

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 1887

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 7 September, 1887.

New Member.—Member Sworn.—Motion for Adjournment.—Entertainments in the “Courier” Buildings.—Petition.—Question.—Real Property (Local Registries) Bill—third reading.—Formal Motion.—Queensland Trustees and Executors Society, Limited, Bill—first reading.—Local Government Act of 1878 Amendment Bill—second reading.—Suspension of Standing Orders.—Local Government Act of 1878 Amendment Bill, No. 2—first reading—second reading.—Financial Districts Bill—second reading—resumption of debate.—Adjournment.

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

NEW MEMBER.

The SPEAKER said : I have to report to the House that I have received the writ from the returning officer for the electorate of Darling Downs, certifying the return of William Allan, Esquire, as one of the members for the said electoral district.

MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. WILLIAM ALLAN was sworn in, and took his seat as a member for the electoral district of Darling Downs.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

ENTERTAINMENTS IN THE "COURIER" BUILDINGS.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr Speaker,—I wish to call the attention of the Government to an advertisement that appears in the *Brisbane Courier* this morning, and in order to put myself right I shall conclude with the usual motion. This advertisement is under the head of "Entertainments," and is as follows:—

"MAJOR HENRY C. DANE,

The Great American Traveller, Lecturer, and Orator.

'COURIER' BUILDINGS.

MONDAY, 12TH SEPTEMBER.

'Up the Rhine and Over the Alps with a Knapsack.'"

Showing that this gentleman means to hold a number of entertainments in a room in the *Courier* buildings. I brought this matter before the House on a previous occasion, and then pointed out the danger that there is to the community of allowing a building of this sort to be used for entertainments. Upon that occasion I understood from the managing director of the *Courier* that no further entertainments would be permitted in the building.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Did you believe it?

Mr. MURPHY: Well, I do not know. I decline to express an opinion upon that point. I was assured, at all events, that no further entertainments would be permitted in this hall until some improvements were made in the way of providing fire-escapes for the audience. Now, I have been in the hall again to-day, and no attempt whatever has been made to provide proper escapes. I believe that there is no building Act in this colony, and I bring this matter before the House because I want to impress upon the Government the necessity there is of introducing a measure in the shape of a building Act, and I hope that, notwithstanding the political aspect, this House will be willing to pass one this session in order to prevent some frightful catastrophe. There is no doubt that a catastrophe of some kind is sure to happen sooner or later in this building if it is used for entertainments. I see on referring to the same paper that there is a cable message reporting that another great accident has happened in a theatre through fire. Now, most of the theatres in England are under a building Act, and they are constructed specially to provide for the escape of audiences from them in case of panic. I do not think there can be much danger in the *Courier* building by fire. It is admirably constructed to, so far as possible, prevent an accident from fire, but the danger is not only from actual fire, but from an alarm of any kind. We have had that even in this House, which is lighted by electricity. We had an alarm of fire, upon which serious panic ensued amongst members, and it was quite possible that some one or more members might have been smothered in their efforts to get away. When a thing of that kind may happen in a small assemblage like this, there is extreme danger to the community in allowing entertainments to be held in the hall I have described. I wish to impress upon the Government the necessity of doing something in this matter, and I warn the community against going to entertainments given in this hall. If they do so after the warning they have received they go at their own risk—a risk which I think a very great one indeed.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—As the law stands at present the Government have no power to interfere in a case of this kind. We have the power to interfere only in cases of what are called entertainments of the stage under an Act passed in 1850. That relates to theatres. The penalty is upon persons who perform—

"any interlude, tragedy, opera, comedy, stage play, farce, burlesque, melodrama, pantomime, or any stage dancing, tumbling, or horsemanship, or any other entertainment of the stage whatsoever to which admission shall or may be procured by payment of money or by tickets."

That, I do not think, covers a lecture of the kind referred to. I have not seen the advertisement, but I do not think it could be called an entertainment of the stage. There does not appear to be any law covering the holding of public meetings or large assemblages at all, except at theatres. Of course, what the hon. member means is that there should be a law preventing the assemblage of large numbers of persons in unsuitable places at nighttime, or daytime either. That is a very large subject. I am not prepared to say that the Government will take it in hand this session. I do not think it is at all likely they will be able to do so.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I think that where the lives and limbs of a large number of people are at risk the Government should be prepared to take immediate action. I think adding one clause to the Act which has been quoted would quite meet the emergency, and the Premier is treating lightly the lives and limbs of his unfortunate subjects in allowing people to lay baits and entice others into places which are admittedly unfit for the purpose of holding entertainments. I think that some little short Act could be passed this session, and the Premier, with his legal acumen and capacity for drafting Bills, could draft a clause in a second to stop this kind of thing. But I am afraid that it is this universal bowing down to the Press which is at the bottom of it. Everyone is afraid to meddle with anything that is connected with the Press, and therefore the lives and limbs of the people must be sacrificed, in order to enable these people to reap some reward out of their enormous white elephant. This is the way they propose to do it, at the risk of the public. I think the Government should not decline to step in and interfere, as they need not be at all alarmed at the power of the Press, as it will not affect their position the least bit in the world. If they will only take the bull by the horns and provide for the public safety at once it will be a very good thing.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—I think hon. members generally are no more alarmed at the power of the Press than the hon. member for Cook. I really do not think that sufficient provision is made for the exit of people from the *Courier* building. I was there myself some time ago when the Fisk Jubilee Singers were giving an entertainment there, and the audience were told to be very careful in going out and not to push one another. It took nearly twenty minutes for the audience to leave the room, and I was one of the last. I therefore think there is something in what the hon. member for Barcoo says, and the attention of the public should be called to it. A malicious cry of "Fire!" by one of the persons in the room would cause a stampede, and there would be a great sacrifice of life in consequence, without the slightest doubt.

Mr. BAILEY said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member is quite right in saying that a panic is just as bad as a fire. It is now, I think, about thirty years ago since I was in London in a large hall, with about 1,200 people, and an alarm of fire was raised by pickpockets in the

galleries, and I can well remember the frightful scene that ensued. The people crushed out from the galleries, and the staircase was broken, and people were hurled from the top to the bottom of it, to fall on the top of a mangled mass of human beings. I was fortunately in the body of the hall at the time, and I can remember Mr. Spurgeon, who almost lost his reason at the time, calling upon and beseeching the people to keep their seats, as there was no danger; but, in spite of all his beseeching, and though he used, of course, the language a divine of his character would use on such an occasion, I remember the crushing from the galleries, and the screams of horror that were made at the time. Sir, a panic is worse than a fire, and if a panic is raised by malicious persons in a building such as is referred to, the effect is sure to be disastrous. I hope the Government will take some action, and see that people have reasonable protection when they attend places of entertainment where a large assemblage of people is collected.

Mr. MURPHY, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker, —I do not know whether the English Building Act is the only Act that applies to such things in England, but I think the Premier could easily find some statute in England that might be applicable to this colony. I know for a fact that even churches are brought under the Building Act in England, and there is far less likely to be a fire or an alarm of fire in a church than in such a place as the *Courier* buildings, perfect as they may be from a fire-proof point of view. A fire might easily start in the upper part of the building where the compositors work, and where there are so many wooden partitions; and even malicious persons, such as pickpockets, might raise an alarm of fire, as the hon. member for Wide Bay showed, for the purposes of their trade. If an Act can be passed in England by which even churches may be brought under the Building Act it must be very easy to pass an Act here to apply to buildings such as this, which is being commonly used for performances for the amusement or entertainment of large audiences. It is not actually a theatre, although there is a stage there, but without scenery. The Jubilee Singers, it is well known, gave concerts there, and so the distinction drawn is without a difference. I beg to withdraw the motion with the permission of the House.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

PETITION.

Mr. KATES presented a petition from Mr. Ransome, the plaintiff in the case of *Ransome v. Brydon, Jones, and Company*, praying for a select committee to inquire into the allegations in the petition presented on the subject by him (Mr. Kates) some time ago. That petition was signed by nearly 1,000 persons, consisting of timber-getters, sawyers, sawmill proprietors, cabinet-makers, carpenters, merchants, and others. He moved that the petition be read.

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

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

QUESTION.

Mr. HAMILTON asked the Minister for Works—

1. When does he intend to submit, for the approval of Parliament, plan of the third section of the railway from Cairns to Herberton?

2. What will be the length of the third section?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) replied—

1. It is not proposed to ask the approval of Parliament this session.

2. The matter is not yet determined.

REAL PROPERTY (LOCAL REGISTRIES) BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By the HON. J. M. MACROSSAN—

That there be laid on the table of the House the report of Mr. Jack, the Government Geologist, on mineral lease 276, Watsonville.

QUEENSLAND TRUSTEES AND EXECUTORS SOCIETY, LIMITED, BILL.

Mr. CHUBB moved for leave to introduce a Bill to confer powers upon the Queensland Trustees' and Executors' Society, Limited.

Question put and passed.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of Mr. CHUBB, the Bill was read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1878 AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

On this Order of the Day being read,

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I omitted yesterday, before the House went into committee to consider the desirableness of introducing this Bill, to communicate to the House the recommendation which must precede the introduction of a money Bill; and under the circumstances it is not practicable to go on with the Bill without going through the form of reintroducing it. I propose to ask the House to allow the Standing Orders to be suspended so as to permit of those purely formal requirements being complied with, and of the second reading being taken this afternoon. In order that I may do that I move that this Order of the Day be discharged from the paper.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move that the Bill be discharged from the paper.

Question put and passed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The PREMIER, by consent, moved, without notice, that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will allow of the immediate constitution of a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the law relating to the endowment of municipalities, and of reading such Bill a second time on the same day on which it is introduced.

Question put and passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1878 AMENDMENT BILL No. 2.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole, to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the law relating to the endowment of municipalities. I have to inform the House that His Excellency, having been informed of the provisions of this Bill, recommends to the House the necessary appropriation to give effect to it.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was affirmed in Committee of the Whole that it was desirable to introduce a Bill to amend the law relating to the endowment of municipalities.

FIRST READING.

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

Question put and passed.

SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—When the clauses with respect to endowments in the Divisional Boards Bill were going through committee, I intimated that if they were adopted I would introduce a Bill dealing with endowments to municipalities on the same basis; and in accordance with that promise this Bill has been introduced. If adopted, it will place municipalities on precisely the same footing as divisional boards. Endowments with respect to rates collected during the present year will be according to the present law; for the next two years there will be available for distribution the same sum as this year; and after that the amount available for endowments will be in the discretion of Parliament. The Bill repeals the two endowment clauses of the present law and substitutes for them other provisions exactly the same as are in the Divisional Boards Bill. Reference is made in the 3rd clause to the rates upon which endowment is payable; and the sections mentioned are the sections of the Act under which endowment is now payable, because, though by the Act endowment was originally payable on other rates, it was restricted by the Act passed in 1881. I do not think it necessary to say any more on the subject. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—As this Bill is simply a complement to the Bill passed the other evening by this House, and as I do not see why municipalities should be placed in a more favourable position than other local bodies, I shall not oppose the second reading.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no fault to find with the amendment proposed to be effected by this Bill, but when the Divisional Boards Bill was going through I understood the Chief Secretary to say that some of the provisions relating to the negotiation of loans in that Bill would be inserted in this Bill. In the case of loans to divisional boards a majority of the ratepayers have to decide whether the loan shall be applied for or not, and I think that provision should be inserted in this Bill. Other local bodies are just as anxious to receive large loans as divisional boards; and there should be some check placed on them.

The PREMIER: I did not understand that any suggestion of the kind was made.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

Committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

FINANCIAL DISTRICTS BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—In rising to resume the debate on the second reading of the Financial Districts Bill, I may say that I think we are placed rather at a disadvantage, because we are in the uncertain position of not knowing whether the Government intend to push this measure forward through committee and complete it during the present session or not. My own opinion is, judging from the utterances of the Chief Secretary, that he is not seriously inclined to do so. He would do so, no doubt, if all the members of the House were perfectly willing; but as he sees that there is some disinclination on the part of some members, I think he is inclined to allow the matter

to go to another session and a new Parliament. In thinking so, I believe I am speaking the sentiments of the majority of the members of the House who listened to the hon. gentleman as well as I did during his speech on the second reading of the Bill. It is not certainly beyond the competency of the present House to pass a Bill of this kind, even in its present dying condition, but I think it would be very unwise to do so; and I accept the Premier's statement that it will be a good thing to have the Bill debated—to have all the facts concerning the Financial Districts Bill of the Government known to the constituencies outside, so that when the question is referred to them they may arrive at an honest conclusion and give a fair verdict upon it. In so far, then, I agree with him, and think we ought to debate the Bill just as thoroughly as if we intended to pass it. At the same time, let it be nothing more nor less than a mere academical debate, because we really cannot expect to do the work of this Bill this session, even if we were in earnest with it, and also to do the work of the Redistribution Bill, and give the Government the Supply which they no doubt will ask for to enable them to carry on until the House meets again some time next year. We have arrived at that period of the session when under ordinary circumstances Supply is being gone on with. We have arrived within, I may say, certainly less than three months of the end of even a long session. A long session is one which continues till the end of November—ordinary sessions generally finish at the beginning of November; so that we really have very little over two months to perform the work of the session before us. I think, therefore, most hon. members will agree with the Premier in desiring that, although the Bill should be debated, it should not pass beyond mere debate. Having said so much I will say something as to the history of financial separation itself, as to which the Premier seems to be altogether astray. Although he is an older member of the House than I am, and was in the House when the first Separation Bill was introduced, he seems never to have grasped the question, or, if he ever did, to have lost the grasp of it now. I am not going back to the period when the people in the Central districts contended for territorial separation; that is beyond my province. At present I am simply going to deal with financial separation as it has come before this House, and of which you, Mr. Speaker, I believe, are thoroughly aware. I believe you were present during nearly all the debates which took place at different periods on the question of financial separation, and expressed your opinion upon it. The first Financial Separation Bill which was introduced into this House was introduced by Mr. Palmer, now Sir Arthur Palmer, President of the Upper House. That was in 1870, and he introduced another Bill in 1872. Neither Bill passed. At that particular time it was only the northern portion of the colony, as we are accustomed to call it—meaning that portion of the colony north of Cape Palmerston—which was really anxious to get financial separation—I do not think the Central district at that time cared much for it—and at that particular time there was only one member representing Northern Queensland in this House—only one member out of twenty-six or twenty-eight. When I entered the House in the beginning of 1874—

The PREMIER: The House consisted then of thirty-two members.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That makes the disproportion still greater. When I entered the House in 1874, having been elected in 1873, we were three Northern members.

The PREMIER: Four.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No, three—Burke, Kennedy, and Bowen. Shortly afterwards, Cook was established as a representative district, and the first member took his seat, I think, in 1875. That made four members, and it remained at that number until the Redistribution Act of 1878.

THE PREMIER: There was the member for Ravenswood besides.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The member for Ravenswood was Mr. King, and he came in for that seat after the Redistribution Act of 1878. I took a very active part at that period, Mr. Speaker, in urging financial separation, because I did not agree with the idea which was held very largely in the North at that time in favour of territorial separation. I had the question debated in 1875 on a motion which I made, and which the Government of the day, of which the present Premier was a member, allowed to go without a division after a long debate. I distinctly stated in that motion that my object was to prevent the demand for territorial separation. The question, as amended and passed, was as follows:—

“That a large amount of dissatisfaction prevails as to the distribution of the revenue in the northern parts of the colony; and in order to prevent a demand for territorial separation arising therefrom, it is, in the opinion of this House, the duty of the Government to introduce a measure dealing with financial separation.”

It will be seen from that that I, at that time, was not an advocate for territorial separation; that I advocated financial separation for the purpose of preventing the demand for it which had arisen. The Government at that time were neither inclined to it nor against it. He knew that the question had a good deal of vitality in the North, but, the representation of the people of the North being so small in the House, they simply allowed the matter to lapse till 1877, when a Royal Commission was appointed by the Douglas Government, the present Premier being a member of it.

THE PREMIER: Not a member of the Royal Commission.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No; I meant that the Premier was a member of the then Government; he was Attorney-General in the Douglas Ministry. That commission was composed partly of members of this House and partly of business men belonging to Brisbane, along with the then Under Secretary to the Treasury—the present Auditor-General—Mr. Drew. The business men upon it have since become members of Parliament—Mr. Forrest and Mr. Turner having been summoned to the Upper House. The commission was one which might be fairly considered as having the ability to do the work which they were appointed to do. They were also representative of the different districts into which the colony was at that time and still is divided. The Northern, Central, and Southern districts were each represented. The hon. member for Leichhardt, Mr. Scott, was a member of the commission, and the business men outside the House were also represented. That commission recommended a certain course of action to be pursued by the Government, for the purpose of allaying the discontent in the distant parts of the colony, and for the purpose also of trying to bring about a more equitable distribution of the revenue. Their recommendations, with very little exception, were embodied in a Bill which was introduced by the late Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Dickson, who was then Colonial Treasurer in the Douglas Ministry. That Bill contained practically the same recommendations as those contained in this Bill—the second reading of which has been moved by the Premier—with one exception, which I will allude to by-and-by.

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That Bill, when introduced, was received by the House in rather a flat kind of manner, and the impression of those who were in favour of financial separation was that the Government were really not in earnest in bringing in the measure. For that reason I, as one who was a strong advocate for financial separation, refrained from speaking as much as possible on the Bill, because the session was drawing near its close, and my object, and the object of the hon. member for Ravenswood, who spoke in committee, was to give the Government no excuse for saying that we had protracted discussion, and that therefore there was not sufficient time to pass the Bill. Nevertheless the Bill did not pass. Five or six clauses were passed in committee, and then, at the instance of the Southern supporters of the Government, it was withdrawn. When the Bill was about to be withdrawn I denounced its withdrawal, and told the Government that if they did withdraw it it would be the means of creating a demand for territorial separation which would be sure to arise in a few years, and that when it did arise I would come and advocate it. That, I believe, was the last agitation for financial separation in this colony. There has been no agitation for it since. Now the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government seems to have gone asleep—politically asleep—and, like Rip van Winkle, waking up at the end of ten years, he thinks the colony is still in the same position as it was when that Bill was withdrawn. We may suppose that he has turned round to Mr. Dickson and said: “Dickson, where’s that Bill of yours? These Northern fellows are singing out again for territorial separation: let us have that Bill and introduce a few alterations, and see if we cannot satisfy them.” Dickson has no doubt told him: “Oh, Sir Samuel, I do not believe in financial separation, nor do the majority of our supporters. Southern members do not believe in separation.” Then Sir Samuel said: “I don’t care, Dickson. We were compelled to withdraw the Bill before, because there was an old fogey at the head of the Government who didn’t know how to make his supporters take whatever medicine he chose to give them. Therefore, Dickson, if you and your supporters do not choose to take the financial separation I mean to give them, you may go to a political shed. I can do without the Liberal party, but they can’t do without me.” That is just the position the financial separation Bill occupies, I believe, in the mind of the Premier at the present time. He has turned round to Woolcock, his private secretary, and said: “Woolcock, bring old Dickson’s Bill here; let us dot the ‘i’s’ and cross the ‘t’s’ and alter the Bill, make some alteration in the phraseology, you know my style, and, by-the-by, we will introduce that 20 per cent. that the Northern members have always been calling for—the Customs duty on goods, if consumed in the North, the duty upon which has been paid in the South. We will introduce that, and surely that will satisfy them. If the Southern members do not like it they may go to where I said before.” Having awoke at the end of ten years he thinks the Northern people and Northern members should be satisfied with the demand which they made in 1877, or rather which they made long before 1877, but since which they have made no further demands in that direction. I say a very great deal has happened in the colony since 1877. The North has progressed rapidly—more rapidly than the South. The district which at that time was represented by four members, being one-eleventh of the House—

THE PREMIER: Five members.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Who was the fifth?

The PREMIER: The member for Ravenswood.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: That was after 1878.

