

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 1887

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 13 September, 1887.

Petition.—New Member.—Member Sworn.—Questions.—
 Question without Notice.—Motion for Adjournment
 —Classification of Engine-drivers, Guards, and
 Stokers—Railway Retrenchment at Maryborough
 —Chinese on Russell River—Motion for Adjourn-
 ment—Chinese on the Russell River.—Motion for
 Adjournment—Extension of the Central Railway.—
 Printing Committee's Report.—Formal Motions.—
 Queensland Fisheries Bill—second reading.—Local
 Administration Bill—second reading—resumption
 of debate.—Supply—resumption of committee—
 Adjournment.

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

PETITION.

Mr. W. BROOKES presented a petition from
 the Trustees of the Lady Bowen Lying-in
 Hospital, praying for leave to introduce a Bill to
 enable them to sell the whole or part of their
 land, and devote the proceeds to the purchase of
 a new site and buildings for the like purpose in
 a more convenient locality. He moved that it
 be received.

Question put and passed.

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 Enoggera,
 certifying the return of James Robert Dickson,
 Esquire, as one of the members for the said
 electoral district.

MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. JAMES ROBERT DICKSON was sworn in,
 and took his seat as a member for the electoral
 district of Enoggera.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. ANNEAR asked the Minister for Works—

1. What is the length of deviation of line as laid by the sleepers known as Phillips's patent?

2. What is the expenditure thereon up to date of opening, and the number of men employed on same since opening, and the amount paid?

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

1. The total length of deviation is 74 chains 22 links, of which 65 chains 71 links only are laid with Phillips's sleepers.

2. Expenditure to date of opening, £1,819. Average number of men employed since opening, 680. Total expenditure since opening, £187 15s. 5d., of which amount £81 18s. is due to the sleeper road, and £105 17s. 5d. to the approaches.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL asked the Colonial Treasurer—

When will a dredge be sent to Cairns?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

The "Octopus" is now undergoing a complete overhaul. When this is completed she will be sent to Cairns—probably in about a month.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—May I ask the Minister for Works a question without notice? I want to know if he will lay on the table of the House Mr. Jack's report on the Croydon and Etheridge Gold Fields.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—Of course I will do that without a formal notice of motion, but I believe the papers were laid on the table months ago—in the early part of the session.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith): I read them yesterday.

Mr. PALMER: They are not printed, then?

The PREMIER: Yes; I received them amongst my other papers.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

CLASSIFICATION OF ENGINE-DRIVERS, GUARDS, AND STOKERS.—RAILWAY RETRENCHMENT AT MARYBOROUGH.—CHINESE ON RUSSELL RIVER.

Mr. ADAMS said: Mr. Speaker,—I am desirous of asking the Minister for Works a question, and I intend to conclude with the usual motion. I may first of all disabuse the hon. gentleman's mind of the idea that any man in the department has mentioned the matter to me, but it has been mentioned outside that there are a certain number of men employed as engine-drivers, guards, and stokers on the different railway lines of the colony who work under what is termed a classification. That is, I presume, that these young men are taken on at a very low salary, and as they work themselves up they are paid larger wages according to their classification. Up to the end of last year these men were in the habit of receiving this extra pay, but in January last when the classification took place they were told that the question of the payment of the extra money was to lie in abeyance for six months. At the end of the six months it appears that a settlement of the question was postponed again for another six months. I have not the slightest doubt that this will be called economy, but if so I think it is very false economy, because when young men enter the department and work themselves up they attain a certain degree of

proficiency, and take care to do justice to themselves and their employers. If the extra money which they were promised is refused that is nothing less than repudiation. If a private firm has made an arrangement with their employes that they would give them a certain amount of money if they proved capable, and if the employes did not get that amount, the agreement would be broken. I think the Government are at fault in this matter. We must remember that, in travelling, the lives of a large number of people are in the hands of these employes of the Government, and it is necessary for them to be very careful; but when they find that their carefulness and attention to duty is only met by a breach of agreement they will take no interest in their work, and will become careless. It would not be the men who would suffer mostly, but the travelling public, and therefore I trust that the Minister for Works will give us some idea of this matter, tell us how it has happened, and whether it is intended to pay these men what they were promised. I move the adjournment of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—The matter to which the hon. member has referred is that concerning the departmental rules which classify the firemen, guards, and drivers, and provides for gradually increasing their pay according to their time of service for the first, second, third, fourth, or fifth year, according to their class. This involves a regular, steady increase in the salaries paid to these men; and as in every other direction in the department it has been decided that no increase whatever shall be made, it is, consequently, not fair to the other servants of the department, who are equally entitled to the consideration of the Government, to allow these men a regular increase in their salaries. The rule was consequently suspended about six months ago, and I have continued the suspension of the rule since I have been in office, because I think it is not right or just that these men should be allowed a gradually increasing salary, while the other servants of the department get no increase. The suspension of the rule will continue, and in the meantime those men will be paid at the rate they are already receiving until it is found desirable to move it. I think it only fair that these men should be subject to the rules which apply to all the other officers of the Government in the colony.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not believe that the other officers are entitled to a similar increase under a similar classification.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, certainly not.

Mr. NORTON: That makes all the difference. The hon. gentleman said it was not right, fair, just, or honest, that these men should get this increase; but if they were entitled to it, according to their classification, they should get it; and if it is considered that they should not get it, then instead of suspending the rule under which they become entitled to the increase, it ought to be altered altogether. If the rule may be suspended for six months, it may be suspended indefinitely or altogether. Is it not far better to alter the whole system and give those men to understand at once that they are not to get the increases to which they are now entitled? At any rate that would do away with the suspicion of unfair dealing upon the part of the Government, in whose employ the men are. When these men received their appointments it was with the understanding that if their services were efficient they would be entitled to the increase of salary, the object being to induce them to fit themselves for carrying

out their work properly. If that inducement to make themselves efficient is taken from them it will not only create dissatisfaction with the manner in which they are treated, but it will create throughout the whole service the suspicion that none of them can be sure whether he will be fairly treated or not. It disorganises the whole service when a promise—or something more than a promise—a rule of this kind is not carried out. I am quite sure, as the lives and property of the public so largely depend upon the efficiency of the railway servants, that it is the greatest possible mistake that any action should be taken by the head of the department that may have the effect of making these men careless or less anxious to carry out their work efficiently.

RAILWAY RETRENCHMENT AT MARYBOROUGH.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister for Works what I consider the very unfair treatment the district which I have the honour to represent is receiving at the hands of the officials of the Works Department. During the last few years we have been increasing our railways in the Wide Bay district, and have added considerably to the number of miles constructed in that district, and yet I find that the department is going to reduce considerably the number of men employed in the repair shops at Maryborough. I quite agree with the remarks of the leader of the Opposition the other night when he said we should not reduce the expenditure to such an extent whereby the safety of the public might not be fully secured. In the Southern district of the colony the commissioner has cut down the probable estimate by $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and in the Wide Bay and Burnett district he proposes to reduce it by $23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Hon. members are well aware that the railways in the Wide Bay district are new railways, and are not so consolidated as the railways in the South, which have been in existence for many years, and yet I am aware that a number of men in Maryborough have been told their services will be dispensed with. I do not advocate that these men should be employed if their services are not required, but I do advocate that the Wide Bay district should receive the same treatment as the other districts of the colony, and as the Southern district especially. I wish also to reply to a remark made by the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Palmer, the other night. That hon. member stated, and seemed to have a pleasure in stating it, that the railways in the Wide Bay district only paid 9s. 5½d. per cent. I find from a return laid on the table of the House this session that the following are the earnings of the several Queensland railways per mile since January 1st to the end of August last: Southern and Western Railway, nearly £337 per mile; Maryborough Railway, £308; Northern Railway, £305 10s.; Central Railway, £185; Mackay Railway, £126 5s.; Bundaberg, £87; and Cooktown Railway, £55. The Bundaberg line is the only line which shows a decrease, and these figures prove that with one exception the line from Maryborough to Gympie is the best paying line in the colony. Seeing the goldfields that are being opened up in the district, I have no doubt the Bundaberg line will also soon become a paying line. I sincerely trust that the Minister for Works, if we are to have a policy of retrenchment, will see that it is carried out in a fair and impartial manner, and I wish to claim, as one of the members for Maryborough, that such should be the case. It must be apparent to every hon. member that it is very unfair that there should be a reduction of $23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in one district and a reduction of only $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in what is at all times the favoured district, the Southern district of the colony.

CHINESE ON RUSSELL RIVER.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to take advantage of the motion for adjournment to read a telegram I have just received from Geraldton, and I do it now so that the Premier may reply to this matter in his reply to the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough. The telegram is as follows:—

"Fearing possible danger Mowbray's advice being followed regarding line drawn for Chinese at confluence of Cave Creek at Upper Russell I give you to understand he is surrendering largest portion of goldfield to Chinamen against European miners' wish. We want no being but Chinese excluded from Russell River waters they having no hand in its discovery. This is to forestall Mowbray's report fearing petition too late which will be forwarded as soon as the necessary signatures are attached.

"CHRISTIE PALMERSTON

"Russell River Diggings."

I received this telegram about half-an-hour ago. It appears from this that there is to be a petition from miners on this goldfield to the effect that Chinese shall not be allowed to interfere with it in any way; that there shall be no line drawn, and that the Chinese shall not be permitted to set foot upon this goldfield at all. This telegram has been sent to me by Mr. Christie Palmerston, the discoverer of the field, and I am perfectly certain he endorses the wish of the whole of the miners there, for no place in Queensland has suffered more from the invasion of the Chinese than the north of the colony, and no class has suffered more from them than the miners. Cooktown was the first portion of this colony they invaded, and the Palmer Gold Field was the magnet that drew them there. At one time from 16,000 to 17,000 Chinese were on that field. Mr. Macrossan, the hon. member for Townsville, saw the danger long before it arrived, and brought that danger under the notice of Sir Samuel Griffith and other members of that party; in fact, their neglect to take any action in checking the invasion of the "yellow agony" was one of his reasons for moving a vote of want of confidence in that side of the House. I have lived for years on the Palmer, and I know very well the effect of the invasion of the Chinese. I know miles of gullies which are now desolate, and which, but for the Chinese, would be peopled with European miners; and the same thing will accrue here if prompt action is not taken. Therefore I take the first opportunity of bringing this under the notice of the House, in the hope that some action will be taken to prevent the Chinese being allowed to place a foot on this goldfield.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not rise to answer the very remarkable historical statements of the hon. member for Cook.

Mr. HAMILTON: Because you do not like them.

The PREMIER: Everybody knows how true they are.

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes; that is the worst of it.

The PREMIER: And how untrue they are. I rise to answer the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear. I do not quite understand what he means by the great reduction in the cost of maintenance of railways in the Wide Bay district. In the Estimates laid on the table the amount asked for this year is precisely the same as last year, £37,927; so I do not see where the reduction comes in. I have before me the figures showing the actual expenditure last year in that department, and I see that the amount saved out of the amount voted was very considerable. I find that in the locomotive department £13,350 was voted and only £10,000 spent, and that is the department the hon. gentleman has referred to. It

is considered that the extra £3,300 is quite sufficient to cover the additional expenditure owing to additional length. I prepared these estimates myself, and I know of no intention to make any serious reduction. I do not know that any man is going to be dismissed. But it is a curious commentary on any attempt made by a Government to retrench: "You must retrench, but you must not dismiss one man; you must retrench, but you must not reduce one man's salary; you must not pay one shilling less to anybody in particular, but in general you are to save several hundred thousand pounds." It always happens that way. It is not the first time I have heard cries for retrenchment followed by objections to any reduction in single items.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—Like the Premier, I do not quite understand the hon. member for Maryborough. In the Treasurer's tables in connection with the Financial Statement it is recorded beyond doubt that the return for capital invested in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts for the year 1886-7 was 9s. 5½d.; and it is not improved if we look back a few years. In the last year it was only £1 5s. 1d.; the year before that, £1 13s. 11d.; in 1883-84, when all the railways were paying very fairly, the Central returned £4 6s. 8d., and this one £1 4s. 9d. I did not refer to the matter with any glee at all; I stated a solemn fact. I did not dance a "corroboree" over it or go in for any gesticulations; I simply stated, in quoting the returns from all the railways, that the Wide Bay and Burnett district railways only returned 9s. 5½d. per cent. on the capital invested. I would like to refer to the matter brought up by the hon. member for Cook. I have several times advocated that the simplest way of settling this matter with regard to Chinese on goldfields would be to refuse to grant them miners' rights at all; then there would be no chance of this continual irritation which exists and will continue to exist between the European digger and the Chinese. If that course were adopted the revenue would not be decreased to any great extent, and it would settle the matter at once.

Mr. BAILEY said: Mr. Speaker,—There is a very simple explanation of the mistake into which the hon. member has fallen with reference to the Maryborough and Bundaberg railways. There has been an annual loss on the line from Bundaberg to Mount Perry, and that loss has been debited to the Maryborough and Gympie line. I was careful in framing a motion which I intend to move to divide these two lines so as to show the actual returns from each. The fact of a losing line being tacked on a well-paying line caused the mistake the hon. member has fallen into. In Table T the hon. member will find all the information he requires.

Mr. ADAMS said: Mr. Speaker,—I think what has fallen from the hon. member with reference to the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line might very well have been allowed to lie quiet. The day is not far distant when the Bundaberg line will be one of the best paying lines in the colony. I shall be very much surprised if, when the first section of the Mungarr line is open for traffic, the Gympie and Maryborough line does not fall back very much indeed. Now, with reference to the Minister for Works' statement that other men ought to be considered as well as firemen, drivers, and guards, I would say that the other men the hon. member speaks of were engaged at a fixed salary and knew exactly what they were to get; but the men I spoke of were to have their salaries raised year by year according to their merits. There was a positive agreement entered into between those men and the Government to which I think the Government are

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bound to adhere; if they do not it is a case of repudiation. The other men have not to be taken into consideration at all: it was an agreement with those men, and those men alone. These men have been endeavouring to work themselves up to a state of efficiency, and many of them, I have heard, obtained a higher classification last year, but could get no more salary. I beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

CHINESE ON RUSSELL RIVER.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move the adjournment of the House. Just now I brought under the notice of the Government a matter of public interest, but the Premier, instead of replying to it, denied the truth of some statements I made on the authority of the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan. Every man in this House knows Mr. Macrossan, and also the Premier; and I do not believe there is a man in this House who would not sooner take the word of Mr. Macrossan than that of a gentleman whose mind is always a blank when facts are against him. I wish to have an answer as to whether the Premier intends to take any action in connection with the telegram I read to the House. Perhaps he does not, for it is very well known that though continually protesting, for political purposes, his disapproval of the Chinese, he has taken very little action in keeping them out of the country. Even within the last session or two, when a Bill was introduced to exclude Chinese, and the Opposition wished to increase the prohibition, it was opposed by the Premier. Perhaps he will deny the truth of that, but it is recorded in *Hansard*. I have read a telegram from the prospector of this field stating that the Chinese are encroaching upon this goldfield; that the white men are the discoverers, and the Chinese have no *locus standi*; and it is the wish of the white residents of the field that they should be protected against the Chinese. I therefore again ask the Premier if he is going to take any action in connection with the telegram I have read.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—In reference to the subject-matter of the telegram to which the hon. member has referred, I may say that a recommendation was made the other day by Warden Mowbray that a certain portion of the district should be proclaimed a goldfield, and it is intended to give effect to that recommendation. Then, if the Chinese attempt to go on the field to the detriment of the white miners, the law can be put into force to prevent them.

Mr. HAMILTON: I beg to withdraw the motion, Mr. Speaker.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

EXTENSION OF THE CENTRAL RAILWAY.

Mr. PATTISON said: Mr. Speaker,—I very much regret to have to move the adjournment of the House to draw attention to another matter.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh!

Mr. PATTISON: I have been here for some time now, and have never yet taken advantage of the forms of the House. The grievance I have to bring under the notice of the House and of the country is in reference to the very unsatisfactory reply given by the Minister for Works to a deputation that waited on him last Thursday with respect to the extension of the Central Railway. The Minister for Works is laughing, but it is no laughing matter to the members for the Central districts, or to the

residents of those districts. When the £10,000,000 loan vote was passed it was passed in a very hurried manner, and, much to the surprise of the Central districts, the whole amount for them was something like £630,000; a very large portion of that was supposed to be for the purpose of extending the railway from Barcaldine to the Thomson. The members for the Central districts had very great difficulty last session in getting the plans laid upon the table, and it was only a week or two before the close of the session that they were very unwillingly laid on the table. We were afterwards informed that tenders for the extension of the line would be called at an early date; and yet the Central districts have been waiting anxiously for nearly twelve months for those tenders to be called. Recently the senior member for Rockhampton extracted a promise from the late Minister for Works that tenders would be called at an early date, but that promise appears to have gone the way of the other promises. The reply given by the Minister for Works to the deputation that waited on him recently gave the impression that there is a great deal of uncertainty whether the line will be proceeded with or not. When questioned on the subject, Mr. Curnow said the plans were ready for the extension as far as Ilfracombe, and the Minister for Works, when informed of that, told the deputation that it was a matter for the Cabinet to consider when tenders would be called, and that it was altogether a matter of finance whether the line would be proceeded with or not; and if it was to be proceeded with, he could not say to what extent. That is a very unsatisfactory state of matters in regard to railway extension in the Central district, and it is not the answer the Minister for Works should have made to the deputation. We have hitherto displayed a considerable amount of patience in being satisfied with promises, but we find we have to do something stronger than to rely on promises; and I would like the answer of the Minister for Works to go forth to the country, and show what are the intentions of the Government with respect to the Central district. We are on the eve of a general election. Do not let the Central districts be again deluded with promises of railways if they will send members here to support the Government. I say the sum set apart was not such a sum as the Central district had a right to expect; but we were satisfied, and the least the Government should do is to have that sum of money spent as we were led to believe it would be spent. The only sum in addition to the £630,000 on the Loan Estimates was £4,000 for finishing the court-house at Rockhampton. Those are the only two sums the Central district was to get out of the £10,000,000 loan. I do not care upon what basis a comparison is made—whether upon population, revenue, or any other basis—but I say the Central district did not receive a fair share of the £10,000,000 loan, even if they get it, which is very uncertain. It may be said that the earnings of the railway have so fallen off that the Government are not justified in extending the railway further; but I say that special causes have led to the falling-off of late, and that, according to the public returns, the Central Railway has been one of the best paying railways; and I believe, sir, when the colony recovers from the depression of the past few years it will again take its old position, and justify the extension not only to the Thomson, but also to the South Australian border—a point which I hope to see reached, even in my lifetime. I think I have said all I need say, Mr. Speaker. My only desire is that the Minister for Works will, in his reply, let the Central districts know what to expect, as far as the extension of the railway is concerned.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—When the Minister for Works received the deputation recently, he told them that it was a question of finance, and so it is. The intention of the Government is, and always has been, to extend the railway as far as the Thomson River; but the question of calling for tenders now, or later, is a question of money, and until we are in full possession of facts concerning all the liabilities already incurred, and likely to be incurred, during the present financial year, as against the money in hand to meet those liabilities, the Government will not make any promises as to when tenders will be called. There are several railways in the same position, the construction of which, when the plans are passed by this House, will be pushed on with all possible speed. The Government have never yet broken a promise they have made. But to suppose that every railway can be made at once is to talk like children. We know perfectly well that our borrowing capacities are limited, and we have no right to spend more than a certain amount in any one year, even if the English capitalists will lend us the money to do it. I am not in a position—although I expected to be in the position to-day—to give more information on the subject now than I was last Wednesday or Thursday, when the hon. member for Bowen asked his question. The information I then expected to receive I have not yet got; I am now promised it this evening. But until the Government are in a position to know exactly what are the outstanding liabilities against the loan vote, what money there is in hand to carry on works, and when it will be desirable to go to the market for more money, we cannot give any definite answer as to when any tenders will be called for, or for what lines. Another serious question with regard to the Central Railway is whether it should be extended in one section or two—to Ilfracombe Creek, or all the way to the Thomson, in which case the whole would be let in one contract. In my opinion it will be far better to have working plans complete all the way to the Thomson before tenders are called for. As I said before, the Government intend to carry out that railway as soon as the state of the finances will allow them to do so, but not sooner.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—It is about time some member entered a protest against the way in which the Chief Secretary treats hon. members, and especially hon. members on this side, when dealing with this question. He gets up and abuses members of the Opposition for the faults of the Government. Is it our fault that the Government have so muddled the finances of the colony that, to use a familiar expression, they do not know whether they stand on their head or on their heel? And yet the hon. gentleman has the audacity to get up and lecture us who have a perfect right to seek to press on works that have been promised by the House; and to tell us that we are like a lot of schoolboys. He says we address him like schoolboys because we dare to ask the Government to carry out what the House has said should be carried out. Whose fault is it that the present state of the finances is bad? Is it the fault of this side of the House, or of the other? Every session of Parliament the Premier and his colleagues have come down with fresh schemes of taxation. They have taxed the colony on every occasion when they have brought in a Budget, in one form or another, and now we are told that the finances are in such a deplorable condition that they cannot tell us how they stand at the present moment, and that we ought to know better than bother the Government under such depressing circumstances. Never, I think, in the history of this or

