

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 1887**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 21 September, 1887.

Petitions.—Establishment of a University.—Questions.—  
Formal Motions.—Electoral Districts Bill—second  
reading.—Message from the Legislative Council.—  
Immigration Act Amendment Bill of 1887—second  
reading.—Queensland Fisheries Bill—committee.—  
Adjournment.

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

## PETITIONS.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNIVERSITY.

The PREMIER presented a petition from the trustees of the Toowoomba Grammar School, praying the House to make provision for the establishment of a university, and said that the petition was on similar lines to other petitions which had been presented dealing with the same subject. He moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER presented a petition signed by James J. Nolan, on behalf of the committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Queensland, of similar purport and prayer; and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

## QUESTIONS.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked the Minister for Works—

Whether concrete piers have been substituted for piles, driven, planted, or built, on the second section of the Cairns railway?—and if so, how many cubic yards of concrete will be required for that item of work?

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

The question of substituting concrete piers for piles, driven, planted, or built, has recently been considered, and at present is the subject of correspondence with the Chief Engineer, but final decision has not yet been arrived at.

Mr. KELLETT asked the Minister for Works—

1. If the whole of the £160,000 loan vote, 1882-3, towards a line from Ipswich to Maryborough, *via* Kilkivan, is available?

2. If any portion of vote has been expended?

3. If so, on what works, and to what amount?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

1. No.

2. Yes.

3. On constructing the railway from Kilkivan Junction to Kilkivan. Total expenditure to date, £165,570 19s. 4d.

## FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to :—

By Mr. PALMER—

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

1. The area of the watershed, also the length, diameter, sectional area, discharge capacity, and cost to date of the culvert under the Brisbane Station yard.

2. The name of the engineer responsible for the construction of that culvert with its several extensions, and whether a survey was made to ascertain the necessary drainage requirements at that place.

3. The diameter and estimated cost of the extension of that drain now under construction.

4. The sectional area and discharge capacity of the outlet to that drain under Roma street.

5. The area of the watershed, also diameter, sectional area, and discharge capacity of the culvert under Milton railway embankment.

6. The estimated difference in cost per lineal yard between a 5-feet and an 8-feet brick or concrete culvert, also between a 4-feet and a 6-feet brick or concrete culvert.

By Mr. DONALDSON—

1. That the Cooneana Railway Bill be referred for the consideration and report of a Select Committee.

2. That such committee have power to send for persons and papers, and leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, and that it consist of Mr. Morgan, Mr. Wakefield, Mr. S. W. Brooks, Mr. Palmer, and the mover.

## ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

## SECOND READING.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of adjourned debate on Sir S. W. Griffith's motion, "That the Bill be now read a second time"—

Mr. JESSOP said: Mr. Speaker,—When I rose to move the adjournment of the debate last night I did not do so with the intention of securing the first opportunity of speaking on the subject this evening, as I have very little to say. Still, I think it my duty to protest against this Bill, on principle. I know the second reading will be passed, but I hope if the Bill ever comes out of committee it will come out considerably altered. I think the Bill is premature, and I am sure it does not suit a large number of people, as is shown by the speeches already made by a number of hon. members. The boundaries in a great many instances are, to say the least of them, absurd. Take for instance my own electorate. The reason given for throwing Dalby and Northern Downs into one electorate is that there is not a sufficiently large population there to enable them on a population basis to return more than one member. The reason for that, however, is that portions of the most thickly populated parts of those electorates are cut off and thrown into other electorates. In the Dalby electorate, at Jondaryan and Rosalie, there are a large number of settlers, and that portion is cut off; on the other hand, at the Condamine there is a large portion of the country there taken away from Northern Downs, and thrown into the Balonne, going away out to the Moonie River where there is a considerable number of people. It is by these means that a large number of the population is taken away, and according to the population basis there are not enough people left in the separate districts to entitle them to two members. I find that in a great many other places the old electorates have been enlarged, and if the same advantage were given to us, and our electorates enlarged to the same extent as others, we should be entitled to two members. I am quite sure if that were done the electorates could be worked easier, and with less expense to the Government. It is strange that the members representing those electorates should happen to sit on the opposite side of the House to

