changes we propose to make. The explanation is, of course, not easily followed by hon. members without the maps, but it will, I hope, assist hon. members afterwards in studying the maps, and help the people of the colony to understand the proposed changes. I should say here that as far as practicable well-known boundaries have been adopted—divisional board boundaries where they are good ones. When preparations were being made last year for taking the census, the particular attention of the Registrar-General was called to the importance of marking the divisions and subdivisions in the census by convenient natural boundaries, which would be available for use for the purpose of this Bill. Now, sir, I will call attention to the results we get as to the proportionate representation in the proposed new districts. Of course there are some anomalies still—as in the case of Bowen, for instance, which has always been a small electorate, and is still the smallest. In the other districts of the Northern division, the only two which seem to have an excess of population are Burke and Cook, and this can easily be explained in both cases. In the Burke district there were a number of people camped to the east of Hughenden making a railway, who have since gone away. That accounts for 300 or 400. In the rest of the district I do not think there has been much increase of population since that time, and in some parts there has been a decrease. The total effective population of the Northern division, according to the census, is 48,679, with an adult male population of 19,589, which it is proposed shall return fourteen members—an addition of four—giving an average to each member of—total population, 3,477, and adult males, 1,399. The population of the Central division is 36,243, and the adult male population 12,813, which it is proposed shall return ten members; they lose one. That gives an average of 3,624 total population and 1,281 adult males. In the Southern division the Wide Bay and Burnett group have a total population of 38,032 and 10,822 adult males. With nine members, that will give an average of 4,226 total population and 1,202 adult males. The Southern pastoral group—the districts of Balonne, Bulloo, Maranoa, and Warrego—which have a total population of 14,086 and an adult male population of 6,093, it is proposed shall return four members, giving an average of 3,521 total population and 1,523 adult males.

Mr. DONALDSON: That is the largest yet.

The PREMIER: Yes; it is the largest average of adult males and the smallest of total popula-

tion, except the Northern division. The Darling Downs group, as proposed, will contain 34,364 total population and 8,501 adult males, and return eight members, giving an average of 4,295 total population and 1,063 adult males.

Mr. DONALDSON: The smallest lot.

The PREMIER: The smallest of adult males, but a large total population. The West Moreton group, with a population of 30,695 and an adult male population of 7,899, it is proposed shall return seven members, giving an average of 4,385 total and 1,128 adult males. The East Moreton group, with a total population of 46,832 and an adult male population of 12,250, it is proposed shall return nine members, giving an average of 5,204 total and 1,361 adults. The metropolitan group, which has a total population of 49,541 and an adult male population of 14,421, it is proposed shall have seven members, giving an average of 7,077 total population and 2,060 adult males. Now, sir, it will be observed in following these figures down that the more remote the part of the country is, the smaller is the total population per member, and the larger is the adult population per member, with the exception, of course, of the metropolitan districts, which have a larger number of people for each member than the more distant ones. For instance, in the metropolitan group, as I have said, the average is over 7,000 people, and in the East Moreton group over 5,000, while in none of the others is it much more than 4,000. I shall just put the figures in juxtaposition so that hon. members may compare them. I will take first the average total population. Northern division, 3,477; Central division, 3,624; Wide Bay and Burnett group, 4,226; Southern pastoral group, 3,521; Darling Downs group, 4,295; West Moreton group, 4,385; East Moreton group, 5,204; Metropolitan group, 7,077. It is in a continually increasing ratio. When we turn to adult males there is not so much difference. The numbers are: Northern division, 1,399; Central division, 1,281; Wide Bay and Burnett group, 1,202; Southern pastoral group, 1,523; Darling Downs group, 1,063; West Moreton group, 1,128; East Moreton group, 1,361; Metropolitan group, 2,060. Now, it is easy to find fault, of course; but I may say here, that when we started we did not start with the idea of having sixty-eight members, but we started with the idea of making such divisions that the constituencies would be workable and possess common interests. After various trials this was the scheme decided upon, and I am sure it will be found very fair. Just one more set of figures, before passing on to some general words about the Bill, as to the number of members each of these divisions would be entitled to on a population basis—either the total population or that of adult males. On the total population basis, the Northern division would be entitled to 11·1 members; it is proposed to give them 14. That will be another injustice, no doubt. The Central division would be entitled to 8·3 members; it is proposed to give them 10. The Southern district would be entitled to 48·6; it is proposed to give them 44. On the adult male basis, the Northern division would be entitled to 14·4, and it is proposed to give them 14; the Central division would be entitled to 9·4, and it is proposed to give them 10; and the Southern division would be entitled to 44·2, and we propose to give them 44. If hon. members, therefore, choose to say that this Bill is founded on an adult male basis, they are perfectly free to do so. It is not so in fact, but that is the way the figures come out. What the Government have endeavoured to do is what every Government, I believe, in undertaking such a task would endeavour to do—make a fair division of the colony. There is

nothing more stupid than to imagine that in arranging the electorates any party can permanently gain an unfair advantage, and I am sure hon. members will give us credit for having done our best in dealing with what is really a very difficult task. That the results have come out so satisfactory is a thing I think rather to be surprised at, because they do come out in a wonderful manner; and I am sure that on this basis no part of the colony can complain of injustice being done. I should have preferred to keep the numbers lower, but that did not appear practicable. I need not go into the details of the Bill. The electorates are enumerated in alphabetical order, which will probably be convenient for purposes of reference. The Bill contains provisions for getting ready the electoral rolls, which is, of course, a very important matter. I take this opportunity of saying a word or two about that. The registration courts for the revision of the annual lists would ordinarily sit in November. Preparations are now going on for getting the rolls ready for that revision. In August lists are made up by the electoral registrars; and the claims and objections sent in before October are made up as supplementary lists. These would in the ordinary course be revised in November. What we propose to do is to dispense with the November registration courts and to substitute special registration courts for the new electoral districts. In all other respects the machinery will be the same as at present. As soon as the new rolls are made up, I understand that it is the general wish of hon. members that an election should take place. That is certainly my own opinion. I now move for leave to introduce the Bill.