of any other colony has there been an instance of a Government admitting, on the one hand, the gross incompetence with which they have managed the finances of the colony, and on the other hand abusing members of the Opposition in particular, and some also on the other side, because they demand the expenditure that has been promised and to which this House is pledged. The same story to which we have now been treated was told to the hon. member for Bowen the other night. But for gross mismanagement of our railways and finances, all these works could have been carried out quite easily. It appears to me rather an anomaly, and a little too hard upon the inhabitants of the colony, that the Government should have taken the late Minister for Lands from that position to make him Minister for Works. But I suppose it was because he had made a mess of the administration of the Land Act that he was put into his new position to make a mess of the Works Department. After what has taken place, I should have thought that in the reconstruction of the Government he would have been put into the Treasury. He was there when the leakage took place, and if he is good at stopping leaks he might have been sent there. I hope he is better at stopping leaks than he is at electioneering. With all the debating society influence he brought to bear yesterday at Toowong, no doubt assisted also by the Railway Department, he was unable to defeat his late colleague and had to content himself with a minority of five. No doubt that is the reason why the hon. gentleman looks so despondent this afternoon. I think if he had attended to his Works Department instead of electioneering he would have done a great deal better. I would ask the hon. gentleman to seriously consider, in connection with our railways, the enormous discrepancy which exists between the cost of managing the railways in the South and the cost of managing them in the other districts. According to the returns, the cost in the South is £377 10s. per mile; in Wide Bay and Burnett, £287 per mile; and in the Central division, £248 per mile. I trust that during the recess, which he is likely to enjoy shortly, he will take the opportunity of finding out how these great discrepancies exist, and the cause of the vast expenditure that has taken place in the department over which he now rules. I again enter my protest against the action of the Premier—against the way in which he treats hon. members who simply ask for what they are fully entitled to.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—While on the subject of the Central Railway I should like to urge upon the Government—at any rate when they get the money, and I do not know how near or how remote that event may be—that they will take the line from the present terminus to the Thomson River in one section. If they stop at Ilfracombe Creek it will be necessary for them to go to considerable expense in providing water for the inhabitants of the township that is sure to spring up there—also for the use of the railway and the men working upon it—which will not be necessary if they let the whole length in one section. For the purpose of the work on the line sufficient water could be obtained at a trifling expense; a dam similar to those required on sheep stations would be sufficient. If the first section should stop at Ilfracombe, as large a township will spring up there as Barcardine is now; and it will be a far more difficult task to supply the residents with water, as there is no river or large creek at Ilfracombe, as there is at Barcardine. I hope the Government will let the work in one contract to the Thomson, and then the very considerable expense to which I have alluded will be saved.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am glad the hon. member for Blackall has brought this matter before the House. I was at Rockhampton lately, and I know very well what the feeling of the people there is upon it. The Chief Secretary has told us that the Government have never broken any promise they have made. I can tell him that they have broken their promises on this very question several times—twice, at all events. Last session a promise was made that tenders would be called for the extension last June. That was not done. Seeing they were not doing anything in that direction, about a month ago I asked a question on the subject, and the answer I got from the late Minister for Works was, that the plans were all ready as far as Ilfracombe—about forty miles, I believe, beyond Barcardine—and that tenders would be called for in about three months; that he would be prepared to call for tenders in about three months from that date. The present Minister for Works, in reply to a deputation which waited upon him, said he could not tell them when the tenders would be called for. It seems clear to me that the Government intend to shelve this railway as long as ever they can; they want to shelve it until the whole of the loan money is expended. Out of the £10,000,000 loan estimate, £360,000 was specially voted for the Central Railway, and not a shilling of that has been expended yet. No tenders have been called since that time; so that the Government have not yet commenced the expenditure of the loan money that was voted for this railway.

The PREMIER: That is absurd.

Mr. FERGUSON: Well, at all events, there has been very little, if any. I know there has been a small amount expended on the Emu Park line, but that is a very small matter—only about £60,000 altogether. So that I can see this quite clearly: that the Government do not intend to do justice to the Central district. We see from the Financial Statement we received this morning that that district has not had a fair share of expenditure in accordance with the money received from it. Every other district—at least the two other divisions—have received over the amount they are entitled to, so that the only district that is not fairly treated in the way of revenue is the Central; and in regard to loan money, I am quite certain they will not get a fair share of that. Even the small amount voted the Government decline to expend. We hear a great deal about the agitation for separation in the North, but I think the Central district is the one that ought to agitate for separation, and if we cannot get something nearer justice than we are getting from the South, I, for one, will be prepared to go with the North. We find that the Fortitude Valley railway is to be constructed at enormous cost to the colony, although I cannot see that it will increase the revenue even £10 a year. Where is the increased revenue to come from? There will be no additional traffic on the new line; so that the Government are going to spend hundreds of thousands of the people's money on that line and get no return for it. And yet here is a railway that is required to open up new country in the Central district, and which has always met with the approval of every member on both sides of the House, and the Government will not call for tenders for it.

Mr. McWHANNELL said: Mr. Speaker,—As one of the deputation that waited upon the Minister for Works on this question, I must say that I was rather disappointed with the reply that we received. Some members, especially those representing Southern constituencies, are, perhaps, not aware that there are twelve miles of railway

on the Central line over which no traffic runs. That twelve miles is beyond Barcaldine, and the Government are now at considerable expense in having to maintain that part of the line, upon which no traffic whatever runs, except when we are honoured with a visit from the Colonial Secretary or the Postmaster-General. I am not quite sure whether it was used on the occasion of the visit of the Governor to the district. That part of the line is of no use or service to the district whatever. Now, sir, with regard to Barcaldine itself, a considerable sum of money will have to be spent there if it remains the terminus for any length of time. It has no water three or four months after rain has fallen. There is a supply—a comparatively limited supply—of water about four miles distant from the township; but if that has to be used by the residents and for railway purposes as well, I question if it will be sufficient. The only other resource they have would be to run water trains some twenty miles along the line, which would add very considerably to the expenses. Some mention has been made of a creek called Ilfracombe. That is only a small creek, on which I believe a fair site for a dam is to be found close to the railway line surveyed there. It would have to be more a tank than a dam; there would be a considerable amount of excavation necessary, at large expense, and even then in a severe drought it would not be likely to be permanent. It would be entirely useless as a supply of water for a large population. I would strongly recommend the Minister for Works, when he calls for tenders for the extension of this line, that it should be let in one section right through to the Thomson. I daresay some members are aware that the inhabitants of Barcaldine slightly object to the extension of the line, but that arises to a certain extent from selfishness. They have been to the expense of putting up buildings there, but at the same time the whole of the surrounding country to the westward has a better claim to the extension of the line than the residents of Barcaldine have for stopping it, because when they erected their buildings they knew perfectly well that it would only be the terminus for a short period. Therefore they knew exactly what to expect when they put them up.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I think, sir, the members who have spoken on this subject on this side of the House have very good ground of complaint; and I think that the admission of the Government shows a weakness on their part which this House should take into serious consideration. They have now had the management of the finances of the colony for four years, and I can say safely that no Government in this or any of the other colonies that I am aware of has had such confidence reposed in them as has been reposed in this Government, and no other Government that I am aware of has ever had the same amount of money at their disposal. And, sir, I do not know any other Government that has ever made such a weak admission as has been made by the hon. the Chief Secretary as Colonial Treasurer this evening, of the hopeless muddle they have allowed the finances of the colony to drift into. And what is the result? That all further expenditure from Loan Fund upon public works is to be deferred until the Government have been able to go thoroughly into the state of the finances. Mr. Speaker, that is a most deplorable admission for any Government to have to make. When are we likely to get this analysis of the Loan Fund? Why, sir, if the Treasury Department had been carried on with the smallest amount of efficiency, it is a return that should be available in two or three hours. Instead of that we had the matter referred to last week, and still the Government are as much at sea as ever they were.

The hon. gentleman stated that the prosecution of any further public works involving expenditure from Loan Fund would have to be deferred until they had ascertained how that fund really stood. Well, sir, I would like the hon. gentleman to give some explanation to this House why he accepted a tender for the Fortitude Valley line. Surely the expenditure for that line is to come out of the Loan Fund. I think—and I know that my opinion is held by many members of this House, and by many people outside—that this is probably one of the most unjustifiable items of expenditure included in the £10,000,000 loan. At all events, in the present state of the finances of the country that is certainly a line that might very safely have been deferred. The time may come when that line might very fairly be made, but just now, when our finances are so seriously hampered, when additional taxation is proposed in order to balance the revenue and expenditure of the country, we find a totally unnecessary expenditure, to the extent of £175,000, sanctioned by the Government, while at the same time they say they will not go on with other public works until they have ascertained how they can make both ends meet. There is a plan I see before me on the table of the House in connection with the South Brisbane extension—what is to be the fate of that? Are we going to waste time discussing it when the Government do not intend to carry it through? And I ask, sir, are this Government competent to go on with the public works, involving the expenditure of large sums of money, after the election which, I am happy to say, resulted as it did yesterday in the return to this House of the hon. ex-Treasurer, a gentleman who we know will assist in passing the Estimates? I think that shows very plainly, sir, that the Government has not that support in the southern part of the colony which they anticipated they had. I am perfectly certain, sir, they have not the confidence of the country, or the more northern portions of it, especially in reference to the expenditure that has been going on out of the £10,000,000 loan since it was passed. The hon. member for Rockhampton stated that little or nothing of the amount voted for the Central districts has been expended out of the amount voted, with the exception of the Emu Park line; and I think he is about right. I will take the Northern districts; I do not know of any expenditure out of the portion voted out of the £10,000,000 loan for the North. The expenditure in regard to the Cairns-Herberton railway was voted by the previous Government, and the amount voted for the Bowen railway still remains unexpended, and the Government do not intend to go on with any of those railways except the Gulf line.

The PREMIER: That is being gone on with now.

Mr. BLACK: The Government have not done anything but that. In fact, the only expenditure out of that £10,000,000 loan has been in the southern part of the colony, where only £1,000,000 out of its share of that loan has been spent, while the Central and Northern divisions have had none.

The PREMIER: Nonsense!

Mr. BLACK: It is not nonsense. The hon. gentleman is welcome to say "nonsense"; but it is not nonsense. I hold in my hand a table which says that in the Southern division, out of the railway loan vote, there is £2,149,668 unexpended. Now, the amount apportioned to the Southern division out of the £10,000,000 was £3,140,000, and I think if the hon. gentleman deducts one amount from the other he will see that the South has only had expended £1,000,000 out of

its share of the £10,000,000 loan for railways; while the Central and Northern districts have not had any expenditure at all.

The PREMIER: You are altogether in error. About £4,000,000 has been spent.

Mr. BLACK: If the hon. gentleman considers he will find that the moneys which have been spent in the Central and Northern divisions of the colony were moneys voted by the previous Government; so that the amount apportioned to these districts out of the £10,000,000 loan has not been expended at all.

The PREMIER: We have only borrowed £6,750,000 as yet.

Mr. BLACK: If the hon. gentleman will take advantage of the presence in the House of the late Colonial Treasurer, that gentleman will give him the information he is certainly not in possession of at present. Now, the hon. gentleman also said, Mr. Speaker, that the Government never broke promises.

Mr. MOREHEAD: They never carry them out.

Mr. BLACK: I think that is a statement that will not bear examination, and again, now the ex-Colonial Treasurer is in the House, I would refer to the promise which was broken with regard to the dredge which was to be sent to Mackay as a Christmas or New Year's gift to the people there, and which has just now been sent to Bundaberg, to fulfil, no doubt, some very necessary work there. But there is no doubt that that is one of the most glaring promises the Government ever broke. I think that the Government, after the admission they have made of the muddle they have got the finances of the colony into, should take seriously into consideration the position they occupy now. I do not think this House is justified, Mr. Speaker, in going on with any more work at all, and the sooner we go to the country the better.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—As one of the Central members I have my protest to enter in regard to the non-extension of the Central Railway. The Premier seems to talk as if this was something new brought before him. Why, sir, last session this was pressed upon him by every member of the Central districts, and it was pointed out to him then how much more it would cost the country now, than if tenders had been called before the last section was finished. It will cost much more now than if tenders had been called then, and yet even now the Premier tells us that he is waiting for further information, which he had hoped to have to-day, but which he has not received yet. It seems to me perfectly absurd for the hon. gentleman to begin talking in this way about a line which has been passed by the House, and for which the money has been voted. The Premier has tried to lead hon. members and the country astray by talking about constructing a line from Normanton to Croydon—a line which has never been brought before the House at all, and which is not included in the £10,000,000 loan. I think the Government should have taken into consideration what were national lines and have constructed them, instead of constructing the paltry lines which they have done. One promise made by the Government has been carried out, and that was the one made by the Minister for Works to the people at Springsure. That line that hon. gentleman previously designated as a "job" that would not pay for the grease on the wheels; but the Government have carried out that promise and have stopped a number of national undertakings like the trunk lines in the Central and Northern divisions, while these "jobs," as they have been designated, have been

carried out. It is disgraceful that the Premier should tell us he is waiting for information in regard to this line. He knew perfectly that the money was voted, and the delay has caused great expense to the colony, and we are now as much in the dark and know no more than we did twelve months ago as to when tenders will be called for the line. It is disgraceful, and we ought to have some explanation from the Minister for Works, who sits in his place and hears everybody talking in regard to his department, whilst he is not game to get up and say one word about the matter. He leaves it in the hands of the Premier to do his work for him, and that gentleman always puts us off by saying that he is waiting for information. When we asked him some days ago a question on a financial subject, he told us that he had only been two days in the Treasury, and that by-and-by he would give the information; and now he tells us that he is not sufficiently up in the finances to be able to tell us when tenders will be called for the extension of the Central line. It is time we had a Treasurer who knows how the finances of the colony stand, and when we can learn when tenders will be called for a railway for which money has been voted. But we are put off from week to week, and from month to month, and from year to year; for this question was brought forward last year in the same way, and is not new to members of the Government—but yet we are only as far forward now as we were then.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—For my part I am not at all surprised at the Premier's statements that the Government never broke a promise. I believe the hon. gentleman has repeated that so often that he has come to believe it himself at last. Nobody else does, I am sure. Hon. members this afternoon have mentioned several cases where promises have been broken in their districts. Promises have equally been broken in my district. In regard to the Port Curtis and Bundaberg line, a promise was broken, and it is the same from one end of the colony to the other, except in some favoured places.

The PREMIER: What was the promise broken there?

Mr. NORTON: It is no good the Premier trying to bluff my statement in that way. He tried to bluff me the other night in regard to what I said concerning the Bowen railway. The hon. member interjected while I was speaking that there was no report upon it. There has been a report in the House for years, and I knew there was a report, and I do not know why *Hansard*, in referring to the matter, accidentally put a "not" in my remarks where there ought to have been none. I may have inadvertently said that I did not know it.

The PREMIER: You did certainly assent to what I said.

Mr. NORTON: But I do know that there was a report. I think I said there was a report, and *Hansard* made the mistake twice.

The PREMIER: *Hansard* made no mistake.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It only makes mistakes in your speeches.

The PREMIER: You did assent, whether you intended to or not.

Mr. NORTON: I take this opportunity of saying that I dissent, because I knew at the time that there was a report, and if I did assent to the hon. gentleman's statement I did so inadvertently. I knew that the report had been presented to the House, and that it was referred to by myself at the time the railway was passed by the House. I have

been looking the matter up and have found the report. I am not going to read a lot of extracts from it, but I will just point out one or two short statements which I think are sufficient to damn the Government for ever in connection with the proposed railway to the burnt-out coalfields on the Bowen River. Here is Mr. Jack's report of forty pages which was presented to the House in 1879. That report was referred to at the time the proposed vote of £100,000 for a railway from Bowen to Coalfields was before the committee. Here is what Mr. Jack says with regard to the Kennedy seam:—

"Burned with difficulty in a strong wood fire, the result, in scarcely diminished bulk, being a reddish shaly ash."

That is the coal from the Kennedy seam, in the valuable coalfield to which a railway was to be taken. Of the Garrick seam he says:—

"Required a strong wood fire to keep it burning, and left a good deal of brown ash. . . . On following the Garrick seam from E. to W., it becomes broken up by one and sometimes two layers of hard ferruginous coal, exhibiting a tendency to columnar structure."

With reference to the Macarthur seam he says:—

"This seam is accompanied by a sheet of dolerite, which has rendered it smutty and almost useless throughout. The portions which are somewhat better are too thin to be practically workable."

And that is the tone of the report all through. Mr. Jack reported that in some places there was coal which was not destroyed by volcanic action; but on the whole, so far as the report goes, it shows that it was a burnt-out field; burnt out in consequence of the volcanic action that has taken place in that locality. I mention this matter because the Premier made a bold assertion when he corrected me by saying that there was no report on that field before the House; and it is just like a great many more of his assertions. The hon. gentleman can brazen a matter out as well as anyone when he likes; and I take this opportunity of referring to the report to show that my statement was correct, and that at the time the vote for the proposed railway from Bowen to Coalfields was passed the hon. gentleman simply induced hon. members to pass it by his personal influence. With regard to the question referred to by the hon. member for Blackall, I do think that the Central district has been treated exceedingly badly, both with respect to the Central line and other matters for which the money has been voted by Parliament. Of course, now that the Premier comes down and sets up his back and says that he is not prepared to do anything to push on the construction of that railway until he knows how the finances stand, we are obliged to protest, as we have already done, against the action taken by the Government in reference to the Fortitude Valley railway. We know perfectly well, and the Government know perfectly well, that that line cannot be carried out, as far as it is proposed to be constructed, for the sum voted by Parliament, and, in addition to the cost of making the line, considerable expense must be incurred in putting up buildings which will be required for the use of the railway when it is built as far as is now intended. There must be a central station, and, according to the report of a deputation which waited on the Minister for Works the other day, I see that it is proposed to build a temporary station—to erect some wooden structure. That will simply be a waste of money, because if a station has to be built there at all it will be a great deal cheaper to put up a good building than to put up a temporary concern which will have to be pulled down in the course of a year or two and be replaced by an expensive and more substantial

structure. I agree with the members who have spoken that the conduct of the Government with regard to the whole of the Central district is such that any member representing electorates in that part of the colony cannot fail to make his protest against it whenever the opportunity occurs.

Mr. PATTISON said: Mr. Speaker,—I have a very few words to say in reply. It appears to me that there is the same amount of uncertainty now about the matter that there was when the deputation left the Minister for Works. I think it is the duty of the Government, if they wish to show consistency with regard to their intention to postpone the Central Railway until they have ascertained the exact finances, to apply that rule to all other railways as well, especially to the two railways in Brisbane—the Fortitude Valley and South Brisbane railways. Let that be done, and then it will go forth to the country that they are consistent. I believe, however, that in one of these cases a tender has been accepted. If that is so the action of the Government is scarcely fair to the Central district of the colony, and it shows very bad reasoning on the part of the Premier when he says that he must first ascertain the state of the finances before he gives us our railway extension, which was promised four years ago. I think we might all be satisfied to delay the matter some little time to give the Premier an opportunity to realise the state of the finances of the country generally; but this railway is embraced in the loan vote of ten millions. We find that the Premier this afternoon said that something like six and a-half millions has been spent.