the present Government. I do not know whether that is the cause of the proposed change, and I hope it is not, though it certainly seems like it, because in other instances the old electorates are not cut up in this way. A portion of Rosalie also is taken away from us and thrown into Aubigny, and to show that the people there do not like that I may say that only a short time ago the residents of a subdivision of the Rosalie Division petitioned to be brought under the Wambo Division. Their roads and interests are in that division properly; they do all their business there, and for that reason they petitioned to be brought under our board. There is another objection I have to raise, and that is to the proposed change of the name of these electorates to "Chinchilla." Surely the name of the district of Dalby or Northern Downs might have been left! As for Dalby, it is one of the oldest incorporated towns in the colony, having been incorporated, I think, in 1863, and Northern Downs was one of the first districts established after the separation of the colony. If these names are to be wiped out I think it will be unfair to the residents of the place. The late Minister for Works once said he would like to wipe Dalby off the face of the earth, and that he would wipe it out, and I hope the Government do not propose to do that, but it appears like it. To show that my constituents are against the proposed changes I will read a telegram I received yesterday, dated "Dalby, 20th September." It is as follows:—

"At a public meeting held last night the following resolutions were unanimously carried. That this meeting most strenuously protests against the gross injustice inflicted upon the Dalby and Northern Downs electors by the proposed action of the Government in amalgamating these electorates and reducing their representation to one member, and consider it unfair that Dalby, one of the oldest incorporated towns in the colony, and Northern Downs, one of the oldest electorates, should cease to be separate constituencies and become one to be called 'Chinchilla.'

"That the foregoing resolution be forwarded to our member for presentation in the proper quarter and that he may use it as he deems advisable."

That telegram is signed by Mr. W. Wood, mayor, and chairman of the meeting. Previous to that meeting being held I was asked by several persons whether there was any possibility of getting the thing altered, and if they should hold a meeting; and I told them to use their own good sense as to whether they should hold a meeting or not. I found when I got home last week that everybody was much excited about the proposed changes, and very much annoyed to find two strong electorates like those thrown into one, and only entitled to one member. I trust, when the Bill gets into committee, there will be some opportunity to amend it in this respect.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—So far as the debate has gone I see that the chief battle will be fought in committee. A great deal of dissatisfaction has been expressed on the Darling Downs with respect to this Bill, and especially amongst my own constituents at the way in which the electorate is to be cut up. Hitherto the Darling Downs group has returned nine members—Drayton and Toowoomba two, Darling Downs two, and Dalby, Northern Downs, Aubigny, Warwick, and Carnarvon one each. Now the number is to be reduced to eight. It is a very considerable time since the last Redistribution Bill was passed.

The PREMIER: Nine years ago.

Mr. KATES: Yes, nine years ago; and I am sure the population must have increased in that time by from 50 to 60 per cent.; and I cannot see why we should be cut down by one member when there has been so great an increase in the population. I believe myself in a redistribution according to the population; but I do not

consider it has been fully recognised in this Bill. A farmer, with a wife and eight or nine children, is of more benefit to the country than a single man who may be a miner. The miner may go to Charters Towers from New Zealand, and after staying for six months he might not like the prospects of the field, and go back to New Zealand; but the farmer is fixed upon the soil, and he may have sons growing up now sixteen or seventeen years of age, and before we get another Redistribution Bill those boys will be entitled to vote; and I think, therefore, the farmer settled on the land with his family is better entitled to representation than the single man. I shall have a good deal to say about the Bill when it gets into committee. With regard to the change of name, I cannot see why the old familiar name of "Darling Downs" should be wiped out. It has been a constituency since separation, and to show the House that my constituents are opposed to the change I may say there was a meeting held the night before last at Allora, and that I have received the following resolution passed at that meeting:—

"That in the redistribution of the electorates the name 'Darling Downs' be retained for this electorate, and the boundary line extended so as to retain Cambooya, Greenmount, Back Plains, Leyburn and district, and extend towards Goondiwindi to make up for the portion cut off and thrown into the Warwick electorate so as to entitle it to return two members as formerly, and that Allora be the place of nomination as before."

Well, sir, I believe in identity of interests, and I believe that these agricultural districts should be joined together when they are alongside one another. For instance, Clifton Back Plains, in my electorate, are chiefly settled by farmers, and they do not like to be cut away from the other part of the electorate. Their interests are identical with those of the settlers at Killarney and at Allora, and they do not like to be thrown into a squatting constituency like Yandilla, Cecil Plains, or Westbrook. I hope, therefore, the boundaries will not be so altered in committee as to make it a purely agricultural constituency. I shall say no more on the question to-day, but when in committee I shall bring forward an amendment which will suit my constituents, and I hope the Government will assist me in rectifying the boundaries so as to give satisfaction to the Darling Downs people.