Question put and passed.

FIRST READING.

The PREMIER moved that the Bill be now read the first time.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—Before fixing the date for the second reading I wish to consult the convenience of hon. members opposite. I may state that smaller maps showing the electorates are being prepared for circulation amongst hon. members. I am sorry that they could not be got ready sooner, but the maps were not completed till to-day, and it may be two or three days before they can be circulated. Probably it will be convenient to say this day fortnight for the second reading. If that is carried we can then proceed with the Bill at once in committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Wednesday week might suit.

The PREMIER: I am ready at any time. I know all about it, and only wish to give hon. members who do not know all about it an opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Perhaps this day fortnight will be better. Outside members may receive protests.

The PREMIER: I move that the second reading of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for this day fortnight.

Question put and passed.

ENDOWMENTS OF MUNICIPALITIES AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House, in Committee of the Whole, affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the law relating to the endowments of municipalities.

The Bill was introduced and read a first time, and the second reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

REAL PROPERTY (LOCAL REGIS- TRIES) BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider this Bill in detail.

On clause 1—"Short title"—

Mr. NORTON said he would ask if the hon. gentleman could give the Committee any idea as to the cost of working the measure?

The PREMIER said he had not sufficient information to enable him to say exactly what it would cost. In each place there would have to be an office, and he believed there was an office available at Rockhampton at any rate—the old Supreme Court. That would not cost anything. If they had no office available they would have to build or hire them. Then they would want a deputy registrar at each place, and there must be two or three clerks. That would be quite sufficient, in his opinion, in both places, and he should think the salaries of the three officers together, if they were paid in proportion to the rates now paid in the Registrar-General's office, which was the worst-paid branch of the Civil Service, would not exceed £1,200 a year at each place—£1,500 a year would cover all expenses, and almost all of that would be saved out of the expenses of the general office. He did not believe the actual increased expenditure upon the people would amount to more than £1,000 a year.

Mr. NORTON: What about copying the entries?

The PREMIER said, as to making copies of the instruments, he could not say what that would cost, but it would not be a very heavy item. He should think £2,000 or £3,000 would cover the cost.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman proposed to go on with a Bill which entailed the expenditure of a sum of money, the extent of which he did not know, and yet he had been telling them during the present session that he, as head of the Government, felt bound to see that no money was expended until it was received. He thought there was no provision made for the money, and they were not told how provision was to be made. They knew that the financial proposals of the Government were as good as thrown out—practically rejected—and yet the hon. gentleman, who had come to the conclusion that no money should be spent until it was received, now came down with such a Bill as that before them, and did not know what it was to cost or where the money was to come from. He supposed Supplementary Estimates would have to be introduced to provide for the expenditure.

Mr. CHUBB said he would like to ask what would be done in the event of objection to a title being made. To whom would the objection be referred? Would it be referred to the Master of Titles, or would it be decided on the spot? If the former course was pursued there would be just as much delay as at present.

The PREMIER said he did not think it desirable to have a Master of Titles in each place. Of course, if hon. members objected to the scheme of the Bill plenty of objections could be made to it, but the question was whether the advantages to be conferred by establishing local registries would outweigh the disadvantages. In a large proportion of cases no difficulty arose, and they could be dealt with by the deputy registrar; but if a difficulty did arise the deputy registrar would have to refer it to the Master of Titles in Brisbane. With respect to appointing masters of titles in the

two towns, as of course they would not be allowed to practise in matters relating to real property, if they were appointed it would involve paying them for the whole of their time.

Mr. NORTON: How does the hon. gentleman propose to find means to carry out the provisions of the Bill?

The PREMIER said, if the Bill were passed, of course money would have to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates. No money had been authorised to be expended yet. That was not a money Bill, and if the House did not think it was justified in expending so much money they could refuse to authorise it on the Estimates, and the scheme could not be carried out.

Mr. NORTON said of course that was all very well, but the hon. gentleman had impressed upon them that they must have the money before they could expend it, for the future. According to his own showing and his own estimates there would not be sufficient revenue to cover expenses which were provided for on the present Estimates, and yet they were to add to them yearly expenses by passing such a Bill, not knowing where the money was to come from. It was absurd for the hon. gentleman to tell them over and over again that the Government were bound to see that they had the money before they spent it, and then to introduce a measure which increased expenditure indefinitely. That was what he wished to point out.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman knew the sources of revenue at the present time; also that in his opinion the present sources of revenue were insufficient to meet the necessary expenditure, and that the House had shown no inclination to assist the Government to get any more revenue; and he knew what the Government proposed to do in consequence. If hon. members thought the present condition of the finances justified them in throwing the Bill out, they must take the responsibility. The Government thought, notwithstanding the condition of the finances, they were justified in asking Parliament to agree to the Bill, and that even if they got further in debt to the extent of £2,000 or £3,000 in the meantime, they would be able to bear the expense.

Mr. NORTON said he was not acquainted with what the hon. gentleman intended to do in consequence of his financial proposals not being accepted.

The PREMIER: I told you.