The PREMIER: No; about four millions.

Mr. PATTISON: The hon. gentleman said we have yet to go into the market for £2,700,000 of that loan vote.

The PREMIER: No; £3,200,000.

Mr. PATTISON: The hon. gentleman said that about six and three-quarter millions had been borrowed.

The PREMIER: And that leaves £3,250,000.

Mr. PATTISON: Yes; there is about three and a-quarter millions yet to be floated. If we have no chance of obtaining this extension when we had ten millions, it stands to common sense that we have less chance now when the loan has got down so low. And if we have to wait until another loan is floated, I very much doubt whether we shall ever get the extension. I therefore think it is very much better to put a stop to all the railways at once, and stop borrowing. We are borrowing altogether too fast; the interest on our debt will be a most serious thing for the Legislature to consider in a few years, as almost the whole of our revenue will be swallowed up in paying interest on the construction of many, to my mind, useless and political railways. With the permission of the House I will withdraw the motion.

The PREMIER: I object.

Question—That the House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

Mr. PATTISON said: Mr. Speaker,—I have a great mind to call for a division, to show in what way the junior member for Rockhampton will vote, as he maintains silence on the subject.

PRINTING COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

Mr. FRASER, on behalf of the Speaker, presented the second report of the Printing Committee, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By the PREMIER—

That Mr. Morgan be appointed a member of the Printing Committee.

By the PREMIER—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to further amend the Immigration Act of 1882.

By Mr. STEVENS—

That there be laid upon the table of this House, the evidence taken in connection with the recent arbitration cases, as follows:—

Railway Extension from Beenleigh to Nerang,—

Henry Schneider, G. A. Hope, Albert Ruge, Stanley Harris, Robert McCreddie, William Stark, Jacob P. Mengel, E. Campbell and Co.

Extension from Logan Village to Beaudesert,—

John Waters, William Lauanders, Arthur Bryant.

QUEENSLAND FISHERIES BILL.

SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill was introduced by the hon. member for Enoggera when Colonial Treasurer, at the instance, as I understand, of the Inspector of Fisheries and persons who are familiar with the fishing industry. Under the existing law the size of the mesh prescribed is, I believe, too small. The present Act provides that no mesh shall be used smaller than three and a-half inches across the mesh stretched diagonally from knot to knot, but that a smaller mesh may be used for taking whiting and garfish. It is found in practice that the mesh is too large for taking whiting and too small for taking larger fish, and it is desirable that there should be modifications to meet the actual state of things. With respect to prawns and garfish, there is now a modification, but it is said that a great deal of injury is done by taking prawns by a net at all. These are some of the principal matters to which attention has been called. I have received a letter signed by all the principal fishermen in Moreton Bay calling attention to defects in the law as it stands, and inviting relief, and all the suggestions they make are dealt with in the Bill with the exception of the practice of "stalling"—that is, enclosing a part of the water with a net so that at low water when the tide runs out the fish cannot escape. That is an extremely destructive process and ought to be prohibited, and it is proposed to deal with it by an amendment in clause 6 when we get into committee. The object, of course, of a Bill of this kind is to prevent immature fish being taken. Our fishing industry is not at present as large as it might be, but I believe our seas contain fish of many kinds which might provide a most useful harvest. Many countries in the world, we know, subsist almost entirely upon their fisheries; and I believe a great deal more might be done, a great many more people supported, and a great deal more profit derived from our fisheries than is derived at present. The destruction of valuable fish is therefore a most injurious thing, and it is well worth while to do what we can to prevent it. I do not myself feel qualified to offer an opinion as to the weight of fish mentioned in the schedule, with the exception of perhaps one or two. I believe for whiting 3 oz. is a rather small weight, and with respect to garfish I think $\frac{7}{8}$ oz. is much too small. With respect to the other fish mentioned there may be various opinions; but I do not think much amendment can be made in the Bill in this respect with any advantage, though something may perhaps be said with respect to bream when we come to the schedule. There are

not many material changes in this Bill as compared with the present Act, and the most important, I think, have reference to the change in the size of the nets and the prohibiting of taking prawns except with a scoop-net. There is another very important provision prohibiting the taking of particular kinds of fish at particular periods of the year, or in particular waters. For instance, as an illustration of this, I may say there is a place in Moreton Bay called Swan Bay, which is at a certain time of the year the breeding-ground for a very valuable fish—the mangrove mullet—and if fishing was allowed there at that time it would do a great deal of harm and no good. It is therefore very necessary that the power should be given to prohibit fishing in particular waters at the breeding time of the fish. Almost the only other important provision is that throwing the onus of proof that fish is not being taken for sale upon the person charged with that offence. I believe that this Bill will make all the changes desirable in the present Act, and I believe that hon. members familiar with the subject are agreed that it is a very good Bill. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad indeed that the Government have introduced this measure, which has been sadly wanted for a very considerable time. The present Act, although in appearance a stringent one, has been so worded that it is very difficult to secure a conviction under it, and quantities of fish are being destroyed every year illegally, and the inspector is utterly powerless to bring the offenders to book. No doubt the fishing industry is increasing in importance every year, and will do so more rapidly than at present when our railways are extended to one or two towns on the coast—for instance, to Cleveland and Southport. I have no doubt that once these railways are constructed large quantities of fish will be sent into the metropolis daily. While I am fully in accord with the principle of this Bill I believe some of the clauses require modification. I am aware that there is as much difference of opinion between fishermen as there is proverbially between doctors, but as there are several ardent and experienced fishermen in this House, I hope by putting their heads together they will be able to agree upon the clauses of this Bill, and render them, perhaps, more suitable than they appear to me to be at present. I think that one or two amendments might be made in the Bill, and though it may be said this should be done in committee, if hon. members now express their intention to make alterations they will have time to consider the ideas expressed on the subject by other members as well as their own. In clause 4 I think it should be stated that the measurement of the mesh should be taken from the inside of the knot instead of from knot to knot, as it may make a difference in some cases of from a quarter to half an inch. In subsection 1 of clause 4, I suggest that the dimensions of the mesh should be increased from $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch to 2 inches in the bunt and 3 inches in the wings; and that there should be a new subsection introduced specifying the size of the net to be used for taking sea mullet. This fish is much larger than the other mullet, and it would be a great mistake to allow fishermen to take sea mullet of a small size. I think the net for sea mullet should have a mesh 4 inches in the bunt and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in the wings. My ideas on this subject are confirmed not only by practical experience, but from conversation with fishermen. I think clause 5 is an admirable one, as hundreds of tons of fish are destroyed every year by fishermen emptying their nets upon the dry beach, as it simplifies matters for them. This clause provides that the nets shall be emptied in the water, so that there will be no fear of fish

dying while they are being extricated from the net, and there is a special penalty provided for an offence against this portion of the Bill. Clause 8 is a very good one, as it provides that prawns shall be taken in a scoop-net, but the size of the mesh in the scoop-net is not specified. I think that is a rather important omission, as it is not likely a person catching prawns will riddle them immediately on catching them; and if the mesh is too small and if there is no mesh the small prawns caught would be destroyed before the fish were riddled. Clause 16 is also a very necessary clause, and provides that no explosives or poisonous matter may be used in taking fish. Some time ago, before I was aware that it was illegal, I saw a person throw from a steamer in the Bay a charge of dynamite into the water for the purpose of procuring some fish, and next day on rowing past the beach close to where this occurred, I saw from 200 to 300 fish lying dead upon the beach. So that all those fish were destroyed and wasted by the use of the explosive. I think clause 18, under which the Governor in Council may prohibit the taking of fish from certain places, is a very necessary provision. Anyone who has had practical experience of fishing in the Bay knows that sometimes a fish has almost entirely disappeared from the Bay, especially from certain places where it used to be plentiful. No doubt, the fish used to assemble there to spawn, and as there was no law in force to preserve that portion of the ground, they were fairly driven away or destroyed. I think the schedule should be altered in several instances, but as that is purely a matter of detail I shall not take up the time of the House by indicating where I think the alterations should be made. In a great many cases I think the size of the fish is too small. I am very glad, indeed, that the Government have introduced this measure. I think it is one of very great national importance, and that the benefits derived from it will be felt in a very short time.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it is time that a measure of this kind became law, but some of the provisions of the Bill no doubt require modification. I do not speak from my own personal knowledge, but from what I have heard from those qualified to form an opinion. However, the 9th clause is one which it does not require a fisherman to form an opinion of. It provides that—

“Any person found using any net in Queensland waters shall, on request by any person, be bound to give his name and place of residence.”

I do not think that clause can stand as it is; it interferes very much with the liberty of the subject that any person whoever can go up and compel a man, who may have a license, to give his name and address. That seems very strong, unless an infringement of the law is actually going on. With reference to the 12th clause, it has been suggested that when a boat is licensed it should be marked, so that it may be recognised. I am told that in the Torres Straits fisheries boats over three tons are charged a fee of 10s. a ton for all above that measurement. I think it would be as well to assimilate this clause with the clause of the Act in question. I think, too, that something ought to be done with regard to crabs. Hon. members have no doubt seen a statement in the Press that the crabs have almost been destroyed in Moreton Bay. Of course the holders of fishing licenses should be allowed to catch crabs, but I think that persons wishing to go in for crab-fishing on its own account should be compelled to take out licenses too. It has been pointed out to me that the 17th clause might have injurious effects. The oyster beds are all staked out by Government officials, and anybody dredging on an oyster bed is really on

the property of a private individual, but if his nets were torn, under this Bill he would have a cause of action against the person who put in the stakes. It may be said that people would not fish on an oyster bed, because their nets would be torn, but under this clause they would have their remedy.

The PREMIER: That is an old section.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It was mentioned to me by a person interested in oyster beds. However, these are all details which can be taken into consideration in committee. I believe the Bill is brought in for a good purpose, and will have a very good effect.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I have a few words to say on this small but very important Bill. I am exceedingly glad it has been introduced, for it was very much wanted, and I have no doubt it will be the means of preserving that useful class of food known as fish, and also of giving employment to a multitude of people and their families. I have read the Bill carefully, and with a very few amendments it is a good one, and embraces almost all that can be said on the subject. As for the weights of the fish in the schedule, as far as my judgment is concerned—and I have had some experience—they are all too small, and I hope when the Bill goes into committee the schedule will be so amended as to increase the size. The hon. member for Logan, Mr. Stevens, has devoted attention to the different clauses, and explained them in a more satisfactory manner than I could. For myself, I am particularly pleased that by the interpretation clause the Bill is made to apply to fresh water as well as salt, because I may mention that at great expense and trouble a number of useful fish—especially European—have been introduced into the colony, and I have every reason to suppose that they have been increasing and multiplying. They will be not only a great source of amusement to the people generally, but a great advantage to the colony as a whole, as food fishes. I hope the Bill will pass without any dissent. There are a few amendments that may be made, but they are of such a character that I do not think there will be much objection to them.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think there is a general consensus of opinion about one point, and that is that the sizes specified in the schedule are too small altogether. The minimum size of garfish is fixed at $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. Now, the ordinary table size of garfish is 2 oz. There are two kinds of garfish in the Bay, and the one which breeds about Wynnum is smaller than the ordinary kind, but I think 1 oz. ought to be the minimum size, and the mesh ought to be $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch instead of $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Then, again, the minimum size of jewfish in the schedule is 8 oz. But the fish runs up to about 50 lb., and I think it would be a fair thing to put a minimum size of about 3 lb. For rock cod, also, I think 16 oz. would be fairer than 6 oz. Sea mullet go up to 6 lb. weight, and the minimum is put down 8 oz.; I think it should be $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. or 2 lb. Certain other matters I think should be provided in this Bill. We have an inspector now—Mr. Pison, the shipping inspector—who occasionally takes a run down the Bay. I have heard that Mr. Tulk is under him, but I believe that gentleman is also manager of the Moreton Bay Oyster Company. I do not think it is exactly the thing that any person who has any connection with a fishing company down the Bay should hold such a position. We ought to have an inspector whose sole duty should be in connection with these fisheries; and if we had a man residing in the Bay who is accustomed to watch the habits of the fish, his personal

experience might afford us some very useful suggestions. I notice that any person using nets smaller than the size indicated here would be liable to have his net forfeited, and to be heavily fined. Now, fishermen, we know, are not in a good financial position generally; some of them have very valuable nets which they have been allowed to use under previous Acts, and I certainly think they should have some allowance made them when an Act is passed, making it penal to use nets which they have hitherto been allowed to use. I also think that some allowance ought to be made to persons who have nets in stock. Another provision is that the amount paid for a license is to be double what it used to be—namely, 10s. instead of 5s., and £1 for each boat; and no matter how long the license is in force the full amount has to be paid. I think that if a person wishes to take out a license for six months he ought to pay only half the amount paid for an annual license.

Mr. DICKSON said: Mr. Speaker.—The present Bill bears the same relation to the Queensland Fisheries Act of 1877 as the Oyster Bill of last session bore to the original Act—that is to say, both the original Acts were tentative; and experience has demonstrated the necessity for the alterations shown in the present Bill. In framing this Bill I took a great deal of trouble, not only to remedy existing defects, but also to frame it in such a spirit that it would not press unjustly or unfairly on those interested in the industry; and it was my particular instruction to the Portmaster, before legislation was undertaken, that the whole of the fishing industry should be acquainted with the intention of the Government to legislate in this direction, and the fullest consideration given to the measure and the views of all interested obtained thereupon; and the present Bill is an embodiment of those views, and, I believe, will prove acceptable generally to those engaged in the fishing industry. I am glad the Premier does not intend to allow the measure to lapse this session. Had time allowed last session it would have been pressed by myself, and I am glad to think that it is likely soon to become law. The Premier has clearly explained the provisions of the measure, and I do not know that there is any matter on which I need speak fully except in reply to the hon. member for Balonne, to whom the 9th clause appears an impertinent interference with men engaged in fishing, inasmuch as any person found using a net must give his name and place of residence when requested to do so. The clause was introduced to allow fishermen themselves to check others; and a man in the isolated position of a fisherman is not likely to be molested by a large number of people wanting to know his name and address.

Mr. MOREHEAD: My objection is that it may be done by any person, not only by fishermen holding licenses.

Mr. DICKSON: It is inserted with a view to allow fishermen to detect any person using a net other than the size prescribed by the Act. With regard to clause 17, I may say that it is a transcript of clause 9 in the present Act. When I left the office I handed the Premier the notes placed at my disposal, and I cannot speak from memory with regard to the various provisions of the Bill, but I may say that up to the time I left the Treasury I do not think the schedule had received the amount of consideration that was intended. Therefore, I would ask the Premier, before proceeding with the schedule in committee, to give full consideration at any rate to the weights therein stated, because I know the last time I consulted the Portmaster on the subject he expressed some uncertainty as to whether the weights and sizes mentioned in the

schedules are the proper ones. I am glad to observe from the debate that the Bill is likely to be accepted, and I think it will prove a valuable improvement on the existing law.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker.—With reference to clause 16, I would ask whether it is intended to be applied to aborigines, because from time immemorial they have been in the habit of killing fish with poisonous materials.

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.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On this Order of the Day being read,

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I have thought, and I believe many other hon. members have thought, after the statements which have fallen from the Premier not only to-day, but also on previous occasions, as to the terribly embarrassed state of the finances of the country, that he would have abstained from pushing this measure. He told us no later than this evening that it is utterly impossible for him to inform this House or the country what the financial position of the country is at the present time.

The PREMIER: I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then I do not understand the hon. gentleman's language.

The PREMIER: I said I could not tell the extent of our obligations in regard to the Loan Fund at the present time.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He has told us this also: that the revenue of the colony at the present time is insufficient to meet expenses, even on the existing scale of expenditure. In fact, it becomes a very serious question as to whether his estimates should be proceeded with on the existing scale. It is perfectly evident that the Government have suffered a defeat, having been placed in such a position that they were obliged to withdraw their taxation proposals; yet they still persevere with estimates on the same scale to meet which the land tax was intended to go a considerable way. And we are now asked to pass a measure which will entail an expenditure of we know not what. The Premier himself, in moving the second reading of this Bill, made an admission practically to that effect; and neither when speaking on this Bill, nor on the Financial Districts Bill, did he indicate in any way what the expense to the country would be should the measure become law. In moving the second reading of the Financial Districts Bill, the hon. gentleman said, speaking of the scheme:—

"It may be said that it will cost a great deal of money. I do not think so, because it is only work now done here that will be done there instead."

He does not think it will cost the country much, but he abstains from giving us any idea of what the State is likely to be called upon to pay. Before such a measure was introduced to the House, the Premier, I think, ought to have framed some fairly reliable data as to what the cost would be, instead of asking us to take, as it were, a leap in the dark. Under the Bill as it stands, although it is only proposed at the present time to appoint two under secretaries—one at Townsville and one at Rockhampton—yet it is quite within the power of the Government for the time being to create seven under secretaries in each place, as in Brisbane.

The PREMIER: There would not be any salaries for them.

Mr. MOREHEAD: If there are no salaries there will be no under secretaries; that goes without saying. What I urge is, that it is quite on the cards, under the powers contained in this Bill, to appoint seven under secretaries in each place. It is quite true that, as at present contemplated, there is to be only one under secretary in each place, but as soon as the one under secretary is appointed, complaints will be made that the work is too much for one man, and that certain portions of it are neglected; and then another under secretary will be appointed to take over a portion of the work from him, thus materially increasing the cost of administration. There are some extraordinarily vague phrases employed in this Bill. Take the 5th clause, for instance, which says that—

"The said under secretaries to the Government shall respectively have, exercise, and perform, with respect to all matters arising within or relating to their respective districts, the same powers, authorities, and duties as are had, exercised, and performed, by the under secretaries at Brisbane of the several departments."

Where are those authorities defined? So far as I know there is no definition of them. If there is any, I, and I am sure most other hon. members, are in the dark in regard to it. I have never been able to discover where the duties of under secretaries in Brisbane are defined, nor have I ever heard of any Act of Parliament relating to that subject and containing any fixed definition of those duties. That clause, as it stands, seems to me, therefore, misleading. But it appears that in cases of difficulty or where the under secretary may be in doubt, he has to telegraph to the Minister in Brisbane for instructions, and some of the remarks of the hon. gentleman on that point seem rather amusing, and are certainly not favourable to the present heads of departments. In his speech on the Financial Districts Bill, dealing with this question, he says:—

"Reference will be made to the Minister in such matters as require his authority"—

I do not know where his authority ceases or begins—

"Most of the correspondence will be done by telegraph, and in cases where that cannot be done"—

This is the expression I wish to call particular attention to—

"It will take no longer to send the papers down than if the Under Secretary in Brisbane had to receive them and take them from his room to the Minister."