Mr. MELLOR said: Mr. Speaker,—A good deal has been said with reference to the basis on which the Bill is framed, but some speakers have entirely ignored the total population basis, especially the Northern members, who think the adult male population the proper basis, because the proportion of adult males is greater in the North than in the South, as compared with the total population. I think, however, that the basis in the Bill is as fair a basis as we can be asked to adopt, and I trust most sincerely that the measure will be passed as it stands, or with very little alteration. With reference to a remark made about the Isis, I think that would be better with the Burrum, because it is a farming district, and closely connected with the Burrum. It seems, however, that portions have been taken from some districts to make up deficiencies in others, and for that reason, I suppose, Isis has been put into the Burnett electorate. Eidswoold has now a good population, and if we look forward to the future, as some have done, we may say that the Burnett will be under-represented in a very short time, because we know what goldfields are when they commence, and there is a rush to Eidswoold at the present time. I do not think that has been taken into consideration. Generally speaking, however, the division made will suit all parties concerned. I am glad to congratulate the Government and the country, in the absence of the hon. member for Gympie, on the

fact that Gympie has been considered to be entitled, as regards both total population and adult male population, to two members. In fact, I do not think there has been anything really substantial said against the Bill—nothing to warrant any serious alteration when in committee—and I trust that no attempt will be made to alter it, because if we begin to alter one portion of an electorate that will cause the alteration of pretty nearly the whole. Perhaps some small details may be altered in committee, but in the main the electorates seem so justly arranged in regard to total population and adult male population that the Bill could not have been framed on better or fairer lines, and I shall be glad to give it my support. I am glad to notice the adoption of the system of single electorates in this measure.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Is that a novelty?

Mr. MELLOR: If I remember rightly, during the debate on the last Redistribution Bill, it was considered by a good many members to be very much against the interests of the colony to have single electorates. It was thought very much better that there should be double electorates, and in some places electorates returning three members; but I think that would be a mistake; and I am glad that the principle of single electorates has been adopted in this measure. I shall give the Bill my hearty support, and I hope it will pass as nearly as possible in its present form.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—It does not seem to me that a sufficient case has been made out for bringing this Bill forward at this particular time. There are, no doubt, some anomalies in the representation of the colony, but they are not of such a grave character as to be brought forward at the present time, when there are other things which more urgently require our attention. I think that if a few members had been taken from the South, and an equal number given to the North, the whole of the requirements of the colony in regard to representation at the present time would have been satisfied; but the Bill does not seem to please anybody except perhaps one or two supporters of the Government; and even they have told us that they expect to make some alterations when in committee. But we have been cautioned by two Ministers and one ex-Minister that we need not expect to do anything of the sort, because if we once begin tinkering with the boundaries there will be no end to it, and the Bill will have to be withdrawn. We have been told that every alteration, however slight, in one electorate will involve alterations in one, or two probably, of the adjoining electorates. Unless the duty of fixing the boundaries devolves upon some other court than this one, I am afraid that before we get them adjusted we shall reach very nearly Christmas. I also object to the Bill for the reason that has been mentioned by so many speakers—that there has been an absolute ignoring of the principle of having an identity of interests within each electorate.

The PREMIER: Give an instance.

Mr. NELSON: I could give half-a-dozen instances.

The PREMIER: Not one has been given up to the present.

Mr. NORTON: I gave you one.

Mr. NELSON: I will give the hon. gentleman one instance, although that kind of challenge is more the argument of a barrister than of a man who wishes to get the truth. However, I will give one instance. Take the electorate of Northern Downs. The township of Taroom is tacked on by this Bill to the Maranoa. Now,

the whole of their trade, post and coach traffic, and everything else comes to Miles or Chinchilla. Why they should be taken away from the electorate they are in, and put on to Maranoa, outside their own interests altogether, is what I want explained. They did not ask for it, and they do not want it.

The PREMIER: Just look at the map and see what it would be like. Do you want it to look like an hour-glass?

Mr. NELSON: It does not matter how the map looks: what we want is to have the people represented. I would strongly advise that the Bill be withdrawn; we have very much more important matters to attend to at the present time. There is a dark cloud of apprehension hanging over the colony now; doubt and distrust are diffused throughout the whole of Queensland, and a painful feeling of insecurity is discouraging all useful pursuits.

The PREMIER: Dear me!

Mr. NELSON: The Premier laughs because he does not know it. We see what the result of his ignorance has been in the past by the effects at the present moment. He admits himself, and he has frequently admitted, that he never knew what the revenue of the colony was, and he does not know it now.