Mr. NORTON said that if he did, he did not understand him. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman intended to introduce increased taxation or some new source of revenue. If he did, well and good; but he ought to do so before they were asked to proceed with a measure which would entail additional expenditure. If he did not intend to do so, it was perfect "bosh" for him to talk about getting money before it was spent.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not know what the initial cost of establishing the system would be, but he thought that was the only cost the Government would have to incur, because the offices at Rockhampton and Townsville would be more than self-supporting.

Mr. CHUBB said the total receipts of the Registrar of Titles' office last year amounted to £16,000, and the expenses were £8,000, so that there was a large surplus. That was his reason for asking just now whether objections would be referred to the Master of Titles in Brisbane or not. It was a revenue-producing office, and if it was to be worked efficiently, there was sufficient to pay officers to do the work properly.

Mr. NORTON said the estimated revenue included the receipts of the Registrar of Titles'

office; so that the initiation of the proposed law would add some few thousands of pounds to the expenditure of the present year. But the hon. gentleman had not pointed out where the money was to come from. He simply wished to again point out the absurdity of the Premier telling the Committee repeatedly that he was not going to spend money before it came in, and at the same time making provision for incurring expenditure, knowing that the revenue was insufficient to meet present requirements.

Mr. BLACK said the Government were placed in a very unfortunate position in the matter. They were anxious to do what they considered right, to give a certain amount of justice to the more remote parts of the colony, but the House would not vote them the money to do it. The Bill was of such a non-contentious character with regard to its general principles that the Committee ought to take into consideration the unfortunate, the pitiable, condition the Ministry were in. The hon. member for Bowen had pointed out that the offices would be self-supporting after the initiatory expense; and he thought the Committee might trust to the good sense of the next Government to devise some scheme acceptable to them and to the country for providing the means for carrying into effect not only the measure under consideration, but also other measures of importance. There were only two alternatives: Either they must reject the Bill and refrain from providing a scheme for the benefit of the central and northern parts of the colony, or they must let the Bill go through and trust to the better judgment of the successors of the Government to devise means for carrying it into effect.

The PREMIER: Don't count your chickens before the eggs are hatched.

Mr. BLACK said that even if the hon. gentleman got back, which he thought improbable, he took it for granted that he would devise some scheme by which he would not be again placed in the unfortunate position he was in at the present time. It would be better for the country, however, that the hon. gentleman should not be the one to do so.

Mr. PALMER said the Premier led hon. members to believe the other day that the Decentralisation Bill was connected with the measure now before the Committee in such a way that if one was not passed the other would be non-effective. He wished to know whether that was the case.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had misunderstood him. He said he hoped the Bill now under consideration would be passed, whatever became of the others, but that he would like to see them all passed. He pointed out that the present Bill stood alone, and that it might be passed irrespective of the others. The boundaries of the districts were naturally the same, but that did not make one Bill depend upon the other.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 2, as follows:—

"In this Act, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms shall have the meanings set against them respectively, that is to say:—

'Central district'—The part of the colony comprised within the boundaries described in the first schedule to this Act;

'Northern district'—The part of the colony comprised within the boundaries described in the second schedule to this Act;

'Principal Act'—The Real Property Act of 1861 as amended by the Real Property Act of 1877 and the Registrar of Titles Act of 1894;

'Registrar of Titles'—The Registrar of Titles appointed under the principal Act, or his deputy at Brisbane

Local Deputy Registrar of Titles' or 'Local Deputy Registrar'—A deputy registrar of titles appointed under this Act for the Central or Northern district;

'Local Registry'—A branch of the office of the Registrar of Titles established under this Act.

"The terms defined by the principal Act shall when used in this Act have the same meanings as are assigned to them by that Act."

Mr. SHERIDAN said he begged to propose an amendment on that clause, and he trusted the Committee would grant it, because it was an urgent requirement. The amendment was that another district be formed, to be called the "Wide Bay and Burnett district."

The PREMIER: What words do you propose shall be inserted?

Mr. SHERIDAN said the district to which he alluded was the Wide Bay and Burnett district, which included Bundaberg, the Burnett district, Burrum, Gympie, Maryborough, Mulgrave, and Wide Bay, containing in the year 1886 a population of 38,506 inhabitants. For many years the people of Maryborough had been doing their best to obtain local registration, but although that had been promised, the promises were never fulfilled. He trusted that, as other districts were to obtain those branch offices, the district he alluded to would be treated the same. He would remind hon. members that it contained about one-seventh of the population of the whole colony. If the voice of one-seventh of the population of the colony was not to be heard, all he could say was that the people there would not be satisfied or pleased. There was no reason why documents from the district he referred to should be sent to Brisbane and large expense incurred through agents' fees, and delay in passing through the office, which frequently amounted to many months. They were all aware that the gentlemen of the law knew how to charge. There was no movement that could be made that they did not charge for, and by having a local registry office all that delay and expense could be avoided. It should also be remembered that vessels of immense value were registered and frequently transferred at the port of Maryborough. As to great expense being incurred in copying deeds, he maintained that no very great expense could arise, because on every occasion the last certificate of title was all that was necessary, so that there was no necessity for copying all those immense piles of documents which had been talked about. He believed local registration could be initiated in the various districts at very little expense to the public, and he hoped that the Committee would see its way clear to grant that very considerable boon to the district he had alluded to. He trusted that the Premier would introduce the new district and a new schedule. The name of the district he proposed would be the "Wide Bay and Burnett," and it would include all the towns he had mentioned. He moved that the words "Wide Bay and Burnett district" be inserted before the words "Central district" in the 10th line.