The PREMIER: No; before.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Well, let it go so. The North was then represented by a little over one-eighth, less than one-ninth of the members of the House; they are now represented by one-sixth, and if they get fair treatment, which they will demand, I am certain, they will be entitled to one-fourth of the representation of the colony on the adult male basis.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Oh!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: An hon. gentleman says "Oh!" but it is a fact, nevertheless. Now, Mr. Speaker, having said so much about the Bill—about the representation, rather—and the different position we now occupy in this House to what we occupied then, when we were simply children asking, as it were, our step-mother for something which when we got it would certainly not do us a great deal of good, but would give us at least a stand upon which to make some further demands—I would point out that our present position is this: That everything which is contained in the Bill can be obtained by the members of this House by the influence which they possess by their voting powers, and by demands upon the Treasury for returns, with the single exception of the 9th clause dealing with the Customs duties I mentioned before in connection with the 20 per cent., and which the Government with even the best intentions will never be able to give correctly—with that single exception there is nothing contained in the Financial Districts Bill which members of the House cannot obtain, and which they have obtained, year after year, for several years past—that is, the knowledge of the revenue and expenditure of the different districts of the colony. That is all the Bill contains. No doubt it is a good Bill as far as that goes. It is a good Bill for keeping the accounts of the different districts separately from each other; keeping the expenditure which takes place year by year, whether from loan or from consolidated revenue; keeping also an account of the general debt and of the local debt as recommended by the Financial Separation Commission. It is a good Bill all through as far as that is concerned, but it wants the one great thing which the North has been demanding for years, and which the hon. gentleman, who has been politically asleep for the last ten years, has some hazy knowledge of; because he says, besides the account of revenue and expenditure, something else has been claimed lately. And so something else has been claimed, something else which the Bill does not contain. That is the power which the Northern representation should have to apportion their own expenditure, to apportion their surplus as they think fit, if any should exist. That is the point upon which the hon. gentleman has entirely failed, and I am surprised that he has failed upon that point. When he made the promise he did in the statement which he sent home through the Governor, he certainly gave the Imperial Government—Sir Henry Holland, at least—the impression that he was going to bring in some scheme which would satisfy the Northern people of the colony by giving them local self-government. That, sir, he has entirely failed to do. There is nothing in this Bill which confers one single iota of authority in the direction of local government upon the members of this House who represent the North, or upon the Northern people, in any way which they do not possess at present. If the hon. gentleman is willing to alter the Bill in the direction of giving us

authority over our own concerns—our own domestic concerns—I think very likely the Northern people might be willing to accept it. But, as it stands at present, it is impossible for them to accept it. It is not what they have demanded for the last ten years, and it certainly will not satisfy the people of the South any more now than it did in 1877. However, let the Southern members answer for themselves. I am certain that it will not satisfy the people of the North in the slightest degree, because what we want is control of our own expenditure. If the hon. gentleman should see his way to do that it would be a great step in the direction in which we want to go. We also want, more or less, the control of our own tariff. It is becoming a question in the southern part of the colony whether freetrade or protection shall be the policy of the Government—I do not say this Government, but of any Government; and although I am free to confess that I am more or less a protectionist, still I am bound to state that I believe protection will be an injury under the present conditions of Northern Queensland. Whatever protection would be to Southern Queensland, it would be an injury to Northern Queensland. We have no manufactures or industries that we want to build up; in fact the climate is rather against them. Hon. members know well that manufactures are not the kind of industry which will be likely to be successful in such a climate as the North.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: You have got sugar manufactories.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Our chief industries, and almost our only industries, are mining, tropical and semi-tropical agriculture, and pastoral occupation. Beyond that there are simply the common domestic industries which are in every state of society, but we have no great industries which we require to build up by protection. Now, I say distinctly that a protective tariff will be a serious injury to the northern portion of the colony, living as it does chiefly by mining and as it will live more and more day by day—it will be a greater injury than any refusal to listen to the complaint about expenditure. Therefore, if the hon. gentleman can see his way clearly to give us a concession not approaching to parliamentary government in the sense we should have it if territorial separation were granted—that we could not expect—but if he could see his way clear to give us a power which will give us control of our own resources, then I think that would be acceptable. Although I am speaking for myself in that respect, I think I am speaking the mind of the people of the North, with whom I have had very long intercourse. Now, there are difficulties in the way, I know, but if the hon. gentleman pass this Bill into law the difficulty will be chiefly removed, because he has already by this Bill admitted the recommendation of the Financial Separation Commission, which was that the Customs should be local revenue; and he has gone further also in granting the demand which the Northern people made and which their representatives claim—that referring to the 20 per cent. Now, these are great difficulties, and if the Bill pass and become law it will be a simple matter afterwards to give the sole control of that revenue to the Northern representatives either in this House or in the North, whichever would be found most convenient and most expedient. Now, this is a proposal which I make to prevent entire territorial separation, because, although I believe that territorial separation will be much better for both North and South, still I know there are a great many people who think otherwise, and there are many who have

a strong prejudice in favour of a very big colony. I have none myself. I believe that a small colony stands a chance of being far better governed than one of the extent of Queensland. I believe if the southern portion of the colony were confined to the South, and Wide Bay and Burnett, it would be far better governed than it has been at any time, and so with the Central, and so with the Northern districts. I believe that each should form a separate colony. There are many who think otherwise, but if the hon. gentleman can do as I suggest then there will be common ground upon which we can stand, and a basis upon which to govern both ends of the colony fairly and honestly. I know that there is another alternative which I am certain will be very distasteful to members of the House generally, and to the southern portion especially. That is, for the colony to go on as it is doing—the North gradually acquiring population and power in conjunction with the Central district, and very likely the northern portion of the Burnett district, and then taking the capital away from Brisbane, and placing it in some more central position. That is a point which hon. members may laugh at, but, believe me, it is quite as possible in a colony like Queensland and is as likely to be done, unless something in the direction which I state now is done, within the next fifteen years, as it was in the case of New Zealand and in Canada.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Take it to Bowen.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Auckland was the capital of New Zealand for twenty-five years or so. Many very expensive public buildings were put up there, quite as expensive as those put up in Brisbane.

The PREMIER: No.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: In spite of all the expenditure the capital was removed from there to Wellington.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: It did not do Auckland any harm.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I do not say that it did; but it satisfied the demand of the people of New Zealand, who would certainly have had separation of the two islands if such had not been done. It did away with the demand for separation. In a similar way there was a strong demand for the removal of the capital in Canada, and it was removed to Ottawa. The same thing has happened in several of the States of the Union in America. Capitals have been established and having been found to be in inconvenient positions have been removed, so that hon. gentlemen need not think that because Brisbane is so firmly established there is no possibility of the capital being removed. If they think so they are certainly labouring under a delusion, because at the rate of progress that the North is now going it will not take a great many years until it attains sufficient power to remove the capital. That is an alternative which most members of this House would not like to adopt, and is it not better to adopt the easier and the less injurious one which can be adopted, and which I have suggested? Of course I know there is a great deal to be said against provincial councils. The Premier knows that as well as I do. He knows the working of provincial councils in New Zealand. They were established very early in the history of New Zealand—in 1851 or 1852—and they existed for at least twenty-two or twenty-three years. They had certain powers given to them by the General Assembly of New Zealand; that is, they had the full powers of Parliament, with the exception of certain subjects upon which they were prohibited to legislate. One subject was, that they could not impose duties

of export or import. They had power to make land laws, and regulate the leasing and sale of land, and they had a certain portion of the land revenue. At one period they had it all. They were prohibited from making laws in regard to the administration of justice so far as the supreme courts of the colony were concerned. They were prohibited from making laws altering the currency in any way, the bankruptcy and insolvent laws, shipping dues, lighthouses, and matters generally kept by the general Government in their own hands. They were also prohibited from altering the law of marriage, which had to be decided by the General Assembly; and they were prohibited also from imposing any disabilities upon any of the natives which were not imposed upon Europeans. With these exceptions the provincial councils had full legislative and executive authority. Still we know they did not work well. There may have been peculiar reasons for their working badly there which would not affect Queensland if they were established here; but that they did work badly there every person acquainted with the history of New Zealand knows. They became very extravagant, reckless in the expenditure of money, reckless in the incurring of debt, which they had the power to do, and at last, after over twenty years' experience, the provincial councils had to be abolished by the general Government, and were abolished at great expense to the general Government—in fact, they had to be bribed to be abolished. The spirit also which they created in the people of New Zealand was detrimental, inasmuch as it tended to depress, discourage, and keep down the establishment of a national sentiment; the members of the House of Assembly themselves actually became provincial in their ideas and sentiments, and they generally acted in such a way as to favour the provinces they represented; and the practice led to the formation of cliques and cabals which the general Government found it impossible to work against. They abolished the system, and it had to be abolished, as I have said, at great expense to the Colonial Treasury. Whether such a system would work here or not I am not prepared to say, but I am quite certain something must be done, and done quickly, to prevent territorial separation, whether it is done by the establishment of provincial councils, on a different basis from what they were in New Zealand, or whether it shall be done by the suggestion I have thrown out to the hon. gentleman—that the Northern members should control the expenditure of the northern part of the colony, either in this House or by some other means; that they should direct the Government as to what public works should be carried out, the Government, of course, taking the responsibility—something in that direction must be done or else territorial separation is, I may say, inevitable. I am quite certain that when Sir Henry Holland refused separation to the delegates who went home from Northern Queensland he must have had in his mind a scheme quite different, though, perhaps, no particular scheme—a scheme entirely different from the one the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government has tabled now. I am quite certain if he had been told that the Premier was going to bring forward an old scheme of twelve or fifteen years ago he would have laughed at him, and told him at once that that was no plan to prevent territorial separation or satisfy the people of Northern Queensland. I know the word "separation" sounded as ugly in the ears of Sir Henry Holland as in the ears of the hon. member at the head of the Government, and I believe the word had a great deal to do with the refusal.

Mr. BLACK: We can change the name

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I do not see how you can. Separation is separation, and you cannot call it by any other name. I believe the very name had an effect upon Sir Henry Holland in causing the demand to be refused. But if the people of Northern Queensland go home again with a similar demand—if they send delegates home after having obtained a plebiscite of the people of Northern Queensland, which can be done either under the auspices of the Government, or under the auspices of the separation council, and fairly done—if after having obtained a plebiscite to show that there are a large majority of the people of the North in favour of the North being separated, I say the chances will be very much in favour of the demand so made being granted. I therefore hope the hon. gentleman will do something, or cause something to be done, that will allay the demand which exists, and certainly something very different from this Bill, which I do not approve of in the least as being satisfying to the people of the North now. We would have accepted a scheme of the kind willingly once when we were children; but, as I have told the hon. gentleman, we are grown-up men now, we have cut our political wisdom teeth and have got far beyond the period when that scheme would satisfy us. We wanted then to prove to the Government of the day, no matter what Government it might be, that we wanted to see justice done. We do not want that now, because we can obtain it here in this House, and can obtain it through our demands upon the Treasury for returns; and we also, if we chose, could obtain much more than the scheme proposed by the hon. gentleman. I refrain from using any language which may be construed into a threat; at the same time I, for one, as the representative of one constituency in the North, say that if this matter comes to a division I shall record my vote against it, because it is unsatisfactory and unsatisfying to the demands of the people of Northern Queensland.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I may say, also, that I am dissatisfied with this Bill, though not on the same grounds as the hon. member for Townsville. I am dissatisfied with the Bill itself, which I do not think will answer the purposes for which it is framed, if passed in its present shape. I believe if this Bill pass the House in its present form it will tend to throw into confusion and damage the commercial interest of the southern part of the colony. It seems a very simple matter in looking at the Bill to adjust equitably the various portions of the colony and mete out justice to each according to the amount of their contributions to the income of the colony; but when one looks more closely into it, it will be found that there is far more difficulty in the matter than the framer of the Bill seems to think there is. When the Bill was introduced I drew attention to the 9th clause, and taking that particular clause to furnish an example of how the Bill will work, I shall just show hon. members that to work it so as to give the northern parts of the colony—to credit them with the proper amount of taxation paid to the southern part—is impossible. It is impossible to do it accurately. Some people seem to think that it is a very easy matter when a Southern house sends goods to the North to show at once what amount of *ad valorem* duty has been paid on them; but it is not such a simple matter. If we look at the freight on goods coming from England or America or any foreign port, we shall find that some goods have to pay as high as 20 per cent. for freight, and others do not pay 1 per cent.

freight. Take the two well-known commodities, calico and silks: The freight on calico is as high as 20 per cent., and the freight on silks is not 1 per cent. So that if an invoice is made up in Brisbane of £100 for various articles of cotton goods, silks, and other articles for a drapery establishment—all articles paying *ad valorem* duties—it would be impossible for the Customs officers to show the average amount of *ad valorem* duties paid upon the goods in that invoice. There is no check whatever; they could not do it. I do not say it is an insuperable difficulty; it might be overcome, but only in one way—that every salesman in a wholesale establishment should be supplied with the amount of *ad valorem* duty on the particular goods he is selling, and when he had made a sale he would have to declare to the Customs officers the amount of *ad valorem* duty. But it is well known that commercial men do not keep an account of the *ad valorem* duty by itself. They place on the goods the net cost to them, including freight and duty. To show what the proposal really means, let me put an example before the House. Take one single sample article in a drapery establishment, some little furnishings perhaps, costing 15d. for a quarter of a gross or so: $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on 15d. is about 1½d., and every item on the whole of the invoice would have to be gone through and marked to add up to the amount of this *ad valorem* duty. That would involve a great amount of clerical labour which I do not think our wholesale houses would care for. But suppose they were willing to subject themselves to this expense of time and labour, for the sake of the trade of the North, another difficulty comes in which I do not think the North would submit to. Suppose an invoice from Brisbane goes to Townsville for £100 worth of goods. The duty would be £7 10s. if that £100 were the first cost of the goods, but if it were not the first cost, the amount of *ad valorem* might not exceed £4, while, for goods coming from the Southern markets or America or England, the North would be credited with the whole £7 10s. Now, no house in the North would deal with Brisbane if they were to be credited with £7 10s. on goods imported, and only £4 on goods from Brisbane. I do not think that the Bill would work, and we can easily see the havoc it would create in every wholesale house in Brisbane; they will all be against it. I should be against it, and I think every Southern member would be against it who knows anything of business. The 9th clause is not drawn with a view to do justice to each part of the colony, and I think I have shown clearly that justice will not be done to the North by the passage of this Bill. Then, see the blow that is aimed—not intentionally—at our Brisbane merchants, our wholesale men in particular. The Sydney and Melbourne houses will be preferred to the Southern Queensland houses by firms in the North. That being the case, I think it would be far better for the Premier to withdraw this Bill and leave the matter to some future occasion, for I am quite certain that he will not have strength enough in the House to pass it. If it comes to a division I shall vote against it. I have no more to say about it now, but if it should come to the committee stage I shall have more to say about the 9th clause. I hope hon. members will weigh well the effects of this Bill if it should pass. It will do justice neither to one district nor the other. If the Customs officers were able to check the amount of duty there would be something in it, but they cannot check it, and I say it would be unsatisfactory to pass any Bill under which the Customs officers cannot check the statements of those supplying the goods. On these grounds, Mr. Speaker, I shall be compelled to oppose the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I certainly thought that some hon. members on the other side would have replied to the remarks of the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan. It is certainly unusual that no member who approves of the Bill should rise after two speeches have been made in opposition to it—one by a gentleman who, as a rule, supports the Government, and the other by a member sitting on this side of the House. The speeches made by those hon. members show that this Bill finds favour neither with the North nor the South; the Central district has not yet spoken, but I suppose its opinion will be very much in accord with that of the two gentlemen who have just addressed the House. I, for my part, will say that I do not see my way to support this Bill in any particular whatever. It was brought in with a flourish of trumpets that was heard on the other side of the world. We were led to believe from what passed at the Imperial Conference, and from the action taken by the Premier of this colony in regard to the separation question, that when he did deal with separation, or any cognate subject, some new and comprehensive scheme would be brought down and presented to this House; in fact, the hon. gentleman in prefacing his remarks on the introduction of this Bill said that he introduced it as the fulfilment of an obligation he had incurred on the other side of the world. All I can say with regard to the measure is that if other results of the Imperial Conference are run upon the same lines I am afraid the Premier's visit to the old country has not been of much benefit to the colony. As was properly pointed out by the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, this is simply an old Bill refurbished up and brought down again—a Bill which might have been accepted by the North ten years ago, but certainly not now. And, unfortunately, with regard to the party now in power, it has always been so in their dealings with the North. They have always been too late, always a day too late for the fair; they have always tendered something which might have been accepted a few years before, but they let the time go by. Similar mistakes have no doubt been made in other places. So far as I understand the measure, the result will be worse than would be brought about by the creation of provincial councils, to which I am totally opposed. If we had a Parliament representing the Northern, Central, and Southern districts, there would be three hostile camps in this House, and one district would join another against the third; though I admit that the Premier has armed himself, so far as the South is concerned, by taking care, in his redistribution scheme, that the representatives of that district shall form an enormous majority as against the representatives of the other two districts combined. He has wisely protected himself in that way; that is to say, holding the views he does, he is determined to still hold in the South the power to control the rest of the colony; but to my mind that state of affairs has prevailed too long. I maintain that the North has not received justice at the hands of the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. If he had behaved justly to the North during the four years he has been in office, the cry for territorial separation might, at any rate, have been postponed for a considerable time; but no disposition has been shown by him to do anything like justice to the North until too late. Nothing has been given by the hon. member; everything the North has got from him has had to be taken from him.

The PREMIER: There is not the slightest foundation for that statement,

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is the opinion I have formed. I draw my conclusions—and so do others, no doubt—from facts in possession, not only of myself but of the country; and I maintain that from the first the hon. gentleman has shown no disposition in any way whatever to do justice to the North. What was his conduct with regard to the mining industry? He put a tax on machinery. What was his conduct with regard to the sugar industry? He has done all he could to crush it, and he very nearly succeeded in doing so. And I would point out, further, that he has gone even beyond that. He has, assisted by his late Minister for Lands, hampered to a great extent the powers of taxation that would have existed had separation been granted to the North some years ago, by locking up nearly all the whole of the northern portion of the colony for a long period of years under the Act of 1884 and the amending Act of 1886. Almost every acre except Cape York Peninsula has been locked up in one form or other.

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. Look at the map!

Mr. MOREHEAD: A very large proportion of that land, I repeat, has been locked up. So far as I am personally concerned—and I think many hon. members agree with me—I would very much rather see territorial separation than a measure of this sort become law. And I say, further, that should the time come—and I do not think it is very far distant—when the majority of the people of what is called Northern Queensland express a desire for severance from Queensland, we have no right to prevent them from going, so long as they are prepared to take the share of indebtedness incurred on their behalf, and so long as the bondholders on the other side of the world are prepared to accept the security offered by the portion of the colony when it is cut off. I say it would be worse than madness to attempt to prevent such a large section of our community from leaving us if they desired to do so. What was the position of Moreton Bay when separation took place, compared with the position of Northern Queensland at the present time? I should very much prefer, individually, not to see separation, but I repeat that if a majority of the people of Northern Queensland desire separation, not only will they have it but they ought to have it; and I maintain that attempting to plaster over the matter in this way with a Bill of this kind will not only have no good effect, but will further exasperate the people of the North. They will say they have asked for bread, and have been offered a stone. I do not hold, either, with the alternative propositions made by the hon. member for Townsville. I do not believe in provincial councils, nor do I believe in committees of Northern, Central, and Southern members for financial purposes. The 20th clause, allowing the imposition of differential duties, is, I think, a very bad one indeed, and one that will be unworkable, because the southern portion of the colony hold under the existing state of affairs, and will continue to do so under the proposed Redistribution Bill, the controlling power over the Northern and Central districts combined. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I shall oppose the second reading of this Bill, and I trust that the Premier, after hearing the adverse opinions, not only of his opponents, but of one of his most loyal supporters, who will probably be followed by others in the same strain, and having had the question thoroughly discussed, will see his way to withdraw the Bill, as I understood was his intention in the first instance. If it goes to the second reading I hope it will be defeated; if it gets into committee I have every reason to believe it will never come out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think that there is any man of ordinary good sense and good feeling but will experience a feeling of disappointment to find that our earnest and sincere desire to do justice towards every part of the colony, such as is proposed in this measure, is objected to by the representatives of two sections of the community—one representing the traders of Brisbane, and the other the irreconcilables of the North. They will not have justice done to the North or to the colony at any price. The hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, said they did not want justice now; they wanted separation pure and simple. The traders of Brisbane see their interests likely to be affected by each port having secured to it the trade to which it is fairly and justly entitled; and they object for that reason. With respect to the difficulties in regard to the amount of Customs duties to be credited to each district, I do not think that is insuperable. It can be overcome by careful management, and I am satisfied there are men here who could so arrange that matter as to remove all the difficulties that may arise. The leader of the Opposition said the Premier and his party had never shown a desire to do justice to the North, but I am sure that anybody who looks at the expenditure in the North since the present party came into power must be satisfied that the North has been very liberally dealt with indeed. They have had a very fair apportionment of all the moneys expended; not one of their wants has ever been put before the Government that has not been fully, fairly, and liberally conceded at once. Now, Mr. Speaker, the real difficulty that has arisen is this: When the late Government were in office things ran smoothly on, and the party which first started the cry for separation were not stimulated into action, because they had, among other things, the prospect of getting cheap labour from British India or from the islands of the Pacific. That was what kept them quiet. As soon as the present Government came in and said, "These things shall not go on in the way they have been going on, to the detriment of the white labour of the country as well as to the eternal disgrace of Queensland, owing to the methods by which black labourers are brought here,"—when they proposed to prevent that, those who represented the sugar industry of the North said, "We will have black labour or separation." No doubt the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, does not belong exactly to that party, but he saw the opportunity of starting a new Northern colony under the auspices of himself and one or two others, and probably that stimulated his ambition in that direction more than a desire to get what might be termed fair justice to the North. He has always raised objections to the methods of treating the North that have been introduced, on the ground that the loan and other expenditure between the North and the South were not fairly apportioned. The hon. member for Mackay goes in the other direction. He has always maintained that there was another difficulty—namely, that the present Government were crushing and killing the sugar industry. We know what that means. It is hardly necessary for me to refer to the remark of the leader of the Opposition as to the way in which land has been shut up in the North. We know well enough how the land in the North was shut up, and we know that it was not the Land Act of 1884 that shut up large areas of land. But there is quite enough good land available now for selection—quite as much as is likely to be absorbed until the termination of the leases now held by the Crown tenants. The pro-

position made by the hon. member for Townsville seems to me to be almost impracticable, unless it is carried out on the principle of a group of federated States, each one possessing its own Parliament with a right to manage its own affairs, and only having a central Parliament to deal with general matters. That may be feasible, but I do not think it is a very practicable idea. It comes very closely, I imagine, to provincial councils, and when he claims the right of each of those local governments, however they may be formed, to deal with their own tariff, then you have a number of small States, each one of them endeavouring to cut the other's throat—one a freetrader, another protectionist, and so on. This would give rise to interminable differences, and we should have simply a repetition of what we see now in the Australian group as it exists at present, where one colony goes in for protection and another for freetrade, with no common object in view except the purely selfish desire to get the better of each other. That can be the only result where you have a group of small States, each one having control over its own affairs and determining its own tariff and the expenditure of its revenue. Then the hon. member said there was another way in which it could be dealt with—namely, by the members of the House. Practically, the members of the House do deal with it now. At all events, the Government are and have been always open to receive suggestions from members representing any constituency. But there must be somebody to determine how it shall be dealt with, for the members themselves would never agree as to how the surplus revenues should be appropriated. I do not think any group of men anywhere would be content to work amicably on lines of that kind. There would be just as much desire and endeavour to overreach one another as there is at present between North and South. There would be endless contention amongst them; consequently there must be some determining body, and the Government are supposed to occupy practically an impartial position, and, acting on suggestions offered to them, decide what works are really required whenever there is money to be expended from loan or surplus revenue. From what the hon. member for Ipswich said, it seems clear to me that the danger he and others anticipate is that the Northern ports, as soon as they have to be credited with the amount of Customs duty on goods sent from here, will have the goods sent direct there. Instead of being forwarded through Brisbane houses, they will have their goods shipped direct to the Northern ports. I believe that will be the outcome of it, and the South will be likely to lose a certain amount of trade. But what will it be? It will be mainly on the *ad valorem* duties. I trust that when there is another revision of the tariff all *ad valorem* duties will disappear, to be replaced by direct duties on special articles, whatever they may be. The hon. member for Townsville said there were only three industries in the North—the sugar industry, the pastoral industry, and the mining industry; and I gather from what he said that there is very little probability of any other sort of industry being started there in the future—that they will never become a manufacturing people. That might be the result if they had the right of determining their own tariff; their future prospects would be confined to those three industries. The only chance there is to establish industries in a new country is to have a reasonable amount of protection. Consequently, the future of the North will in a great measure depend upon whether or not they are protected to a certain extent; and, if they are, it will be brought about by the influence they will feel from connection with the South.