That is a most extraordinary statement. I did not know that the power of locomotion of our under secretaries was so rigidly limited that it took them three or four days, or perhaps ten days, or even a fortnight, to take papers from their room into the room of a Minister. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman intended to convey that impression, but I am quoting from the "revised gospel," and therefore I suppose it is correct. It must be evident to everybody that you cannot place an under secretary, no matter how good, far from his base, and then put the electric telegraph alongside of him, but he will not and cannot take the responsibility which an under secretary in Brisbane would. Therefore, I think this is simply going to an enormous expense, and trying an experiment which can only result in failure. I do not think this scheme will be of any benefit to the districts it is supposed or intended to benefit, and it will be an enormous addition to the cost of government—an addition coming at a time when our financial position most certainly does not warrant it. I suppose the Government will press this measure to a second reading.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOREHEAD: I sincerely trust that hon. members on both sides of the House who grasp and fully recognise the great financial straits we are in at the present time will pause before they throw another very serious expense upon the shoulders of the already over-burdened taxpayers. I shall oppose the second reading of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—The objection taken to this Bill by the hon. gentleman who has just sat down, looking at it from a practical point of view, seems to be that the officers appointed to the Central and Northern districts would be no better able to deal with matters brought under their notice than if they were in Brisbane. But the hon. gentleman has sufficient knowledge of the working of the departments to know that the under secretaries deal with a great amount of detail work without referring to the Minister at all. It is only in matters of importance that they refer to the Minister, and in cases of that kind they would be able to obtain speedy information by the aid of the telegraph. In that respect they would be of very great value. It is often very difficult to get at the material necessary to form a just opinion upon what a Minister is called upon to decide. Take the Lands Department, for instance. I myself when in charge of that department often found it necessary to require an officer of the department to go out and report on a matter; and it is only after investigation by a competent officer, and on the information he is able to furnish the Minister, that a proper decision can be arrived at. Frequently I have experienced the necessity of sending an officer back over and over again in consequence of his not being able to grasp the whole case, so that he could furnish all the information which would enable the Minister to come to a decision upon its full merits. Officers of the kind proposed, appointed to the Central and Northern districts, would be invaluable to a Minister, for they would furnish him with just the information he wanted to enable him to come to a proper decision on any question that might be referred to him. The hon. gentleman, from the argument he has taken up, seems to maintain that everything ought to be centralised in Brisbane; that there should be no attempt made to take ordinary business away from here and spread it over the districts where these matters require to be dealt with with as little delay as possible. He thinks they must all come here and filter through all the channels in Brisbane before they can be touched at all. Or probably he will maintain that the only alternative is separation. I do not know whether he is a separationist or not, but his argument indicated one of two things—either that everything required to be done must be done in Brisbane or that it would give the North a good chance to separate from the South. A difference of opinion may exist upon that point, which the hon. gentleman did not attempt to explain, but the whole gist of his argument was that everything must come to Brisbane to be dealt with here. But I have pointed out that the difficulty in a great many minor matters is not insuperable; that many of the duties may be discharged with convenience to the departments by an officer representing the Government as is here proposed. To those gentlemen who look forward with so much confidence to the separation of the North from the South, I will direct their attention to a letter written by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Henry Holland, in answer to the separation petition.

Mr. PALMER: What paper is it in?

The PREMIER: One laid upon the table this afternoon.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a short letter. I will read all of it, so that hon. members may grasp the whole thing:—

"THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES TO THE GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND.

"Downing street, 14th June, 1887.

"SIR,

"I have the honour to inform you that I have carefully perused the correspondence which has taken place respecting the proposed separation of the northern part of Queensland, and I have taken advantage of the presence of Sir S. W. Griffith in this country to hear his explanation of the views held by the Colonial Government on this subject.

"On the 17th and 20th ultimo I received a deputation of gentlemen, including the Honourable H. Finch-Hatton, Mr. M. Hume Black, M.L.A., Mr. I. Lissner, M.L.A., and the Honourable M. Finch-Hatton, M.P., who advocated the formation of a new colony in Northern Queensland. I enclose reports for communication to your Government (as corrected in this department) of the proceedings which appeared in the *Australian Times* and *Anglo New Zealander*, and from which you will observe that in concluding my reply to the deputation I stated that Her Majesty's Government did not think at present that a sufficiently strong case had been made out to justify action on the part of Her Majesty's Government in the direction desired.

"Imperial legislation, not supported by resolutions or legislation of the Colonial Parliament, for the purpose of taking away a portion of the territory formally placed under the control of the local legislature by the Constitution Acts, would be a very serious interference with that responsible government under which the settlement of the colony has been developed and its obligations have been undertaken, and would be only justifiable if, after a prolonged trial, all other means of removing any administrative defects or inequalities should prove ineffective.

"It will be necessary in the first instance to test fairly the proposals of your advisers for establishing branches of Government departments in the Northern districts, and to ascertain by a careful system of accounts whether, after the expiration of a further term, a reasonable proportion of the colonial revenue has been expended in the Northern districts."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that shows very conclusively that the English Government have taken a reasonable and rational view of the matter. They say, "If this question can be settled by the proposals that the Premier has undertaken to bring in for their settlement, or amelioration, or correction, there can be no need for separation." Therefore those gentlemen are met entirely and completely. The conclusion to which the Imperial Government has come is that those who are agitating for Northern separation are not entitled to any consideration until this matter has been thoroughly and fairly tested. Now, sir, this measure that has been introduced and submitted to the House has a distinct and unmistakable tendency—it is an effort clear and distinct in that direction. Hon. members opposite may not agree with it altogether. Of course they do not agree with anything that comes from this side of the House; but, at all events, this is the best scheme the Premier has been able to formulate for the purpose of correcting the evils and difficulties under which the North now exists. And it is distinctly pointed out in this letter that until this is done the North has no right to ask the Imperial Government to relieve them of their connection with the southern portion of the colony. That being so, I do not see how those hon. members can object to these measures. The hon. member who has spoken just now objects to this Bill because it does not sufficiently centralise the action of the Government in Brisbane. Other hon. gentlemen who sit opposite say, "We will have nothing to do with it; we want separation pure and simple, and we will have nothing at all unless we get that." I think, sir, they are very unwise in that respect. They ought to take what they can get and put it to the test. They say that if the proposal is put to the test it will probably fail.

The PREMIER: They are afraid it won't fail.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is what is at the bottom of it. If they believe that, let them put their belief to the test; and if the scheme is a failure then they can go to the Imperial Government and ask for separation. "Here," they can say, "is an attempt that has been made to correct the evils under which we say we labour; that attempt has failed, and now there is no alternative but separation." And no doubt under such circumstances they would get it. They would have a very good case in the event of this scheme failing to effect the reasonable reforms proposed, and I am sure that they will make a great mistake if for party purposes they refuse to accept this attempt to correct the evils and mischief that they contend have been done to the North by the centralisation tendencies of the South, and which one of them holds is the only means of carrying on the Government. If they really believe that, they will accept this proposal, and put it to the test, and then they will be able to say whether or not they have a fair claim to be dealt with by the Imperial Government on the question of separation. I do not think anybody in the southern portion of the colony would raise a finger or utter a word in opposition to their demand for separation if this proposal is an absolute failure. I am certain that I should not. I would be glad to see them go, and go at once.

Mr. DONALDSON: On this one proposal, or the whole?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not take one alone; I take the whole. I attach much greater importance to the financial proposals than I do to this. But this, I believe, will remedy to some extent the inconvenience and delays and annoyances we hear of sometimes in dealing with comparatively trifling matters that, under the present state of things, must necessarily come down here to be dealt with. I trust, Mr. Speaker, that those hon. gentlemen who resent these measures so strenuously will take better counsel, and prepare themselves to give this question, at all events, a trial. If they do not do that—if they insist upon throwing it out entirely—I can only say that the Premier has done all he possibly can, and the Government have done all in their power to meet them half-way, and to provide them with remedies—the only remedies they have been able to suggest to meet the case. If they have any suggestions, any better remedy, or any improvement that can be made upon this scheme, I am satisfied that the Premier will be quite ready to consider them, and to consider them from any point of view, practical or otherwise—even from a sentimental point of view. I have never heard anything in the shape of a suggestion from any member on the other side of the House as to the way in which these difficulties may be met. They have only one argument—that is, denunciation of the South and of the Government, and the threat that unless they get everything they want they will have separation—the one great result to which they look forward for everything.

Mr. BLACK: May I ask the hon. gentleman the page of the paper he quoted from?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Twenty-five and twenty-six.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I consider the three Bills which have been introduced in connection with the Northern question of great importance. At the same time I do not pretend to agree with this Bill; but I shall not go into the reasons now, because I do not think there is any occasion to do so. I do not wish to go into a long discussion, which I believe is merely time wasted.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. NORTON: I think it is. Of course the hon. gentleman holds another opinion. But I will ask, is it right that a Government which has been practically defeated on their policy—on their financial proposals—should attempt to go on with the business of the country just as if nothing of the kind had occurred? Outside this House the Government is regarded as practically almost an extinct Government. If they had waited until they go before the country and got a majority of members to return them, then I should say it was a fair thing to go on with a question of this kind. But I say in the present condition of the country, and the present condition of the House, it is an absurdity for the Ministry to go on introducing fresh Bills day after day, and trying to work out the session, as other sessions have been worked out, for the purpose of adding volumes to our statutes. Why, what is the meaning of passing all these Bills during the last four years? A large number of them have been amended, and it will be the same with many of the measures brought in now if passed into law this session. I am not a separationist in any sense of the term. I would like to see fair play given to the North, and so far as I can I will assist them in getting fair play; but I do not wish to see separation. I think it will not do any good—certainly it will not for the southern part of the colony, and I doubt whether it will for the northern part. It is for the Northern people to decide whether they want separation or not. I say that it is for the Northern people to say, now that these Bills have been introduced, whether they are what they want or whether they will have separation. Now that these Bills have been introduced and circulated, they will have an opportunity of knowing what the Government propose to do for them; and let them say by their votes at the coming general election whether they approve of the course of action taken by their representatives in this House or not. If they want separation I presume they will do that; but if they do not—that is, the bulk of them do not—they will send some other representatives here who are prepared to accept the scheme brought in by the Government, or a modification of it, and who will assist in passing it in the next Parliament. But, Mr. Speaker, I do protest against going on with Bills, against wasting the time of members of the House, and putting the country to an unnecessary expense, when there is no practical object to be gained by it. The matter can be discussed without going on with the Bills. I think it would be better to take a general debate on the Northern question and the schemes proposed, and then let the thing be withdrawn and put aside until after the general election has taken place. I do not wish to detain the House on the subject, because I really do not feel any inclination whatever to go into the discussion of Bills which require a great deal of consideration, and which, if one goes into them fully, must be gone into not in a general way, but with a thorough understanding of the principles which they embody, and with a knowledge which enables one to refer to facts in order to show he is justified in supporting those principles or otherwise.

Mr. DICKSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I sympathise with the Premier in what I know to be a genuine desire on his part to afford the Northern and Central districts of the colony the additional means of local administration which they have so long expected and demanded. I must say that in regard to this Bill, it having been assented to in Cabinet before I ceased to be a member of it, I am at one with the Government in endeavouring to extend some means of local administration by which

greater satisfaction may be given to those districts. But I would like to know what will be the probable cost to the country. There is no concealing the fact that this Bill imposes an additional amount of expenditure, and we must not for one moment accept it in the light that these offices will be established in the Central or Northern districts of the colony without a very large amount of increased expense upon the general taxpayer, and I look upon this as the thin end of the wedge. We have here under secretaries to be appointed in two districts. But, when once this amount of local administration has been granted, there will be a demand for more. Not only that, but I can see clearly that if under secretaries are established at Rockhampton and Townsville, the Gulf country—Normanton—will have an equal right to have local administration.

The PREMIER: Very likely; some day.

Mr. DICKSON: As the Premier says, some day. We must look upon this fact, if we accept the measure—and I intend to support the Government in it, because I may say at once I am bound to recognise the fact that I assented to the principle in the Cabinet—that it will undoubtedly, at a very early stage, impose large further expenditure. Now, I regret to think that our finances are not in that position that would justify us in entering upon an extensive scheme of decentralisation at the present time, and I should have been better pleased to have learned from the Premier what he intended to do in connection with the finances of the colony before proceeding with this Local Administration Bill. It is undoubtedly a very important measure, and I give the Premier credit for a sincere attempt to endeavour to satisfy the grievances of the Central and Northern districts of the colony in regard to local administration, but we must not blind the country to the fact that the introduction of this measure will undoubtedly entail, and immediately entail, a very considerable increase to our expenditure. It is, therefore, right that we should view the question in that light. As I have said before, I intend to vote for the Bill, as I was connected with it in Cabinet; but I think it would have been more satisfactory to the country, and have shown more sincerity on the part of the Government, if they had addressed themselves to the condition of the finances, especially when we hear of a desire to retrench, and that retrenchment is the motto of the day. Undoubtedly, under this Bill no retrenchment can be effected. In fact, there will be an increased expenditure, and, to my mind, a scheme involving this increased expenditure will not be deemed a sufficient *quid pro quo* for the cry that has been made for territorial separation. I shall support the Government in the scheme they have laid before us; but I should like to have had it accompanied by some statement showing how the revenue is to be enlarged, providing the Bill is passed, to meet the additional requirements.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—While the debate on the second reading of the Financial Districts Bill was going on, I protested against it as an insufficient measure in regard to the legitimate demands of the North; and I think the discussion we have had this evening with regard to the railway policy of the Government in the North, as against the South, is sufficient evidence that the protest I then made was not without proper grounds.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to call your attention to the fact that there is not a quorum in the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. PALMER: Regarding the protest I then uttered on the Financial Districts Bill, I have been fully justified, and I now enter my protest against this as an insufficient measure—being in fact a supplement of that Bill. I do not see in any way how this is going to appease the cry from the North, and that opinion has been intensified very much by the discussion we have had, and the attempts which the only two members of the Government who have spoken as yet made to plead the question. The Minister for Works said this evening that the Government have done all they could to meet the wants of the North; but I think that is sufficiently refuted by the complaints which have been made with regard to the spending of loan money. I should like to ask: Is there anything in this Bill, or in those which we have already discussed, that will give people resident in the North power over the expenditure of this money? Furthermore, with regard to the arguments used by the ex-Colonial Treasurer, the member for Enoggera. He said the time would come when the Western districts would also require this power, and I think they require it now. So far as I can see, the people in the Western districts can do business with Brisbane quite as well as with Townsville, as the same communication will bring them right through to Brisbane which will take them to Townsville. They will gain very little by a measure like this, or even by the Financial Districts Bill. We find provision made in the Bill for the Central districts; but they have not applied, or made any demands, so far as I know, such as the North have made for an extension of local government. I have never heard a voice from the Central district, and yet we have only one district centred in Townsville to meet all the demands of the North in regard to local government. And, furthermore, the Government have not taken us into their confidence with regard to the expenditure of these branch offices. To what fund will the expenses be charged? Who is to pay for the officers? Will they be paid from the general fund or from a fund collected in the district? We find that the public expenditure has been enormously increased. The Government have added a Minister, and have also added a new department—that of agriculture—to the public service, and now we have the proposals contained in these three measures—the Financial Districts Bill, the Local Registries Bill, and the Local Administration Bill. There is not the slightest doubt that there will be a very large increase of expenditure for officials and for carrying on the work of the departments. Is there one word in the measure to show from what funds the money is to be provided? There is very little in the Bill beyond the provisions for the extension of powers which are already in existence. I have known Government money to be paid by officials in the North for many years past; Customs duties and other moneys have frequently been paid for wages, and contracts, and various other matters. I see very little in the measure in connection with the other Bill we have had before us to meet the demands that have been made in a legitimate manner in this House for the extension of local government; and I enter my protest against the Bill because it does not deal with the matter sufficiently.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I have carefully looked through this measure, the third of the batch of anti-separation Bills, which is entitled “A Bill to make provision for the establishment of branches of the several Government departments in the Central and Northern districts of the colony”; and I must say that, as a measure which is intended to give satisfaction to the more northern districts, and remove the grievances which led to the present strong

demand for territorial separation, it will utterly fail in achieving that object. I will give my reasons why I think it will fail to have the desired effect. The Minister for Works referred just now to a letter of Sir Henry Holland, dated the 14th of June, which was subsequent to the time when the deputation waited upon him in London to advocate the formation of North Queensland into a new colony. The hon. gentleman certainly quoted what Sir Henry Holland stated in that letter, but I do not think he explained to the House and to the country whether the views expressed in that letter were really expected to answer the objections which the deputations urged, and whether this measure is really carrying out the promise the Premier made to Sir Henry Holland previously. I will refer back to the speech of His Excellency the Governor, delivered at the close of last session. In that speech His Excellency stated that some measure for the extension of local self-government was going to be introduced this session, and that during the recess steps would be taken to prepare such a measure. His Excellency said:—

“My Ministers recognise the 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”—

which I maintain this Bill entirely fails to do—

“I believe that the causes of complaint to which I have referred, and which are especially likely to arise in a new land in a state of constant progress and expansion, will be effectually removed.”

Now, that is the promise, Mr. Speaker, that the Government, through His Excellency, made at the end of last session—and it was on that promise that Sir Henry Holland based his reply to our deputation in London—that the Government had promised to extend the principles of local self-government, “by which the more northern parts of the colony would be provided with a more speedy and economical expenditure in the several divisions of the colony, and the revenue raised within them.” This Bill entirely fails to accomplish anything approaching that. There is no doubt, as the hon. the ex-Colonial Treasurer has pointed out, that at considerable cost local branches of the departments may be established in Rockhampton and Townsville, and later on in the Gulf, but in what way this is going to effect “a more speedy and economical expenditure of the revenue raised in the different divisions of the colony,” I fail to perceive. Then, again, as a further confirmation of the view that I take—that it was an extension of local self-government which was to be the remedy for this cry for separation which was promised—I will read what Sir Henry Holland said; and here I may mention that I am glad the Premier has laid these papers on the table of the House. They contain the reply to the deputation which interviewed the Imperial Government at home, and that reply, I may mention to this House, was reported by a verbatim shorthand reporter whom I myself employed for the purpose. That reply, after being published, was submitted to Sir Henry Holland, and I am very glad to see that Sir Henry Holland has testified to the accuracy of that report by sending it out here as an official document.

The PREMIER: Sir Henry Holland says “after correction.”

Mr. BLACK : I will leave the hon. gentleman to point out any serious divergence between the reply which I had published and this one. However, these interruptions are irrelevant. At page 35, Sir Henry Holland says, in reply to the deputation :—

"Therefore I say it is difficult, if not undesirable, to deal with such a question as this, unless we have the authority or a desire expressed on the part of the Colonial Legislature."

I have already pointed out that we can hardly expect that a Legislature sitting down here will voluntarily surrender a portion of their territory until compelled to do so by the inexorable logic of facts and the demand of the people ; but Sir Henry Holland also says :—

"or unless there is some case made out which is absolutely overwhelming."

Now, that is what we hope to do, and what I believe we shall do ; and I believe that this House, when it meets after the next general election, will see that an overwhelming case has been made out, and that nine-tenths of the adult male population of the North demand separation. Then he continues :—

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

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is not one single attempt in this Bill—which is the last of the three anti-separation Bills—there is not one attempt to extend the principles of local self-government ; and I should consider myself as betraying the trust which has been reposed in me by not only my constituents, but by the voice of the people of the North, if I were to allow a measure of this kind to pass without entering a protest, and stating here that it does not in any way carry out the promise which the Government made through His Excellency at the end of last session, and which the Premier repeated to Sir Henry Holland in London. This Bill provides for under secretaries, or Government Residents, to be located in certain centres outside of Brisbane, but, Mr. Speaker, what power have the Government Residents? What power have they got to deal expeditiously with any urgent grievances which may be brought before them? It will merely be that through them and with the assistance of the telegraph, matters will be referred to the Government down here, and assuming that any grievance were brought before the Government it would then be referred back to the Government Resident for his report. And at what cost is all this going to be carried out? The Government have not pointed out in what way funds are to be provided, and I say it is not the place for any Government, situated as they are, to bring forward such important measures as this without being able to sketch out how the funds are really going to be provided, and how, if they can be provided, this measure is going to remedy the grievances of which it has now been admitted for some time past the North has had cause to complain for some years. The present Government, Mr. Speaker, cannot possibly expect to give effect to this Bill. It is well known that as soon as the House prorogues a general election must take place. Is it right that this House, not representing the voice of the country, should force a measure of this sort upon the Government which will succeed the present Government? This Government no doubt would say later on, in the event of the succeeding Government not carrying out this proposal, that they had failed. Why should the next Government be bound by such a Bill as this, passed by their predecessors, who did not represent the voice of the country? What will be gained by giving

effect to this Bill? It will remain a dead-letter. The Government surely do not intend to give effect to it during the recess previous to the general election ; so that I maintain that no useful purpose can possibly be served by this House passing the Bill. The Government bringing in this Bill must not suppose that the North will not understand the principles of it. I notice throughout the Northern Press they unanimously, so far as I have been able to judge, disapprove of the decentralisation scheme of the Government. And why? It is not that there are not some good principles involved in it, but it does not give them what they have been demanding, what they want, and what this Government most decidedly promised that they should have.

The PREMIER : Separation?