Mr. ADAMS said there should be another district added to the list in the Bill, and that suggested by the hon. member for Maryborough would answer very well. He knew it had been in the minds of the people of Bundaberg for some time, and he believed that an application to that effect had been sent in by the local Chamber of Commerce. It would be only justice to them to give them a local registry office. The district mentioned by the hon. member for Maryborough would suit all the purposes of his district as well as those of Maryborough, and taking the population into consideration, he thought they were as much entitled to it as they were in the North.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it struck him that that was rather an extraordinary departure, even

for the Wide Bay and Burnett members, who were eccentric in their movements. Nothing was heard in that direction until the Bill was introduced, and the thing was kept very quiet until the present time. He was quite certain that if the amendment of the hon. member for Maryborough were carried it would lead to many other members moving in the same direction, so that they would have offices all over the colony. Every one of the districts mentioned in the Redistribution Bill brought in that evening would want a registry office, and then they would be running to the other extreme.

Mr. DONALDSON said that it took only about twelve hours' steam to go from Brisbane to Maryborough, while it took more than that number of days to get to the western districts. Take the case of Thargomindah, for instance. If the colony were to be cut up into districts, why not allow the western districts to have two or three offices? They wanted them just as much as did Maryborough, and he was sure it would not be more ridiculous to have offices in the far western parts of the colony than in Maryborough, which was only a few hours' steamer-travelling away; but there were other points which might be considered if he chose to take up the time of the Committee. Having these offices in central places would give people great facilities for carrying on their business. He had not the slightest objection to offices being established in Rockhampton and Townsville, because they were rather far away from the seat of Government; but placing them, as proposed by the hon. member for Maryborough, only a few hours' journey from Brisbane would make the whole thing ridiculous. He might as well ask for an office at Thargomindah.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the hon. member appeared to forget that there was no land to be transferred in the western country which he represented. The only things to be transferred there were rabbits and sheep, and such like, and the hon. member was more interested in sheep than in land. He (Mr. Sheridan) thought the hon. gentleman had made a very unjust attack upon Maryborough in not allowing that place to get what it required and ought to have. The hon. member seemed to forget that when once transfers left Maryborough to come to Brisbane, the expenses, in lawyers' and agents' fees, were just the same as for those coming from Townsville. The reason why the Maryborough people asked for a local registration office was that the work might be done quickly, and so that persons might walk to the office and see how the land lay, as it were. He hoped that the amendment would receive favourable consideration, and that arguments like that used by the hon. member for Warrego would not be again introduced.

Mr. DONALDSON said he wished to put himself right. He made no attack whatever on Maryborough. He had the greatest respect for Maryborough and the people of Maryborough. He knew it was a very enterprising and go-a-head district, but the amendment was going too far. As for rabbits and sheep, perhaps the district would be a little better if it had a few more of them, as then their sportsmen would have rabbits to shoot. He believed an attempt had been made to establish rabbits there, but fortunately for the colony it did not succeed. He knew the hon. member had accomplished his object in introducing the amendment, as he did not believe the hon. gentleman ever had any desire to have a local registration office established in his district, but simply brought forward his proposal to curry favour with his constituents.

Mr. ALAND said he did not think it was to curry favour; the hon. gentleman was merely carrying out the instructions of his constituents. There was a public meeting held at Maryborough not long since, and that was one of the demands they made upon the Government, and of course they expected their representatives to support it. He did not blame the hon. member for bringing forward his proposal, but he certainly did think it was a very foolish amendment to introduce. Every district in the colony might ask for a local registration office on grounds quite as reasonable as those put forward in favour of Maryborough. The Darling Downs district, for instance, was as much entitled to a branch of the Real Property Office as Maryborough, which would certainly be in as close proximity to Brisbane as the Downs. He had not the slightest doubt that the hon. member did not expect his amendment to be carried when he proposed it to the Committee.

Mr. ADAMS said it might perhaps be said that the argument with reference to currying favour with the electors applied also to him, but he could assure hon. members that he did not care whether he was returned again or not. He never curried favour with anyone, but he was sent down there to do his duty, to represent the people of Bundaberg and the electorate of Mulgrave, and he knew the opinions of the people in that district perhaps better than the hon. member for Warrego. He noticed that the minds of the people in his electorate had been exercised over that question for a considerable time, and, as he had stated on a previous occasion, it frequently happened that purchasers of land there had to wait six or seven months, and sometimes as long as twelve months, before they could get a title. If a registration office were established at Maryborough there was no doubt that it would greatly facilitate the getting of transfers, and for that reason he would support the amendment of the hon. member for Maryborough. The Mulgrave and Maryborough districts were as much entitled to a local office as the North. He believed the population was as great, and was perfectly satisfied that the transfers of land were also as numerous.

Mr. MELLOR said he cordially supported the amendment, and he did not do so to curry favour with his constituents, but because he thought it was only fair consideration to the people of the Wide Bay district. The population there was only about 10,000 less than the whole of the Northern district, and it was more than the population of the Central district. Therefore, on the score of population, he maintained that the Wide Bay district was entitled to a local registration office, and he believed it would be very much better if the whole of the districts mentioned in the Redistribution Bill introduced that afternoon had local registration offices. He did not think the cost would be any more than the cost of carrying out the proposed system. It was simply a matter of having one man less in Brisbane, one less at Rockhampton, and one less at Townsville. He certainly thought the Wide Bay district should have the consideration asked for by the hon. member for Maryborough.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the population had nothing, or very little, to do with the question. The population of the Wide Bay district, according to the returns that had been placed in their hands, was 38,000, but the hon. gentleman forgot one very important thing, and that was that those people were in proximity to Brisbane, whereas the residents of the Central and Northern divisions were a very long way from any centre where a local registration office was situated; so that there was really more in the contention of the hon. member for Warrego than in that