There is a very great advantage to the North in remaining in close connection with the South, and having their tariff based on the same lines and with the same objects in view. It seems a much more important question for the future than Northern men generally seem to imagine. The mining, the pastoral, and the sugar industries, as well as the people engaged in those pursuits, will never prosper satisfactorily unless the people can branch out in other directions. The success of a State depends upon its industries being diverted into as many channels as possible, so as not to have to look to other parts of the world to furnish them with those articles which civilised life has taught us to look upon as necessities; and nothing will tend more to the advancement of the colony. Take the Central district, to which I have belonged ever since I became a resident of Queensland. Until the last few years that was a purely pastoral district; there was absolutely nothing excepting that. Now, I am glad to see that they are developing great mineral resources, and, consequently, they have another string to their bow. Formerly the Central district was about the poorest portion of Queensland, because it had one industry, and one industry only; whereas now, with the advent of new industries, it is enjoying a far higher share of prosperity. Take the case of the South, for instance. Wherever we find agriculture, small manufacturing industries—very small at present, I admit—in connection with mining and grazing—there they make rapid advancement, not from the mere fact of population alone, but because the opportunity has been given to a large number of people by having a variety of employment. That is what has placed the people of the southern portion of the colony in a position of comfortable prosperity.

MR. PATTISON: The seat of Government has done it; nothing else.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. gentleman attaches great importance to the fact that this is the seat of Government, but that has very little indeed to do with the real prosperity of the people. I can fancy a community of settlers at Cape York being just as prosperous as people in the neighbourhood of the seat of Government if they get the same advantages and their energies are directed in the proper course. It is not a question of the seat of Government; it is not Government expenditure that gives people real genuine prosperity; not even that fictitious prosperity which some people claim for the South. The great evil lies in people concentrating their energies upon one particular thing, and not having their industries diversified. The more diversified they are the more assured will be our prosperity and the more rapid. I shall feel very sorry if there should be any difficulty in the way of passing this measure. I feel satisfied, at all events, that it would really meet the wants of the Central district; and I can join in the regret expressed by the hon. member for Townsville that a measure of this kind did not become law a great many years ago. I am also surprised that he, entertaining that opinion, should have been a member of a Government for years, and knowing that such a system would give substantial relief to the North, or if not substantial relief, it would, at all events, have enabled them to know that the money they were contributing towards the revenue, and the general prosperity of the colony—that they were getting a fair proportion of it—I say I am surprised that he did not endeavour to pass such a measure. When the scheme was first started the accounts were kept separately in the Treasury, in order to carry out the Bill

if it became law; but the Government, of which the hon. member for Townsville was a member, stopped the accounts from being kept in that way. It would have been a very valuable source of information, and would, I believe, have shown that the Northern people had always received fair and substantial justice, and the Central division also. I am perfectly satisfied that if the measure becomes law it will satisfy everybody in the North, except the irreconcilables, and they are almost exclusively confined to the sugar-growers, and those who desire to have the initiation of the new Government in that part of the colony. These are the only men who are irreconcilable. They have a small following, of course, principally at Townsville, and it is not hard to find a reason why they should exist. We know perfectly well that when a Government is started the first question is what place is to be the seat of Government. That has been disclaimed entirely by the hon. member for Townsville, but we all know very well what the result would be. Of course, people who own land there would be enabled in the first "boom" to reap a considerably increased price for their property, and there will always be men who desire a change, no matter what it may be, that is likely to bring them more than they have at present. I hope hon. members will not be influenced by any feeling except this—a desire to do fair justice to every part of the colony; and I believe that by adopting this measure we shall be doing that, and although it may not be in the direction some people wish, still I think it is in the direction that every reasonable and right-minded man can desire.

MR. PATTISON said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. the Minister for Works, in addressing the House, said he was a representative of the Central district, but I think the sentiments he has given expression to show how little he knows of the feeling of the Central district. I am sure that this measure will not be acceptable to any reasonable man in the Central district. That district can by no manner of means be said to have been excessive in their demands for some system of local self-government. They have been led to believe by the past action of the Premier, and by his public expressions, that such a measure would be introduced as would to some extent meet their reasonable demands. It is a well-known fact, although the Central district has not joined with the people of the Northern district in their endeavour to obtain separation, that they thought some medium course might be adopted by which the extreme step of actual separation might be avoided; that is, that the Government would introduce some measure by which a system of local self-government might be established throughout the colony. The colony has been led to believe that some such measure would be introduced by the Government. They have been led to believe that, because the hon. the Premier himself has on several occasions told them that he would introduce a measure that would wipe away all cause of complaint on the part of the North. But, sir, now that we have got the measure before us and come to analyse it, what do we find? As far as my reading of it goes it is simply a financial statement Bill under which the accounts are to be kept at Rockhampton and Townsville instead of Brisbane. Beyond that, sir, there is nothing to lead me to believe that there is any extension of local self-government whatever. There is nothing in the measure that goes one bit beyond that point, and beyond that point I think the Premier is bound in honour to go. He appeared to lay great stress upon the promise he made to Sir Henry Holland when he was at home recently, and when he stated that he would introduce some scheme to allay the agitation for separation on the part of the

North. My extreme sympathy is with the people of the North. Their demand for separation is a just one, into which they have been forced by the continual refusal to concede the reasonable demands they have made, and which any Government should have conceded to them. Unfortunately I was absent when the division on the question last session came off, so that no Central or Southern member voted with them, but if I had been present I should most certainly have voted openly with them. I sympathise with their cry most cordially. It was my fate to take an active part in the agitation for separation in the Central district some twenty years ago. That agitation resulted in the removal of a great many abuses and neglect, but we find that abuses are now growing to such an extent that we are getting into even a worse state of things than existed before. I do not intend to trespass long upon the House. The petition I had the honour of presenting to the House two or three weeks ago set forth clearly and concisely the wants and wishes of the residents of the Central division. Since then a public meeting has been held there, and resolutions were passed, of which I believe the hon. the Premier has received a copy, and I will now read them to the House to call attention to the reasonable concessions that district has demanded. And I say that if those demands are granted I believe the people will be satisfied. I listened with pleasure to the speech of the hon. member for Townsville, who appears to be fast approaching the views of the Central district, or, rather, he is prepared to concede so much that he is fast coming back to the position held by the people of that district. What we want is the right to tax ourselves to a certain extent, or rather that, while submitting to taxation, we demand the right of controlling our own expenditure; that we should have some little executive authority that we do not possess at the present time. Under this Bill the most we can get is a local secretary who will have to refer everything to the Minister in Brisbane. Nothing can be done by him personally. Supposing any person in Townsville or Rockhampton approached the secretary, what power has he got to deal with him? We should be in just the same position that we are in now. I am the representative of Blackall; there is a representative of Rockhampton, but I have never seen that hon. gentleman approach this House to make known the grievances of Rockhampton. I say we are far better off now than we should be under this system. We can now hear something direct from the Government, instead of having to deal with a subordinate officer at either Rockhampton or Townsville. I repeat that we are far better off under the present system than having to submit to that. This is a summary of the resolutions passed at the meeting to which I refer:—

"We seek—

"1. The division of the colony into provinces, each possessing a certain amount of autonomy, and being presided over by an executive body, having power to deal with purely local matters, in order to avoid the necessity, which is now felt a grievous burden, of referring every detail to the central authority."

Now, that resolution was met by what? There are to be two Government officials located in Rockhampton and Townsville, and what are to be the duties of those gentlemen? Simply to refer matters to the Minister in Brisbane. What better position will the Central or Northern districts stand in by having resident secretaries in either one place or the other? We can approach the Minister now just as well as the secretary will be able to do, and always receive the same courteous refusal, especially if

the application is for money. The second resolution is this:—

"That each province should only be called upon to pay interest upon that portion of the national debt which has been expended upon public works in such province, and should be credited with the revenue derived from the Customs and other sources within the province or from the inhabitants thereof."

Well, that appears to me to be a very reasonable proposition, and on the face of it it seems that this Bill meets that case, but in reality it does not meet the wishes of the residents of the Central district. I cannot now, after listening to the hon. member for Townsville, distinguish between the wants of the Northern district and the Central district. It appears to me that we must go hand-in-hand together. That would be the better course, and I am not certain that the Central district will not yet make up its mind and resolve to throw in its lot with the North if they will only take us in with them.

Mr. HIGSON : I do not know about that.

Mr. PATTISON : The hon. member is nobody; no one cares what he says. We left it a little bit too long. We ought to have gone hand-in-hand with the North at once. I have not shirked the question. The separation question is not new to me. Twenty years ago I was one of the committee formed in the district for the purposes of separation. We did a lot of good for the district, and I have no doubt whatever that this present agitation will do a lot of good. But nothing can be extracted from the present Government or from the present Parliament. We shall have to go to the country, and may be sure that the future will extract a very great deal. We shall continue to call attention to our wants and grievances, and I am sure that good will result from the agitation. At all events we shall make a determined stand, and although hitherto when we have asked for bread and the present Government have given us a stone we shall continue to agitate for what we require. I need not take up the time of the House. It appears to be useless to waste our time in talking on this measure. We are wasting time in the discussion, because it has been admitted by the Premier and the hon. member for Townsville that the discussion is going to lead to no result. We talk because we have nothing else to do. We are not going to come to a decision upon this question. We are going to relegate it to the constituencies, and I am glad that it is going to be so. Let us consider the Redistribution Bill. Let us go to the country upon the question and not waste time in useless debates that we are not going to divide upon. The Chief Secretary says he has no intention of asking the House to pass the measure.

The PREMIER : I never said so.

Mr. PATTISON : The hon. gentleman was understood to say so.

The PREMIER : If you are going to throw it out on the second reading, I cannot pass it.

Mr. PATTISON : It is the impression on this side of the House, as well as on the other, that the Premier simply wishes the matter to be discussed and that then it shall be one of the measures to be submitted to the country. I trust that a fuller measure than this will be brought forward. This is certainly not satisfactory, because it simply means that Rockhampton and Townsville shall have separate accounts kept there for the Central and Northern districts, instead of their being kept in Brisbane. That is all the Bill means, instead of providing, as was expected that it would do, for largely extended powers of local self-government. The Bill which we passed last night, providing for the establishment of local registries, is certainly a measure of justice, but so far as this Bill is concerned it

really does not touch the question at all. It is not an extension of the present system of local self-government which we were fairly entitled to, and which we are quite as capable of dealing with as this present Parliament is of dealing with important measures that come before it.

Mr. HIGSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no intention of speaking on this Bill, but I simply rise in my place to contradict a statement made by the hon. member who has just sat down—namely, that Rockhampton will throw in its lot with the northern portion of the colony. I am quite sure it will not, and that there are not five people in Rockhampton who will go in for the separation agitation. As far as the former petition for separation is concerned, I may say that I was in Rockhampton at the time and endeavoured to obtain signatures. At that time we could get very little indeed for the Central district. Votes were passed by this House year after year, and they were allowed to lapse, but of late years we have been treated somewhat differently. For the last four or five years, I think, we have got more for the Central district than we ever obtained formerly. It is well known that a member of the former Government, when asked to construct a bridge over the Fitzroy, asked us what we “wanted a bridge from a miserable village over such a mudhole for.”

Mr. PATTISON: No such thing.

Mr. HIGSON: I say yes. That was the answer. I only rose, Mr. Speaker, to contradict the statement that Rockhampton has any intention of joining the Northern people in the separation movement.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—About two years ago I believe the hon. the Chief Secretary and the Government generally asserted that the North had no grievances—that no grievances existed. At the beginning of last session the Government admitted that occasional complaints sometimes arose about irregularities in the transaction of public business in the more distant parts of the colony. That was admitted, and the Government then said they hoped to give the matter some consideration. Time passed and nothing was done, and then we had a debate which attracted a great deal of attention and lasted some three days in this House, in which various members spoke for and against the resolution moved in favour of territorial separation, and the result was that the Northern members—with the exception of the Attorney-General, whose position as a member of the Cabinet prevented him from supporting a movement of which the Premier disapproved—recorded their votes in favour of territorial separation. I think the Government must have been aware at that time, when they saw the result of the division—it must have dawned upon them that this movement was something more than a flash in the pan—which they had stigmatised it somewhat earlier—and although they did not give any intimation of it during the session, His Excellency the Governor, at the closing of Parliament, stated that his Government intended to take some steps during the recess towards preparing a measure which would remove some of the grievances alleged to exist in the North. It is quite evident that this movement was considered likely to jeopardise very much the relations between the two parts of the colony. During the recess I had the honour, and the pleasure too, of going to England as one of the delegates from the North, to see what the views of the Home Government were upon this matter, and also to lay the claims of the northern part of the colony before the Imperial Government. The report of that conference at home, and the interview we had with the Secretary of State, which was very ably

reported, I think most hon. members have had an opportunity of seeing. The Premier was at home in England at the same time, and had an opportunity of laying the views of his Government before the Imperial Government, in a report which was sent to His Excellency the Governor here in reply to the separation petition. That report, to a very great extent, denied everything that the separationists alleged; and the separationists, on the other hand, of course, denied almost everything the Government had said. The result was that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Henry Holland, was placed in a somewhat awkward position. I believe he was anxious to do impartial justice to both sides. He had an opportunity of frequently seeing and meeting the Premier for about six weeks almost daily, and no doubt noticed that he was a gentleman of very superior intellect, and a gentleman likely to assist him very materially in giving effect to certain resolutions arrived at by the Imperial Conference. There is no doubt that Sir Henry Holland, in his reply to the separation delegates, was guided to a very great extent by what the Premier said in his report, and partly I presume, possibly from conversations with him, for this is what he said in reference to this particular question of the extension of local self-government:—

“Now, whether the legitimate wishes and requirements of the inhabitants of Northern Queensland can be fairly met by a more extended system of local government than now prevails, seems to be doubted by Mr. Black. It appears to me, however, that this is one of those questions which, before the Imperial Government can be called upon to act, would have to be much more thoroughly worked out in the colony.”

Then, this is what I wish specially to refer to, as being a promise that the Government must have made through the Premier to Sir Henry Holland, as to what they intended doing:—

“It appears from what has been stated by Sir Samuel Griffith, the Colonial Government are prepared to consider the question of extending the system of local government.”

Before I went home, in referring to this matter I stated that I doubted very much if the Premier had left anyone behind him in the colony competent to draw up this measure of local self-government. I may safely infer that during his visit to England he had not much time to spare to the matter, but I thought that on the journey out he might be able to devote some time to concocting a scheme. But what do we find? That on his return, as we may assume nothing whatever was done up to that time, and in order apparently to keep faith with the North and with the Imperial Government, he drags out an old Bill dating back to 1877, I believe, and recommended by the Royal Commission on Financial Separation, which passed its second reading in this House, but which was defeated in committee. This Bill is dragged out and re-hashed as a measure proposed to meet the extension of local government to the North. It is not local government for the North, but merely a system of keeping separate accounts for the divisions of the colony here in Brisbane. It cannot be satisfactory to the North, because they are to have no voice in the expenditure of their own money, and no voice in respect of what they claim more than anything else—the control over their own tariff. In fact, it gives them nothing they have been demanding, and would merely have the effect of enormously increasing the expenses of government without giving the North any control over its affairs.

The PREMIER: This Bill?

Mr. BLACK: This Bill.

The PREMIER: How will this Bill increase the expenses of government?

Mr. BLACK: This Bill, in conjunction with the other Bills the hon. gentleman has introduced for the establishment of local offices. We had a very characteristic speech upon the subject from a Southerner's point of view from the Minister for Works—late the Minister for Lands—a gentleman who, unless I am misinformed, has not travelled much further north than Rockhampton. He knows little or nothing of the North, and certainly if he has travelled we may infer that he has not made use of his eyes. He knows little or nothing about the industries of the North and little or nothing about the miners of the North. He advances the well-worn argument—the threadbare, worn-out argument—that this is a movement for getting coloured labour into Queensland. That argument is pretty well thrashed out.

Mr. W. BROOKES: It is all ready to be revived.

Mr. BLACK: Then it will be the hon. member's duty to debate it. The hon. gentleman, the Minister for Works, spoke of some people in the North who wished to start the new colony under their own auspices. The Minister for Works might be perfectly satisfied they are not likely to start under his auspices. I think from a Southern Minister, who has done more than anything else to bring the Ministry of which he is a member into the disastrous condition the present Ministry are in, nothing should come reflecting in a disparaging way upon anyone who has a desire to do something for the benefit of the northern part of the colony. I do not think the hon. gentleman's remarks were at all in good taste, and they are not entitled to, and are not likely to receive, any consideration either in this House or out of it. There is no doubt that one great difficulty in effecting an amicable arrangement between the North and South will in future be a matter which has not received very much consideration hitherto, and that is the matter of the tariffs. As the hon. member for Townsville pointed out, it is quite evident that the Premier and many other leading politicians of the South are dabbling with protection. That is evident in their speeches, partly in this House and partly when they have had an opportunity of speaking outside the House. They are all coquetting with it, and I have very little doubt that the platform at the next general election in the southern part of the colony will be protection to a very great extent. And, Mr. Speaker, I am not certain that if I were a representative of the South, holding somewhat liberal views on the question of free-trade and protection, I should not advocate a protective policy as a very good thing for the southern portion of the colony. Where there is a large and rapidly increasing population of young people, I am not at all certain that a small measure of protection—not as a permanency—would not be the means of establishing industries that might not be established without it. Were I living in the South, not in any way connected with the manufacturers wishing for protection, I would be quite willing to contribute my quota towards trying a protection scheme, feeling quite assured that whatever property I might take an interest in would be benefited by the increased prosperity of the rest of the community. That is what I think about protection for the South, where there is never likely to be a large export of produce, with the exception, of course, of wool. Agricultural produce, we well know, can only be grown here to a limited extent at the present time—not even to such an extent as to prevent importation from the other colonies—and they want protection for their agricultural products.

In the North, on the other hand, we have an agricultural industry of great magnitude. Hon. members are, no doubt, aware that the value of the agricultural exports from the North amounts to between a million and a million and a quarter annually. What the North wants, as every Northerner will tell you, is reciprocity; reciprocity is what will benefit the sugar industry, which is the chief industry of the North. Had the Premier, in his stated wish to benefit the agricultural industry of the North, said, "I cannot accede to any proposal which will be the means of continuing the employment of coloured labour in Queensland, but I will endeavour to give the agricultural industry in the North some measure of relief by reciprocity," he certainly would have disarmed a good deal of the antagonism that the Northern agriculturists have to the present Government. But I cannot see how the Government can concede reciprocity to the North if they are likely to give protection to the South. We in the North have no objection to receiving colonial wines from New South Wales or Victoria; we cannot make it ourselves; and so with many other articles which are grown to a considerable extent in the southern colonies, which we cannot grow, but which are produced to a limited extent in the South. It would be an advantage to us in the North to introduce those articles duty-free or on a reciprocity basis, but we are at once met by an outcry from the Rosewood wine-makers, or the wine-makers of Ipswich or Warwick, saying that they will be ruined. Take again the case of the foundries down here. I know that for the past two years they have been in such a depressed state that the Government have had almost to find work for them in the shape of building dredges and barges. They want protection for their industry; they want to manufacture all the machinery of the colony. There is another difficulty showing the difference between the interests of the northern and southern portions of the colony. The agriculturists of the North, compelled by the force of circumstances to carry on an industry where there is the minimum of profit—the sugar industry—and also being brought into competition with other sugar-producing countries which have an immense advantage in the shape of Government bounties, can only exist by the use of the most modern, the most improved, and the most expensive machinery, so as to manufacture the very best article. That can only be carried out at very great expense. We want machinery above all things, and if our labour is to be made expensive, we can only make up for that increased cost by the low cost of machinery. What did the Government do? What is to the interest of the South is a protective duty on machinery, and they put it on. That duty falls, as was shown last year, much more heavily on the North than on the South. It is in the interest of the South to have protection for their foundries, and how are we going to reconcile the need for a difference of tariff between the northern and southern portions of the colony? Take another case that will be within the recollection of hon. members—the steel plates that I believe have been ordered from England to make sleepers for the Northern railway. If I am in error as to the figures, Mr. Speaker, I shall be very pleased to be corrected. I have not the exact figures, but I am credibly informed that these sleepers will cost 5s. apiece, or £500 a mile more, from the fact of their having been brought out from England to the Southern foundries to be bent, and then sent up again to Normanton.

The PREMIER: No.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : You are far within the mark.

MR. BLACK : There will be a difference of between £500 and £1,000 a mile; and the North will be charged with that for the purpose of protecting those foundries down here in Brisbane.

THE PREMIER : The fact is not so.

MR. BLACK : The statement I make is subject to correction. The hon. member for Townsville says my figures are considerably under the mark. It stands to reason that to bring the plates out from England, take them past the port of Normanton where they could be landed in the shape of bent sleepers almost as cheaply as in the shape of steel plates, pay the extra freight from Normanton to Brisbane, unload them, take them to the foundries to be bent into the required form, and reship them up to Normanton, must involve an enormous additional cost.

THE PREMIER : You know those plates could not be landed so cheaply in Normanton.

MR. BLACK : I do not know anything of the sort, and I can say that if the hon. gentleman is paying a higher freight by the British-India line to Normanton than to Brisbane, his Agent-General is making a very bad arrangement indeed.

THE PREMIER : You do not know how many there are to come; you do not know anything about it.