The PREMIER: What?

Mr. NELSON: I say you never knew what the real revenue of the colony was.

The PREMIER: I never said so.

Mr. NORTON: You said something very like it.

The PREMIER: I have said nothing of the kind.

Mr. NELSON: The fact of the matter is that the worst thing the late Government ever did was to leave a surplus in the Treasury; it completely demoralised their successors. They thought there was no occasion to inquire what the revenue of the colony was; it was unlimited, and they could go on spending to all eternity. We know that from their own confession, and from the results that have taken place. Well, sir, that being the state of the colony, I think it is imperative that we should go at once to the country without waiting for redistribution or new electoral rolls, or anything of the sort. What the colony now imperatively demands is some man of large experience and of wide experience, of strict integrity—a man of some financial resources and expedients—to take charge of the Treasury; and the sooner we get that man the better it will be for the colony. We cannot delay; we cannot put it off. This deficit is growing every day, and unless we take some steps to check it we do not know what disgrace it may lead to. Now, sir, I think that is a very good reason why we should not go on with this Bill, seeing, moreover, that there is every prospect of its taking a long period of time to get through. The members on both sides of the House say they are going to alter it in committee, and Ministers say they will not allow it to be altered in committee. Well, the Premier will have an opportunity of telling us whether he is going to allow alterations to be made or not. If he is not, I do not think the Bill will pass its second reading; if he is going to allow alterations to be made, we do not know what period of time this Bill may take in its discussion.

Mr. KATES: We have plenty of time.

Mr. NELSON: We have not plenty of time. How can we have plenty of time when the Treasury is devoid of money—in a state of impecuniosity? We are in fact in this disgraceful state:

we are living on the public balances; we are living on the deposits in the savings bank. Hon. members may laugh; but show me where the money is. We are living on the balance of the Loan Fund and the Trust Funds, and the savings bank deposits, and nothing else; and I say that is a most disgraceful state for any colony to be in, and the longer we suffer it to exist the more culpable we shall be. That is my principal objection to going on with the Bill now; we cannot afford the time. We ought, I say, to go to the country at once, and let the country judge of the kind of administration we have had for the last four years. There is a measure of justice in it too, because the Ministers will then be judged by the same constituencies which entrusted them with the management of the colony; and they may depend upon it that they will be judged, not by their professions, not by the preaching they give us, but by the results of their administration. In order to give an opportunity of coming to some decision on this point, I will on my own authority, and without consultation with any one, move an amendment to the effect that the word "now" be omitted, with the view of adding after "time" the words "this day six months."

Question.—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put.

Mr. KATES: Mr. Speaker,—I yesterday understood the hon. leader of the Opposition to say that he was not going to oppose the second reading of the Bill. We have now another leader of the Opposition.

The PREMIER: Didn't you hear him describe himself just now?

Mr. MOREHEAD: What I have said I will do.

Mr. NELSON: I did not describe myself. I do not pretend to experience, and that is the first qualification I mentioned—a man of large experience. That is rather a mean way of putting it.

Mr. BROWN said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to say a few words before the debate closes. The principal point of contention seems to be as to the basis of representation. Hon. members on the other side contend that the whole population should be taken as the basis. That seems to me to be an erroneous idea. Where every resident in the colony has a vote the basis should be the voting power. The man who has a farm or a wife and family has just as much and no more voting power than a man who has neither a farm nor a wife and family. Each man is entitled to the same amount of representation. The poorest man in the community has a vote just the same as a man who draws an income of £100,000 a year. That principle being recognised, it follows as a matter of course that the male adult population should be our basis of representation. We know that in the Western districts of the colony, and in the far North, the male adult population is considerably larger in proportion than in more settled districts. That is a matter easily understood. A large number of the male adults are not able to carry their families about with them; they must leave them in the settled districts; and hon. members must know hundreds of instances where the families of men working in the more distant parts of the colony reside at the seaports and other centres of population. There can be no doubt as to the equity of taking the male adult population as the basis of representation; and that, I believe, would be the opinion of the electors if the question were referred to them. Indeed, the principle is admitted to a large extent by the Government in this Bill, from which it is quite evident that they have not framed their scheme of representation on the total population of the colony. We have heard a good deal about the