of the hon. member for Wide Bay. If there was any reason in the arguments it was not in the arguments for the establishment of a local registration office for the 38,000 people who were within a few hours' post of Brisbane. The reason was rather on the side of those who were situated a long distance from the metropolis and had to send very valuable documents by mail at very great risk. As to the lawyers' fees, he did not think that the Maryborough lawyers were likely to do the work for less than the Brisbane lawyers. While he maintained that there were good and sufficient reasons why there should be registration offices at the places provided for in the Bill, he was not prepared to go beyond that, if for no other reason than on the score of expense. They ought, perhaps, to consider whether even those should be adopted in the present state of the exchequer and proposed taxation.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought, in reference to the expense, that the districts would be willing to bear the necessary cost of establishing local registration offices, and would ask no assistance outside their districts. With regard to the remarks made by the hon. member for Warrego, as had been stated by the hon. member for Maryborough, there were no lands out west to be transferred.

Mr. DONALDSON: There will be.

Mr. MELLOR: The land is not sold.

Mr. DONALDSON: It has to be sold.

Mr. MELLOR said when the land was sold they might have local registration offices; but in the district of Wide Bay, where nearly all the land had been disposed of, sales and transfers were going on almost every day in the week.

Mr. DONALDSON: There are lands sold out west now.

Mr. MELLOR: On the Warrego?

Mr. DONALDSON: Yes.

Mr. MELLOR said there was not very much. As to the question of expense he did not think that was a matter for consideration. The work of registration would be done cheaper if smaller areas were adopted than were proposed by the Bill. What difference would it make if there was one man less in the Brisbane office and one sent to Maryborough? There would be very little difference in the expense, and he thought it could be carried on with almost the same expenditure as at the present time.

Mr. KATES said the question of the expense had been referred to by the hon. member for Bowen on the second reading of the Bill, and that gentleman had said that the initiatory expense would be something like £4,000 or £5,000 for the places already provided for. In addition to that there would be the deputy registrars, masters of titles, and other officers required. He thought it would be quite enough to go to that expense for Rockhampton and Townsville, without also including Maryborough, and he could not, therefore, support the hon. member on the score of expense.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would point out to the hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Mellor, that if there was to be a local registrar's office established in the Wide Bay and Burnett group, it seemed to him it should be established at Gympie, which was progressing more than Maryborough, which was almost played out. There was only a difference of about 700 people between the two places, and, in fact, the adult males at Gympie, who he supposed were the intelligent people, outnumbered the adult males in Maryborough by about 240 or 250, so that the registry should evidently be established at Gympie and not at Maryborough, if one was to be established in that district at all.

The PREMIER said he rather sympathised with the amendment, as the people at Maryborough were the first to call attention to the inconvenience of having a registrar's office established in Brisbane only. The circumstances of the colony had, however, very much altered since then. If financial districts had then been established the Wide Bay and Burnett districts would have formed one of them, but since then circumstances had altered, and they had railway communication now in course of construction between Brisbane and Maryborough, and he hoped they would shortly be able to say complete between Brisbane and Bundaberg, so that there was no longer the same necessity for the establishment of a local registry there. In the interests of the Treasury, also, he was bound to oppose the motion of the hon. member for Maryborough.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that for a very simple reason he was very much inclined to support the hon. member for Maryborough. As usual, when the hon. Premier went into the realms of history in connection with the operations of that House, he made mistakes. The Financial Districts Bill, which was a Bill introduced by the hon. gentleman's own Government, did propose the Wide Bay and Burnett district as one of the financial districts, but it was also wiped out in committee, and by himself and his supporters, and that was one of the causes of the withdrawal of the Bill. If the hon. gentleman would tax his memory—but he knew the hon. gentleman had no memory on the subject of financial separation.

The PREMIER: I remember it was in the Bill, but I do not remember that it was struck out.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman never appeared to have any time to consider the question of financial separation, and it was only within the last few days he had considered it, and that was the reason he knew so little about it. He thought the Wide Bay and Burnett district was fully entitled to have a local registry.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where is the money to come from?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Treasurer should find the money; what was the use of having a Treasurer if he could not find it? There was no district more compact than the Wide Bay and Burnett district, or in which an equal proportion of the land was sold in proportion to the population, and there was therefore a great deal of work to be done there. Taking that into account, and that the people of that district had moved first in the matter, and were movers for financial separation in the early days, he considered there should be a local registry established in the district; and it did not matter in which town it was established so long as it served the wants of the district.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, to accentuate his remarks and to show clearly why Gympie should be the centre for the establishment of a local registration office, if the amendment was carried, he might point out that in 1886 the total population of Gympie was 7,613, with an adult male population of 2,049, and the total population of Maryborough in 1886 was 10,561, with an adult male population of 2,448. In 1887 he found that Gympie possessed a population of 9,747, having advanced a little more than by 2,100, whereas the population of Maryborough in 1887 was 10,405, showing a decrease of something like 160, and showing also that, while Maryborough was going back, Gympie was progressing. The same remarks applied to the Mulgrave. The population of Mulgrave in 1886 was 8,158, and although

in 1887 it was mixed up with other electorates in the returns, it had not increased by anything like the same proportion as that of Gympie. The adult male population of Gympie had also increased. The population of the whole of the Wide Bay and Burnett group, so far from having increased, showed a slight decrease. He hoped the Government would not give way on the proposed amendment, because if they did there certainly would be a very good claim made by the representatives of the outside districts for local registration offices in their districts.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, said that he made his motion at the direction of his constituents.