MR. BLACK : I am not referring to this as a question of strict accuracy. I have not the exact figures, but I am informed that £500 to £700 will be the additional cost of every mile of that Northern railway; and according to this financial separation principle the North is to be debited with the whole of this. And what for? For the purpose of fostering the foundries of Brisbane and Maryborough. Now, that is most unfair, and I say that until the North can see some way to an adjustment of the tariff which will prevent these extraordinary anomalies, you will never stop the cry for territorial separation. During our brief adjournment I have had an opportunity of ascertaining that what I have previously said about the extra cost which would be entailed upon the North by the order of steel sleepers is not by any means underestimated; and in addition to those sleepers, in the event of locomotives being manufactured in the southern part of the colony by the assistance of a heavy protective duty, that would also add very considerably to the cost of the Northern railways. It has not been pointed out, either, how the North is likely to be compensated in any way should this Southern policy be carried out, as it will be eventually. And it is not only in those respects that we are at a disadvantage in the North. The administration of the respective departments, such as mining, cannot possibly obtain that attention from this Government, or any Government, which they deserve. I am not particularly specifying this Government as being antagonistic to the Northern interests—I think that no Government at this enormous distance from the more northern parts of the colony can possibly do that justice to the progress and the requirements of the North which we have a right to demand now. With the exception of the Chief Secretary and the late Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Dickson, I do not think a single member of this or any other Ministry has ever travelled—as a Minister to inquire into the requirements of the northern portion of the colony—beyond Townsville. Now we have a large and increasing population settling down in the more remote parts—say, Cooktown even. Take the Gulf country—a country which, I believe, is likely to be developed with very great rapidity in the

future—we have already a large population settled down at Croydon; and I am informed by gentlemen competent to form a reliable opinion, that that is likely to be one of the greatest mining fields in the whole of Australasia. Now, how can a Government holding office here, in the extreme south-eastern corner of the colony, possibly devote that attention to the increasing requirements of places like Croydon and Normanton which their importance deserves? It is proposed, I know, by a Bill accompanying the present, and part of the decentralisation scheme, to establish officers of the Government, called Government residents, at Rockhampton and Townsville; but that is not an extension of local government. It is an extension of the administration of the Southern Government, but it is not an extension of local government, such as the Chief Secretary promised Sir Henry Holland he would introduce.

THE PREMIER : Where is the promise?

MR. BLACK : If the hon. gentleman wishes to say that he never made any promise in the direction of the extension of local government, then our determination to adhere to our principles in regard to the erection of the new colony of North Queensland will be stronger than ever. It has been believed by hon. members and by the country—certainly by the people of the North—that the hon. gentleman did intend or propose to extend the principles of local government to the North; and if the hon. gentleman means to say now that he never made that promise, the sooner the people of the North know it the better.

THE PREMIER : I said so when I was moving the second reading of this Bill.

MR. BLACK : The hon. gentleman interrupted me just now by asking me when he made the promise.

THE PREMIER : I did not make it there, anyway.

MR. BLACK : I do not think it is worthy of the hon. gentleman to endeavour to evade this very important question in the way he seems inclined to do. The people of the North are certainly under the impression that the hon. gentleman did propose to extend local government to the more northern portion of the colony, and Sir Henry Holland in my presence stated so. In his reply to the delegates, when I was in London, he led us to believe that until the promised extension of local government had been fairly tried in the North he was inclined to withhold any further decision on the subject. This Bill gives no extension of local government.

THE PREMIER : It does not profess to; it simply deals with the question of finances.

MR. BLACK : I am not going to be put down by the hon. gentleman's interruptions, Mr. Speaker. If he were pleading in court such an objection might be worthy of him, but it is not in an important question like this. This Bill certainly does not refer directly to the extension of local government, but the Bill which accompanies this one,—the two I may call the anti-separation Bills—that is the right name of them,—that certainly provides for the appointment of officers, one at Rockhampton and one at Townsville. But what are they to do? And what power will they have beyond that possessed by the under secretaries in Brisbane? They will be local officers without local control, and the people of the North will have no more control over the finances of the North or over the public works in the North, if this Bill becomes law, than they have at the present time. We shall simply have the privilege of being debited every year

with the cost of government without receiving any proportionate benefit in return. These proposed measures will not in any way meet the demands of the North for an extension of local government. I was referring to the rapid increase of the mining industry in the more northern part of the colony. The Government have been very profuse in their promises, and have frequently said that they have left no grievance unredressed when properly brought under their notice; but I maintain that they have. The £10,000,000 loan was undoubtedly fairly apportioned, but the money has not been so rapidly expended in the North as the interests of that part of the colony demanded. What did the hon. gentleman say the other day? One of the measures he proposed to consider during the short term this Parliament will last was a proposed railway from Normanton to Croydon. Why, Mr. Speaker, hon. members know that it is utterly impossible for the Government to construct a railway from Normanton to Croydon, and that it is merely a sop thrown out in order to get support for the present Government during the next election. Where is the money to come from? Every sixpence of the £10,000,000 loan has already been apportioned; and in addition to that a loan of £3,000,000 will probably be required to complete the railways contained in the schedule to the Act authorising the £10,000,000 loan. What chance, then, is there of a railway from Normanton to Croydon? And what chance is there of any new Southern railway being constructed? The people of Enoggera are talking about a railway to a place called Samford, but the Government do not tell them plainly that until the £10,000,000 loan is exhausted they will not be able to give them anything in the shape of railways. And the same remark applies to the other districts where railways are required. The Government evade the questions asked by deputations, and lead them to believe that if they will only keep the present Government in office they will get their railways at some future time. Those are the promises made by the Government, especially to the people in the North; and those unfulfilled promises, I say, would thoroughly justify us in adhering to the principle for which we are contending—namely, territorial separation. Now, I will briefly refer to another department, the administration of which will not in any way be altered by having a Government officer at Rockhampton and another at Townsville; and that is the Harbours and Rivers Department. What control will local officers have over the dredges, for instance? Everything will still be settled in Brisbane, and as the preponderance of representation will be in the South, the works there will necessarily be expedited while the Northern and Central districts will not be helped in the least. Last session I remember speaking about a proposal to send a dredge to Normanton. I knew, from what I ascertained of the intention of the department so far as the new dredges were concerned, that it was practically impossible to get one there under two and a-half years; but since then the people have been led to believe that within six months they are to get a dredge. The sooner they understand that a promise made is intended to be broken the better it will be for them.

The PREMIER: I hope they will not understand anything of the kind.

Mr. BLACK: I hope the hon. gentleman will give them a better assurance than his word.

The PREMIER: They will take my word in preference to yours in that matter.

Mr. BLACK: I do not think so. The hon. gentleman is one of the Ministry, and he must

remember the late Colonial Treasurer making a positive promise to me in this House. It was promised that the "Lytton" dredge should be at Mackay by the first of the year. Has that promise been kept? I would ask the Premier to answer that question. That promise was made during the debate on the Estimates last year, and it is recorded in *Hansard*.

The PREMIER: I should like you to show it to me.

Mr. BLACK: I will show it to the hon. gentleman later on. The hon. gentleman coolly told me last night, in reply to a question on the subject, that the dredge was going to Bundaberg, and that he was waiting for Sir John Coode's report. Sir John Coode's report was in the possession of the Government last year, in which he actually advised that immediate steps should be taken to go on with the dredging of the Pioneer River. I am not especially referring to this as a grievance, but as an instance of how the Government make reckless promises in the hope of deceiving the people of the North when they have not the least intention of keeping them. We are told that this decentralisation scheme will meet the admitted grievances—they were always denied before—of the North. Attached to this Bill are certain schedules apportioning the debt of the different parts of the colony. The hon. gentleman, in his somewhat able report which he wrote on the separation petition, and which was sent home to the Imperial Government, also based that report upon certain financial statements which were attached thereto, pointing out that the North was far from having been treated with injustice financially; that it had, if anything, received more than its fair share of expenditure. I think the hon. gentleman, or his late colleague the late Colonial Treasurer, actually told the people that if the matter was analysed it was the South that would have grounds for complaint, and that the North had received more than its fair share of expenditure. There is no doubt that Sir Henry Holland, in giving his reply to the deputation that went to England on this subject, based that reply to a very great extent upon the financial statements that were attached to that report. And we are asked now to assent to this Financial Districts Bill on the ground of certain schedules of accounts which are attached to it. I wish to point out that hon. members should not be misled by these tables; they are utterly unreliable. I do not wish to make a statement without being able to give my reasons for making such a very sweeping assertion. I hold in my hand a Treasury return, dated the 11th August, 1886. This return came from the Treasury, and was laid on the table of the House and circulated. It is a statement showing the amount actually expended in the districts north of Cape Palmerston to the 31st March, 1886, out of the total loans authorised—namely, £26,550,850. By that statement—No. 3 in the return—it is shown that the North had actually expended a sum of £2,569,462. That statement was open to discussion as to whether it was excessive; it required to be analysed, at all events, before the House would probably accept it in the event of financial separation taking place. Still, that was the amount which the Treasury stated was the amount which had been expended in the North. Attached to the Chief Secretary's report, which was sent through His Excellency to the Imperial Government, there is another statement—Table 3—a statement showing the total loan expenditure north of Cape Palmerston to the 30th of June, 1886. You will understand, Mr. Speaker, that this is just three months later than the previous return. These two returns both

emanate from the same department; I assume that the same officers were in the department; and yet we find that in these three months, between the 31st March, 1886, and the 30th June, 1886, the Northern expenditure had suddenly increased to £2,949,683. In order to make out a case to the Imperial Government, it was shown that the Northern debt had increased by £400,000 in three months. To show how inaccurate these statements are, I will analyse some of them. In March the North was debited with £350,093 for immigration. Three months later they were debited with £428,440 for the same thing—£78,000 being added to the Northern expenditure in three months.

The PREMIER: I suppose the figures were justified by the census returns, which were then in.

Mr. BLACK: I do not think the hon. gentleman can say that the census has anything to do with the railway expenditure, or that the drought or the floods had very much to do with it; but perhaps I may be wrong. Let us see how the railway expenditure comes out. In March the railway expenditure was £1,290,992; but in June it was £1,470,792. I do not think the hon. gentleman can say that the census had anything to do with that. That is an increase of £180,000 in three months. Then look at the electric telegraphs. In March the amount was £184,701; in June it was £254,297. I do not know whether the census had anything to do with that, Mr. Speaker, and I should like the hon. gentleman to explain this sudden increase of Northern indebtedness. Harbours and rivers increased in those three months from £245,170 to £275,052. That is an increase of only £30,000, and it may possibly be justifiable. Then we come to harbour lights and coast lights. In March the amount for these was £25,699, and three months later it was only £22,732. I do not think the census had anything to do with that, Mr. Speaker. The amount for roads and bridges in March was £182,904; three months later it was only £155,944—an unexpected decrease, which cannot be accounted for by any census, nor by droughts or floods which have always managed to come to the assistance of the Government whenever they get into difficulty. The totals are as I have stated; nearly £400,000 was added to the Northern indebtedness during those three months. I wish to point out from this how impossible it is to arrive at any conclusion based on the financial statements in connection with this Decentralisation Bill. They are utterly unreliable. It was thought advisable, Mr. Speaker, before this Decentralisation Bill passed its second reading that a *pro forma* statement should be published by the Government, showing the probable bearing of this financial division of the colony into three provinces; showing, for instance, how last year's revenue and last year's expenditure would have been affected by this Bill—what the position of the different provinces would have been had this principle been carried out last year. That was laid upon the table of the House by the Premier yesterday, and has been handed to me for criticism. I had hoped that it would have been distributed amongst hon. members in order that they might see how the different provinces would stand financially. But, sir, it confirms what I have just been referring to, that is the impossibility of basing my calculations upon any financial returns we can get from the Government. There is the most amusing inaccuracy in that statement that probably has ever been laid before this House. The House is now asked to pass the second reading of the Bill together with certain schedules attached to it. This statement shows that there was a deficiency last year of £455,866, which is to be appropriated to the three different

provinces—Southern, Central, and Northern; and you must understand, Mr. Speaker, that this is going to be apportioned, not on the basis of the contributions to the revenue by each of these provinces, but on the basis of population—the population of the South is so and so, of the Central district, so and so, and of the Northern, so and so. That is based on the data of the last census, to which the Premier is inclined to adhere. So it should be. Then what do we find? That the Southern district is credited with 221,693, and the population of the Central division is 38,821. Add these two together, and we find that it amounts to about 260,000 population. That is right so far, but the Northern district, in order to show what a loss it would be to the North in the event of this financial separation taking place, is debited with a population of 95,749.

The PREMIER: Will the hon. member allow me to correct him? That is a clerical error in the return laid upon the table. The figures 95,749 were copied in mistake by a clerk from a line representing pounds and not numbers. The other figures are perfectly correct. In all cases the population is that given in the last census. That of the North should be 62,000 odd. I propose to lay a corrected return on the table to-morrow.

Mr. BLACK: I am glad to accept the hon. gentleman's explanation. I pointed out the error to him at once last night. But I have examined the figures very closely, and I advise the hon. gentleman not to have an amended form laid upon the table before examining it very carefully. This may be an error in the population, but I would like to point out to you, sir, and to this House, that the calculations have been based upon these figures.

The PREMIER: No, they have not.

Mr. BLACK: They have.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. BLACK: Yes, they have. The Southern district in order to make up this deficiency is supposed to contribute £278,601; the Central, £57,094; and the Northern, £120,191, which the hon. gentleman will find is calculated on the supposition that the population is 95,749.

The PREMIER: No, no! Look at the table immediately above and you will see how the £120,000 is made up.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is based on an error in population.

The PREMIER: No; I think the hon. gentleman will find it is correct.

Mr. BLACK: I think the hon. gentleman suffered a heavier loss than he likes to acknowledge when he lost his late Treasurer. I admit that, so far as any legal question is concerned, the hon. gentleman has no peer in the colony, but when he attempts to go into a financial question, and to analyse it, I think he is very much at the mercy of his department. And I think it is to be regretted that the hon. gentleman, after the almost total failure of the whole of his policy, should have allowed one of his colleagues to leave him, one who was, next to himself, certainly the most powerful in the Ministry, in order to—I must say what I was going to say—in order to humour the fads of his late Minister for Lands, now Minister for Works. I was not here at the time, and when I heard of the change which had taken place I could not imagine how the Premier could possibly have sacrificed one of his colleagues—a gentleman who has always been entitled to the respect of both sides of the House, for the sake of another who has brought nothing

but disaster upon the colony ever since he has been connected with the Ministry. However, that is apart from the question. I wish to point out that it is impossible for this House to accept this financial separation Bill if the calculations are based upon these schedules, which the Premier admits to be incorrect. I have not the least doubt in my own mind that when I come to analyse the rest of the figures, the return will be found to be utterly unreliable.

The PREMIER: The rest of the figures are quite correct.

Mr. BLACK: I am willing to accept the hon. gentleman's assurance that he thinks they are quite correct; but we have a number of other tables, Mr. Speaker, which I know to be incorrect, that is in connection with the electric telegraphs. The northern portion of the colony is debited with the mileage of their telegraphs to the extent of about one-third of the cost of the whole of the telegraphs of the colony, whereas on the other side they are only credited with the revenue on the population basis. That is manifestly unfair and unjust.

The PREMIER: The table is correct.

Mr. BLACK: The table is correct according to the hon. gentleman's way of making up the accounts, but I say that before these schedules can be accepted as the basis of financial separation we should have them most carefully audited, certainly not by anyone at present in the Treasury, but by someone who is really competent to deal with financial figures. There is one matter in connection with the Bill to which the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, briefly referred; that is clause 20.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Clause 9.

Mr. BLACK: Clause 20 also shows the difficulty of adjusting mercantile transactions between the northern and southern portions of the colony, and that was what the hon. gentleman wished to point out. This clause refers to it in perhaps a more marked degree than clause 9:—

"For the purpose of defraying the local expenditure of any district, Her Majesty, with the advice and consent of the Parliament of Queensland, may make laws imposing taxes, rates, or duties within any district or districts, or imposing taxes, rates, or duties of differing amounts within different districts; and all moneys received under such law of local or limited application shall be deemed to be local revenue."

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Chief Secretary the other night briefly referred to this clause, and he exemplified it by saying you might put on a differential land tax— $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £1 in one province, 1d. in the £1 in another, and a variety of amounts in each of the provinces; but this provides for differential duties. We will assume that there is a deficiency in the revenue from the northern part of the colony. The Northern residents are not asked in what way they propose to meet this deficiency, but the differential duties may be imposed down here; and, overwhelmed as the North is, and will be for many years to come, by the voting power of the South, the South can impose such rates, duties, and taxes as to benefit the commerce of the South and, perhaps, be most prejudicial to the commerce of the North. It has just been pointed out to me by the hon. member for Townsville that this clause says that Her Majesty, with the advice and consent of Parliament, may do these things. I do not know whether it is intended that the Home Government shall have the power of imposing these differential rates. If so, they are not at all likely to be assented to, but that is a matter we need not discuss. I would point out that the trade of the whole colony will be hampered by such a regula-

tion as this. We might consider in the North that it would be advantageous to trade with the southern colonies, but I have already pointed out that the principal difficulty is the increasing difficulty of arriving at an amicable adjustment of the accounts of the two portions of the colony; and I can plainly see that a Parliament sitting here with almost exclusively Southern interests, and having power to impose differential duties on the North, will militate very much against that progress which the North is deservedly entitled to pursue during the next four years. But the whole of this Bill is crude. It has not been considered before it was laid before the House. It will not in any way meet the demands of the North for the local management of their own affairs, and unless this House can see some way by which the adjustment of the tariff can be made acceptable to both North and South, I am perfectly certain that all the steps the Government may take will have the effect of making the North more determined than ever to go in for territorial separation. It has been admitted of late that the North has been paying far more in the shape of Customs duties than the South. In the report that the Chief Secretary submitted to the Imperial Government he seemed to infer that the North was not overtaxed; that the taxation which applied to the whole of the colony did not press unnecessarily severely on the North as compared with the South; and the whole of the hon. gentleman's criticism was confined to the last two years. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have admitted for some time past that the agitation that has been going on in the North has undoubtedly compelled the Government to pay more attention to Northern requirements than they have hitherto done. I have carried my analysis over five years rather than over two, and the manner in which the Customs press more heavily upon the North than upon the South, I have pointed out before in this House. For the five years up to the end of last year the South paid Customs duties to the extent of £2,769,927, or £2 11s. 5d. per head per annum, while the North paid, on the other hand, £955,277, or £4 8s. 9d. per head per annum. £2 11s. 5d. for a resident in the South, and £4 8s. 9d. for a Northern resident; and it is to be distinctly understood that when that return was made they did not take credit for the duties which are collected in the South, and which the Chief Secretary admits now are properly to be credited to the North. The fact is that the North is paying double the Customs duties that people are paying in the South; and I would like the hon. gentleman to consider this and point out what alteration in the tariff can possibly be devised which will serve the whole interests of the colony, and by which this inequality of taxation will be remedied. I do not know how it can be done, and we claim in the North that while we contribute one-fourth of the total revenue of the colony we are entitled to more than one-fifth of the expenditure, and more than one-fifth of the representation. I need hardly say that it is my intention to oppose the second reading of this Bill. We allowed the first Bill of the anti-separation batch to pass yesterday—the Bill providing for local registries at Rockhampton and Townsville. We did so because we considered that that Bill was absolutely necessary to the welfare of that section of the colony, and did not in any way commit ourselves to this measure. The Bill now before us does not in any way carry out the promises that we understood the head of the Government gave to Sir Henry Holland in England, to extend the principle of local government. It does nothing of the sort. It simply gives us an office and a Government officer at Rockhampton and at Townsville, without giving the people a

voice in the management of their own affairs, or more voice than they have at the present time. I hope hon. gentlemen will not make this a party question.

The PREMIER: Only on that side.

Mr. BLACK: I hope they will not make it strictly a party question. It is a question that cannot be dealt with by this Parliament. This Parliament is nearly at its end, and it is proper that the question should be submitted to the constituencies all over the colony, especially in the North; and if the constituencies of the North say that they are satisfied with this scrap of justice, and that they consider that their prosperity will be advanced by the continued union of the whole colony, then I shall say very little more on the separation question; but I am convinced that when the people understand this Bill—when it is analysed and laid before them at the general election—they will hurl it from them with scorn. They will look at it as merely one of the promises made by the South—a promise made to the ear with the intention of breaking it in the fact.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I have listened with considerable interest and considerable anxiety to the tone of this debate. When I first heard the member for Townsville state that this was only to be an academical debate, and that nothing could come out of it, I knew at once that the second reading of the Bill, so far as its influence upon the separation question was concerned, was doomed. I myself would have been very glad to see this Bill pass, speaking as a moderate and temperate separationist. I am not an irreconcilable or a dynamiter, and I look upon it that separation is inevitable at some future time. I do not think it will come by leaps and bounds at once, and I would have accepted this Bill and would have been willing to accept it—and I think in expressing these views I am expressing the views of my constituents—as an instalment of what will eventually happen.

Mr. MURPHY: A stepping-stone to separation.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Yes, certainly.

Mr. MURPHY: That is the reason you should vote against it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I am glad to hear the hon. member for Barcoo give that as his reason for voting against the Bill. I hope the hon. member for Townsville and the extreme separationists will be glad to hear that reason, which is, I believe, the reason that must be given by many hon. members on that side—that it will stop separation altogether. I trust the people of the North will take notice of the sort of support they are getting, and the reasons given for it. That is what I really do hope that they will clearly understand, that it is not in defence of their rights or privileges that the Opposition are going in a body for it, not to assist the North, but to effectually stop the North from getting separation. I shall be glad to let the North hear that, and I trust they will be told it at the next election.

Mr. HAMILTON: I thought you were going back to your turnips again.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: There are others besides myself coming forward for the North, as the hon. member for Cook will find out. I say that if separation is to be brought about, it will be by degrees, and this is an instalment of it, and is getting in the thin end of the wedge. As I have said before, it will not hurt the South one whit when we come to deal with the case in a cool, calm, and deliberate manner, without extreme parties struggling to get into power in the North when they see they have lost the way to power

in the South. When we see the united wisdom of the colony really and deliberately considering the matter, I believe some day separation will come, and it will then be better for the North and for the South. As to the sort of threat made by the hon. member for Townsville that if separation does not come the capital will be shifted, I am perfectly certain that Brisbane will always be the capital of the southern portion of the colony, and so long as the colony remains united, which may be for a good many years to come, Brisbane will be the capital of the whole colony. As to the plebiscite the hon. member for Townsville talks about to show that the North is almost unanimous on the subject, I may say that the constituency of Cook, a very large and important constituency in the North, is by no means unanimous in its desire for separation at all at the present time, and a very large proportion of the people there—I might almost say a majority of the people there—are decidedly opposed to separation at the present time.