metropolitan constituencies. We all know, or should know, that, as a matter of fact, such constituencies as Brisbane, Ipswich, and East and West Moreton do not require the same amount of representation as the outside districts. There are six members representing what are called the metropolitan constituencies, and it should be remembered that those six members are always on the spot. Now, although we may have ten members for the North of Queensland, we know that practically they cannot be always here; so that Brisbane virtually has as much representation as the whole of North Queensland. Of our ten members two sit on the other side of the House, which makes the numbers eight to six. But, on account of the enormous distance we have to travel, we cannot possibly have six members present during a session, while the six metropolitan members need never be absent. Then consider also the number of members for other constituencies who live in Brisbane; and bear in mind that out of the thirty-seven members of the other Chamber, only one comes from North Queensland, and one from the Central division. Surely it is high time some alteration was made in the constitution of that upper Chamber. Such being the case, I contend that if Brisbane did not return a single member it would be very well represented. Hon. members laugh, but it is so. There is hardly a member of the House, residing in Brisbane, who has not interests in the city of Brisbane, and who would not be always ready to give all the aid he could to anything which would tend to the advantage and progress of the city. It is absurd to argue that the metropolitan constituencies should have anything approaching the same amount of representation that the outside districts should have. When I speak of North Queensland, let me say, I am not referring to my own electorate. The Government have treated it very fairly indeed, and I give them credit for having done so. I refer to those enormous constituencies like Burke, which is to have one member for an adult male population of 2,000, while a small Southern constituency like Drayton and Toowoomba is to have two members for an adult male population of something under 2,000. That is anything but equitable. In the allotment of members, distance from the seat of government should, as was pointed out yesterday, be taken into consideration. Then there is the district of Carpentaria, which is known to have an adult male population of at least 6,000, to which one member is allotted. The Government may say that they must be guided by the figures of the last census. There is some reason in that, but I would remind the House that two years ago, when four additional members were granted, the allotment was not based upon the previous census, but upon facts that had come to the knowledge of the Government. They had heard that the population in certain districts had largely increased, and on that account alone they decided to give additional representation to those districts. They have similar information now with regard to Carpentaria. They know that the population there has increased enormously since the census was taken, and that there is every indication of a large permanent population at Croydon. Knowing that, they ought to have taken the claims of Carpentaria into consideration. Compared with the Southern districts Carpentaria will be almost unrepresented, and the Government cannot reasonably refuse to assign an additional member to it. Taking the Bill as a whole, I think it is to be regretted that we should increase the members by such a large number. I admit that the Government might have had a difficulty in making out a scheme which would have been equitable, and at the same time have retained the

number of members as at present, or even, if possible, have reduced it. I am sure that if fifty member cannot govern Queensland it is no use increasing the number. Another point dwelt upon by some hon. member was, that it is a great pity to alter the boundaries or the names of electoral districts, if it can possibly be avoided, and in that opinion I concur.

Mr. McWHANNELL said: Mr. Speaker,—I cannot allow the present opportunity to pass without raising my voice against the injustice which this Bill proposes to do to the central and northern parts of the colony. This injustice becomes more apparent to me when I look at the tables that have been put in our hands with regard to the Western pastoral group, with which districts I am more intimately acquainted. Those tables also show that, although the South has always been over-represented, this Bill, instead of remedying that evil, will add still more to it. I trusted that some measure of justice would have been done by our enlightened Premier to the outlying districts, instead of which I find that over-representation of the South is rather increased than diminished. So far as I can gather from the debate, I can see no principle and no basis upon which the electorates are formed. If some principle had been laid down, some hard-and-fast line, and that had been adhered to throughout the colony, it would have simplified matters greatly, and no doubt the public outside would have been more satisfied and felt that there was at least an effort made to do justice to all parts of the colony alike. I hold, sir, that the proper basis on which the electorates should be formed is adult male population, taking also into consideration the necessity of giving increased representation to the more distant parts of the colony. There have been already good reasons given by many hon. members why this ought to be done, and therefore I need not dwell further upon that matter. In looking over these tables, sir, I notice that the Western pastoral group does not get its fair quota of representation under the Bill. The constituency I have the honour to represent is to be cut in two, but I cannot see that there is any additional representation given to it. I hold, sir, that the Gregory and Warrego districts are entitled to four members—one each to the pastoral districts of Gregory North and South, and two members for the district of Warrego. In looking over the tables which have been put into our hands I find that the proposed electorate of Bulloo would have 1,440 adult males; the Gregory district 1,444; and the Warrego 1,849. Dividing these three electorates into four, it would give an average adult male population of 1,183. Now, sir, I do not think that this principle compares favourably with the average number of adult male population in the West Moreton and Darling Downs group. The average of the West Moreton group is 1,123, and of the Darling Downs group 1,063. I also think that the pastoral district of Burke, as laid down in the Bill, is entitled to two members. It is a very large district, and population there is increasing rapidly. The same remarks will apply to the Gregory district. In that district when the census returns were collected they were not brought in for some three months after the usual time. In fact, the census was not taken on the proper day at all. There was great difficulty in getting the papers distributed, and still more in getting them collected, and I believe they were furnished at last by someone in the district making an estimate of the population. I dare say the Premier will have some recollection of that. At that time, too, the country was depopulated to a great extent by the drought, which added to the difficulty of getting the returns sent in. I therefore hold that, instead of there