Mr. ALAND: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the hon. member had used words to that effect. He admitted at once that he was the representative of his constituents, and he was very proud to do all he could to represent their interests. He believed the passing of the proposed amendment would be greatly to their interest. It was not to-day or yesterday that they started the idea, and they had been frequently promised by previous Governments that a local registration office would be established in Maryborough. He was not surprised to hear the hon. member who led the Opposition object to Maryborough, because that hon. member had not forgotten that Maryborough was the place in which the standard of liberty was first hoisted. The hon. member could not forget either that Maryborough had virtually put the present Government in office and kept it there. There was no ill-feeling between Maryborough and Gympie, and the discovery of the Gympie Gold Field was the first great start Maryborough had got in its existence. Maryborough had increased and multiplied side by side with Gympie, and the hon. member for Wide Bay had but expressed the feelings of the people of the district when he said how anxious they were to get a local branch registration office established in the district. He hoped that the Premier would not assign the state of the Treasury as a reason for not establishing an office in the Maryborough district. If that were to be given as the reason it should be a sufficient reason in the case of all the other districts referred to. If the expense upon the Treasury was to be the only reason given for not establishing an office, he hoped the Premier did not mean it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said there was something he did not forget with regard to Maryborough, and that was that it had given the present Administration a Postmaster-General.

Mr. SHERIDAN: Yes, and kicked you out of office.

Mr. CHUBB said there was one point upon which he wished to ask a question, as there was no provision given for it in the Bill. Was it intended that the principal office in Brisbane would keep also a record of the registrations in the other districts?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. ANNEAR said that if a registry office was established at Maryborough he did not think it would entail much extra expense, because there were plenty of officers there at present with scarcely enough work to do. Personally, he had not studied the question very closely, but he thought there was a great deal in what the Premier had said. In two or three years' time Maryborough would be in direct railway communication with Brisbane, and it was hardly wise to fall in with an idea that might be supported by three or four persons for something new every two or three months. He was not afraid of Maryborough being badly treated by

Brisbane, or by Brisbane members. Whatever his district had required, in the shape of railways or public works of any kind, had always been voted cheerfully by Southern members. No doubt registration would be carried out with greater despatch when the railway was completed, and even now there was steamer communication between the two places almost every other day. No doubt there would be more registration required to be done in Maryborough in future than there had been in the past. It had been often said that there was no agricultural land in that district; but land had been opened up by the railway, which he hoped soon to see completed, which could not be excelled by any land in the colony; and at Rawbelle, Stanton Harcourt, Degilbo, and other places there was as splendid agricultural land as any man need wish to see. He believed that under the administration of the new Minister for Lands there would be such a stream of people paying their own passages to the colony and settling upon the land as would make that district a very prosperous one. He should vote with his colleague, but he was certainly of opinion that no harm would happen to Maryborough if it did not get a registry office at the present time.

Mr. SHERIDAN said that, in reply to his colleague, he would read the following resolution which was passed at a public meeting in Maryborough within the last few days:—

"That Maryborough having for many years endeavoured to secure local registration and other advantages of local government, this meeting hails with pleasure the introduction of the principle of decentralisation as sketched out by the Government, and trusts that whatever form such measure may take, the district will share in the benefits."

And the third resolution was—

"Resolved that the foregoing resolutions be forwarded by the chairman to Messrs. Aunear and Sheridan, M.M.L.A., for presentation to the Premier."

They were both, therefore, in exactly the same position with regard to that resolution. He could not agree with his hon. colleague's argument, that because the two places might some day be connected by railway the work of registration would be done at less expense, because the documents would have to be forwarded to Brisbane for registration, and then began the expense of the delay. In fact, the expense would be just as great then as it was now.

Mr. CHUBB said the hon. member was making a mistake. Registration in Brisbane was done by correspondence. Of course if people liked to have it done by an agent they would have to pay the agent; but there was no need to do more than send the document direct to the office by post, and the only expense would be the cost of the postage stamps.

Mr. MORGAN said that, although the establishment of direct railway communication between Brisbane and the Wide Bay district might not lessen the delays which now occurred, yet the establishment of registration offices at Townsville and Rockhampton would certainly do so, because they would relieve the head office of a very large amount of work which was now done there exclusively and caused delay. The matter was one which would involve considerable expense to the State, if local registry offices were to be established in every centre of population. The Government, having stated their intention of establishing a local registry office in the commercial centres of the three principal divisions of the colony, had done all that could be expected of them. If the amendment of the hon. member for Maryborough was carried, the hon. member for Warrego would receive the greatest encouragement to prosecute an amendment in favour of

Thargomindah; and there would be no reasonable ground for refusing to establish a registry office at places like Normanton.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Or Warwick.

Mr. MORGAN: Or even at Warwick. He therefore hoped the amendment would be rejected.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the hon. member for Bowen had made a slight mistake when he said that the only necessary cost in registering a document from Maryborough was the cost of postage. The hon. member must remember that the document would not be received direct, but must be delivered through a lawyer or other authorised agent, for which fees were charged.

Mr. CHUBB: That is not so.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he was speaking from his own personal experience. He was not surprised at lawyers sustaining the reputation of their class, but he wished to point out to the hon. member for Bowen that his assertion about the cost of registration was scarcely correct.

Mr. MELLOR said there was no doubt the cost of getting transfers from Brisbane was very considerable.

Mr. CHUBB: In what way?