Mr. MURPHY: Then why did you vote for it?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Because I believed in it. I believe in it for some future time, but I do not believe in immediate separation, and never said I did. I say the separation cry, even so far as it has gone, has been of the greatest service to the North. It has called the attention of the Government and of the country to the neglect the North suffered from under the late Administration. We are told about specious promises; but what did the McIlwraith Government do? Did they not make promises? What was the result of the great Northern combination talked of by the hon. member for Townsville? My constituents have told me often enough that the combination resulted in putting the member for Townsville into the Works Office, and enabled him to give his friends McSharry and O'Rourke a monopoly of railway-contracting. I myself, in the Central district, saw the gum saplings growing through the line while the railway was being constructed. The people of the North, or a considerable portion of them, are full of being made fools of by such men as the hon. member for Townsville. I remember the cry for separation in the Central district referred to by the hon. member for Blackall, and it was got up because the Central district had not had any attention paid to its wants. Well, the Central district cried out for separation, and what did they get? They got the Central Railway, and then Mr. R. M. Hunter, who was mayor of Rockhampton at the time, I think, said, "Haul down the separation flag now; we have got what we wanted—the Central Railway." The North, and more especially the constituency I represent, has done pretty well. We have got the Cairns-Herberton Railway.

Mr. HAMILTON: From the last Government.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: They had a good deal to do with it, had they not?

Mr. HAMILTON: They voted the money.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: We have got also the Cooktown-Maytown Railway; the harbour of Cooktown has been dredged, and the harbour of Cairns will very shortly be dredged. I daresay they have not got all they asked for, but still, as the representative of that constituency, I am by no means ungrateful for what they have done, and I say there are a great many people in that electorate, at all events, who can fairly appreciate what the Government, and the Liberal party of the present, have done for the Cook district. They have decidedly done a great deal more than any other Government ever did for it.

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes, "done for it."

MR. LUMLEY HILL : It has been attempted to make a great deal of capital by stating that the present Government have crippled and cooked the sugar industry, and in fact crushed it out altogether by placing restrictions and regulations upon the system of employing black labour. I have studied that industry carefully, and have had it considerably under my notice, and I say that the very unfortunate position the sugar industry is in is not due so much to an absence of the requisite amount of cheap or coloured labour as to other causes. That is not where the shoe pinched. Where the shoe pinched was that when they embarked on the undertaking they based their calculations on the price they reckoned they would get for their sugar, say £35 a ton. They got that price for some years, and then they suddenly found that owing to the bounty system and protection in Germany, and the competition of beetroot sugar, the price of the article they produced got to an average of, say, £20 a ton. That of itself is, of course, almost enough to capsize an industry of that nature. I believe that both the Central and the Northern districts have received infinitely more justice from the present Government than ever they had before; the money has been more equally divided amongst them. With regard to the principle of local government, which, it is complained, is not in the Bill, I believe the Bill to establish local registries and local representatives of the Government in different centres of population will do much to widen the principle of self-government. I do not believe it is by any means the intention of the Government to appoint mere dummies. I believe the people in those localities will have their wants more directly attended to, and that the Government down here will be kept in touch through their responsible advisers with the Northern and Central districts. I do not think it necessary to go into the table of figures or follow the hon. member for Mackay through the elaborate statement he made. I should like to know why the second reading of the Bill should not have gone through, and these figures and the different clauses have been discussed in committee. If the hon. member for Mackay were in earnest in wishing for separation, instead of wishing merely to embarrass the Government and consolidate his own party, the second reading of this Bill could have passed, and the details and figures, the apportionment of the debt, and the expenditure of the revenue, could have been carefully considered and modified and amended in committee. I think the way in which this Bill has been treated by the Northern members is unworthy of them. I think it would have come with much better grace from them, supposing they were determined to knock the Bill out, if they had passed the second reading and allowed it to be considered in committee. I do not think their constituents will thoroughly approve of their efforts or of the result which I fancy they will achieve. I only regret that the Bill is not likely to pass the second reading; I shall vote for it.

MR. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I hope this Bill will go into committee, and I see no reason at all why this Parliament should not pass it. The hon. member for Mackay stated in the beginning of his speech that he did not consider that this Parliament should deal with this measure. Well, sir, as far as I can see, the Government have a good majority at their back to carry out the policy on which they were elected by the country in the year 1883. Many years ago a policy was carried out in this House on the casting-vote of the Speaker, and we saw the other day, on a vote of no confidence, that the Government had a majority of eight—twenty-nine to twenty-one. Now, sir, I hope and I believe that the Premier is fully sincere in

attempting to pass this measure. I can see from the speech of the hon. member for Mackay that there is a determination that this agitation should be further kept up, but I fully believe that a majority of the inhabitants of the North will welcome this measure as a means of remedying the evils under which, no doubt, they have laboured for some time. I believe that a majority of hon. members are pledged to their constituents that they will do all they can to pass a measure of this kind into law. Now, sir, if I read figures correctly—I am not very good at reckoning them up, but I can read them when they are reckoned—the people in the North who claim to be separated from the South are about one-eighth of the population of this colony; and when we have expended the £10,000,000 loan they will have had about £7,000,000 of the money borrowed by this colony for the carrying out of public works. Now, sir, if they are going to continue in the same ratio as that, the sooner we separate from them the better. But I think, from what we have seen lately that separation is dead for many years to come. It is an impossibility, and I think if the Northern members wish to pass a measure which will deal out justice to those they represent, they will hail this Bill with great pleasure indeed. The hon. member for Mackay spoke to-night about the unreliability of the figures he had placed before him. I can tell that hon. member that wherever he got that information about the steel sleepers it is very unreliable indeed. Since the adjournment of the House I have taken the trouble to ascertain what will be the weight of those sleepers, and I find that they go thirty-two to the ton. If they were brought to the colony in a manufactured state the space taken up by one sleeper would be equal to that taken up by six unmanufactured ones.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

MR. ANNEAR: I say, yes, and I defy contradiction; and I am within the mark. Now, they are brought to the colony by weight and not by measurement. Those plates would be brought from London to Brisbane at £1 a ton at the outside. When they are manufactured in Brisbane, and taken to Normanton, they will be conveyed there at the rate of £2 a ton, or 1s. 3d. per sleeper. There are 2,400 sleepers to the mile, and the total cost for the conveyance of those sleepers from Brisbane to Normanton will be £150 a mile. The hon. gentleman said he had been informed that having those sleepers manufactured in Brisbane would entail an extra cost of £500 per mile, at the lowest estimate. Now, I say that when those sleepers are made they will be taken from Brisbane to Normanton for £2 per ton in a manufactured state, or £150 per mile. At the present time ships convey 100 sawn sleepers, weighing ten tons, from Brisbane to Cooktown for £8, so that I am sure that my estimate is correct. The hon. gentleman said that the Government lately had to find work to keep the ironfounders of the colony employed. I am glad they were driven to that, because tenders were called here for the construction of cylinders and girders for the superstructure of railway bridges, and tenders have been accepted in Brisbane $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in excess of the prices we received from the old country. That, in my opinion, is doing the work far cheaper for the people of the colony than following the practice hitherto adopted of sending all orders to the old country, and I am sure that the information derived, owing to the slackness of trade, will prove beneficial to the people of Queensland. I hope that this Bill will not only pass its second reading but will become law. I may say that I distinctly heard the Premier, in introducing the measure, say that he trusted it would pass this session, and that he saw no reason why it should

not. The Government now carrying on the affairs of the colony have not deviated from the policy they were elected by the people of Queensland to carry out, and I am sure they will receive fresh confidence if they devote themselves sincerely to the further carrying out of that policy, which I believe they will. This is a most important measure, and one that will confer the greatest benefits ever meted out to those districts which will come under its operation. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—This is a question not to be determined by speeches of the heated character of that we have just heard and the one that preceded it.

Mr. ANNEAR: I am not a bit heated.

Mr. CHUBB: I think I shall be able to show that the figures the hon. member just gave us are quite wrong. He has been misinformed, if he obtained them from someone else; and if he did not get them from anyone else there is no foundation for them in fact. It has been said that hon. members representing Northern constituencies should vote for the second reading, and deal with the details—and principles, in fact—in committee. But if we do not oppose a measure on the second reading, that is an acknowledgment that we agree with its principles, and hon. members who seriously and honestly do not believe in the principles of the measure now before the House are not going to stultify themselves so far as to vote for the second reading. The Minister for Works told us that the Bill was an honest attempt to do justice to the North, and I give him credit for making the statement honestly; but if that is so, it does not say much for the Government if that is their idea of an honest attempt to do justice to the people of the North. It has been well said that this Bill is simply a scheme for ascertaining more completely the manner in which the accounts with regard to expenditure and revenue are kept. It is a Bill to authorise triplicate ledger-keeping. We were told last session that the complaints made by the North were to be redressed. Indeed, very prominent attention was drawn to this very question in the speech the Governor delivered to the Legislature at the close of last session. His Excellency said:—

“When I declared the causes of summoning Parliament at the beginning of the session, I expressed a hope that time would allow of your dealing with the question of the administration of public business in the more distant parts of the colony, and of adopting measures for the removal of the grounds of complaint which have occasionally arisen. I am sorry that the pressure of legislative and administrative duties has not afforded my Ministers an opportunity of preparing and laying before you complete and definite proposals on this subject. My Ministers recognise this subject as one of paramount importance, and purpose, during the recess, to prepare for submission to you a measure or measures having for their object to remove, as far as practicable, the evils of undue centralisation in the administration of the government, and to provide for the speedy and economical expenditure in the several divisions of the colony of the revenue raised within them. To effect this object it will probably be necessary to establish, in suitable localities, branches of the Real Property Office, and of the more important administrative departments. If to this be added an extension of the existing powers of local government, I believe that the causes of complaint to which I have referred, and which are especially likely to arise in new lands in a state of constant progress and expansion, will be effectually removed.”

There have been introduced this session three Bills—one to establish branches of the Real Property Office in the North, one to provide two or more officers to reside in the Northern and Central districts to take charge of the administration of the departments, and this Bill, which is to provide for financial book-keeping; but no

measure tending to give a greater meed of local administration has been proposed, introduced, or promised, so far. Therefore, the promise made at the close of last session by the Government to attend to that portion of the matter has received no attention; and I believe it is not intended to do anything in the matter, otherwise we should have heard something about it before. This Bill simply provides for a division of the colony into Northern, Southern, and Central districts, in which accounts are to be kept of the receipts and expenditure, provision being made for local revenue and general revenue and for local expenditure and general expenditure. And a most important thing, which has not been referred to yet, is the schedule, by which the local debt of the three divisions is intended, apparently, to be apportioned; and in addition to members committing themselves to the principles of the Bill, if they pass the second reading, to a certain extent they will commit themselves to the apportionment made by the Government, which, I believe, will be found to be wrong on investigation. The hon. member for Maryborough said that when the £10,000,000 loan was expended the North, which represented one-eighth of the population of the colony, would be found to have received £7,000,000 of the money; but if he will look at the Bill in his hand he will see that the total amount, according to the figures given by the Government, is only £4,500,000. The whole expenditure is in the second schedule divided among the three districts, so that the hon. member is from two and a-half to three millions out in his statement; and if he has shown the same inaccuracy in his other figures they will have to be discounted to the same extent. I hold, Mr. Speaker, that a Parliament such as this is, which has just refused to accept the new taxation proposed by the Government—a House which is in its fourth year, almost the last of its existence—a moribund House, which is asked now to pass a Redistribution Bill—has no right to pass into law a Bill of this kind which has not yet been submitted to the constituencies, and on that ground alone, if on no other, this Bill ought not to be passed. But the Government are quite right in introducing it, and putting before the House and the country their idea as to what should be the scheme to satisfy the North. Let it be so. Let it go before the North, and let the North have an opportunity at the elections of pronouncing for or against this Bill. I am quite prepared for myself to accept the issue on that, and I believe that when the people of the North have the principles of the measure fairly explained to them they will not accept it. It has been said that a large majority in the North are in favour of this scheme; but they have not seen it yet.

The PREMIER: Oh, yes, they have!

Mr. CHUBB: At Normanton, the other day, a meeting was held, and they expressed themselves in favour of the Premier's decentralisation proposals, although at that time the Bill had not been printed and circulated or laid on the table of the House. They also hoped that the Government would go on with the first section of the Cloncurry railway. They put the two things together, and were quite willing to approve of his decentralisation proposals provided the first section of the Cloncurry railway was gone on with. That was the result of that meeting; although whether it represented a large majority of the electors of Burke is more than I can say; I leave it to the hon. member who represents the district to speak for himself on that point. But I say this, that no doubt those residents of Normanton were under the impression that the decentralisation proposals of the Government were intended to introduce local self-government.

The PREMIER: With a Parliament sitting at Townsville?

Mr. CHUBB: Giving them the expenditure of their own money in a way other than is proposed to be done by this Bill. Why, we shall be no further advanced by this Bill than we are without it. After it is ascertained what the receipts of a district are and what amounts are to be carried to its credit or debit, any public work that is required to be carried out they will have to come to this Parliament for, where a large majority of Southern members will be able to control all expenditure, either in the Northern or the Central district. Under the Redistribution Bill as introduced, the North will get fourteen members as against forty-four in the South, the latter having three times as many as the former. And even if you include the Central members with the North, which will bring the number up to twenty-four, the South will still have a majority of twenty-four, which will be quite sufficient to swamp any proposal that may be brought forward by the Northern and Central districts combined. So that while giving the North some power over its expenditure—a very small power, at best—the real expenditure will be controlled by the Southern constituencies. I will now refer to those steel plates. That, of course, is only germane to this question in so far as it has been touched upon by hon. members to-night in regard to the fiscal policy of the colony in the future. It has been said that a policy of a protectionist character will suit the South, whereas one of a freetrade character will suit the North. There is no doubt that if the policy adopted in regard to these steel plates is carried out it certainly will suit the South very much—at the expense of the North. We have been informed that these steel plates will be delivered free on board at £5 7s. 6d. per ton, and that 2,750 tons have been ordered. On this subject I have been supplied with some figures, which I believe are correct. From them I learn that the outward freight for dead-weight of this character, by the British-India steamers, is 30s. a ton. When the plates come here they have to be handled. If they go to Maryborough they will have to be re-shipped, and if to the Ipswich workshops they will have to be carted to the railway station. This handling and carting will add another 10s. per ton.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

Mr. CHUBB: Thus bringing the freight from London to Brisbane up to £2 a ton. The outward freight from London to Normanton at the present moment is 45s. a ton, so that there is only a difference in favour of Brisbane of 5s. a ton. The cost of bending or making these plates when they come here will be about 2s. 8d. a sleeper, or perhaps more. The freight from Brisbane to Normanton is 60s. a ton, as they would have to be lightered a considerable distance up the river. This is how the figures would come out: Cost of plates, £5 7s. 6d.; freight to Brisbane, £2; making, £3 12s.; and freight to Normanton, £3; or a total of £13 19s. 6d. a ton for those sleepers. Whereas, if they were made in London and taken direct to Normanton, there would only be the original cost of the sleepers and the outward freight of £2 5s. a ton to pay.

Mr. ANNEAR: If manufactured in England they would cost £8 5s. a ton.

Mr. CHUBB: I am informed that if manufactured in England the cost of making would not be more than 3d. per sleeper. This would bring the total cost to £7 12s. 9d., or a difference of £6 a ton. The effect of the proposed course is to make the North pay an increased price for those sleepers, and consequently the vote for the

railway will not go as far as it otherwise would. This is how the principle of giving encouragement to native industry in Brisbane will affect the North in regard to this railway. If the whole railway is to be carried out on those lines the loss will be very large indeed.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: £140,000.

Mr. CHUBB: An hon. gentleman sitting near me says that £140,000 will be the loss if this monstrous idea is carried out. I do not intend to discuss the details of the Bill. I believe the Bill will not satisfy the Northern constituencies; certainly it will not satisfy mine, who have been consistent separationists for the last twenty-five years. They have always advocated separation, and have never veered one point from the platform they laid down in the early days of the colony. I believe that at one time they advocated that Bowen should be the capital, but they do not advocate that now; they are quite prepared to be unselfish in that respect, and to allow the capital to be fixed where the North thinks is the best place for it. They certainly have nothing to lose by separation, and I think they have a great deal to gain by it. I for one am quite prepared to let the constituencies pronounce an opinion upon the Bill. If they are willing to accept it it will then be our duty either to fall into their views or to give place to representatives who will agree with them.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to say a few words on the matter of this Bill; not very many, but it is an important Bill, and I think deserves the attentive consideration of every hon. member of this House. I should be very sorry if this Bill does not pass the second reading for several reasons, and one reason is a very powerful one in favour of those who wish to see the North separated from the South. I cannot but come to the conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that if this Bill is rejected on the second reading by the votes of the Northern members, when the report reaches the Colonial Office in London, Sir Henry Holland will feel himself quite justified in further postponing the question of separation.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: He will not have the chance very long.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I do not know how the power will be taken out of his hands.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Very soon.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I think the hon. gentleman is wrong. You cannot so readily dispense with the Colonial Office in London.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: We will dispense with Sir Henry Holland.

Mr. W. BROOKES: You may dispense with Sir Henry Holland, and you may get somebody worse still.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Or somebody better.

Mr. W. BROOKES: You may change kings, but how are you to know which is the better—king stork or king log? It seems to me, so far as the discussion has gone on the other side, that it bears out the idea that is prevalent just now amongst the people in the Southern and in the Central and in the Northern divisions of the colony—an idea that will grow as they read *Hansard*—that the hon. gentlemen representing the Opposition are determined to listen to nothing. They have just one idea—to bring this Parliament to a close, and nothing else. All that I ask the House to do is to affirm the principle of this Bill. A great deal that has been said really might have been said, and better said, in

committee, but not having been said in committee, but on the second reading, really it does confirm me in the belief that it is of no use the Premier bringing forward anything; that the Opposition have arrived at a stubborn determination that no more business shall be done this session than passing the Redistribution Bill; and that they are prepared to accept that, looking at all the surrounding circumstances of the case, I must acknowledge is a very great act of grace and favour from them. In listening to the hon. member for Mackay, who has always got something substantial in what he says, he will forgive me if I say I thought his speech had a very narrow ring. But he is not the only offender against good taste—that is, my sense of good taste. I have before said in this House that the question of separation does not depend entirely on arithmetic. Arithmetic and figures are all very well, and cannot often be done without, but the question of separation will, of course, be determined on other than arithmetical calculations. There are social questions concerned in it, there are moral questions concerned in it, and there are political questions concerned in it, with which figures have very little to do. And really some of the remarks made on the other side did astonish me. I was very pleased to note the adroitness of the hon. member for Mackay—the nimbleness and agility with which he shifted his ground when he thought he was coming within—shall I say?—smelling distance of coloured labour.

Mr. GRIMES: That is a long distance.

Mr. W. BROOKES: It is no use trying to conceal from the world what we all know is a great fact—that the coloured labour question is only lying *perdu*; that it is only waiting for the beaming sun of separation and the refreshing showers which so many think separation is going to bring to burst forth into full bloom. But for myself I distrust—I do not say the hon. member for Mackay, but those whom he so ably represents in this House. The hon. member for Townsville spoke of there being three interests in the North—the mining, pastoral, and agricultural. But by the agricultural interest he did not mean that interest; he only meant the sugar-planters. That is not the agricultural interest. And I think he further said—I am sure if I make a mistake he will forgive me, because I do not make it intentionally—but some speaker on the other side said that in the interests of those three industries—mining, pastoral, and agricultural—it was absolutely necessary to keep the manufacturing interest out. That is as strange a doctrine as ever I heard anybody proclaim.

Mr. HAMILTON: No one said it.

The PREMIER: Yes, they did.

Mr. W. BROOKES: It was said by someone; I think by the hon. member for Townsville.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Great stress was laid by the hon. member for Mackay on the fearful burden of 5 per cent. on the machinery that is on the sugar plantations.

Mr. HAMILTON: Oh!

Mr. W. BROOKES: The hon. member may speak after me. I shall pay no attention to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is reciprocal.

Mr. W. BROOKES: If he does not know how to behave himself I am not going to turn schoolmaster to teach him. The hon. member for Mackay very properly said that, in consequence of the large manufacture of beet sugar under the bonus system, it is impossible for the planters up north to compete with that sugar

unless they have the very best machinery. That I grant, and I am pleased to know that they are depending more upon their machinery, such as iron, steel, and brass, than on the other part of the plant which they speak of as machinery; that is human labour. If they only learn to depend more upon cog-wheels, fly-wheels, steam-engines, vacuum-pans, and less upon kanakas and coolies, I think they are going in the way of their salvation.

Mr. HAMILTON: That's more than you are.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I will just refer again to the remark about the three industries in the North. The hon. the Minister for Works touched the keynote, and I know it has response in the hon. member for Townsville. I would put it roughly and gruffly in this way. Whenever you find a country where mining is the main industry you find a poor country. It does not matter how much gold may come out of it, it is a poor miserable country. Its social condition is low, and a thousand to one you will find the whole tone of its civilisation at starvation point—at zero. Well, now we will put it this way: The very country that had all the gold of the world at its feet—that was up to its knees in gold—is now a poverty-stricken country. That is Spain. If we take a country where the agricultural industry is predominant we do not find that that is a prosperous land. I would like to know whether hon. gentlemen on the other side can give me one illustration of there being in such a country anything like what we English people call prosperity. Do hon. members call Russia prosperous? Look at the wheat grown there. I remember the time long, long ago, when the banks of the Danube were heaped up with bags of wheat which seemed to betoken untold prosperity; but look at that country at the present day, and what do we find? How many newspapers do the people subscribe to? How many books do they read? How many pianos or fiddles do they buy? The hon. member for Townsville knows the circumstances just as well as I do. And now allow me to take the pastoral interest.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about Victoria?