Mr. BLACK : No ; an extension of local self-government. If the hon. gentleman had brought in some measure by which we could have local boards which could really confer with the Government resident, and expedite the expenditure of money, who could push on the construction of railways where necessary—a measure which would give us some real voice in the management of our own affairs more than we have got now—we might have received this Bill as a first instalment. But this gives us nothing more than we have got now. Everything will have to be referred to Brisbane, and we shall be charged with the expenses of administration of these offices. I am well aware that, in a House formed as this is, this Bill will be forced to a second reading, but I doubt whether it will get beyond that ; and even if it become law the Government cannot give effect to it. It is out of their power. They have neither the money, and I doubt very much whether they have the inclination ; but it will remain like a great many other measures they have passed—a dead-letter on the Statute-book. Now, look at it from another point of view. What reason have I, as a Northern representative, and what reason have the other honourable Northern members, to believe that the Government will be able to carry out this scheme any better than they have been able to carry out any great scheme which they have proposed since they have been in office? Have they not failed miserably and signally failed in every chief point of their policy? Their land legislation has been a failure ; their financial matters have been a complete failure. I do not know of any Government who have been in power for the same length of time who have got less to pride themselves on than the present Administration. We have had nothing but promises ; and now, in a moribund Parliament, on the eve of a general election, they bring this important measure forward and say to the North, "Take this or you will suffer for it." I shall certainly, if it comes to a vote, vote against this Bill. It is a fraud from beginning to end. It does not give the northern part of the colony anything approaching to what they have demanded, and I consider the Government have stultified themselves in bringing in a measure like this in response to the promise made by His Excellency the Governor at the end of last session, and to the decided promise which the Premier made to Sir Henry Holland in London.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) said : Mr. Speaker,—I have not much to say upon this question ; but I do not agree with the hon. member for Port Curtis when he says it would be a waste of time to discuss it. This is a measure, a part of an important scheme, and a more important matter never came, in my opinion, under the consideration of this House. For some time there has been an agitation in the North for the dismemberment of the colony. It is asserted that the North has been unfairly dealt

with; that revenue collected in the North has been expended chiefly in the southern portions of the colony; and that there has been an injurious system of centralisation by which the southern portions of the colony have largely benefited at the expense of those who reside in the northern portion. We have the fact that there is a demand on the part of the North, so far as it goes—for I do not believe it is a universal demand by any means—but there is a demand on the part of a large section in the northern portion of the colony for separation from the South—for the dismemberment of the colony. This House does not agree with that demand, and has very grave objections to the dismemberment of the colony, much in the same way as the Imperial Government objects to the separation of Ireland from England, and to what in the United States of America cost oceans of blood and immense treasures, to prevent the separation of the North from the South. By a large section of the people of this colony it is thought that this principle of breaking up the colony into a number of independent States should be avoided by all possible means, and that, in fact, the grand interests of the colonies are to be secured by retaining the unity of Australasia. This House, then, refusing to recognise the demands of the North, an appeal was made to the Imperial Government. The North very wisely selected one of its ablest men—the ablest man, very likely, the North can produce—and he went to England to represent the views of the North on this subject of separation. The Premier of the colony went home at the same time, and, I suppose, satisfied the Imperial authorities that he had fully considered the question, and was prepared with a scheme, foreshadowed in this House by Her Majesty's representative some time ago, for redressing these grievances, and doing full and impartial justice to the North. I suppose Sir Henry Holland gathered from the Premier what the outlines of the scheme might be, and that they commended themselves to his judgment; for, as seen by what was read by the Minister for Works, we find that Sir Henry Holland states that he could not entertain the subject of separation until the scheme the Premier had devised was fairly tried. The Imperial Government, then, will not entertain the idea of exercising their absolute right of separating this colony into two parts before the Premier's scheme has had a fair trial. From that decision there is, I believe, no appeal, and we are bound to formulate a scheme of local government and give it a fair trial, and even if the Premier were disposed to think that separation should be granted, it could not be done until some such scheme, as was promised, has had a fair trial. He has no intention of doing anything of the kind, and he now brings forward, in compliance with his promise to the North and the Imperial Government, his scheme for the settlement of the question, and we have before us the three Bills brought forward in this connection. This is the beginning of a scheme proposed to be established by the present Government, which, I believe, will do the amplest justice to the North. That is my firm conviction. I think we are brought to this point on both sides of the House, both hon. members opposed to separation and those in favour of it. Hon. members of the Opposition who are in favour of separation have no right to oppose this scheme unless they can devise a better one. I do not think there is any disposition shown on the part of the separationists in this Chamber to devise a scheme of their own. Some scheme must be proposed, and they propose none. The Opposition, of course, are opposed to the scheme brought down by the Government; it is their duty, we all know, to

oppose any scheme brought before this Chamber by the present Government, because they feel it to be their duty to turn the present Government out of office. They feel assured that they can manage the country very much better than those at present in power, and I should think very much less of them than I do if they had not the courage of their convictions, and did not believe that they were very much better men than the present members of the Ministry and members on this side of the House. We, on this side of the House, however, hold a different opinion. We believe that the Liberal party is the best party for the colony, and that it has been the misfortune of this colony that for twenty-seven years the Conservative party have generally ruled the colony; that has been a calamity, in my opinion. The Liberal party is united, by the advantage of superior intelligence, shall I say, and certainly by a numerical advantage; but they are unfortunately divided in other respects. They have a habit of forming their own opinions; they are all politicians on this side. Every member, as Sir Charles Lilley once remarked, has a Land Bill in his pocket. On the other side of the House their politics have been contained in a nutshell for twenty-seven years, and their policy was this: "We have got possession of the land and we shall keep it." They were so bound together that they could not be separated, but they have been separated now by the hon. the Minister for Works. When he was Minister for Lands he produced a Bill which has separated them. The hon. member for Mackay says that the whole of the separate parts of the grand scheme of the present Government have been failures from beginning to end. He says the land scheme has been a failure; the public works scheme has been a failure; everything has been a failure, and the finances of the colony have been a failure under the present Government. Well, I deny that altogether. I say the land scheme of the Government has been a grand and glorious success. We believe, on this side of the House, that the land scheme of the Government has been a success, and I will tell you why I believe it has been a success. It has broken up the hitherto undivided unity of the Conservative party which ruled this colony for twenty-seven years. What have they done because of the land policy of the Government? They have given up vast areas in this country for close settlement under that Act.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Where is the close settlement?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is at the disposal of the Government, for the Government to make use of it, and I believe they will make use of it for the required end. The pastoral tenants of the Crown have deliberately accepted what is called fixity of tenure, indefeasible leases, and compensation for improvements, in lieu of vast areas of land of which for twenty-seven years before they had a grand monopoly. Now they have given it up for close settlement. They have said in effect to the Liberal party: "Now, you have always said that there might be a settlement on the land of this colony—that a great agricultural interest might be established in Queensland, not opposed to the pastoral interest, but working with it side by side—that this colony might be covered with persons who by their labour—and labour is the source of wealth—who by their labour on the land in the best portions of this vast country might create abundant wealth if you have a large population." Now, we are satisfied with the bargain and so are they. Of course we know it has been a fair bargain for them and they are satisfied with it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: They have got to be.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are satisfied with it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Are they?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; it is good for all parties; it is good all round. If the Land Act is administered in accordance with the spirit and intention of that Act, it will be a grand and glorious success; and twenty-seven years hence, instead of a population of 350,000, we may have a population of 2,000,000 or 3,000,000.

Mr. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to a point of order. Shall we be allowed in reply to the hon. member to discuss the land policy and the administration of the Land Act? Because I do not see why he should be allowed to go so far away from the motion, if we, in replying, are not to be allowed to do the same.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was invited to do so by—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Order! Chair!

The SPEAKER: I presume the hon. member for Barcoo desires my ruling as to whether the hon. gentleman is speaking to the question or not. I cannot answer his question whether hon. members will be allowed to discuss the land policy of the Government, but I must rule that the hon. member, the Minister for Lands, is travelling from the question before the House.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was invited to do so by the hon. member for Mackay, and I must ask the pardon of the House for having travelled so far out of my way. Now, to come back: this is only part of the scheme; we have had the other Bill before us already. The Opposition will not discuss it, because they insist that the Government ought to go out of office as quickly as possible.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It will be very hard on you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Never mind me; we won't trouble about that at all. I say it is part of a great scheme, and the Opposition will not discuss it because they will have separation. Now, sir, after what has occurred, and after what has been read to-night by the Minister for Works, I think it is childish—if they will forgive me for using such a word—to insist still on separation. Have they not gone to England about it? Have they not represented by their ablest advocate all the reasons for separation? Has not the Imperial Government told them—

Mr. MOREHEAD: We are sick of the Imperial Government.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Has not the Imperial Government told them that it cannot take place until they try some such scheme as that now proposed? Can they devise any better scheme? Can they make any suggestions for the material improvement of this scheme? The leader of the Opposition is generally logical; he says "Go out."

Mr. MOREHEAD: Why don't you go?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Government have a great majority. The House wants the Government to go on, and not to go out. They are bound to go on, and the Premier is bound to submit this scheme to the House. He has been commanded, shall I say, to do so by the Imperial Government—

Mr. MOREHEAD: Commanded?

Mr. STEVENSON: It is not the scheme he suggested there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Can hon. members opposite devise a better scheme? They know the scheme is a good one, a fair one, an honest one. We were bound to bring in this Bill as a matter of course, and we shall carry it, I have no doubt.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman who has just concluded passed a high eulogy upon the Liberal party. Now, sir, the name "Liberal" is a word that that party has always traded on, but the only thing I have ever seen liberal about them is the name, and the fact that they have always been liberal with other people's money, liberal in giving political supporters bribes at the expense of the country, and in bribing constituencies by giving them important public works. With regard to the land question, I shall not travel over it as the hon. gentleman did, because I believe I should be ruled out of order, otherwise I should be delighted to do it; but I may say in passing that the only good thing in connection with that Act—the honestad principle—was forced upon them by this side of the House after the Minister for Lands said he did not believe in it. This scheme is simply a farce not worthy of consideration.

Mr. BULCOCK: Show it!

Mr. HAMILTON: I shall show it. It is simply taking a number of gentlemen, who are now head clerks, calling them under secretaries, and increasing their salaries. It gives them no more power than head clerks have at present. An under secretary here has no more power than any other clerk: the only advantage he has is in being in direct communication with the Minister, but he has no power whatever. In fact, this system will lead to more red-tapeism, because instead of any head clerk at Cooktown, Port Douglas, Cairns, or any other place being able to communicate direct with the Under Secretary, he will have first to communicate with the head clerk in Townsville who is to be called the under secretary, who will then communicate with another individual down here. There is nothing in it whatever, and it will increase the expense. The hon. gentleman who just sat down says that we want separation, and will accept of nothing less than separation. Well, our action in passing the late Bill in connection with separation disproves that. We unanimously passed a Bill in connection with the registry of land the other evening because we saw some good in it. We cannot see any good in this, and we cannot conscientiously vote for what we disapprove of. He also challenged us to say what we do want. It is not the part of an Opposition to state that, and we know perfectly well that we shall not get what we want; but the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, stated the other evening that he would support the Financial Districts Bill, and that the other Northern members would support it, if the Premier would promise to enable us to have some control over our expenditure. The Premier has made no such promise, and therefore we are not going to be put off with a simple absurdity of this kind. We are not children.

Mr. ADAMS said: Mr. Speaker,—A few words fell from the hon. gentleman who is now Minister for Lands which I think were hardly warranted. He said that when the Conservatives ruled the country it was a great calamity. Now, sir, I should like to know where the Liberals are. I believe that if the grand old man, Mr. Gladstone, happened to be in this Chamber, he would not acknowledge that hon. members on that side of the House at any rate were Liberals. The only thing I can see they are liberal in is that they are liberal with the money of the taxpayers. If we look back to the different times the Liberal party have been in power, we shall find—

Mr. BULCOCK: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is the hon. member speaking to the question before the House?

Mr. MOREHEAD said : Mr. Speaker,—I do not know that the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Bulcock, is endowed with any more prescience than any other hon. member. How can he tell in what direction the hon. member's arguments tend?

The SPEAKER: The remarks of the hon. member for Mulgrave are scarcely pertinent to the question before the House, it is true, but the Minister for Lands was allowed some latitude with regard to the history of the Conservative party, and if the hon. member for Mulgrave in his preliminary observations was only referring to what was said by the Minister for Lands, I do not think he is out of order.

Mr. ADAMS: I will only say, Mr. Speaker, that I do not believe those "bull-and-cock" stories about the Conservative party. I rose principally because it is my invariable rule not to give a silent vote, and I wish to say that I cannot vote for this Bill. When it was read a first time it was distinctly understood that it was to be merely discussed and to go no further. As for the Opposition wishing to turn out the Government, it was only the other night when, if we had not walked out of the House, the Government would have had to go out.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: No.

Mr. ADAMS: I am perfectly convinced that we should have had a majority if we had not walked out; but it is not our wish just now that the Government should go out. When they can only command such a small majority on Bills of such vital importance they should go to the country and ascertain from the electors whether those Bills should be passed or not.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Speaker,—So far the discussion seems to have been in connection with North and South; the Central district has had no voice in it. But I may remind the House that we have agitated for financial separation in the Central district for the last fifteen or twenty years. We contend that we have never got a fair share of expenditure, and I am the more convinced of that from the tables placed in our hands to-day showing the revenues of the three districts—Northern, Central, and Southern. I find that the Central district is the only one that has a surplus up to June, 1887, the revenue being £426,609, the expenditure £405,115, and the surplus £21,494. The Government have expended in the North £21,000 more than the revenue contributed there, and the expenditure in the South has been greater than the revenue; so that the sooner we have something in the shape of financial separation the better. I take it this is a Bill to appoint officers to carry out the scheme of financial separation.

Mr. BLACK: No.

Mr. FERGUSON: If it is not I am mistaken. At any rate, there was a surplus to the credit of the Central district last year of £21,000 odd, which I suppose has been spent in the North, and I think it is time the Central district got a measure similar to the one we are now discussing.

Mr. PATTISON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am surprised to find that the senior member for Rockhampton knows so little about what the people of the Central district have been contending for all along. For a number of years the people there have been contending for largely extended powers of local self-government, which these three Bills do not propose to give. They require some little executive power over the expenditure of their money. The Minister for Lands wants some members on this side to say what they would be satisfied with; but the
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Government know full well what the Central district wants, and what, judging from what the senior member for Townsville says, even the North would be satisfied with—namely, some largely extended powers of self-government by the bodies now in existence. So far as the Central district is concerned, they have managed their affairs in a very creditable manner; and if some largely extended powers are given to them, we can believe we have some extension of local self-government; but I characterise these Bills as delusions and snares that will not and never were intended to satisfy even the reasonable demands of the Central district, and certainly not those of the North. I trust the Minister for Lands will be satisfied with the petition I presented some time ago in regard to the requirements of the Central district; if not I will read it over again to him to refresh his memory. We require some power to deal with the money raised in our own district, some power of taxing ourselves, and certainly demand a voice in our expenditure, instead of the present humdrum style of going, hat in hand, begging from the Government and being courteously refused. Even if this Bill pass, the same thing will exist hereafter, except that we shall have to deal with a secretary with no more power than the "man in the moon." The secretary will have to refer to the Minister, and the Minister of the day with a lot of red-tape will give his refusal to the secretary, and hon. members will get it from him instead of getting it from the Minister in the first instance. I am an advocate of provincial councils, but I am by no means satisfied with the Bills brought forward by the Chief Secretary. They do not meet the wishes and requirements of the Central district, and I shall, certainly, on that account vote against them. Besides, Mr. Speaker, we have no right to discuss these measures. We are a dying Parliament, and it is for the country to decide upon them; and if they decide on this question in favour of the Chief Secretary, as possibly they may—though I do not think the Central district will—I shall be perfectly satisfied. But I am satisfied that in this, a dying Parliament, almost at its last kick, as one might say, it should not be discussed further. I suppose the Bill will pass its second reading, but I trust that in committee we shall see the end of it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not quite echo the views enunciated by the hon. member for Blackall that we are exactly a dying Parliament. A little time ago I thought we were, but since we have been rejuvenated by the presence of the new Minister for Lands I think we are likely to get along for some little time in a very comfortable and happy-family sort of way. Speaking to the Bill, I think it is one which certainly ought to go into committee, although I do not anticipate, after the speeches that have fallen from other hon. members representing the North, that any very useful or practical legislation is likely to come out of it, no more than I do of the proposals embodied in the Decentralisation Bill, which was read a second time the other night, when the bulk of the Northern members voted against it, and almost denied the right to go into committee upon it. When Bills of this kind go into committee, and are met in a spirit of that kind, very little that is useful will eventuate; and I am afraid that very little useful and practical legislation will come out of this Bill. In my opinion there is a great deal in this Bill which will expedite business in the North. It has frequently been complained to me by my constituents that there is a great deal of trouble involved in sending everything down to Brisbane, and that contractors cannot get their money from the Government without a lot of red-tape. If trustworthy under secretaries

were appointed in central places—not merely at Rockhampton and Townsville, but also at Cooktown and Cairns—these matters would be very much expedited, and there would be less red-tapism in the Government dealing with local matters. This Bill, therefore, is a step in the right direction; and as I voted the other night in favour of the Decentralisation Bill, so I shall vote to-night for the second reading of the Bill now before us. It is hardly worth while making a speech about it. I am very much in favour of the division that has been made with regard to financial districts, although I think, and have always thought from the very first, when separation was talked of, that a wrong starting point was made when it was decided to fix upon the latitude of Cape Palmerston. The division ought to have been made somewhere about where the Central division is separated from the Southern division; and I say now, as I did when the question was first mooted, that the South would get along very much better without the North. It would then have ample time and energy to attend to its own business, leaving the North at some future time to go away with a view of being subdivided into two separate colonies. Because we choose to separate, it is no reason why we should quarrel; if we separate in peace and amity and goodwill, we can work very much better together afterwards. We should work happily together then, which at present we do not. No doubt there are conflicting interests and opinions between North and South which place them in a position of antagonism to each other. That is a very unfortunate state of affairs, and the sooner we can bring the people, even as members of different States, to work for the common good of the whole community, the better. And I believe this to be a step in the right direction. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, and if any amendments should be hereafter forthcoming, making the measure clearer and more conducive to the public benefit, I shall be very glad to entertain them.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—With the permission of the House I should like to say a word upon a remark that fell from the hon. member for Mackay. I do not propose to ask permission to reply generally on the debate. The hon. member for Mackay referred to what he called a promise that I made to Sir Henry Holland in London—

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to make one request before the hon. gentleman is allowed to proceed. I have no objection to the hon. gentleman being allowed the right of reply, but if he is referring to anything I have said, it is only fair that I should have a right to reply to the hon. gentleman.

The SPEAKER: Even if the House gives its consent to the request of the Chief Secretary, no debate can take place upon his reply.

Mr. MOREHEAD: This is the second time it has been done by the Premier within a week.

The SPEAKER: The Chief Secretary can only reply, on the second reading of a Bill, with the consent of the House. It is quite contrary to parliamentary practice for the mover of the second reading of a Bill to have a right of reply. He can only reply with the consent of the House, and no debate can follow on the hon. gentleman's reply. Does the House consent to the Chief Secretary being allowed to reply?

Mr. MOREHEAD: No.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that the Premier be heard in reply.

The SPEAKER: The question is—That the Chief Secretary be heard.

Mr. BLACK: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to know whether the same privilege is to be extended to other hon. members? It is establishing a precedent which I think is rather dangerous. Personally I have not the least objection to the hon. gentleman replying, but I think when he states that he is going to reply specially to something I have said, it is only right that the same privilege should be extended to me, and perhaps to other hon. members.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Mr. Speaker,—I think the hon. the Premier is running this business to death. Not many days ago he acted in exactly the same manner when dealing with a somewhat similar measure—another Decentralisation Bill. The hon. gentleman was challenged then to quote a precedent, and he had great difficulty in finding one.