Mr. MELLOR said he would tell the hon. member in what way from his own experience. Not long since, he purchased an allotment of land for which he paid £11, and the cost of the transfer of that land amounted to £5 9s. There were the agent's fees, £2 2s., and the registration fees, and other costs, which altogether amounted, as he had said, to £5 9s. The same thing happened about the same time to a gentleman whom he knew; and it was a heavy tax on the community. If people could go to a local registry office they would not have to pay fees to anything like that amount. It was stated that the charges of the country lawyers would be no less than those of Brisbane lawyers. Even if that were so, it would be better to have the business a little more divided, so that all the money should not be sent to Brisbane. He maintained that the Wide Bay district was entitled to a local registry office on account of its population. Gympie was certainly a very large centre of population, and no doubt Gympie would like to have a local registry office, to which place it would be a very great boon; but whether it would be fair to the entire community of the Wide Bay district, which included also Maryborough, Bundaberg, and the Burnett district, was another thing. He thought it would be more satisfactory if Maryborough were the centre.

Mr. CHUBB said the hon. member had proved what he (Mr. Chubb) had stated, that if the local solicitor chose to employ an agent in Brisbane the expense would no doubt be increased; but there was nothing to prevent his sending the documents by post, when the business could be transacted without any extra expense except for postage. As for the statement made by the hon. member for Maryborough that deeds would not be delivered except to a solicitor or his clerk, that was true in Brisbane, but if the party sending the deeds from the country asked that they should be returned to him by post it would be done. The hon. member for Wide Bay said it would save agency expenses to have a local registry at Maryborough. No doubt it would, so far as Maryborough was concerned, but what would the solicitors at Bundaberg, Gympie, and farther out do? They would have to send their work to the solicitor at Maryborough, who would charge the same as an agent at Brisbane; so that there would still be the same trouble as regarded agency, unless the parties chose to send their work direct by post, as they could do now.

Mr. ADAMS said that argument was not sound so far as Bundaberg was concerned. When the two places were connected by rail it would only take two or three hours to get from Bundaberg to Maryborough, and men could go down and transact their business in one day without employing any agent. Now, as a rule, lawyers were honest, but he knew a case where two men employed a lawyer to register some deeds in Brisbane, and the lawyer billed them for £9, part of which was for the agent's fees in Brisbane. However, they could not get their deeds, because he had sent no money to the agents, so that there were the agent's fees at this end to be paid. He (Mr. Adams) made application for the deeds, but could not get them because they had to be given to a lawyer or a lawyer's clerk. If they were going to take railway communication into consideration, the day was not far distant when Rockhampton would be connected with Brisbane by rail. If Rockhampton and other places were entitled to local registry offices, then he considered that his district was entitled to one. Not only Maryborough, but Bundaberg, through its Chamber of Commerce, had agitated for that boon for many years.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to know if the hon. members who supported this amendment intended to move a similar amendment in the other two Bills closely connected with the present one. If they created another place for registration it seemed to him that they would have to create another financial district. He would like to know where this would end; while they were discussing the matter they might just as well know the whole of it. Perhaps the junior member for Maryborough would inform the Committee whether he proposed, when the other Bills were before the Committee, to move amendments to the same effect as that proposed.

Mr. SHERIDAN said that, with regard to the other Bills, all he could say was "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." When they came forward they would know how to deal with them.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 9.

Messrs. Mellor, Sheridan, Adams, Philp, Bailey, Annear, Macrossan, Palmer, and Hamilton.

NOES, 28.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Norton, Morehead, Chubb, Moreton, Dutton, Nelson, McWhannell, Donaldson, Black, White, Lalor, Buckland, Rutledge, Pattison, Wakefield, McMaster, Campbell, Bulcock, Morgan, Aland, Stevens, Higson, S. W. Brooks, Jessop, Kates, Brown, and Murphy.

Question resolved in the negative.

Clause 2 put and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4 passed as printed.

On clause 5, as follows:—

"Upon the establishment of a local registry within either of such districts, a duplicate, certified by the Registrar of Titles, of so much of the register-book kept by him at Brisbane under the principal Act as relates to any land within such district, shall be transmitted to such local registry, and shall there be kept by the local deputy registrar of titles.

"Such duplicate shall thereafter, so far as regards land within such district, be deemed to be the register-book kept with respect to such land up to the time of the establishment of such local registry."

The PREMIER said he thought there was no need for sending to the new registries all the old records relating to land. He therefore proposed to insert after "relates," in the 4th line, the words "to the existing title," so that all the Registrar of Titles would have to send up would be so much of the register as related to existing titles.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: If the history of the title is wanted it can be got here.

The PREMIER: It would reduce the preliminary expense by at least one-half, perhaps more, and also the bulk of the books to be kept.

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER moved, as a consequential amendment, the omission of all the words after "land," in the last line but one of the clause.

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

On clause 6, as follows:—

"The local deputy registrar of titles for each district shall, from and after the establishment of the local registry, keep a book in continuation of such duplicate register-book so transmitted as aforesaid, and such book and the duplicate aforesaid shall together be styled the local register-book, and shall be deemed to be the register-book for the district for the purposes of the principal Act, and the local deputy registrar shall enter therein the duplicates of all subsequent deeds of grant and certificates of title relating to land within the district, and shall record therein the particulars of all instruments affecting the land comprised in any grant or certificate of title relating to land within the district, distinct and apart."

Mr. CHUBB said he thought that the present was the proper time to deal with the point he had previously referred to, which was one of great importance, and ought not to be passed over without some little discussion. He alluded to the question as to whether it would be advisable that the principal office here should keep a complete record of all dealings in land throughout the colony. Under the Bill as drafted, when the two new offices came into existence, all transactions in the districts in which they were situated would be recorded there, and would cease to be kept in the principal office. In addition to the question of the convenience of his suggestion, there was the further reason that, supposing the records in either of the branch offices were destroyed by fire, which might happen, especially if the offices were held in wooden building, as they probably would be in the North, there would still be a permanent record in the principal office, which would be a great advantage. Of course a fire might occur in the principal office, but, as they all knew, it was constructed as well as it possibly could be to provide against fire, with strong rooms and so on, and there was not the same risk as there would be in the branch offices. No doubt it would add something to the expense, but by the amendment that had been made in the 5th clause they had saved a considerable amount of the initiatory expense, and it would be well to consider whether it would be advisable to adopt the course he suggested.