Mr. MOREHEAD: What about California?

Mr. W. BROOKES: California will do just as well for me as anywhere else. California has a large diversity of interests. It can find 500 means of employment and getting a living; but if it were suddenly called upon to resort to gold alone as a means for gaining a living, it would drop. I have spoken of Spain as being a poverty-stricken country. There was a time when it was the centre of the arts and sciences, medicine, chemistry, and everything else, but gold ruined it.

Mr. CHUBB: No; protection ruined it.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Gold ruined it. I just mention these facts now, not for the information of hon. members, but for the information of the people of the colony, who will not be misled. I am speaking to my constituents, and my constituents are every man and woman in the colony. The colony is my constituency—the world is my parish. The thought has passed through my mind that when anybody reads this debate in England or in the colonies they must come to the conclusion that our talk about Australian federation is gigantic humbug. It is a mere dream; it almost goes beyond even an impossibility; it is a mere Arabian Night's dream. It is just like the hon. member for Mackay's talk about his reciprocity. In order to sell his shabby sugar he would ruin all the farmers in the south of this colony. The hon. member wants reciprocity with Victoria; he wants to get all the supplies of the planters from Victoria; he has no sympathy with

the South. We know what reciprocity means. The hon. member wants to reproduce in Mackay exactly the same sort of thing that has prevailed from time to time beyond the memory of living man in the Mauritius. What do the sugar-planters in Mauritius do? They get all they require from France or England; they do not patronise their local shops. Along with the sugar they export go their orders for goods to come back. Is that the way to make a country prosperous and rich in the sense in which we wish to make this colony prosperous and rich? What is the use of talking for half-an-hour about patent sleepers? Really the hon. member for Bowen must excuse me when I say that when we enter upon the debate of such a Bill as this Financial Districts Bill is we ought to rise higher than he did in his arguments. The hon. member said that importing the material and getting the plates made in the colony will entail a large additional expense upon the Railway Department. I would advise the hon. member to lift himself a little bit higher than those "two-penny-halfpenny" considerations. The money spent in manufacturing the sleepers in the colony will be spent in wages, and will help to keep the women and children who are here and the men too.

Mr. CHUBB: Let the South find the money for that.

Mr. W. BROOKES: But the hon. member for Bowen was not the only member who took up this twopenny-halfpenny argument. I must also call the hon. member for Ipswich over the coals. But I will not make the furnace seven times hotter than it is. I would just tell the hon. member for Ipswich that he very dimly perceives the truth underlying this question. He perhaps did not mean it; but I, along with others who listened to his speech, have come to the conclusion that his argument when boiled down amounted to this: that the people resident in the Northern towns of the colony must come to Brisbane merchants to buy their goods. I do not see how any other conclusion can be drawn from what he said.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. W. BROOKES: I do not believe the hon. member meant that, for he has too much generosity to use an argument of that kind; but I wish him to understand that that is the only inference possible from his argument.

Mr. MACFARLANE: Nonsense!

Mr. W. BROOKES: The hon. member talked about an invoice of goods to the value of £100 going to Townsville, and about the impossibility of a clerk finding out what 7½ per cent. on 1s. 3d. would be; that is a trumpery argument; it is all nonsense.

Mr. MACFARLANE: You do not understand what you are talking about.

Mr. W. BROOKES: The hon. member can only mean that he was thinking of the interests of the wholesale merchants in Brisbane, but I tell him now—of course I do not wish to give offence, but I am bound to speak my mind—that that is a very retail manner of dealing with a great public Bill. I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill, and shall be prepared to consider it again in committee. I would urge upon the House the danger that will arise from rejecting the Bill, and I repeat that it will not look well in London. It will again convict the separation party of being unreasonable and irrational, and of not knowing where their interests lie, by rejecting proposals they ought to accept. If they will only accept the principle of the Bill and discuss the measure fairly in committee, they may make any alterations they like, and even throw it out. I would

accept that with good grace; but I was not prepared to see hon. gentlemen exhibit such an obstinate and stupid front to the whole world in opposing a measure of this nature. They seem to go at the Premier like a bull at a gate; nothing he can do is right, all that he says is wrong. That is not the position that an Opposition ought to place itself in. This is a moribund Parliament, I know, and I, for one, am devoutly thankful for it, because I rejoice in the prospect that these and other great questions—and there are many great questions that are now incubating in the public mind—are to be submitted to the colony. There are many gentlemen on the opposite side of the House who will find that, since the last election, the colonial mind generally—the mind of men and women—has been fixed on a great many things that they do not just imagine at present. There has been great intellectual progress since 1883; and I may further state—I could almost prophesy it—but I most unhesitatingly believe that the next general election will bring Sir S. W. Griffith triumphantly back to the Premiership of this colony.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—The Premier conveyed an impression that it was not his intention to pass this Bill through committee this session, and, therefore, I think a great deal of time is being spent uselessly. Some hon. members on the other side have attempted to show that there are members of the North on this side who object to this measure simply because they will have nothing but separation. That is disproved by the fact of our having agreed to a subsidised measure only a few days since which affected the North—an Act dealing with the registration of real property. We saw that it would benefit the North, and we accepted it, and if we approved of the principle of this Bill, I feel perfectly sure, for my part, I should be only too glad to accept it also. The Minister for Works stated this evening that the hon. member for Townsville said he did not want justice—that nothing would satisfy him but separation pure and simple. That is incorrect. What the hon. member did say was that if the Bill passed it would be a simple matter for the Premier to provide some way to let us have control of our own resources, and that if the Premier would promise to do so he would not oppose the Bill, thus showing that he was quite agreeable to support this Bill if the Premier would promise to provide us some measure to enable us to have some control over our own resources; and I feel exactly the same way, and so, I am sure, do all the members for the North. If the Premier would make us such a promise we should not have the objection we have at the present time to this Bill. The Minister for Works also accused the hon. member for Townsville of being a malcontent—wishing to start a new colony under his own auspices. I shall answer one charge by making another, and I state that the Premier would like to pack the hon. member for Townsville off, and all his contingent with him. The presence of that hon. member face to face with him in this House is not a great source of gratification to the Premier. I have thought for a long time that the Premier, although ostensibly opposing separation, really desires it, and everything that has transpired during the last four years has caused me to think so. During one session he stated the North had nothing to complain of; during the next session he said that certain complaints had been made, and if the Ministry had time they would deal with them during that session. The indifference with which he viewed those complaints was indicated by the fact that, while he had time to pass a number of most unimportant measures during that session,

he did not take this matter in hand. During the present session he promised that a Bill would be passed dealing with the question, and while keeping the promise to the letter he, in introducing the Bill, conveyed the impression to the House that it was not essential that it should be passed in committee this session. My hon. colleague, the member who misrepresents Cook, has stated that that constituency had nothing to complain of, and he gave some instances, which, I think, prove the reverse. He referred to the Cairns-Herberton Railway, to the Cooktown Railway, and to the dredging work done. But we have been asking for those dredges year after year, and have failed to get them. With regard to the Cairns-Herberton and Cooktown railways the money for both was voted by the late Government, and in the latter case the preliminary survey for the first thirty miles of that line was passed and tenders were called for by the McIlwraith Government. All the present Government had to do was to accept those tenders, and since then, in four years, not twenty miles' additional lines have been constructed. With regard to the Cairns line the delay has been simply disgraceful, and at last the tenders were simply called for that line on the eve of the election when my hon. colleague, Mr. Hill, got in. Had it not been for that, tenders would not have been called for. I could instance numerous cases in order to prove the persistent injustice and neglect the North has received from the present Government. There are many roads in my district passing through Crown lands, and which are generally considered main roads, for which the Government to keep in repair have voted each year £6,000. The money, which was insufficient, was always expended months before the end of the financial year in which that sum was voted, the reply of the Minister when asked for more having always been, "I am out of money; I have no more; you will have to wait until the next £6,000 is voted." Each year has shown that £6,000 to be insufficient, but no additional sum has been voted. This year, although those roads are more numerous and there is more traffic on them, and consequently requiring more money, a paltry £2,000 instead of £6,000 has been put on the Estimates. Only a day or two ago I called on the Minister to request that a certain sum should be voted for a road between Cooktown and the Bloomfield, which is a mining centre, tin having been discovered there, and a road therefore required, but the Minister refused the amount, as the money voted was all expended. Now, with regard to the dredges. About four years ago we were promised a dredge at Cairns, and we are just as far away from that dredge now as we were then;—probably on the eve of the election we may get it. Then as to the tax on machinery imposed by the present Government, that affects mining as much as it does the sugar industry. To crown all, the Government have actually stolen property at Cooktown which the municipal council had held for years, not having even the civility to answer letters protesting against their action in appropriating the land belonging to the council.

Mr. ALAND: It does not follow that because the council held it for years it was necessarily theirs.

Mr. HAMILTON: They stole it for all that. I should now like to say a few words with regard to the coloured labour question. That is always dragged in. Members on the other side must think the people of the colony are fools. Why, the planters during the whole term of office of the present Government have got as much coloured labour as they wanted, although they may not have been able to get coolie labour from the part of the world the

McIlwraith Government proposed. The late Government proposed that those coolies should be restricted to one industry, and that they should go back after a certain time; but the present Government, who have allowed others in, have not restricted them to any industry, and they have been allowed to remain in the colony. The objection of the planters has not been want of cheap labour, but that the attitude of the Government towards the planters has deterred capitalists from investing their capital here. That is a fact. Now, with regard to these steel sleepers. The hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, is mistaken when he states that when these sleepers are rolled they take six times the room. They are only about one-eighth of an inch thick, and, as is well known, steel being more flexible than even tin, one sleeper can fit inside another in the same way as spouting. They would be sent out by weight, and therefore at the same charge for freight as if sent unrolled. The Premier stated, in reply to the member for Mackay, that the freight was less from England to Brisbane by the British-India Company's steamers than from Brisbane to Normanton. That is quite true; but the freight we are paying for these rails by the route we take them is far more than if we took them from England to Normanton. The freight from England to Normanton is 45s. per ton; from England to Brisbane it is 30s., and the freight from Brisbane to Normanton is 60s. Therefore, if, instead of sending them to Normanton, you bring them from England to Brisbane as we are doing, and then send them back to Normanton, you pay 90s. per ton as against 45s., which would be paid if they were carried straight from England to Normanton. Now, there are twenty-seven of these sleepers to the ton, and the extra freight alone, by taking them *via* Brisbane to Normanton, is about 2s. 2½d. per sleeper. The extra cost of rolling in Brisbane is about 2s. 6d. per sleeper. The price at home would be 3d. per sleeper, and there would be hardly any difference in price in sending them out rolled or unrolled. I shall not say anything about carriage to Ipswich and back again, and 6d. for carting; unloading and reloading alone, would make the extra cost come up to 5s. per plate by doing as we are at present—getting them from England, taking them here and getting them rolled and sent off again to Normanton. There are 2,400 plates in a mile of railway. That at 5s. per plate means an additional cost of £600 per mile by doing what we are doing now; and as the railway from Normanton to Cloncurry is 250 miles in length, the manner of dealing with these plates causes us to incur an additional cost of £150,000 for that line, and the North is to be debited with the interest on that sum. I think these few examples of the manner in which the North is being used by the Government to obtain political support in Southern constituencies will certainly justify our conduct in doing what we can towards objecting to this treatment, and doing what we can to prevent it. If we considered that by this Bill any of these disabilities we are labouring under would be remedied we would be only too happy to support it. But apparently there are other gentlemen besides the Premier's colleague who once said that the North had neither money nor brains who are of the same opinion.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—No one knows better than the senior member for Cook that I have several times said that I never used such an expression.

Mr. HAMILTON: I perfectly well know that the junior member for North Brisbane stated that he never made use of such an expression, and he stated it so confidently that I really

imagined he had not and that my ears had deceived me, in consequence of which I looked up *Hansard* and found that he had said it. This gentleman also said that in all mining centres land was very bad, although—

Mr. W. BROOKES: I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. HAMILTON: Well, I can only conclude that the gentleman must be suffering from softening of the brain if he fails to recollect having said so. I was so surprised that I took his words down, because I thought he might deny having used them. He said that all mineral countries were poor, and in that he was perfectly correct. As a rule the country round mineral centres is poor, although the Minister for Works said the other day that the only good land on the Cairns-Herberton line was about Herberton.

Mr. W. BROOKES: You know you are misrepresenting me.

Mr. HAMILTON: I will state something else now, and although the hon. gentleman may forget having said it there are many who will recollect it.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I rise to a point of order. I do not like being misrepresented.

Mr. HAMILTON: We know that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Neither do your constituents.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I appeal to the House as to what I did say. What I said was that countries where mining was the chief industry were known to be poor countries.

Mr. HAMILTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know that a person may forget what he has said, but it is impossible to recollect what you never heard. I recollect that the hon. gentleman also said that the social and moral condition of miners was generally low. I appeal to hon. gentlemen as to whether he did not say that, and of course it is unnecessary for me to take the part of miners. We know very well that as a class they compare favourably with any other class in the community, and are far higher in the social scale than Queen-street shopkeepers. Now, if this Bill enabled us to deal with such matters as I have referred to, I should be happy to support it; but I consider that it is a perfect farce, and that the Premier recognises that. If he will adopt the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville, and make some provision by which we shall be allowed control over expenditure, and protect ourselves from the crying evils from which we have been suffering I might support the measure, but as it now stands I cannot do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) said: Mr. Speaker,—I think this question cannot be fairly discussed unless discussed by both sides of the House, and we can hardly say that that has been the case. It has been commented upon severely by members of the Opposition from one point of view only. They cannot separate it in their own minds from the question of separation. Some members on the other side appear to have made up their minds to have separation of the North from the South, and I think I heard a member on the Liberal side say, "If nothing else will satisfy them let them have separation." Would separation be a good thing for the North, or would it be a good thing for the South, and would it be a good thing for Australasia at large? Does anybody suppose that if we had the separation that is now insisted upon by gentlemen on the other side, that that separation would stop at the limit which hon. members now propose as the southern boundary of the new colony?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Certainly not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would go on, and we should then have a demand for the separation of the Central district from the North, and there is no telling where the thing would end. We should have a breaking up of the whole of the Australasian colonies into little bits of States, all opposed to each other—because separation means hostility.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The tariff of one colony would be opposed to the interests of another colony amongst the number of little States, and the grand idea of the federation of the Australasian colonies into an Australasian dominion which would have a proper place amongst the nations of the earth, at no very distant period, must be abandoned for ever. I was glad to hear the hon. member for Townsville—who always edifies the House, because he has a great deal of information and has a happy way of communicating what he knows—I was glad to hear he was unfavourable to the idea of separation. Some time ago he told us he was distinctly opposed to it. But in discussing this measure he states his objection to it in a very singular way. He rejects this Bill, and says he will vote against the second reading of it; and while unfavourable evidently to the idea of separation, he yet suggests nothing to take its place. He gives us three alternatives. We are to have either separation, or the capital is to be removed from Brisbane, or he suggests a committee of Northern members of the House to discuss Northern affairs in this House, but that he is evidently not in favour of and does not think it desirable. Although he urges the necessity for provincial councils he does not seem to be in favour of them, and refers us to the terrible effects of the system in New Zealand.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman is misrepresenting what I said. I did not urge or advocate the establishment of provincial councils, but referred to the working of the system in New Zealand to show the power they had. I did not advocate the adoption of the system here.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I misunderstand the hon. gentleman. He appeared to me to suggest that we should have something analogous to provincial councils, and then he proceeded to show how miserably they had worked in New Zealand. The hon. member has an objection to separation, and does not like the idea of the colonies of Australasia being divided into a number of little independent States, and yet he suggests nothing, but says he will vote against the second reading of this Bill.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I think the hon. gentleman is misrepresenting me again. I did not say I was not favourable to separation now. I said I had been unfavourable to it, but I took it up afterwards. I do not say I am unfavourable to territorial separation. The hon. gentleman must not misrepresent me in that way.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have no wish to misrepresent the hon. gentleman.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I am sure the hon. member has no intention of doing so, but still he is doing it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. gentleman said that some years ago he was opposed to it, and I gathered from his remarks that he is still unfavourable to separation on the whole. I believe he would now vote for territorial separation, but I think his feelings, judging from the tone and general tenor of his remarks, is opposed to the Australasian

colonies being divided into little independent States. Then the leader of the Opposition rejects altogether the only suggestion made by the hon. member for Townsville as to the management of the affairs of the North by a committee of members of Parliament. He discards the idea of such a thing. He also is unfavourable to the idea of separation; and though I do not think he said so distinctly to-night, I think I have heard him say so. I am quite certain he would reject altogether the idea of removing the capital, which was an alternative mentioned by the hon. member for Townsville. The hon. member for Mackay, I think, made some very remarkable statements in the able speech he made. He seemed to think that a general policy which would suit the members of this House might not be suitable to the interests of the North. He gave one or two reasons certainly. He said there were a great many children in the South, and the adoption of a policy which might tend to the protection of certain industries, and which might therefore be a good policy in the South, might not be a suitable policy for the North. He evidently goes on the principle that if separation is obtained, the North will be run on the expectation that adult males will always greatly preponderate in that part of the colony. It reminds me of a circumstance that happened some years ago, when I was in London, and sent out a shipload of respectable, well-selected, female domestic servants to the northern part of the colony. When the ladies residing in that part of the colony heard of it they were very much delighted to think they would be able to get them. But a day or two after the arrival of the ship, and by the time she got to Bowen, those girls had all been married to shepherds and others who came before the ladies could secure them. There is, then, one great remedy for the Northern grievance; that is, that all the men up there should get married, and I hope the Agent-General will send out a lot of ladies, so that they may have a large number of families in the North, and thus equalise the interests of North and South in that respect. I suppose it is hardly worth while to enter very deeply into the discussion of this question, because I see that hon. gentlemen on the other side are determined to accept nothing less than separation. I do not think they will get separation;—I hope not; I see every objection to it. I think it would be wise of hon. members representing the North to accept this measure of relief at all events; perhaps it is not all that may be conceded to the North. I am not quite sure whether the whole scheme is complete or not; perhaps the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville may be acceded to in a certain degree by the Premier; I do not know what is in his mind on the subject. Now, what are the objections that have been made to this measure by the principal speakers who have addressed their remarks to it to-night? The hon. member for Townsville objects to it because he is determined to get separation. Whatever his private feelings on the subject may be, his constituents are determined, if possible, to get separation. They expect Townsville to be the capital of the new colony, and no doubt the hon. member for Townsville, whatever his private feelings may be as to how the question may affect the whole colony, is here for the purpose of insisting on separation. That is his objection to the scheme the Premier has laid before the House. Then the hon. leader of the Opposition objects to it because it is his business to object to everything proposed by the present Government. That is quite enough for him, and he has not gone further than that to-night. He has not given

his opinion on the subject at all: he objects to this, but he substitutes nothing. Then the hon. member for Mackay objects to it—of course he objects to it. He insists on separation, and he will be satisfied with nothing less. Then there is an underlying subject in his own mind that is always associated with the idea of separation or non-separation. He is the representative, and a worthy able representative, of the planting interest in the North; and we know, sir, that there is another question in the background, though very little is said about it nowadays. As the hon. member for North Brisbane said, the hon. member for Mackay, with great agility, got out of the way very quickly and said nothing about the question of black labour. Now the question of separation is immediately connected, in my mind, with the question of black labour: I cannot separate the two questions. I believe there is a great future for the North of this colony, and I believe there is a great future for the planting interest in this colony, and I believe the solution of this question of black labour is not far to seek. I believe it has found its solution now, and that the idea which the hon. member for Mackay has favoured in some of his speeches in this House will be carried out—that is, we shall have the sugar industry established in the North in the first place by the employment of the most modern machinery, and in the second place by the establishment of the system of the manufacture of sugar by the present planters. They will be the manufacturers, and the growers will be a large number of small proprietary farmers. I have received reliable information from a gentleman who has recently come from the North, who tells me that this is favourably regarded by some of the largest planters at Mackay, and that the central mills are proving a success. The central mills are growing their cane with the assistance of proprietary farmers—

Mr. BLACK: The central mills are not started yet.

The PREMIER: It was only in London that the hon. member said they were going to be a success; here they are to be a failure.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Perhaps I am mistaken in my way of stating it. I should have said it was anticipated that they are going to be a great success. They intend to buy the cane from the farmers who grow it. My informant prepared for me some figures, which I am able from my experience of sugar-growing to verify, if his calculations about the cost of machinery are correct, at all events. It satisfied me that with improved machinery and the growth of cane on a large scale by small proprietary farmers, the manufacture of sugar in the northern part of Queensland will be able to pay even against beet sugar, and even while bounties are continued. He has satisfied me that it may be made a great success, even at the price of £15 per ton. I know from my own experience that farmers can grow cane and be well paid at 10s. a ton; and a number of parties now—as many as 200, I believe—in the Logan district are desirous that cane mills should be established in the locality, and are perfectly satisfied to plant a very large area of cane now, and receive 10s. a ton for it. I believe that will be the solution of the black labour difficulty, and I believe we shall have great prosperity in the North. To say that the lands are all exhausted there, or occupied, is to talk great nonsense. We know very well that millions of acres of land might be profitably occupied by small proprietary farmers. The hon. member for Mackay has stated in this House more than once that he knows many of those men are doing well at Mackay, and can make a very good living if they dispose of their cane

at a reasonable price to the sugar-planters. Now, sir, I should regret exceedingly if hon. members on this side of the House permitted gentlemen on the other side, whose only policy is separation, to have this Bill thrown out. I think it is of the utmost importance that this Bill should pass its second reading, and I hope all the members on our side of the House will support it. I cannot follow the hon. member for Ipswich in the objection he has taken to the 9th clause. I cannot see that there will be any great difficulty in ascertaining what *ad valorem* duty has been paid, or any invoice sent to the North, which has paid duty on its arrival in Brisbane. In the Custom House if they saw such an invoice as the hon. member has described they would know exactly what duty had been paid on those goods. He says that every clerk in a wholesale establishment would have to determine what duty had been paid on each article. I suppose that would be done by an expert—the man who makes up the invoices; and I should think the inspector of invoices at the Custom House would be able to tell at once the amount of drawback necessary to be made on goods which had paid *ad valorem* duty, when they were sent to the North. Of course, I do not understand this question as well as the hon. member for Ipswich; but I have tried to follow him, and I cannot see that there is anything in his argument at all. I hope hon. members on this side of the House will vote for the second reading, and allow the Bill to be discussed in committee.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to give a flat denial to a statement made by the Minister who has just sat down. He stated that all the members on this side of the House were opposed to this Bill because they were separationists. Now, sir, I deny that they are separationists. I am opposed to this Bill and mean to vote against it, but I am no separationist. I am going to vote against this Bill because my feeling against separation is so strong. I consider that the separation of the North from the southern part of this colony would be a national disaster. I think, sir, that we should lose the most valuable part of our possessions if we lost this northern part of this colony. I think that any Government that lends a hand in any way to assist the North to separate from the South is unfaithful to the trust reposed in it by the country. This, according to the statement of one of its own supporters, the junior member for Cook, is only a stepping-stone to separation, and that is the ground upon which I oppose it. I am satisfied that the Premier recognises that fact.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Nonsense!