The PREMIER: I found one in two minutes.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman said so before, and had to take Sir Thomas Mellwraith as a precedent. I am certain, sir, that he cannot prove that in one week the Premier of any Government that ever existed in this colony twice claimed the right to reply on the motion for the second reading of a Bill. I think I am right in saying so. I am satisfied that the hon. gentleman will have considerable difficulty in finding any number of precedents, or in finding even a few. There are very few in the parliamentary history of this House where that right has been forced; I do not think he will find one instance where it has been forced upon the House as it has been by his dummy colleague, the hon. member for North Brisbane.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Is the hon. member in order, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. MOREHEAD: I withdraw the word "dummy." I will say "puppet," as he was brought up by pulling a string. I say, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." If the Premier is allowed by the House to speak in reply, surely hon. gentlemen on this side—say, for the sake of argument, the hon. member for Mackay—should also have the same privilege extended to him by members of this House.

Mr. NORTON said: The privilege which the hon. the Chief Secretary asks is sometimes granted, but it is scarcely right to ask it to reply to arguments. He asked, when the last Bill connected with the Northern question was before the House, to be allowed the right of the reply, and that right was given to him. Well, sir, instead of confining himself to explanatory matters he attacked the arguments that had been brought forward by members of this side of the House. That is quite contrary to all precedents. I may point out that only last session the hon. gentleman objected to my replying to a speech that was made on the other side of the House in connection with a very important question, although I did it on the motion for adjournment. I think, sir, that if the hon. gentleman chooses to raise objections of that kind to members on this side, he should expect that objections will be raised when he wants the right to reply. The occasion last session when he objected to my right of reply to a speech that had been made was exactly similar to cases of the kind that had occurred before, and of which he had taken advantage. The hon. gentleman should apply the same kind of arguments to himself when he wishes to take objection to members on this side replying. I know the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, when he heard the speech in reply of the Chief Secretary last week, said that if he thought he was going to answer arguments he would most certainly have opposed his request to be allowed the privilege of reply.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Speaking on the question of the right of the Premier to reply, I think there is one point that should be considered; that is, that we have not had these papers with regard to Sir Henry Holland's despatch long enough before us to have studied them and made ourselves masters of them. They were not furnished with my papers this morning; I only found them in my box on coming to the House this afternoon, and I do not thoroughly understand them. I have not made myself master of their contents, at all events. I think, perhaps, that the Premier's reply had better be postponed.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—When the hon. the Premier rose he distinctly pointed to the hon. member for Mackay, and said he wished to reply to him. I think after the Premier has spoken the hon. member for Mackay should also have the right of reply, as the Premier particularly pointed to him.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is all we ask.

Mr. STEVENSON: The Speaker says he cannot have the right to reply.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think the hon. the Premier has asked anything which has not been conceded by this House before.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Speak out!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Premier asked permission to make some explanation in reference to some quotation made by the hon. member for Mackay.

The PREMIER: Statement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Some statement.

Mr. NORTON: He did not.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He never said anything about an explanation.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He asked permission to reply, not to any arguments, but to make an explanation.

Mr. NORTON: He did not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think that is always conceded.

The PREMIER: Always conceded.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That's not what was asked.

Mr. STEVENSON: I suppose if I move the adjournment of the debate the Premier could have his reply and the hon. member for Mackay would have the right of reply also. I move the adjournment of the debate.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: There is a motion before the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. member can move the adjournment of the debate on that if he likes.

The SPEAKER said: I think it is of importance that the House should have a clear conception of the parliamentary rule applying to the right of reply on the second reading of a Bill. The House is slowly but surely establishing precedents of its own, and care must be taken that those precedents are founded upon strictly constitutional principles. In the future, as time advances, our own precedents, and not those of the House of Commons, will guide the proceedings of this Chamber, and hence the importance of laying down the principles of parliamentary rule upon clear and well-defined lines. "May," in the latest edition, says:—

"A reply is only allowed by courtesy to the peer or member who has proposed a substantive question to the House. It is not conceded to a member who has moved any Order of the Day, as that a Bill be read a second

time; nor to the mover of an instruction to a Committee of the Whole House, or to a select committee, or of a motion for referring a Bill to a committee specially constituted and enlarging its terms of reference, nor to the mover of any amendment or of the previous question which is in the nature of an amendment. Under these circumstances, it is not uncommon for a member to move an Order of the Day or second a motion without remark and to reserve his speech for a later period in the debate. Formerly a member who had moved an Order of the Day or seconded a motion, was precluded from afterwards addressing the House upon the same question, or was heard merely by the indulgence of the House; but of late years the option of speaking at a subsequent period of the debate has been conceded whenever the moving or seconding is confined to the formality of raising the hat. But in moving an amendment a member cannot avail himself of this privilege, as he must rise in his place to move an amendment, and thus cannot avoid addressing the House, however shortly. And as a member who moves an amendment cannot speak again, so a member who speaks in seconding an amendment is equally unable to speak again upon the original question, after the amendment has been withdrawn or otherwise disposed of. In both cases, the members have already spoken while the question was before the House and before the amendment had been proposed from the chair. For the same reason a member who has addressed the House in moving the second reading of a Bill cannot move the adjournment of the debate unless an amendment has been since proposed."

Now comes the point to which I wish to call the attention of the House particularly—

"In some cases the indulgence of the House has been extended so far as to allow an explanatory reply on questions which do not come within the ordinary rules of courtesy."

The only precedent I can call to my mind in connection with this Assembly is this: That before the final division on the second reading of the Transcontinental Railway Bill, the then Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, asked the House to allow him the privilege of reply, and that was conceded, and it is so recorded in our *Hansard*. That is the only instance; I have no recollection of any other. It was a question of considerable magnitude, upon which the fate of the Government and a dissolution of Parliament depended, and the matter being deemed one of gravity at the time, the House conceded the privilege of reply to the hon. gentleman. I may say, in my experience during the time I have been a member of the House, that I have no recollection of any member ever asking the House for the right of reply on the second reading of a Bill before the precedent established by Sir Thomas McIlwraith. I take it that it was the magnitude of the question then before the Assembly and the important results which would follow from the division about to take place which led him to ask the House upon that occasion to grant the indulgence of reply. The House will observe from the extract I have just read from "May" that the House of Commons is, and has always been, exceedingly jealous in granting the right of reply on Orders of the Day, and it is only conceded as a matter of courtesy.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I thank the majority of the House for what is only an act of ordinary courtesy under the circumstances. I said when I rose before that I did not desire to make a general reply upon the debate; but that I desired to take notice of a statement made by the hon. member for Mackay, which I might have done as a matter of personal explanation. The hon. member referred in his speech to what he was pleased to call a promise that I made to Sir Henry Holland, and it was affirmed that I was breaking that promise. I cannot allow a statement like that to go unchallenged. I made no promise, and the hon. member has no authority whatever for saying that I did. All communications made between the Government and the Imperial Government

have been made in writing, and they are all contained in the document the hon. member had in his hand while he was speaking. The inference which Sir Henry Holland drew from them is to be found in the despatch quoted by my hon. colleague the Minister for Works:—

"It will be necessary in the first instance to test fairly the proposal of your advisers for establishing branches of the different Government departments in the Northern districts and ascertain by a careful system of accounts whether, after the expiration of a further term, a reasonable proportion of revenue has been spent in the Northern districts."

I think that is plain enough to show what the Secretary of State understood had been communicated to him by the Government, and I cannot allow a statement like that made by the hon. member to pass unchallenged. The hon. member knows I never made any such promise. The only promise made was made by the then Acting Governor, when addressing Parliament at the close of the session. It is in writing, and is included in the despatch that was quoted. It is true that on behalf of the Government I expressed a hope that we might be able to establish an extended system of local government. As I have explained on more than one occasion before this, the Government still hope to give extended power of local government to the Northern and Central districts. But that this measure does not contain any part of that proposal has been already pointed out. That is all I desire to say.

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

A YES, 26.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Jordan, Dutton, Macfarlane, Moreton, Dickson, Fraser, W. Brookes, Aland, Mellor, Isambert, White, Buckland, Bulcock, Sheridan, Kellett, McMaster, Wakefield, S. W. Brookes, Kates, Lumley Mill, Bailey, Annear, Grimes, Higson, and Morgan.

NOES, 14.

Messrs. Morehead, Norton, Hamilton, Nelson, Black, Jessop, Lalor, Stevenson, Adams, Donaldson, Pattison, McWhannell, Murphy, and Philip.

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.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the Chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to further consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1887-8.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

The PREMIER moved that there be voted a sum not exceeding £1,039 for salaries and contingencies for the Executive Council.

Mr. NORTON said he thought it was generally understood the other evening that the item of £300 for "Private Secretary to Prime Minister" would not be allowed to pass without some discussion. He did not object to the item itself, but to the use made of the item. He did not know whether he was right in referring to the private secretary of the Premier as an officer, because he was only a servant of the Premier. Personally, he (Mr. Norton) did not object in any way to the hon. gentleman having a private secretary, nor did he think any member of the Committee objected to such an officer being appointed; but he was quite sure many members on both sides objected very strongly to the Premier employing his private secretary as an active electioneering agent. He thought they would all object to that use being made of anyone whose salary was paid by the country. If the Premier liked to employ half-a-dozen active electioneering agents nobody had a right to protest, so long as he paid them himself; but he contended that

no salary voted by that Committee ought to be given to a gentleman who was employed in that capacity, under any circumstances whatever. They all knew that the Premier, as leader of the Government, had need of a private secretary, as, in addition to the work of the Government, he had a great deal of private business to attend to, and in order to do all his work he must have that assistance. He held the most responsible position in the Ministry, and it was only fair they should vote him that help, as the strain was greater than they could reasonably expect him to respond to. For that reason he believed no objection had ever been made to an appointment of that kind, and the salary had always been voted; but he did not think that any member ever for one moment expected, when the salary was voted in the first instance, or when it was voted each year after, that the gentleman holding such an appointment would be allowed to act in the capacity of electioneering agent. It was an open secret that the private secretary had taken an active part in the election that had just taken place, and that he had worked hard on the side which was opposed to the late Colonial Treasurer. It was very well known what he was doing; it was known that he not only attended the meetings, and sat quietly by as a spectator, as they had been told, but that he had really taken an active part in endeavouring to persuade the electors in the Enoggera district to vote for the opponent of the late Colonial Treasurer. He did not think that the result could be very satisfactory to the Premier, because the result of the election had been a decided affirmation on the part of the electors that they approved of the views held by the late Colonial Treasurer.

Mr. W. BROOKES: No.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Yes.

Mr. NORTON said it was no use the junior member for North Brisbane saying "No," because he was very often wrong. He had been wrong in that case, as a few nights before he had told them that the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, would never come back to that Chamber; but he had come back, being returned by a big majority. He had come back in spite of all the efforts of the Government, in spite of all the efforts of the Premier, and in spite of all the work done by his private secretary to get his opponent in. He (Mr. Norton) had not one word to say against the gentleman who had opposed Mr. Dickson. He believed he was one who, if he were a member of the House, would be a most useful member, and would work well with both sides. He had no fault to find with him personally, but on that side, at any rate, they did not like his views with regard to the land tax. He did not wish to occupy the time of the Committee too long, however; but he thought the employment of the private secretary by the Premier as an active political agent was most objectionable. If he chose to employ him in canvassing, the least he might have done was to have done it quietly, so as not to attract the attention of the country. He dared say the hon. gentleman had instructed him in the part he had taken, and it was only to be expected that members of that Committee would take notice of what had taken place, and express their disapproval of it.

The PREMIER said he had already said what he had to say about the Premier's private secretary when the matter was previously discussed on a motion for adjournment. He (the Premier) then expressed his opinion on the subject, and he was of the same opinion still, and always had been of that opinion.

Mr. NORTON: Of course.

The PREMIER said that if hon. members would only think a little more they would see that it was the only possible opinion. He did not propose to discuss the Enoggera election unless it was desired to have a debate on that subject. If it was desired to have a debate on it he was quite prepared to take a part in it if necessary, but he did not propose to initiate a discussion on the subject. If hon. members would follow him for a few minutes he would again state what were the functions of a private secretary. The Prime Minister's private secretary was an official appointed for the purpose of doing what might be called political work, official work which was not of a nature that could be done by a permanent officer of the department. The head of the Government had naturally a great deal of work to do not only in connection with his official position as head of the Administration, but also as the head of his party, and that was purely political work. The principal function of a private secretary was to do that work, and conduct the necessary correspondence in respect to it. Take the case of a general election. Would not the Prime Minister be expected to be in correspondence with nearly all parts of the colony with respect to suitable candidates, with respect to the best men to get, and the best arrangements to make for securing their return? That work it was the function of a private secretary to perform. The private secretary of every Minister, in any country where a Minister had a private secretary, had to perform work of that kind—work which had to be done by the Minister, but which, because it was of a political character, could not be done by a Civil servant who could not take any active part in politics. If, then, the private secretary could assist the Prime Minister in a general election, why should he not do so in a particular election? Where did the difference come in? He maintained that if a contest were taking place, in which the head of the Government thought fit to take an active part, he would be perfectly justified in employing his private secretary to do as much of the work as possible, and might even take his secretary with him when going round an electorate for that purpose. But on the late occasion nothing of the kind happened. As he had said before, he (the Premier) did not take any part in the election. A great number of Government supporters worked actively on one side, and a great number worked actively on the other side, and the Opposition came in as umpire. As he had already stated, his private secretary was free to do what he pleased, and he thought he had a perfect right to do what he did, and that he might have done a great deal more.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman, on the last occasion when they discussed the subject, described his private secretary, Mr. Woolcock—that was his name, he believed—as his political attaché, showing that tinge of Imperialism which he had displayed since he had attended the Imperial Conference. With regard to that political attaché, he (Mr. Morehead) hoped, fondly hoped, that his ill success on the last occasion would not shake the confidence of his political chief; it would be an awful thing if he lost his billet and the election too. He hoped the Premier would not be too hard upon Mr. Woolcock; it was his first attempt in that line, and though not marked with conspicuous success, he was a young man, as was the candidate who was described by the Press as a political neophyte, and could scarcely be expected to succeed in a fight against an old stager like the member for Enoggera. But to come to the larger question. He did not think it was ever contemplated, when voting the salary

for the private secretary to the Premier, that it was to be a political office—that was to say, that the private secretary was to be used for political purposes. In the present case the gentleman who held that office was actively employed in the election against the opponent of the Government. He thought that it was manifestly unfair that such should be the case, because the whole of the taxpayers of the colony were not of the same way of thinking as the Premier—at least he believed they were not; and why should they be taxed to employ a private secretary, in opposition to their views, as an active political agent? The duties which the hon. gentleman said appertained to that office were generally supposed to attach to the whip of the party. He believed there was an hon. member on the other side who held that high and elevated office, and possibly received remuneration for it, and who did the political dirty work for the Premier and his party. However, it seemed that he was mistaken, and that the Premier thought that the person the taxpayers supported should be allowed to go round electioneering on behalf of the party in power. The hon. gentleman also stated that on a former occasion the private secretary of the late Premier did the same sort of work. He (Mr. Morehead) thought he might safely say that that statement was not correct. Did the hon. gentleman say it was perfectly true?

The PREMIER: No, I do not.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman said so the other night. Well, I may express my convictions that there is not a scintilla of truth in the statement.

The PREMIER: I was so informed at the time by a gentleman sitting near to me. But in that case the private secretary was a Civil servant, so that the case was somewhat different.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not think that the late private secretary was a Civil servant.

The PREMIER: Yes, he was, all the time he was private secretary.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought it was very much better that for the future the private secretary should be a Civil servant, and that he should be kept out of electioneering squabbles and fights; he believed there was "rough-and-tumble" down at Eagle Farm. He certainly entered his protest against the office being abused in the way it had been by the present Premier and would move that the estimate be reduced by the sum of £300, that being the salary of the Prime Minister's political attaché.

Question—That £799 only be granted—put.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Premier the other day gave several reasons in support of his action, and each reason contradicted the other. He had stated that he was justified in using Mr. Woolcock as an electioneering agent because his predecessor had done so. He then said he did not use him as an electioneering agent, and then he finished off by stating that he was perfectly justified in using him as his agent. When the hon. member for Port Curtis said Mr. Woolcock was used as an electioneering agent the Premier's words were, "His predecessor did the same." He (Mr. Hamilton) could endorse what the leader of the Opposition had said, that that statement was utterly without foundation. He knew very well that the private secretary to Sir Thomas McIlwraith never went canvassing as Mr. Woolcock appeared to have done. Now, directly after the Premier admitted that his secretary was an electioneering agent he denied that he had used him as one. He would quote the hon. gentleman's words, because he was in the habit of making denials and saying he was misrepresented. The hon. member for Stanley said if Mr. Woolcock did his work properly he would

not have time to go canvassing, and the Premier replied, "He is in my office all day long." Now, that statement was known by people inside and outside the House to be utterly untrue. He knew very well that Mr. Woolcock was not in the office all day long. Scores of electors of Enoggera knew it, and he could mention one case in which a respectable merchant in town saw him between 1 and 2 o'clock in the afternoon canvassing a milkman on Red Hill. He made the remark, "Hullo, Woolcock has lost his billet!" The milkman was overheard to say, "Very well, I will do it; you can depend upon me." Yet that was the gentleman who was said to be in his office all day long. The Premier also stated that he had allowed Mr. Woolcock to do as he pleased in the matter, and had exercised no influence over him. Now, he (Mr. Hamilton) thought that statement was just about as correct and credible as the previous one, that Mr. Woolcock was in his office all day long. The hon. gentleman's memory on that occasion was a blank, as it had been on so many other occasions previously, when it suited him. Now, he had shown that the Premier's first excuse that the previous occupant of the office had done the same thing was without foundation. The hon. gentlemen, after overwhelming evidence had been brought to bear that his secretary had acted as a political agent, attempted to brazen it out and justify the action, and how did he do it? Simply by calling Mr. Woolcock his political secretary. The bare fact of the matter was that that gentleman was paid by the State to do work for the State, and he had no right to act as an electioneering agent. The members of that Committee would never have voted the salary year by year if they had known that the Premier's secretary was simply to be used to further the interests of one particular party; why, it would be just as reasonable to expect the State to pay the hon. gentleman's groom or butler. He did not blame Mr. Woolcock, who, of course, was told what he had to do, and no doubt did it to the best of his ability, but he certainly saw corruption creeping in when the funds of the State were used in order to keep in power a particular party. Some allusion had been made to a "rough-and-tumble" at Eagle Farm, and he noticed that great capital was made of it in the papers, but he was assured that the fact was that Mr. Brookes and one or two others were driving in a cart and somebody threw a dead duck at them. He believed it was on the same occasion that the member for Rosewood was treated with not quite so much leniency as he received in the House. A resolution was passed that he be allowed to speak for five minutes if he spoke English, but he did not comply with the condition, and therefore was stopped.