The PREMIER said the matter had not escaped his attention, but it appeared to him that it was quite a different scheme from that proposed. If they were going to carry out such a proposal they might as well keep all the records down here and send duplicates to the Northern districts. If the record was kept in the way suggested it would only apply to titles to land in the Central and Northern districts, while of titles to land in the Southern district there would be only one set. He did not see how the system could be worked. If duplicates of local registers had to be sent to Brisbane there would always be a number of days between the making of the certified copies and their arrival here. They could not come down every day, but only at intervals, and it would be dangerous to trust to searches in the register titles at Brisbane, when perhaps a day or two before an additional entry might have been made upon them elsewhere. He had considered the matter before, and was not at all taken unawares. He thought the disadvantages would be greater than the advantages.

If the object was to have duplicates, then the principle of having duplicates should be made a general provision in respect of all records. It would be very convenient, perhaps, but they had not done that up to the present time, and he did not know that it was done anywhere.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7, 8, 9, and 10 passed as printed.

On schedule 1, as follows:—

"CENTRAL DISTRICT.

"Commencing on the east coast at the mouth of the Kolan River, and bounded thence on the south by the northern watershed of that river westerly to Dawes Range; thence by that range and the range forming the northern and western watersheds of the Rawbelle River and its tributaries westerly and southerly to their junction with the southern watershed of Ross and Cracow Creeks; by that watershed westerly to the Dawson River; by that river downwards to Bigge's Range; by that range westerly to Carnarvon Range; by that range westerly to the Great Dividing Range; by that range westerly to the Warrego Range; by that range westerly to the Cheviot Range; by that range north-westerly and westerly to the confluence of the Thomson and Barcoo Rivers; thence by a line due west to the western boundary of the colony; thence on the west by that boundary northwards to the twenty-first parallel of latitude; thence on the north by that parallel easterly to its intersection with the Selwyn Range; thence by that range, Kirby's Range, and the range forming the southern watershed of the Plinders River and its tributaries in a general easterly direction again to the twenty-first parallel of latitude; thence by that parallel easterly to the Great Dividing Range; by that range southerly to its junction with the southern watershed of the Cape River; by that watershed easterly to the confluence of the Belyando and Suttor Rivers; thence by the Suttor River upwards to its head in the Leichhardt Range; thence by that range and the northern watershed of Funnell Creek and its tributaries easterly and southerly to a spur forming the watershed separating the waters of Marion and Rockydam Creeks; thence by that watershed north easterly to Cape Palmerston on the east coast of the colony; thence by a line eastward to the eastern boundary of the colony; thence on the east by that boundary southerly to Sandy Cape; and again on the south by a line westerly to the point of commencement,—inclusive of all islands adjacent thereto south of the latitude of Cape Palmerston and north of the latitude of Sandy Cape."

Mr. McWHANNELL said he drew attention to that schedule on the second reading of the Bill. He thought that in the western part of the colony it would be much better for those townships which did all their business with the North if they were included in the Northern division of the colony. The boundaries, he would suggest, should be so altered that the business should go to the northern part of the colony. There was no doubt that that would serve a good purpose. People doing all their business in Townsville would then get their titles much more readily than if they had to send to Rockhampton for them. He knew it was a matter that had been considered by a good many freeholders, and he should very much like to see the boundary altered in the way he had suggested on a former occasion—namely, following the dividing waters between the Thomson and Diamantina Rivers south-westerly until the 23rd parallel was struck, and then following that line to the west. The whole of that part of the district did business with the North.

The PREMIER: I do not think so.

Mr. McWHANNELL said that would include Winton and Boulia in the Northern division.

Mr. PATTISON said he should like to hear better reasons given than those advanced by the hon. member for the change he advocated, unless his aim was to take in the whole of the Central district within the bounds of the separation territory; he could understand the proposal in that light. If hon. members would look at the map they would find that it was not the towns doing business with Townsville that

would be affected. He took it that the boundaries, as they stood, were altogether unfavourable to the Central district, and although he had no intention of moving any amendment, still he thought it was only fair that, small as the boundaries were, the Central district should not be robbed of what it had got. It appeared to him that, by the proposal of the hon. member, the town of Winton and the whole of the country round about would be taken from the Central district. That would be a most unfair proceeding, and a proceeding which he should protest against.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the hon. member for Gregory was perfectly right in saying that the trade of Boulia was carried on with Townsville, but he was afraid it would be rather hard for them to strike a line going so far south as to include Winton and Boulia. He thought that the remedy for the matter was for the people of the Central district to throw in their lot with the North and go in for separation, pure and simple.

Schedule put and passed.

Second schedule passed as printed.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. We propose to-morrow, after the formal business is disposed of, to take the second reading of the Bill to amend the law relating to the endowments of municipalities which I introduced this afternoon, and after that the two Bills now standing on the paper for to-morrow—namely, the Financial Districts Bill and the Local Administration Bill. I propose to ask the House to consider the Estimates at an early date—I hope on Thursday.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—Have the Government any intention of going on with the Fisheries Bill?

The PREMIER: I cannot say whether it will be gone on with or not.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-three minutes past 8 o'clock.