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. member may say "Nonsense," but hon. members will find that what I say will come true. Does this measure satisfy one single Northern member except the hon. junior member for Cook? How was that gentleman returned? Was he returned as an anti-separationist? Was not he returned only because he was a separationist? Did not he go away from Brisbane, to my knowledge and to the knowledge of many gentlemen, as an anti-separationist, and when he got amongst his electors in the Cook district he immediately changed his coat and became a separationist, and why did he do so? Because he knew he would not have come back into this House except as a separationist. It is no use saying "nonsense," because the facts prove it; and, more than that he is the only member on that side of the House representing a Northern constituency who has spoken in favour of the measure, and he knows perfectly well if he went back to that constituency he would not be returned—there-

fore he does not go back; so that the facts are against the arguments of that hon. member. This proposal of the Government is, to my mind, only the thin end of the wedge, and if we give the North financial separation from the South, total separation is sure to follow. That is my firm conviction, and that is the reason why I, for one, as an anti-separationist and as a resident in the Central district and the representative of one of the largest constituencies in the colony, object to the measure—because, as I said, I am morally certain that it is only the thin end of the wedge, and that those who represent Northern constituencies will drive this wedge home in time to the end. Now sir, there is another thing to be considered, and I may as well reply to the statement that the Minister for Lands made just now in regard to little independent States. I think this Bill will create little independent States. Does it not confer the power upon the Parliament to establish a differential tariff between these three divisions, and may we not have a line of Custom-houses between the Southern and Central districts?

The PREMIER: If Parliament chose to be so foolish.

Mr. MURPHY: And another line between the Central and Northern districts. The Premier says "if Parliament so chose." But suppose that the revenue from the northern portion of the colony does not meet its expenditure, what is Parliament to do; are we going to meet that deficit in the Northern revenue out of the surplus in the Southern revenue? How can that be met except by the establishment of Custom-houses? I would like the Premier to tell me that. Does it not follow that Parliament must assent to differential tariffs between the different portions of the colony? The Bill provides for it, and if it provides for a contingency of that kind, does it not follow, logically, that the contingency may arise? On the other hand, if the contingency were not likely to arise, no such clause would ever have been inserted in the Bill. Parliament may have no choice in the matter. It may be bound, in order to balance the finances between the divisions, to make these differential tariffs. I am informed by my hon. friend, the hon. member for Warrego, that these Custom-houses and differential tariffs might be established in direct opposition to the will of the people interested. These are my reasons for opposing this measure. I am opposed to separation in any shape or form, but I may, however, admit this—that had the Northern members accepted this measure as a final termination to the agitation for separation I should have voted for it. But they have been almost unanimous in rejecting it; they have not had one word to say in favour of it, with the exception of the junior member for Cook, who is retiring from that constituency; therefore his opinion is not worth anything at all. He is not going back to that constituency for re-election; he has sung his dying song in this House, and therefore his opinion is valueless. With that exception every Northern member who has spoken in this debate has spoken against the Bill, and I do not see how we, who are anti-separationists, can possibly with any reason accept it. We can only accept it on the grounds that it would terminate this question of separation; but as it is not a panacea for the evils that the North suffer from, I think we should be unfaithful to our trust if we accepted it. I shall certainly vote against the Bill.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—If this Bill is not before the House for the purpose of meeting the objections which the Premier has found to the call of the Northern members for

separation, I should like to know what its object is. If it is not his reply to the separation petition that went home last year and an antidote, as it were, to separation, I should really like to know what that Bill purports to be and what it is intended to do.

The PREMIER: It is part of and the foundation of what the Government propose to do.

Mr. PALMER: We have been led to believe that this Bill is to meet all difficulties.

The PREMIER: I have never said so, or anything like it.

Mr. PALMER: Then the hon. gentleman has been misreported.

The PREMIER: I was not misreported; I have been correctly reported.

Mr. PALMER: I will read the title of the Bill in order to discover the purpose which it is intended to serve. I have listened to the hon. the Minister for Lands and the junior member for North Brisbane, and I do not think the House has received much information from their rambling speeches, because they touched on every subject on the face of the earth except the Bill. We have the Bill now before us, and its title is "A Bill to make provision for dividing the colony into districts for financial purposes, and for the keeping of separate accounts of the general and local revenue and expenditure of the colony, and for the expenditure within the different districts of the revenue raised therein." Will the Premier show me a single clause in this Bill that is intended to deal with the expenditure in the several districts where the revenue is raised?

The PREMIER: This Bill does not deal with the subject at all; it does not profess to.

Mr. PALMER: That is the purpose the Northern members thought it was intended to serve.

The PREMIER: Nobody ever thought anything of the kind.

Mr. PALMER: This Bill is in conjunction with the other two Bills. If not, I am very much in the dark.

The PREMIER: Pitch dark!

Mr. PALMER: The Bill wants some alteration. If it is not here for what I said, what is it here for?

Mr. MOREHEAD: It is a book-keeping Bill.

Mr. PALMER: I find that the Premier voted against a Financial Districts Bill some years ago.

The PREMIER: When was that?

Mr. PALMER: In 1872. There are three members now in the House who voted against it—yourself, Mr. Speaker, the Premier, and Mr. Thorn. That Bill was supposed to meet a legitimate want, and here we have a Bill which is *a fac-simile* of that introduced in 1872.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. PALMER: I have seen the old Bill. The good clauses have been eliminated, and some objectionable ones have been inserted in this Bill.

The PREMIER: That is a bold assertion to make.

Mr. PALMER: The subject is not new to this House, and it is not solely a Northern grievance. The Financial Districts Bill of 1871 provided for the division of the colony into three districts, and it contained a provision which this Bill lacks—namely, that the expenditure within each district should come out of its own revenue, that Parliament should appoint three committees representing those three divisions, who

should have an opportunity of reporting to Parliament the public works required in their respective districts. In 1877 a Financial Districts Bill was introduced to divide the colony into four districts, as was contended for by the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Sheridan, last night, in connection with the Real Property (Local Registries) Bill. In that year a commission was appointed to report upon the best means for remedying the evils that existed then as well as now. That commission, of which the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, was one member, and the hon. member for Leichhardt, Mr. Scott, another, brought up a very able report, of which the following is the concluding paragraph:—

"In submitting to your Excellency our recommendations, we consider we have adopted the most practicable method of giving effect to principles which, equitable and beneficial in themselves, will secure to the colony—(1.) That the general expenditure of government will be borne equitably by all districts of the colony. (2.) That each district will be benefited to the full extent of the revenue it contributes. (3.) That an interest in local affairs will be engendered through the administration of local funds, and the universal appeal to a Central Government for general revenue to carry out local and personal objects will be curtailed; and (4.) That these advantages will be secured without in any appreciable degree adding to the general expense of government."

That brings us back to the great expense that will be added to the government of the country, should this Bill pass without any appreciable result. The Premier referred to the evil effects of bureaucracy, and we know what red-tapeism and officialism will do when carried on at enormous distances; but the evil is not removed by this Bill in any shape or form. I think the Premier should get up and re-introduce it, and tell us what it is here for. The report from which I just quoted says that railways should be a first charge, and that provision should be made for interest on the general interest in dealing with financial separation. The Premier has never been happy on the separation question; he has never been able to meet it in a straightforward manner, but has always turned round and accused people of wrong motives. His colleagues, the Minister for Works and the Minister for Lands, gave us a rehash of the black labour question, but that has nothing to do with the matter under discussion. We know that when the Premier went north his mission seemed to be to set one town against another, and one district against another. Did he not, at Cloncurry, try to set the people there against Townsville? That seemed to be his intention in addressing the people. A great many of the Southern people cry out against this justifiable demand of the Northern representatives, and I am not surprised that they object to separation. We know that £200,000 has been spent in the South above the revenue collected there, and that the money must have come from the North. The general taxation average in the South is £2 3s. 9d. per head, while in the North it amounts to £4 5s., and it is very easy to calculate on the basis of population how much more has been contributed by the North than by the South. With regard to the sleepers spoken of by the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, that hon. gentleman's figures were shown by the hon. member for Bowen to be wrong. And as to his statement about the room the sleepers would take up on the way from England, I may say that I have seen them and I know that they fit into one another in half-dozens; so that no extra room would be taken up by introducing the manufactured sleepers than by importing the steel plates. I am quite certain of this: that the expense of that line will be increased in this way by between £500 and £600 a mile; and I am sure the vote is

not large enough to carry out fully the construction of the line. It is not fair, therefore, that the district should be saddled with this extra cost in order to pander, as it were, to the wish of the people in the South for some of the expenditure on that line. It is not fair that the vote should be reduced by from £500 to £600 a mile for that purpose, to say nothing of the delay that will be engendered thereby. I have been informed by professional men that these sleepers could be landed at Normanton in their manufactured state at very little more than half the cost of bringing out the plates to Brisbane and manufacturing the sleepers in the colony. I should have thought that the present Minister for Works would have inaugurated his accession to that important office by showing us a little of that administrative ability which was so signal a success in the Lands Department, and have seen into this matter. However, he is very good; he gave us some advice about our Northern tariff, and I suppose we may take the example of what is being done in the Works Department in the matter of these steel sleepers as an example of what he would wish us to do. He said he could give us some very good advice about our tariffs if we would only follow it. I will now refer to the junior member for North Brisbane. That hon. member, though of a very mild and peaceful aspect, often uses very strong epithets towards this side of the House; indeed, for a man of his years and appearance he uses very strong language. He said that we Northern members were so impracticable there was no dealing with us; that we were the most impracticable set of men he had ever met with. But we are not singular in that respect. There are some persons who look upon that hon. member as rather impracticable, as the following extract from a letter signed "Robert Bulcock," which appeared in yesterday's paper, shows. It is a letter addressed to Mr. Dickson, to whom Mr. Bulcock writes:—

"That you should be opposed by such extravagant and impracticable men as Messrs. W. Brookes and Isambert was to be expected, as they are men who never tire of retailing their threadbare and silly platitudes about protection."

So that, judging from the evidence of their friends, we are not the only impracticable men in the House. But I said I would keep to the Bill. The only thing I go back to is that for nearly three years the Premier has in a manner admitted that there were grievances in the North. He has admitted, in a sort of way, in the Governor's speeches, that there were remote parts of the colony in which fault had been found with the Administration. In every Governor's speech there has been some reference to it. The hon. gentleman went home almost solely to defeat the separation petition, and succeeded in doing so; but I understood that he did so with the intention to bring forward a measure which would scotch separation for ever. That was the impression left on the minds of the Southern people, and I daresay upon the minds of many members of the House. I may be mistaken, but that is the view I take of it—that he would introduce such a measure as would prevent people from raising the cry again. I ask him to show me where, in this Bill, he has met the great want of the North; that is, the right which they demand, to have a voice in the expenditure of their own money—the money which they contribute to the general revenue. There was some utility in the proposition which appeared in former financial separation Bills—when the colony was to be divided into four divisions—that the members returned for each district should form a committee to bring up a report to the House every year as to what public works were required for

their respective districts. But that does not appear in the present Bill, nor can I see how in any way that great want of the North has been met. The government will still be centralised; all the work will still be carried on in Brisbane. It has been said that the telegraph would be largely used to carry on the work of the North, but the Government would almost want a special wire to themselves to carry all the different orders backwards and forwards to those under secretaries who are going to do the work. If there were in this Bill any provisions to meet the legitimate demands of the North—that they should have a voice in their own expenditure—there would be some reason for accepting it; but really, Mr. Speaker, it misses the point altogether. I have looked the Bill carefully through, and there is nothing even tending in that direction. It is no use travelling away from the point and bringing in the black labour and other questions; we want to know what the Bill is meant to do. I do not know what purpose it can serve, except in enabling the divisions to keep books; and if they are not kept better than some we have seen lately in the Treasury I do not think there is any need to keep them at all. I have always heard this Bill referred to as the decentralisation Bill, but as far as I can see it is in reality a centralising Bill. There is nothing whatever in it but an extension of red-tape and officialism, and we know what they will do for a young and thriving colony like this. It will be bound hand and foot by them. I think the Premier, if he had wished, might have introduced a Bill that would have dealt with the subject in a more proper and able manner, and with some idea or intention of meeting the demands that are being made by the Northern members of the colony.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said: I do not intend to occupy the time of the House more than a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, and I should not have taken part in the debate at all had it not been for some observations which were made by my hon. friend the member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, in the course of his speech when he referred to the social condition of mining communities.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. DONALDSON: That's too thin.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman drew a comparison between the condition of mining communities and other communities, and drew a deduction from his comparison very unfavourable indeed to mining communities. I do not intend to enter into any discussion with the view of showing the erroneous character of the statements made by my hon. friend, but I think he must have been generalising without really intending to convey the impression which his words were calculated to convey. If it were necessary to show that the hon. gentleman's remarks had no foundation whatever in fact, as can be shown by our own observation and by history, it is only necessary to look at the condition of the mining communities nearest our own doors. I ask the hon. gentleman whether he can find any community that will rival in intelligence, or in social condition, or in any of the attributes of civilised communities, the mining community we find at Ballarat? Or, to come a little nearer home, where will he find one to exceed in all these qualities the mining community of Charters Towers?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Oh, oh!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There are mining communities and mining communities, sir. The hon. gentleman must have been thinking of the degraded condition of some of the coal-mining

districts in England. He could not have been referring to any experience gained, or to any information he has acquired as to the condition of those communities, in all that goes to make the prosperity of the country, to be found in connection with the development of gold-mining. His illustration of Spain was very far-fetched indeed, and one, I think, altogether destitute of any weight. I regret that the hon. gentleman should have been so discursive in his remarks, and should have thought it necessary to make the observations he did upon mining communities. In fact, they amounted to a gratuitous reflection, wholly uncalled for, upon those communities. As the representative of a mining community, which will compare favourably in all respects, except perhaps in the length of their purses, with any community whatever in Queensland, even the community of North Brisbane itself, I protest against such remarks. I am sorry I was not in the House until after the adjournment for dinner, and, therefore, had not the advantage of hearing the principal speeches that were made by hon. members on the other side, in opposition to this Bill; but I have been informed that the hon. member for Townsville particularly deprecated the introduction of this Bill, one of his grounds being this: that in view of the policy shadowed forth by the Premier, it would not be for the advantage of the North, because he said—I am open to correction if I state what is not true—because he said that there were only three industries possible to the North—mining, agricultural, and pastoral.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Three principal industries.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Well, I want to know whether the hon. gentleman means to convey the impression that a policy of protection would be disastrous to the northern districts of this colony?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: He said so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Does the hon. gentleman mean to insinuate, much less positively state, that the people in the districts of Charters Towers and Herberton are not as capable of establishing and developing large manufacturing industries as any community in the south of Queensland? We talk of the necessity of improving machinery, and of getting machinery to develop our mineral resources in the North, and what is there to prevent us from establishing large factories capable of turning out machinery of the very best description in the districts to which I have referred? Why should the North be at any disadvantage in that respect? I maintain that it was almost as great a slight to the capacity and resources—intellectual resources—of the people of the North as they suffered by the observations of the hon. member for North Brisbane with respect to mining communities. A great deal has been said in order to disparage the attempt that has been made to do full justice to the northern districts of the colony, and with a view of showing the alleged insincerity of the Government—about the plan they have adopted with reference to the introduction of Phillips's patent sleepers for the purpose of the construction of the Normanton-Cloncurry railway. Hon. gentlemen have been continually harping upon this. They say that the plates could have been got cheaper in England, and could have been brought out here all ready formed, and landed at Normanton, without being brought to the South, and then being transhipped to Normanton. There may be some truth in the statement that the sleepers might have been got somewhat cheaper in England. But hon. members seem to assume that absolutely no mistake whatever would happen in the

construction of these plates in England; that all that is necessary is to have them made according to a certain pattern there, and that they would be landed at Normanton without the possibility of there being any defect in their construction, or in any of the details of their construction, so as to necessitate any fresh alteration being made in them in order to render them capable of being employed for the purpose for which they were imported. Why, sir, hon. members ought to know this—that there is very great risk indeed in importing large quantities of manufactured material of that description. These are not things well known in England, or which are to be made from a well-known pattern which everybody understands.

Mr. HAMILTON: Not at all; it is merely bending the steel.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They might bend the steel and drill the holes in the wrong places, and perhaps make mistakes in some other little details.

Mr. HAMILTON: Only two holes.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There might be some error, and that one error would necessitate the conveyance of those sleepers from Normanton to Brisbane in order that the defects might be made good. I say it is of the greatest advantage—to insure that those sleepers should be made according to pattern, and that there should be no defect which would necessitate delay—that they should be prepared here under the observation of those who are competent to exercise oversight over their construction. In that way the possibility of there being any delay in the construction of that line is entirely obviated. It is all very well for members to take up a cry and say there will be a great increase of cost; but it only shows how recklessly hon. members make statements of this kind in order to support their arguments. We had the statement of the hon. member for Barke just now to the effect that these sleepers could all lie in nests, and that we could bring out six sleepers in the same space that we could bring out six plates before they were bent into sleepers. But he ought to know very well that these sleepers do not fit accurately into nests in the way he has described, but that if one sleeper is attempted to be fitted into another it would not go more than half-way into it.

Mr. HAMILTON: He says he saw it done.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member seemed to imagine that the sleepers brought out here in plates, before they are rolled into the shape required, would cost no more in transit than if they were brought rolled in the manner which will be necessary before they can be laid upon the line for the purpose of carrying the locomotives. These are just the means by which hon. members, in order to discover some excuse by which to disparage the Government, manufacture their arguments. How much worse would it be if the people of the North had been treated as they were by the last Government, and no railway was made at all? What an outcry there would be then! The hon. senior member for Cook, when replying to his colleague the hon. junior member for Cook, asked what had the Government done? What did the previous Government do? In order that they might appear to be doing something for the northern part of the colony, they put a sum of money upon the Loan Estimates for the construction of a line of railway—from where to where? From the coast.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Like the bundle of carrots!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes; like the bundle of carrots held before the donkey

running after them, as if he was going to get something, when really they were laughing at him, and intended to give him nothing at all. That is what the last Government did. They deceived and deluded the people of the North, and had not the courage to say they would construct the line from "this place to that place"; but in order to have the appearance of doing something for the North in the way of expenditure, they put down on the Loan Estimates a sum of money for the construction of a line which they never intended to make. The first thing the present Government did was to decide that a line should be carried in the first instance from Normanton to Cloncurry, and, in the second instance, one from Cairns to Herberton. More than that, they provided the money for carrying out those lines; and more than that, they had the surveys made. In one instance tenders were called for a portion of the line, and a section is now in course of construction—that is the Cairns railway. That is what the present Government have done; and I say in the other case, it is far better, in order to ensure that there should be no further delay in the construction of the line, to have the plates prepared here under responsible supervision. It is far better to adopt that course, even if it costs something more, than not to have the line made at all, and follow the example of those who are getting up this mock indignation against the Government. I do not intend to reply to any of the lengthy arguments we have heard. As I stated before, so many have spoken upon the subject that I do not think it is likely anything one can say at this stage will alter any votes; but I did feel it my duty to protest first of all against the observations made by the hon. member for North Brisbane, and then to show as far as I could, in the course of the very few observations I thought necessary to trouble the House with, how very hollow, unreal, and insincere are the attacks made upon this measure which the Government have introduced in accordance with the promise made by the Premier some time ago, which he is bound to carry out, and which the people of the North will accept with very great satisfaction. What is all this nonsense about the people of the North not accepting this Bill, and that they will have nothing but territorial separation? Have hon. gentlemen read the letter in the *Telegraph* this evening from Townsville? We have heard one letter read from the *Telegraph* by the hon. member for Burke, and I will now invite the attention of hon. members to another letter in that paper—one from Townsville. I am not going to read it; but I direct hon. gentlemen's notice to it, and they will find this statement: that there is absolutely no enthusiasm whatever in Townsville at the present time on the subject of separation. In the next place the people of Townsville, including the *Townsville Bulletin*, one of the most persistent and hostile critics of the present Government, agree with the Premier's policy, and recommend him to the support of hon. members of this House. Then the *Telegraph*, another paper published in Townsville, counsels the people of the North to support the Liberal party and the decentralisation proposals, while not losing sight of full territorial separation in the future. Does this look like hostile criticism of those proposals of the Premier? I prefer to take the statements made by people living on the spot to the statements made by hon. gentlemen who sit opposite, having one object in view—that of discrediting the Government and disparaging their efforts to ameliorate the condition of the people of the North—and having nothing better to do than to carp at this measure, with which they cannot find any just and reasonable fault.

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—The English Parliament is pestered with home rule for Ireland, and the Queensland Parliament is pestered with home rule for the North. Home rule for Ireland means the doing away with a landed aristocracy, but home rule for the North means the setting-up of a landed aristocracy. It will be impossible for the Liberal party to prevent the exploitation of the land in the North. The Liberal party is too far in the minority at present; there is only one representative of the North who is a Liberal. All the advocates of separation are Conservatives, every one of them. What chance will the North have in holding its own with the representatives of the present and future aristocracy of the country? It would be a most disastrous thing for separation to take place for a good number of years yet. I think that this Bill will certainly be a measure of justice for the North, and I shall therefore vote for it.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I wish to say a word in explanation—

Mr. MURPHY: Spoken!