Mr. DICKSON said he would like to say a few words upon the subject under discussion, and he trusted that any remarks he might make would not be characterised by what might be termed spitefulness. After he had said what he had got to say he intended to ask the hon. the leader of the Opposition to withdraw his amendment. He did not wish to join in anything which would appear to be a personal act of spite towards the Premier's private secretary, who had taken an active part in opposition to him at the Enoggera election. He did not like to attack in that House, under the privileges of the House, any man who did not stand on an equal footing with himself, but at the same time he did not wish the debate to pass without expressing his very strong opinion against the practice of allowing a gentleman, occupying the position of private secretary to the Prime Minister, to act as an electioneering agent or touter for votes, for that was what the

Premier had allowed his private secretary to do during the late Enoggera election. He had always in that House advocated the cause of Civil servants possessing the franchise, and he still thought that gentlemen who faithfully did their duty to the State, though they might be paid by the State, ought not to be deprived of the rights of citizenship, which made a man feel that he occupied a proper position in the community. He felt that when a man was deprived of such rights of citizenship he was deprived of that which made him a useful and honourable member of society. But there was a great distinction between the right of exercising the franchise and the right of a gentleman paid by the State for certain special duties to perform the work of an electioneering agent, and he was sure of this: that the salary of private secretary to the Prime Minister was never voted by hon. members on the understanding that the gentleman who occupied the office was to act as canvasser or touter at elections. He totally disagreed with the Premier that the functions of a private secretary were in any way what he stated them to be, and he considered it exceedingly objectionable that a gentleman occupying that office should perform the duties that the Premier had permitted his secretary to perform. It had never been done in the past, and he could not see why he (Mr. Dickson) should have been selected as the victim of that animosity or spite which had been shown. However, he could rise superior to the position, and he felt that notwithstanding the action of the Premier's private secretary or any other gentlemen who had been instructed to oppose him he was able to return to the House with a thorough endorsement of his late action by the constituency which he had the honour to represent, and he was not afraid to meet the Premier or any other gentleman and give a full explanation of the reason why he had been again returned to the House by the electors of Enoggera. He was not prepared at the present time to join with the hon. the leader of the Opposition in opposition to the vote. He had a respect for Mr. Woolcock. He believed him to be a gentleman who satisfactorily performed the duties appertaining to his position as private secretary to the Prime Minister. He was a young man, and he (Mr. Dickson) believed that although he had a varnish of self-conceit which probably would be rubbed off when he came into contact more largely with the world, it would do him good, and enable him then to estimate himself more correctly at his proper value. In the meantime he did not join with those who might wish to deprive him of his position. He would certainly say this: that if he was in the House at a future time, and if during the approaching elections Mr. Woolcock was made use of as an electioneering agent by the Premier, he would most cordially support the withdrawal of his salary from the next Estimates. He did not blame Mr. Woolcock, because he believed he was acting under instructions. He could not at all accept the explanation that Mr. Woolcock was not a Civil servant. Possibly he had not been gazetted, and had not the benefit of the Civil Service Superannuation Fund, but he was to all intents and purposes a Civil servant paid by the State; and being paid by the general taxpayers, it was never intended that he should act as an electioneering agent for one section of the community. He hoped the hon. member would withdraw his amendment.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he could not help giving expression to a feeling he had very strongly just then, that the last speech was characterised by very bad taste. It was in just as bad taste as it would be for him to connect the newly elected member for Enoggera with the row and rumpus at Eagle Farm. He had never thought

of identifying the hon. member with the rumpus at Eagle Farm. He was free to confess that the events of Saturday night had made an indelible impression upon his memory, but he did not connect the member for Enoggera with those events. He was sorry also to hear the hon. member give further currency to the quite unfounded remark that the private secretary acted under the instructions of his Chief.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: How do you know?

Mr. W. BROOKES said he knew very well the remark had no foundation in fact. It was a very shabby remark to make, and it was a remark which should not have been made by such an old and experienced politician as the hon. member for Enoggera claimed with more pretensions than foundation to be. The hon. member claimed so much for his victory, but let him tell the hon. member that his victory was owing to the respect paid him for his long political services. Let him tell the hon. gentleman that when he went into the public market again—

Mr. MOREHEAD: Do not prophesy any more.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he was not prophesying—he was only expressing an opinion, and that opinion was that when the hon. gentleman was put up to public auction again he would not fetch the price he put upon himself.

Mr. KELLETT: Where will you be?

Mr. W. BROOKES said that wherever he was he could take care of himself. As to the ridiculous and absurd speech made by the senior member for Cook, he could only tell him he was wrong in his facts and wrong in the inferences he drew from them, and one-half of his speech was the invention—he was going to say of his own fertile brain, but he would refrain from saying that, and merely say that the hon. member was a picker-up of unconsidered trifles; and with that he would let him drop. There was surely something wrong in the estimation of Mr. Woolcock's position. Let him start fair, and he was sure he could depend for fair play on all the hon. members on the other side, however strong the party spirit might be. It had been said that Mr. Woolcock was a Civil servant, and it had also been asserted that he was not a Civil servant. However, it was quite unfair to say that he left his office and neglected his work. That was a most unjust remark, and should not be made by a member of that Committee, because hon. members must remember that when they made such remarks about Mr. Woolcock or about any other private person they were made without the possibility of a rebuttal by those persons, who had no means of defence. It was, therefore, mean and contemptible to make such remarks and make such use of parliamentary privilege. He should be ashamed to say anything of that kind; still it seemed to be in the nature of some persons to make such remarks. Mr. Woolcock had been called an electioneering agent by the newly elected member for Enoggera.

Mr. DICKSON: Hear, hear! What else was he?

Mr. W. BROOKES said he was not an electioneering agent. Whatever part he took in that election he took as a private person, and received no instructions from anyone.

Mr. NORTON: That is too thin.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he merely made those remarks, and they could only be contradicted.

The PREMIER: By persons who know nothing about the matter.

Mr. W. BROOKES said the same remarks might be made of himself. Did anyone suppose that the remarks made by hon. members on the other side were made in the interest of political purity? What rubbish! They were only made for the very smallest, the bitterest, and the most contemptible of party motives. He was pained to find that a gentleman who should know better and who had been characterised by amenity and suavity of disposition—which were qualities that were not very apparent just now—should have made use of such remarks. As for excising the vote, he did not think that was seriously intended by the leader of the Opposition. It might be taken for granted that what was said in the Committee would be read, marked, and inwardly digested; but let them do Mr. Woolcock justice, and to call him an electioneering agent was to entirely misrepresent the whole position. A friend of his came out as the opposing candidate, and he took a friendly interest in his candidature and was neither asked nor told to do it or not to do it, and he did not abstract any of the time for which he was paid by the public in doing it. He (Mr. Brookes) might say he was inclined to think—and a very little pressure would make him think—that if that gentleman had been employed in securing the return of the present member for Enoggera they would not have heard a word about it. He would appeal to the good sense of the Committee whether to excise the vote was not altogether beyond the occasion. Let them be satisfied with what had passed, and, above all, let them avoid slandering, and maligning, and backbiting, and injuring people who were without any power of protecting themselves. Let them remember that, if it was excellent to have a "giant's strength," it was tyrannous to use it like a giant.

Mr. STEVENSON said they could all excuse the hon. member for North Brisbane for feeling a little sore on the present occasion. He had been a bad prophet; he had gone on the wrong man, and, of course, he felt a little sore. The leader of the Opposition, no doubt, did not want this vote excised, but he wished to have a little discussion on it. Had the question been not the excision of the vote, but an expression of opinion as to whether the Premier was right or wrong in using Mr. Woolcock as a political agent or touting man, he was perfectly satisfied that the majority would have said the Premier was wrong. Of course they all knew that any Premier wanted a private secretary. He could not be expected to do without one; so, no doubt, the leader of the Opposition would withdraw his motion; but, at the same time, the Premier should give the Committee some assurance that he would not use his private secretary in the future as he had done over the Enoggera election. It had put Mr. Woolcock in a very false position, and it was beneath the dignity of the Chief Secretary himself.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that he, at any rate, was not sore in the matter, whatever might be said of the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes. He (Mr. Hill) was not sore, because his friend, Mr. Dickson, had been returned with a very substantial majority, to which he (Mr. Hill) had contributed one vote.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Are you sure you did not vote more than once?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said there was no California Gully about on that occasion; that was confined to the far North. He was glad that his friend, Mr. Dickson, had been returned. He could see that the Premier was placed in a very awkward position. There was one gentleman who had left the Cabinet because he could not go the entire animal—the whole hog; and a whipper-snapper of a lawyer—

a duck or a drake—got up and offered to do battle for the Premier, to support him through thick and thin, to swallow everything. How could the Premier put him down? He had to flutter his wings somehow or other, and the Premier could not very well say, "Don't you do anything of the kind; I would much rather you didn't." It would have been an admission of his own weakness, so he probably said, "Go and have a try at him." Then the private secretary, who was said to be a friend of the other bird—they were both birds, one was Woolcock and the other a cock duck—did not seem to have wasted any public time over the business. It seemed that he simply went out after 8 o'clock at night with Mr. Drake, and on Sunday it appeared he had been canvassing down Nundah way. That was very sad; this gentleman belonged to a very religious family, and he ought not to have been canvassing on the Sabbath Day, but it had not been shown that he had wasted any of the time he was paid for. It would have been better if the leader of the Opposition had shown his sense of the indecency of the course that was pursued by moving the reduction of the salary for the present year by the sum of one shilling. It would have been ample penalty to inflict for all the harm that was done. He (Mr. Hill) had not the slightest intention of voting for the excision of that amount.

Mr. HAMILTON said his colleague and himself seemed to have been in unison in supporting the present member for Enoggera. He also attempted to give that hon. member a vote; but he found it was another Hamilton whose name was on the roll, so he did what he could otherwise. The junior member for North Brisbane appeared to be championing Mr. Woolcock, but no one was blaming Mr. Woolcock. They knew perfectly well that he was acting under instructions.

Mr. W. BROOKES: That is exactly what I deny.

Mr. HAMILTON said that had not the slightest weight with him, because any person who would be guilty of such conduct would, of course, deny it. He considered that the hon. member for North Brisbane was the last who should presume to give the hon. member for Enoggera a lecture on good taste, because he thought the hon. member's own taste was very questionable when he talked of one of his own leaders and one of his own side as he did at one of those meetings, when he spoke of him as a "flabby and senile politician." He believed the hon. gentleman was old enough to be Mr. Dickson's father. The hon. member also referred to statements made by him, as unconsidered trifles. Were statements intended to deceive, unconsidered trifles? They were generally and justifiably distinguished by harsher terms. It was stated by the Premier that Mr. Woolcock was in his office all the day, but there was not the slightest foundation in fact for that statement, because he was away electioneering day after day. As for not acting under instructions, could any sensible man believe that the Premier had no knowledge of what he was doing? If he had been canvassing on behalf of Mr. Dickson some inquiries would have been made, and he would have been brought back to his work very quickly. He believed there was no intention to excise the vote, but hon. members wanted an expression of opinion that Mr. Woolcock should be confined to the work for which he was paid by the State.

The PREMIER said he had stated just now what he conceived to be the functions of a private secretary, and no one had attempted to answer his arguments. No one disputed the necessity for a private secretary to the Premier

to conduct correspondence with regard to elections generally, but exception was taken to the connection of the private secretary with a particular election, when he was not asked by the Premier to take any part in it, but simply allowed to do as he liked. As to the supposition that it was wrong to allow a person receiving State money to act in political matters, hon. members were strangely forgetful. There were officers in England specially paid for that service.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Not here.

The PREMIER said the officer in question was not paid as a Civil servant any more than he was, or than the Chairman was. The Chairman received his salary from the public Treasury, and he was at perfect liberty to take part in elections. He (the Premier) also received his salary from the Treasury, and he was at liberty to take part in elections. As head of the Government and of a party it was his business to do so, and the private secretary to the Prime Minister was exactly in the same position. In England the First Lord of the Treasury had two secretaries—financial secretaries; and they were simply the paid political agents of the party in power, each getting £1,000 a year for his services. They made all the arrangements for elections, and if they happened to be in a place where an election was going on he did not think they would be such fools as to refrain from canvassing. He wished now to correct an error into which he fell the other day when referring to Mr. Woolcock's predecessor, Major Lyster. Reference was being made at the time to Mr. Woolcock being present at an election meeting and being on the platform, and an hon. gentleman sitting beside him (the Premier) told him that his predecessor did the same. He then repeated it, but he believed he was incorrect in one respect. He had the best authority, however, for saying that when the then Prime Minister was canvassing his own electorate his private secretary went with him, and he did not see why he should not have been. If he were canvassing North Brisbane he should feel at liberty to employ his private secretary to assist him in every possible way, even to sit on the platform at meetings, and to induce doubtful voters to vote for him. He could not undertake to carry on the business of Prime Minister and head of a party without a private secretary. There were many other duties, not political but confidential, that could not be performed by Civil servants, and it was for the performance of those duties as well as the others he had mentioned that he asked for the salary of a private secretary. He did not wish it to be supposed that he was conceding to the objections made on the other side.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he might tell the Premier, once for all, that Queensland was not England, and that there were a great many customs there which were not likely to be adopted here. And one of the worst practices ruling in England was for the First Lord of the Treasury to have two financial secretaries to do work connected with elections. It was a new departure in the colony, at any rate, and was not likely to be allowed by the Committee or by the country. He did not desire to punish a man who was, to a certain extent, the unoffending tool of the Premier, but he wished to protest against the private secretary of the Premier being employed as he had been. There was no doubt that the discussion which had now spread over three evenings, more or less, was brought about by the remarks of the Premier and the Minister for Works when the matter was first brought forward. The Premier stated that he saw no reason why Mr. Woolcock should

not exercise his political rights, and then said he owed no gratitude to Mr. Dickson, and saw no reason why he should support his candidature. Then the Minister for Works got up and spoke in this wise :—

"As for the doctrine that Mr. Woolecock should not be used by the Premier for political purposes, I say that he is the very man the Premier would use at a general election, and I suppose that but for his friendly feelings towards Mr. Dickson he would have made use of him on this occasion. I know that if I were in his place I would make use of Mr. Woolecock to the utmost in trying to defeat Mr. Dickson, because it is not a personal matter: it is a matter of political principle between Mr. Dickson and the Ministry. If Mr. Dickson chose to separate himself from the Ministry on a question of political principle, he is certainly a fair object for opposition on the part of the Government."

Those were the words of the Minister for Works in regard to the employment of a private secretary. He sincerely trusted that at no period of the history of the colony would the Minister for Works be entrusted with a private secretary, though possibly, if he had possessed one, he might have done more good in the late election than the Minister for Works seemed to have done himself. He was informed that the hon. gentleman toiled and moiled the livelong day, and then had to submit to a most ignominious defeat, even in his own Toowong, which was to be created a pocket borough by the new Redistribution Bill; and he hoped the same fate would befall him as befell Mr. Drake when he stood for that constituency. The Premier stated that he inadvertently made a statement with regard to the private secretary to the late Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith—although he still believed it was correct—namely, that Mr. Lyster went on to the platform at public political meetings. The hon. gentleman was not altogether correct. What the hon. member for Port Curtis said was :—

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

"The PREMIER: His predecessor did the same."

There was nothing whatever about his sitting on the platform at meetings held for purely electioneering purposes. He (Mr. Morehead) fully agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Enoggera, and was very glad to find that that hon. member took exactly the same view of the question as the majority of the Committee, he believed, did; and said that in future, when any similar action was taken by any Premier's private secretary, he should oppose to the utmost the passing of that officer's salary. With the permission of the Committee he would withdraw the amendment, which, he might say, was only made with the intention of emphasising the opinion of the Committee with regard to the action taken by the Premier's private secretary. He trusted the debate would have some good effect, if not upon the present Premier, who had expressed his intention to make no change in that direction, upon some other Premier who was more amenable to reason, not so stiff-necked and perverse, and not so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Imperialism which seemed to have got such a firm hold of him when he was in the old country.

The PREMIER said that if the vote was passed he should consider himself at liberty to employ his private secretary in that way in future.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It will not be for long.

The PREMIER said that, as to the nonsense the hon. member talked about Imperialism, it was not his own. The hon. member had heard it from somebody else, and brought it forward on every occasion as a new epithet. The hon. member would soon get tired of it, and would then cast about for another. The arrangement to which he had referred was found a most convenient one in the old country.

Mr. DICKSON said he was not at all averse to the Chief Secretary employing his private secretary as his amanuensis in his correspondence with political partisans, even during an election. What he did object to was that the private secretary should depart from his strictly clerical duties and be delegated to assist or to introduce to public favour any particular political partisan of the Government. He doubted whether the political secretaries to the Treasury in the old country would go about the country with a Government candidate introducing him to public meetings and doing electioneering work in general. And that was what the Premier's private secretary had done. He should denounce it in any Civil servant, and he should feel disposed on any future occasion, if in the House when anything of a similar kind was brought under their notice, to mark his sense of its impropriety by attacking the vote.

The PREMIER said he was strongly of opinion that Civil servants should not take part in electioneering. He had never allowed a Civil servant to do it, and had had to threaten more than one with dismissal in consequence.

Mr. MOREHEAD: On which side were they electioneering?

The PREMIER said that one of them offered his services to him, and he told him it was quite a sufficient reason for dismissal.

Mr. KELLETT said the discussion had been a very useful one, no matter what might be the end of it. They knew very well that the Premier would never give in and own himself wrong.

The PREMIER: Not when he is certain he is right.

Mr. KELLETT said he was perfectly satisfied the Premier knew it was not the duty of his private secretary to interfere in elections, and that his salary was never voted for the purpose. But he was one of those men who would never acknowledge himself to be in the wrong, and that was one of the greatest mistakes he ever made in his life. The best men, the best statesmen, had sometimes acknowledged that they were wrong; but the Premier never did. He (Mr. Kellett) should have liked to have heard more members on his own side of the Committee take part in the discussion, because he knew that the opinions of many of them coincided with his own, that touting at elections was not the proper duty of the Premier's private secretary. The Premier stated that in England private secretaries made arrangements for elections; but that was quite a different thing from touting for a candidate who was put forward in opposition to the respected late Treasurer, Mr. Dickson, which made it more objectionable to a majority of hon. members on that side. He (Mr. Kellett) should not have spoken on the subject but for the unwarrantable language of the junior member for North Brisbane, although very few people inside the House, and as few outside it, took much notice of what the old gentleman said. He should have liked to hear the Premier say that he did not intend to use his private secretary at the forthcoming elections to tout against any candidate who happened to object to his views on one or two points. The hon. member, Mr. Dickson, only objected to them on one or two

points, and on being returned sat, as before, on the same side of the House as the Premier, prepared to support every good measure the hon. gentleman might bring before the House. If the junior member for North Brisbane had been subjected to similar treatment he would have gone to the other side of the House. But there the hon. member for Enoggera was, and he (Mr. Kellett) was perfectly satisfied he would be one of the best supporters the Premier had. Possibly what had taken place would bring the Premier to his level a bit, which he very much required. The hon. gentleman's trip to England had nearly ruined him. Queensland was not the country for Bismarcks; they would not have them; they must have their own independence. But the Premier was always trying to drive his supporters to the other side, and they refused to go; they did not like the fellows over there, and meant to stick to the Premier. They were going to make the Premier a good deal better man than he was, and he might tell him that there was a great deal of room for improvement; there were so many things in that country that he knew nothing whatever about. The hon. gentleman had lived all his life in lawyers' offices in town, and there were any number of matters in the country about which he had yet to learn. If the hon. gentleman lived a little longer they would teach him, and might induce him to modify the autocratic disposition to which he was now so much inclined. He was satisfied the Premier knew that that was not the proper position for his private secretary to take up. He was glad to know that the hon. the leader of the Opposition did not intend to push the matter further. He had never thought that he would. But the discussion had been well brought forward, and he was only sorry that other members on his side of the Committee had not spoken, because he knew that a very large number of them held similar opinions to his own—that it was a most unjustifiable position for the private secretary to take up.

Mr. NELSON said he hoped they would soon see some of the improvement that was going to be effected in the Premier by the hon. member for Stanley.

Mr. KELLETT: No; by members all round.

Mr. NELSON: At the same time he thought the private secretary to the Chief Secretary had abused his position if all was true that they had heard of his conduct with regard to the recent election. He rose, however, chiefly to state his opinion that the Chief Secretary was wrong in trying to draw an analogy between secretaries in the home country and his own private secretary. The hon. gentleman referred to the political secretary of the Treasury, and to the financial secretary of the Treasury, but they occupied a totally different position from the private secretary here. They were members of the Ministry, and had the same right as any other Minister to go about the country, and do what they liked with regard to elections. They were members of the Ministry, although not members of the Cabinet.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And members of the House.

Mr. NELSON: And members of the House; so that there was no analogy whatever between their position and Mr. Woolcock's position.

The PREMIER: The only analogy was in their getting pay.

Mr. DONALDSON: As a matter of fact they are members of the House.

The PREMIER: I assumed that you knew that. I gave you credit for knowing a little.

Mr. NELSON said the Chief Secretary defended the conduct of his private secretary in this instance by saying that he, as the head of an administration, was also the head of a party; that that party required looking after, and that if he had not time to do so himself the proper person to assist him was his private secretary.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. NELSON said there was something in that. But it was thoroughly unconstitutional. Although they carried on the government by party, yet party government was no part of the Constitution. It had only become a convenience. Possibly they could not carry on their system of government without it; but still it was not part of the Constitution, and he never knew before that it was the proper thing to vote the public funds for the purpose of carrying on a political party. That was quite a different thing from the administration. If a private secretary was necessary to the Chief Secretary to assist in carrying on the administration of the country, he could easily understand that they were justified in voting the people's money to pay him. But when that person was to be employed for party politics, he could not see that they were in any way justified in paying him out of the funds of the people. That was the objection he had to the private secretary being employed—a man who was paid from the public funds—being employed for the purposes that the gentleman in question seemed to have been employed in lately.

Mr. BULCOCK said that he was not at all satisfied with the explanation given by the Premier as to the position occupied by his private secretary. He did not think it was ever intended by that House that that gentleman should be a political secretary. That he was a private secretary to assist the Premier in drafting Bills, and in his correspondence, he could well understand, but he did not think any secretary occupying that position should be used for party purposes, either on one side or the other. If either party wanted assistance in time of elections, or if the Premier wanted it, he should pay for it out of his own pocket. He did not think the country should have to pay money spent for party political purposes on either side. On that ground he challenged the Premier's statement that the private secretary was intended to be a political secretary. He (Mr. Bulcock) had not the same objection that some hon. gentlemen had to Civil servants voting. Civil servants were not intended to be automata. They had their rights; they gave their services for the money they received, and they had all the rights of citizenship. He for one had no objections to their taking part in elections, if they did it so as not to be offensive to other people. He did not think it fair to attempt to keep them down, and try to debar them from having the rights which other men, with less intelligence and no more honesty, exercised. As citizens they were entitled to that. In this case, however, he thought, although he did not personally object to what Mr. Woolcock had done, that his own good sense should have led him to have appeared in a less public manner than he had done. If Civil servants were let alone there were very few of them would do what was offensive to either side. They ought not to tie them down and gag them because they were Civil servants. He thought that there had been quite sufficient said on the matter, and he was sorry they had spent so much time in discussing it. After all, it was really a very small matter.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked how it was that "incidental expenses" formed such a heavy item, £100, compared with what appeared for other departments?

The PREMIER said there was a great deal of clerical work to be done. The Clerk of the Council had often to call in additional assistance.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the reason he raised the point was because he saw that "contingencies" for the Legislative Assembly, which included "postage, fuel, and incidental expenses, including stationery, &c., for shorthand writers," only amounted to £185; and he was told that the work in connection with that Chamber was much greater than in connection with the Executive Council.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The PREMIER moved £3,400, salaries and contingencies, Legislative Council. He said the vote was the same as last year, less £25 increase to the salary of the principal messenger for 1884-5, which did not appear this year.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The PREMIER, in moving £3,585, salaries and contingencies, Legislative Assembly, said the vote was the same as last year.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The PREMIER, in moving £8,089, salaries and contingencies connected with the joint establishment of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, said in the first item there was an increase of £25 for one of the junior library messengers—from £40 to £65—to which he apprehended there would be no objection. In the reporting staff there was no change, and there was no change proposed in the item for the Refreshment Rooms, although the expenditure last year was £250 in excess of the vote. Under the heading "Contingencies," the same sum was asked for as last year. The amount asked for then for gas proved too small, in consequence of defects in the electric light in the early part of the session; but a sufficient amount was saved out of other items to pay for that. In respect to the Refreshment Rooms, he thought it was a matter for the Refreshment Room Committee to take in hand, whether they ought not to charge, under existing circumstances, a larger sum for the meals supplied to hon. members. He did not think the State ought to pay anything towards feeding hon. members, who received a daily allowance during their absence from home. Another matter that should be taken in hand by the Refreshment Room Committee was the cases of members who did not pay their Refreshment Room accounts. There was some amount of scandal going about in regard to that, and he thought it was the duty of the Refreshment Room Committee to report such cases to the House.

Mr. BLACK said they were going along very gaily voting those large sums of money at a time when they were led to believe the Government intended to do something to reduce the expenditure. They did not appear to have made any such attempt. He should have liked to have seen some attempt made to reduce the vote before them which appertained to the Legislative Assembly and also to the Council. He endorsed what the Premier had said about the Refreshment Room Committee. He was on that committee, and he certainly thought the country should not be called upon, after they had voted hon. members' expenses, to supplement that vote by giving members meals in the Refreshment Room at a lower price than they actually cost. He wished the hon. gentleman would move a reduction in the vote; if he did not, he

should be inclined to doubt his sincerity. The hon. gentleman also said he would like to see the Refreshment Room Committee bring forward the names of those hon. members who did not pay their accounts. He (Mr. Black) could only say that he had never heard anything of it, and the caterer had not made any complaint that he was aware of in the complaint-book. However, he should certainly make it his duty to inquire. He could not believe that any hon. member, either of the Assembly or the Council, would be guilty of such an act of meanness as had been suggested. There were some very large items in the vote which, considering the state of the finances of the colony, ought to be cut down. There was the item "Bookbinding, £1,000," which might safely be cut down one-half. The reporting staff cost £4,128 a year, but was any attempt to be made to reduce any of that expense? They were passing all those items when there was no attempt, so far as he was aware, to curtail any of them. The Government had been defeated upon their financial proposals, and they were unable to impose a land tax, which was to have been one of the sources of additional revenue. They had been unable to carry their motion for curtailing the endowments to divisional boards and municipalities, and how were they going to make both ends meet? Were the Committee to pass the Estimates almost *in globo*? He thought the Government should not go further with the Estimates until they had submitted to the Committee some proposal by which they could hope to make both ends meet during the year.

Mr. BUCKLAND said there was an item "Groom, £104," and he would ask the Premier whether, in connection with that, it was customary for persons not members of Parliament or their attendants to make use of the stables?

The PREMIER said he had been informed that there had been some instances in which persons had been allowed the use of the parliamentary stables who were not members of Parliament. He had also been informed that the Parliamentary Buildings Committee had passed a resolution absolutely prohibiting it.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he was glad to hear from the Premier that that custom should be discontinued in future.

Mr. NELSON said he understood that the vote was nearly always exceeded—that the expenditure was nearly always in excess of the amount voted. Last year the excess was £925; but he was aware that some of that belonged to the previous year. They knew that expenditure was going on, and would go on until the end of the present month. In the year 1885-6 he noticed that the total was considerably larger than this year; there was actually £8,793 spent that year, and £674 carried forward. He thought the Premier might have given some reply to the hon. member for Mackay and told them when he was going into Committee of Ways and Means, so that they would know what was to be done. They were fixing the rate of expenditure and did not know where the money was to come from. He did not mean to say that there was any trap laid or that advantage would be taken of their passing the estimate; but still they knew that if they fixed the rate of expenditure they would be bound to find the money somewhere or other, either by a land tax or by some other tax. They were now voting those sums of money in the dark; they had made no provision for them, and did not know where the money was to come from. If retrenchment was going to be the policy of the Government, then the Committee ought to know that, and also in what particular parts of the public expenditure that retrenchment was to be exercised. If they knew that to start with,

they would be in a much better position to consider the expenditure, and would be able to deal with the Estimates in a much more economical manner.

The PREMIER said the information he had from the Treasury showed that in the expenditure of that vote up to the present time there was a considerable saving on last year's estimate. One item, as he had mentioned just now, had been exceeded, but on the general vote for books, binding, periodicals, and other contingencies, there was a large surplus.

Mr. NELSON: But we do not know what has been spent since the 1st of July.

The PREMIER said the information he asked for, and which he presumed he had received, was up to date. The saving on that vote was about £700. There was, however, an excess on two others of about £500, so that, as far as he could tell from the information taken from the Treasury books that day, the expenditure was within the vote. As to going into committee of Ways and Means, he had already stated that the Government did not intend to make any fresh financial proposals to the House. That he had said plainly enough. There would be an endeavour, therefore, to make both ends meet by exercising a severe economy, as far as was consistent with efficiency. If they could not make both ends meet there would be a deficiency at the end of the year, but in the present position of affairs they could not help that if it did happen. They had asked the Committee to give them the means of raising more money and they had declined to do so, and had at the same time accompanied that refusal by what was equivalent to an imperative order to the Government to continue to carry on the business of the country. He was not prepared to say in what departments retrenchment could be effected. He was endeavouring to discover whether any saving could be made in the Treasury, but he did not at present see how any saving could be made in that department. He believed it was extremely economically conducted. He thought that in the Works Department there might be some material saving, but that was a matter which his hon. colleague, the Minister for Works, had now in hand, and which was receiving very careful consideration. He (the Premier) had taken the opportunity of going very carefully into the expenditure of the Works Department and the progressive expenditure of the different branches of the Railway service, and had compared the expenditure per mile on the different railways from year to year for some years past, and he was satisfied himself that there was room for considerable reduction. He handed over all the materials obtained for that comparison to his colleague, the Minister for Works, when he took office. He (the Premier) had every reason to believe, though he was not then in a position to give any particulars, that the estimated revenue would be exceeded, but he hoped there would be an opportunity before the close of the session of making what might be called a supplementary financial statement. He could not, however, that evening give the Committee any further information on that point.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the Committee had a right to expect that every item which had not been expended should be pointed out as they came to it on the Estimates, so that they would not be asked to pass a sum of money with the probability that the whole of it would not be expended. It was well known that if a large amount was passed there was a tendency to expend the whole of it. He quite concurred with what fell from an hon. member with reference to the charges made for refreshments. He did not see why hon. members who received

what was practically a salary for their services, which they had no right to expect when they came into the House and which they helped themselves to because they had the power, should take advantage of their position and help themselves to refreshments partly at the cost of the State. He entirely disapproved of that, and he thought that if the Premier made a proposal which would effect a reform in that particular it would meet with the approbation of the Committee. He would, at any rate, support the hon. gentleman in the matter. There was one other thing that he would like to say, and that was that they were told when the Estimates were brought forward that very careful consideration had been given to them by the Government, and it was impossible to reduce them without impairing the efficiency of the service. Since that statement was made ten draftsmen in the Lands Office had received notice to clear out, and now they were told that considerable expense would be saved in the Works Department. If that were so the Estimates could not have been properly considered. His impression was that in most of the departments it would be possible to make some retrenchment by which greater economy could be carried out. He quite fell in with the idea suggested by the late Treasurer that a Public Service Board should be appointed, and believed that they would make valuable recommendations as to what changes could be made without impairing the public service.

Mr. DICKSON said he would like to ask the Premier if he would take into consideration, before the recess, the advisability of appointing such a board. He was satisfied that no satisfactory retrenchment could ever be carried out in the departments unless there was such an authoritative inquiry held. He was not going to criticise unfairly the action of the Minister for Lands in giving notice of dismissal to ten officers in his department, although he might say that no intimation was given to him, when the hon. gentleman prepared his Estimates, that those men would not be required. Still he was convinced that the Premier and all the Ministers would find themselves relieved of a great deal of trouble, and of a disagreeable duty, by acting on the recommendation of such a board as that to which he had previously referred, and which had been again mentioned by the hon. member for Port Curtis. He therefore asked the Premier whether he would take the matter into his consideration. He did not ask for an answer that evening, but he hoped the hon. gentleman would let the country know before the close of the session what his intentions were with respect to the matter.

Mr. HAMILTON said he thought another reduction might be made in the Estimates. At present they were paying a groom £104 a year. Of course that was not too much for his services, but it should be borne in mind that expensive stables were provided for the use of members, and he thought that the members who used those stables should pay for attendance. There was a groom paid £104 a year, and in consequence of that members were able to keep their horses at a reduced cost. The salary of the groom should be paid by those making use of his services.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he believed that members who used the stables paid as much for the privilege as if they put their horses in a private livery stable. It was necessary for members who lived out of town that there should be a groom at the stables. There was another matter he would call attention to, and that was the increase in the salary of the caterer. Was that intended to make up for members who did not pay their scores? He believed the caterer had been let in on several occasions, and even now, though members received £2 2s. a day, some were

not in the habit of paying up promptly once a month as ordered by the Refreshment Rooms Committee.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is easy to make them.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not know that it was. He was credibly informed that there were members of the House who had not paid last session's refreshment score.

Mr. HAMILTON: I don't believe it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was glad to hear that his colleague did not believe it. He begged to say that he did. He believed there was a person in a very high position in the House who on one occasion did a very quick time through the insolvency court, and let the caterer in for £60. If the Speaker of the House could be guilty of a transaction of that kind, he did not wonder at others following his example.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Not the present Speaker?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: No; he referred to Mr. King, who was Speaker of the House, and went through the insolvency court and paid 6d. in the £1.

Mr. HAMILTON: He did not swindle his kanaka servants.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I daresay he did not. I do not suppose he ever had any.

Mr. HAMILTON: You had.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said, at all events the caterer was swindled, and he had heard that he had been swindled.

Mr. PATTISON said he regretted the hon. member for Cook had referred in the way he had done to a former member and Speaker of the House. He could not quite understand the justice and force of the remarks made by the hon. member, but he could scarcely characterise the hon. member's action in naming the gentleman referred to as a manly act. With reference to the stables, he quite thought that members using them should pay for the privilege and pay the full value. Reference had also been made to the Refreshment Rooms, and he certainly thought there was no reason, now that members were receiving two guineas a day, for their receiving cheaper meals than they could obtain elsewhere. In his case he received fourteen guineas a week, and he knew very well that he got a better feed for 1s. at the Refreshment Rooms than he could get elsewhere for 3s. or 4s. He rose chiefly for the purpose of correcting what he thought was a very great mistake made by the junior member for Cook in mentioning the name of a gentleman who had held a very high position in that Assembly, and who he had no doubt would do so again.

Mr. HAMILTON: A better man than ever he was.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would not have named the gentleman, but that he was compelled to do so to exonerate the present Speaker.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You mentioned what he was.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had stated that if a Speaker became a defaulter, it was not to be wondered at that some other members who had not yet attained to that exalted position should also become delinquents. He should like to see a report brought up from the Refreshment Rooms Committee as to whether the bills were promptly paid or not, and whether the caterer laboured under any disability in getting the paltry amounts which were charged for meals. He believed that he did. He believed that he laboured under considerable disability, and was not fully paid. He had mentioned the one case, which was certainly incontrovertible, as the matter had been thoroughly public at

the time. There was a list of creditors in the insolvency court, and they all saw and knew and heard of the case, which was no secret at all. He believed the same thing was going on now, so he had been led to understand; and he only hoped that the mention which had been made of it would have the effect of causing the caterer to be paid. That was all he wished for.

Mr. PATTISON said if the hon. member for Cook would only mention the names of the defaulting members no doubt the accounts would be paid directly. He had mentioned the name of a former Speaker of the Assembly.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I got into trouble about that once.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he quite agreed with what had fallen from the Chief Secretary that there ought to be an increase made in the price charged for meals; it was certainly an anomaly, now that members were paid for attendance, that they should receive their meals at a cheaper rate than they could be obtained for elsewhere. With regard to what had fallen from the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, theoretically he was right, but practically his proposal would be unworkable. There must be someone in charge of the stables. Hon. members paid for the feed of their horses, and it would be impossible to divide the salary of the groom amongst those who used the stables. One man might have his horse there two or three days in the year, and another man all the year round. The groom must be in charge of the stables whether the House was sitting or not.

The PREMIER said he had had no opportunity of saying anything with regard to what had fallen from the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, and the hon. member for Port Curtis, as to appointing a board to inquire into the working of the Government departments. He was not prepared to say definitely at present that the Government would do so; personally, he felt very much inclined to adopt the suggestion, which had been made in Cabinet by the hon. member for Enoggera. He believed a great deal of useful information might be got, and a great deal of economy effected by re-arrangement of the different departments.

Mr. MURPHY said he thought that when the Chief Secretary had studied the question of a commission to inquire into the Civil Service he might consider it worth his while to bring in a Bill to put the Civil Service under a permanent commission. He thought that would be the proper remedy for all the ills they were suffering under just now through having the service over-manned.

The PREMIER: It is not over-manned.

Mr. MURPHY said it was well for the hon. gentleman to say so, but he guaranteed that if the Civil Service were put under a commission it would be found that if it was not over-manned, a great many persons were foisted into the service who were utterly useless. It would be found that many of them were utterly unfit for the positions they occupied. That was found to be the case in Victoria, and that very question got to be such a burning question there that at last the Government had to take the matter in hand, and appoint a permanent commission to manage the Civil Service; and unless they took a leaf out of their book and did the same thing here, they would find the Civil Service would become very much overgrown, and almost useless for the purposes for which it was required. They knew that members of Parliament were in the habit of going to the Government departments and asking for billets for friends. He had made it a rule that he would never ask a Minister for a billet for any friend or any constituent of his, and he never would. He would

guarantee that none of the Ministers sitting on that bench, or any who might have been a Minister but not now sitting there, could say that he had once gone to him to ask for a billet for anyone. He thought that was one of the greatest curses members of Parliament laboured under. They were continually being applied to by constituents or by friends to get them into the Civil Service; and they all knew the Government were often only too happy to oblige a prominent supporter, and sometimes were very much inclined to make billets for the gentlemen recommended by their supporters. That was all done away with in Victoria, and if a commission to inquire into the Civil Service was appointed, he hoped the Premier would bring in a Bill for the purpose of putting the Civil Service under a commission, taking it altogether out of political influence, as he was sure that it would be for the general benefit of the whole of the country, and for the benefit of the Civil Service itself.

Mr. ANNEAR said that, before the question was put, he wished to say he thought it would have been far better if the junior member for Cook—who seemed to be in possession of all the information, and to know the names of the hon. members who had not paid up regularly to the caterer of the House—would say who they were, as people would wonder to-morrow. If he knew the names, and had gone as far as the hon. member had, he should have had no hesitation in telling the Committee who those members were. He was of opinion that members using the Refreshment Rooms, and partaking of refreshments, should pay the full cost of those refreshments. Now that they had payment of members he did not see why the country should be called upon to contribute one iota. He knew that some hon. members almost used the place as a boarding house. They almost lived there the whole session and a good part of the time that the House was in recess. Of course, he did not want to be like that individual who said, "Is it I?" He looked upon it as a very serious matter, and as one that should be the first duty of any hon. member to attend to. If they ran up any accounts with the caterer they should pay them as soon as possible after the accounts were rendered. He agreed with the hon. member for Barcoo, Mr. Murphy, that the time had arrived when a commission should be appointed in this colony for the management of the Civil Service. It had done great good in Victoria in the way of relieving members of Parliament from being pestered, as they were from time to time, to get employment for their friends or constituents. He thought, however, that a member would be failing in his duty if he knew of a competent person in his constituency to fill a vacancy that had arisen, and did not bring him under the notice of the Government. Since he had been a member of the House he had never asked a Minister for a billet for a relative of his, but he had recommended two or three persons, and it could be borne out by the heads of the departments that no one could more efficiently perform their duties in the Civil Service than the gentlemen he had recommended. As to the matter of the Refreshment Rooms, he would like to see the names of those members who did not pay up promptly appear in the morning's paper.

Mr. NELSON said, with regard to retrenchment, which appeared now to be the only hope they had to make ends meet, he would like the Premier to thoroughly understand that all proposals for economy ought to come and must come from the Government, and they should be formulated in a systematic manner. If they adopted the promiscuous proposals of members of the Committee, it was quite possible

and extremely probable that they would do a deal of injustice, as very few members of the Committee had any practical experience of the working of the departments; and they might make proposals which were not at all feasible, and which might injure the efficiency of the service. The Premier ought to prepare some system of economy to submit to the Committee as a whole. That would be much more satisfactory. Taking the Works Department, for example, and taking the actual expenditure for last year as an index of the expenditure that might be required, it would be found that the vote passed last year for the making of railways was not expended by nearly £26,000. One would imagine that that was an example of economy, but instead of that when they looked at the expenditure for the whole department they found it was in excess of the vote by over £10,000. What was saved or supposed to be saved from the Railway vote was devoted to other purposes and spent on buildings and things of that sort, and there really was no economy at all. That ought to be avoided in the future.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. I have promised that the hon. member for Dalby should have a day this week to discuss the report of the Prisons Commission, and I propose to put Supply at the head of the paper for to-morrow, after a formal Order of the Day, when I think we can conveniently take the discussion before going into Committee of Supply. I also wish to say, with respect to the maps for the new electoral districts, that they have been circulated to-day or will be circulated to-morrow morning. Those are the maps showing the divisions so far as the colony generally is concerned. With respect to the maps of town districts and smaller districts it is not proposed to circulate copies of them to every member, but I believe there are a sufficient number of them for members representing town and suburban districts which are available for them if they will send to the Colonial Secretary's Office for them.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at half-past 10 o'clock.