Mr. W. BROOKES: I know I have spoken, and I only wish to make an explanation.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Spoken!

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is entitled to speak if he wishes to make a personal explanation.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I wish to state that the hon. member for Charters Towers, the Attorney-General, has misrepresented me.

Mr. JESSOP: That is not an explanation.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I expect fair play. What I said was that those countries in which mining was the sole interest were poor countries, and I had in my mind Chili and Peru. It is quite certain that I did not have Charters Towers in my mind, or even California. What I meant was a primitive state of mining. That is all I wish to say.

Mr. ADAMS said: Mr. Speaker,—Although I do not like to give a silent vote on any matter, I would not have spoken to-night were it not for the remarks which fell from some hon. members on the other side of the House. No doubt hon. members are smiling. I was extremely surprised to see the Attorney-General get so hot and hasty over the few words that fell from the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. W. Brookes, especially when I take into consideration that it is not many nights since the hon. member for North Brisbane stated from a platform that a younger man than himself was a fossilated politician, and taking into consideration also the fact that when the hon. member gets up to speak he always has the black labour question on the brain. I believe he has got that on the brain so long that it has almost fossilated, and the consequences will be an aberration of the brain before very long. It was not, as I said, my intention to have spoken had not the Attorney-General referred to the steel sleepers. I would have said a great deal, but it is now late, and as many hon. gentlemen wish to go home I shall only touch on one or two remarks made by the Attorney-General. He went on very amiably with reference to protection, and he wanted to know a great deal about what members on both sides of the House thought of protection; but it appears to me that the present Government have gone in for protection to the extent of £150,000 at all events. Figures have been quoted to show that this railway would cost that amount less if the sleepers were landed at Normanton. The contention is that the sleepers should be made in the colony although they cost so much more, but I can only imagine that the Attorney-General did not

know one iota of what he was talking about. He says, suppose they were landed at Normanton and there happened to be a hole in all of them which was not in its proper place. Well, suppose they were made in Ipswich, I believe the holes would be made there. Are there better tradesmen in Ipswich than in the old country? Would they not make them according to a certain pattern? The sleepers had to be made according to pattern, and I take it that there is as good machinery in England as at Ipswich, and yet we are now paying extra for these sleepers to the tune of £150,000. The Attorney-General says that the work had to be done on the spot. I suppose he refers to the spike-holes, but I think he knows very little about engineering. Wherever the sleepers or fittings are made, they are supposed to be made according to pattern. Therefore I say we have no business to squander £150,000 more than we need have done. I think the electors and taxpayers of the colony will look into the matter and ask themselves when the Government propose such a scheme whether that would not account for some of the deficit of £410,000. They will consider a good many times before they return to power such an extravagant Government.

MR. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I did not intend to take part in this discussion, but after hearing the arguments on both sides of the House I have decided to vote against the second reading of this Bill. Prevention is better than cure, and if the Government now in power had, when they first came into office, adopted the conciliatory policy which they are now adopting, it would have had some effect, but concession and conciliation, unless they are taken at the tide, are of no avail; once the tide begins to ebb such a policy leads only to exasperation. This policy ought to have been produced several years ago, and when I look back upon some of the speeches made by the colleague of the Premier on former occasions, and by other members, listened to by the Premier and not corrected by him, I can see that they tended only to exasperate. And it is too late to come forward with a small Bill of conciliation now. The members we find here as Northern members we must take as representing the North, and we are told by them that such a measure will not be accepted. We must infer that this conciliation is no conciliation at all, and that they will not accept it as an antidote for their grievances. It may be said that they do not represent the North, but the time is now at hand when we can put that to the test. Let us leave the Bill as it stands and go to the country, and let the people of the North say whether they approve of it or not. If they say they approve of it—that it will suit them and will provide for all their previous grievances—then we shall be bound to pass it; but if they say “No,” then, as the leader of the Opposition has very well said, we are bound to listen to the voice of the North. Let us get a distinct voice from the people principally interested in the matter, and the only thing to do until then is to reject the Bill on the second reading. If we pass the second reading we confirm this principle, as it were, and are bound to pass it through committee. A good many arguments have been brought forward in regard to these steel sleepers, which is only a “side” argument, but a very good one. The only thing I have to remark in regard to this matter is that the Government are importing these sleepers contrary to the expressed opinion and advice of the Chief Engineer for Railways. That seems to be a very curious thing to do, and I think if they are going to act contrary to the advice of their Chief adviser they ought to “sack” him; he cannot be competent. If they send home for the steel

plates contrary to the advice of the man who is appointed to give them advice on those matters, then they are taking the business out of his hands altogether, and he is certainly not fit for the position. I listened to the arguments of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, and really I could not make out the figures at all. I am perfectly satisfied that by importing plates we shall lose a great deal of money. You can buy patent sleepers just as good and probably better than Phillips's patent in England at a less cost. And then, again, the question of carrying them to Brisbane and re-shipping them to Normanton involves a considerable outlay. The freight from Brisbane to Normanton is 60s. a ton, and that has to be added to the original cost of importation; and I am afraid that when they are landed at Normanton we shall find we have paid at least 50 per cent. more than they can be imported for. But on the general principle I say this: That if this policy is not adopted by the Northern members now here present, either their contention is right, or else they do not represent the North. If they do represent the North, then this policy will not conciliate the North. It is not an antidote for the grievances they have brought forward, and if they do not represent the North the matter ought to be put before the country, and let the North give a clear and distinct sound as to what particular policy they require. If they are determined upon territorial separation, they are just as much entitled to it as we were when we agitated for separation previous to 1859, and they are entitled to as much consideration as we considered we were then, and they have as much right to continue the agitation as we claimed we had then.

MR. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no intention of speaking at any length on this Bill or to go into the details of it and discuss it on its actual merits, because I consider the speeches of hon. members who represent the North and the Separation League have brought it to a stage beyond that. In speaking in public a few years ago with regard to separation or something that would have the effect of pacifying the North sufficiently to do away with the cry for separation, I said I was in favour of a decentralising scheme, and so I was, and so I am still, but simply to do away with the cry for separation. Well, if this scheme is carried out it will entail a considerable cost to the country—many thousands a year—and the Northern members say the North will not accept it, the Central members declare against it, and I do not see why the Southern members should insist upon forcing a thing upon the North which the North has not demanded, and which will not give satisfaction to any one part of the colony. It will cost a large sum of money, and will not be a panacea for the wrongs, real or supposed, of the North. I always have been and am still opposed to separation. I think the country will only accept a decentralisation scheme with the one view to do away with the demand for territorial separation. This Bill is offered by the Government to meet the wishes of the North, and the North will not accept it. I consider those who have spoken in favour of something of this sort in times past have done all that can be required of them so far, and I for my part will vote against this Bill on these grounds, feeling that it will be useless for the purpose for which it is intended—namely, to do away with the demand for separation.

MR. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—We can see now very plainly that hon. gentlemen opposite have made this a party question. The presence of the hon. member for Leichhardt, Mr. Scott, shows it. He is like the stormy petrel,

and his presence here to-night shows that this has been made a party question by the other side. I believe that this Bill is an honest attempt to meet the grievances of the North. If the Premier had not introduced this Bill he would have been blamed, and now that he has introduced it, it does not please hon. members opposite. This Bill was promised two years ago in the Governor's Speech, and I believe the constituencies of the North will not thank hon. members opposite, who say they represent the North, for the opposition they have given to the Bill. They will hear of it when they meet their electors, and they will be told that half a loaf is better than no bread at all. They cannot get separation now, and I believe this is a good instalment. I believe separation will eventually come, and I believe it will be a good thing for the South when it does come. If the North got separation long ago we should not have had the opposition we have had to our useful railways in the South. What do the people of the North complain of? I believe if all the money in the Bank of England was spent on the North they would not be satisfied. They have had money spent on railways that do not pay for the grease on the wheels. The Cooktown Railway does not pay at all, and the Mackay to Eton Railway does not pay, and yet they are not satisfied. I shall certainly support this Bill, because I believe that although the Northern members are opposing it, the Northern constituencies will accept it with satisfaction and gratitude.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—At this late hour I do not feel inclined to trespass much on the patience of the House, still, as this is a very important question I do not like to give a silent vote upon it. I have visited most of the towns of the North, and during my exceedingly pleasant and agreeable visit I talked to a great many of the residents in the various towns on the subject of separation. The only town where I saw there was any anxiety on the subject was Townsville, and the people even there were by no means unanimous in their desire to get separation, and for this reason: The whole of their ambition, should separation be granted, is that Townsville should be the capital, and if Townsville was not to be the capital, I can safely say that those who spoke to me on the subject would rather be connected as they are now with Brisbane. If territorial separation were asked for this evening, I may tell you, sir, that I would be willing to vote for it, but for one reason. I feel sure that the first act of the new legislature of the Northern colony would be to pass a measure for the introduction of British-Indian coolies, and not only would these men overrun the whole colony, but they would literally starve out the white man earning an honest living here. Those men are not like the poor kanakas who are so easily handled and so easily managed. They are knowing, intelligent men capable of competing with white men in almost every relation of life, and they are able to live upon a mere fraction of what is necessary to support the white man and his family. That is why I am prepared to do all I possibly can to stave off separation—I am afraid it will come some day—but I hope it will be a very long time before it does come for the reasons I have stated.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—With the permission of the House I wish to say a few words by way of reply—a right, however, to which I know I am not strictly entitled; but it is one that is often conceded to the Ministerial mover of an important Bill.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Are you going to make a fresh declaration?

The PREMIER: I am simply going to reply to some of the arguments used against the Bill. As I have said, I know that is a right to which I am not strictly entitled unless by permission of the House, or unless an order of the House is made to enable me to do so.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Are you going to make a fresh speech?

The PREMIER: I do not suppose I shall occupy more than ten minutes in replying to the arguments used against the Bill.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: That will be simply continuing the discussion. If you reply to our arguments we should have the right to reply to yours.

Mr. BLACK: Are you going to introduce a fresh question?

The PREMIER: I do not think so. I wish to say a few words in reply. I only ask of hon. members to allow me the ordinary courtesy to reply as the mover of an important Bill.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: We are not afraid to allow you to reply.

The PREMIER: I ask of the House the ordinary courtesy which has been frequently conceded in such cases.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Move the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER: I will not move the adjournment of the debate. Will the House give me the ordinary courtesy of replying or not?

The SPEAKER: Does the House consent to the hon. gentleman speaking in reply? Of course the hon. gentleman can only speak in reply with the consent of the House.

Mr. DONALDSON: Mr. Speaker,—I move the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER: What is that for?

Mr. DONALDSON: That will give you the opportunity.

The PREMIER: I must say that I think it is a very strange thing that I should be refused a courtesy of that kind, which I have never known to be refused before in this House—that is to allow the introducer of an important Bill like this the right of reply. The hon. member for Warrego has moved the adjournment of the debate that I might not have the right to reply, but that some other hon. member may have the right to reply on this debate upon a Bill which I have introduced, and upon which, under the ordinary courtesy of Parliament, I should be allowed to reply.

Mr. DONALDSON: That was not my object.

The PREMIER: The hon. member, I know, did not know what he was being put up to do.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He was not put up to do it.

The PREMIER: I say I have been refused the ordinary courtesy. I cannot help it if hon. members will not give me that courtesy.

Mr. DONALDSON: My object was to give you the opportunity.

The PREMIER: The hon. member could have moved that I be heard. That is the regular parliamentary way. I asked for it as a matter of courtesy.

Mr. NELSON: And it was agreed to.

The PREMIER: It was not.

Mr. DONALDSON: I made the motion for the purpose of giving you the opportunity. I assure the hon. member that was my intention.

The PREMIER: I am very much obliged to the hon. member.

Question—That this debate be now adjourned—put and negatived.

The SPEAKER: Does the House consent to the hon. the Chief Secretary replying?

Hon. members agreed.

The PREMIER: I have to thank the House for its courtesy. I have very little to say. Very many things have been introduced into this debate which have nothing whatever to do with it, and one matter which has been introduced about the Normanton sleepers has occupied a good deal of time. What has that to do with a great question like this—the introduction of a measure endeavouring to do what is right and fair by all the different parts of the colony. However, as a strange misconception has arisen about that, I will say a word or two on the subject. Some hon. members say we ought to have had these sleepers manufactured in England. One hon. member who has not the least idea what they are like says there are many in England quite as good. There are not any like them. Does the hon. member know that these sleepers are made of three-eighths steel plate, and that outside them there is a strengthening piece, also three-eighths steel plate, bolted on, and that the difference between the width of the outside of the sleeper and the inside is more than an inch? How could you make them fit into one another? Hon. members who have seen them or know what they are like know that it would be quite impracticable. It would be possible, just as you could put one large volume into another. You could put one "Pugh's Almanac" inside another, but it would be a very inconvenient way to carry them about.

Mr. NELSON: What about the Chief Engineer's advice?

The PREMIER: I suppose the hon. member refers to the Chief Engineer's advice to use wooden sleepers?

Mr. NELSON: I understand that he does not approve of the iron ones.

The PREMIER: I do not care whether he does or not. The Government think that this is a matter where common sense goes quite as far as engineering skill; sometimes common sense is a very useful thing to apply, especially in engineering matters. Now, sir, I wish to say a few words about this Bill. I am extremely disappointed with the debate on this measure. It was brought in by the Government in the most perfect good faith in compliance with a promise that they made, and how are they met? This Bill has been declared for the last fifteen years to be the very foundation of anything like a fair administration of the government in all the different parts of the colony.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No.

The PREMIER: This Bill, or a Bill on these principles. The details may be different, but the principles of this Bill have been declared for the last fifteen years by agitators in the North to be the very essence and foundation of anything like fair administration of government in the North.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No.

The PREMIER: I say, yes.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I say, no.

The PREMIER: I say, yes. The speech delivered by the hon. member for Townsville this afternoon was the strongest proof of it. He admitted that the principles of the Bill were fair, and that they were essential, and his only complaint was that it did not go far enough—that it was not accompanied by something else which under no circumstances could be part of this Bill.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I said up till ten years ago. Since ten years ago it has not been asked.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was a member of a Government that, less than ten years ago, brought in a Bill on the same lines.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It was never carried any further.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was a member of the Government which brought it in. I say that from the first it has been maintained that it was essential to make a distribution of expenditure in proportion to the revenue in the different districts of the colony. What has been the cry for the last few years here? That with the Parliament as at present constituted, and with the administration of the Government as at present constituted, it was impossible to get for the North a fair return for the revenue they contributed to the general exchequer. Has not that been the complaint all through? And what more convincing proof of the utter hollowness of the arguments of hon. members who come from the North could be given than the treatment they have accorded this Bill this evening? I say it is absolutely convincing proof, not only in this House and in this colony, but throughout Australia and throughout the empire, wherever any interest is taken in this matter, that the whole thing is a hollow sham, and that what they want is not to get what they are nominally clamouring for—an equitable distribution of expenditure in proportion to revenue—but to embarrass or defeat the present party in power, or else to carry out some ulterior object. They have proved that themselves in the most conclusive manner. Now let me tell some of those hon. members—I am not referring so much to the hon. member for Townsville as to one or two others who have spoken this evening—that I think they will find that in this as in all other matters of politics or private life, honesty is the best policy. It is no use pretending one thing in one place and another thing in another. This was the scheme that has been demanded as the foundation of everything they asked for, apart from absolute territorial separation. When they are offered in the most perfect good faith by the Government, that, without which all they are asking for could not be carried out—without which none of it could be carried out—they say, "We will not have it," and hon. members who in previous years have been consistent supporters of the same scheme are combined with them in what is evidently a purely party vote to defeat the Government. I do not object to it, sir. I am very glad now to have had an opportunity of compelling those members who have been saying these things outside, to record their votes against this Bill this evening. We will see whether the people in the northern parts of the colony really are so irreconcilable—whether what they really want is to have a Parliament, or whether what they want is justice, and to secure that they get justice. I believe, sir, that is what they want, and five-sixths of them do not care two straws whether they have a Parliament there or not, and more than half of them would prefer not to have a Parliament there. Five-sixths of them I am sure do not care two straws whether they have a separate Parliament or not, so long as they get a fair return for the revenue they contribute to the Treasury.

Mr. BLACK: This Bill will not give it.

The PREMIER: It will secure them a fair return.

Mr. BLACK: On paper.

The PREMIER: It is the foundation of everything. Let hon. members reject the foundation, and then they cannot complain if there is no superstructure.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : What about the superstructure ?

The PREMIER : I am about to say a word or two about that. I believe I said, in moving the second reading, that as to the manner in which the expenditure of the funds of the districts were to be controlled, I was not at present in a position to make a definite proposition. I have not my speech before me, but I know what I had in my mind, and, I believe, I made a reference to a possible representative body elected by local authorities. I do not remember if I said that or not.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : You said it was undesirable.

The PREMIER : I said that of provincial councils, which, I believe, are undesirable. I believe I also made reference to some other possible—

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : You said there might be an extension of the powers already held by local authorities.

The PREMIER : I am speaking of what I said in moving the second reading of the Bill. I believe I then made reference to the matter. I am sure I referred to it—it is so present in my memory. I said that although the Government was not prepared at present to propose any definite form of a local administrative body, that was a matter which would no doubt be developed. This is the foundation, and when this is done we shall be in a position in a very short time to say what more will follow. That is the object with which it is brought forward. We propose at the present time, in addition to this, to secure the local administration of the Government departments at any rate, and so avoid, so far as we possibly can, the evils of centralisation. I can say no more. I say that the Government have kept their word so far as they could. They have brought in this Bill which is an essential part of any scheme which is to have the effect of treating the northern and central portions of the colony on a better footing than at the present time. I believe it meets the wishes of a large majority in the North as well as in the Central districts. I have strong reasons for believing so, but hon. members who represent the North say they will have none of this, and why? Some of them because it will embarrass the Government; others because they will not have anything but separation; and others will vote against it, although up to the present they always supported it, because the Government have brought it in, and it will embarrass them, and may defeat them. This division so far as the Government are concerned will be an honest one. They have kept their word, and will do so so far as they can. If the people of the North absolutely refuse a scheme of this kind they can no longer be heard to say that the southern part of the colony will not treat them fairly. Let them do it if they please. Let them reject the Bill if they will; but I am sure those members of this House this evening are not the representatives of the people of the North in this particular. Let them reject it; but they must bear this in mind, that hollow mockeries and hollow professions do not count for much in the actual work of life, though they may sound very well as electioneering addresses delivered in Parliament when members think they are on the eve of a general election. They must remember this, that if they reject a fair offer, honestly made by the Government to them, they can no longer be heard to say that the Government was not disposed to give them fair treatment. Let them take it or leave it as they please; we make them a fair offer; they may refuse it if they

like. But if they refuse it, it will not be open for them to say that we did not make them the offer, and endeavour to make the offer a fair one.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 25.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Jordan, Rutledge, Dutton, Moreton, Sheridan, Lumley Hill, McMaster, Kates, Grimes, Wakefield, Bulcock, S. W. Brooks, Buckland, White, Mellor, Fraser, W. Brookes, Foxton, Campbell, Higson, Annear, Bailey, Morgan, and Aland.

NOES, 21.

Messrs. Morehead, Norton, Chubb, Macrossan, Nelson, Hamilton, McWhannell, Murphy, Wallace, Allan, Brown, Stevens, Palmer, Philp, Scott, Pattison, Donaldson, Adams, Black, Lalor, and Jessop.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. The business the Government propose to take to-morrow is, first, the Municipal Endowments Bill, then Committee of Supply.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Does the hon. gentleman propose to sit on Friday ?

The PREMIER : No.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said : Mr. Speaker,—I wish to inform this House and the country that the hon. gentleman opposite was allowed on the last debate a privilege I never saw accorded before to any person who moved the second reading of a Bill.

The PREMIER : I have.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : I have been in this House twelve years, and this is the first time I ever saw it done; and the hon. gentleman felt very indignant at any objection being taken. I objected, but objection was only taken to the hon. member replying to arguments. I was under the impression that he was going to make a declaration in the direction of the suggestions I made in the early part of the debate—namely, a further extension of local government would be allowed to the North such as would give us the control of our own resources; otherwise I would have objected to allowing the hon. gentleman one single word in reply to arguments. I was under that impression, but I was deceived. And yet he claims to have said something about local government being extended to the North, but he did not. The only reference the hon. gentleman made to the question was when he said that we had delegated certain powers to local authorities in the past, and we might do so by extending them still more in the future. Whether that was anything to give us any hope of local government in such a direction as to give us the control of our own resources I leave hon. members to judge for themselves. If the hon. gentleman had made a statement in accordance with any of the suggestions I made, I believe that probably there would have been no division at all; but he failed to make such a statement. He says he is glad he forced us to give our votes. I am just as glad that we had an opportunity of giving our votes on such an important question, and also that it has been carried by the votes of the Ministry. There was only a majority of four, and the five Ministers in the House made that majority. What I want to impress on hon. members is that this is a privilege that has not been accorded, to my knowledge, before. It is one not usually asked for, and I do not think it would be accorded to enable an hon. member to reply to arguments.

The SPEAKER : Looking at the question as one of parliamentary rule, the hon. member is quite right. The hon. member who moves the second reading of a Bill is not entitled to the right of reply, but in this case the privilege of reply was given with the consent of the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Is it without precedent?

The SPEAKER : It has been given before in this House.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—When the hon. member for Townsville brought up the question, I turned up a precedent at once in *Hansard*. On the 5th July, 1883, Sir Thomas Mellwraith said :—

“ When moving the second reading of this Bill I was courteously accorded the right of reply by the House. ”

I think I have asked for the right to reply since then.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : I do not recollect.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said : Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, casts a slur upon the party on this side by saying that the question was carried by the votes of the Ministry. I say it is a credit to the Ministry that they have decided to give fair play to the North. Hon. members may slink out—the Opposition dare not listen to the arguments used against them—but I say that in the North the measure will be received as an endeavour on the part of the Ministry to give them fair play as far as they possibly can.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at six minutes past 11 o'clock.