being only 1,444 electors in that district, as set down in these tables, there are at the present moment half as many more there, and on that ground I contend that Gregory North and South is each entitled to a member. Mr. Speaker, I look upon this Bill as the most unjust that has ever been presented to this House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: Oh, oh!

Mr. McWHANNELL: It simply shows, sir, that the Premier has a majority at his back, and that he means to retain that majority. The suggestion of the hon. member for Northern Downs, Mr. Nelson, that four additional members should be given to the North, was, I think, a very good one. Such a measure as that would meet with the support of both sides of the House. In fact, I think a measure giving four or five additional members to the North and two additional to the Central division would meet the case at the present time, and I would strongly advise the Premier in his present position to adopt some such measure, go to the country at once, and let the next Parliament decide upon the question of a Redistribution Bill. I regret that the hon. member for Northern Downs should have thought it necessary to introduce an amendment on the motion at the present time. I thought it was agreed by all parties that a Redistribution Bill was necessary, but, sir, I can justly say that we did not expect such an unsatisfactory measure as this now before us. I think, however, that the amendment would have been very much better left alone; and let us endeavour to make the best we can of the Bill in committee. I certainly hope that when it goes into committee it will come out a very different measure from what it is at present.

Mr. HIGSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think I should be failing in my duty if I did not rise on the present occasion to express my opinion with regard to this Bill. On looking over the Bill, and seeing the preponderance of representation that is given to the South over the Northern and Central divisions, I think it behoves every member representing those districts to rise and express his views. So far as the Central district is concerned, I would prefer to have the representation we now have to that proposed by this Bill; and if we cannot get better, I for one shall be prepared to throw it out. The Central division has now eleven members, and under this Bill we shall get only ten, while in the South there is an increase of six. We find several new electorates created in the South—Toowoong for instance, and four or five others; and this considerably increases the voting power of the division. A man may have a shop in Queen street, and reside in another electorate; he may have pieces of land in other electorates, so that he can assist in returning several members to the House, and has almost as much influence as the member himself. I think, sir, that the basis of representation in the Central division should not go upon total population, and for this reason: When this House meets, Brisbane members who have private business of their own can do it in the daytime and attend here at night, whereas members living 500, 600, and 700 miles from the seat of government, who have private business to attend to, cannot come down here under a month or six weeks. Therefore those constituencies are not represented for a portion of the session. Look at the members now absent from the House. They are nearly all Northern and Central members. Therefore, I say the southern portion of the colony is practically doubly represented compared with the Northern and Central districts. Again, sir, with regard to population I would point out that at the time the census was taken in 1886 it was an impossibility that

it could be taken properly. People could not travel about the country at that time, and therefore the census is no criterion at all of the population of the Central district. At the time the census was taken, station hands were for weeks felling scrub to keep the cattle alive, and therefore were not counted, and I am certain that if the census were taken now the population would be increased by more than one-half. I cannot see why the Blackall electorate should be wiped out or cut up and divided among two or three other electorates. Take Mount Morgan, for instance—how can it be represented by the member for Port Curtis? It has nothing at all to do with Port Curtis; it has nothing in common with it, and no business connection in any way. Westwood, again, is to be represented by the member for Port Curtis, but it has no connection with Port Curtis. It does no business with it, and does not lie in the same direction either. Instead of wiping out Blackall I think that Westwood, Rosewood, Mount Morgan, and the country right down to the Downs should be combined, and the mining interests of Rockhampton would then be properly represented; but I cannot see how the member for Port Curtis can represent the mining interests of Rockhampton and the pastoral interests of Port Curtis. I venture to say that there are 3,000 electors on Mount Morgan alone, and if that was taken into Blackall the mining interest then would be properly represented, and in a short time there would be even a larger number of adult males qualified to vote in that district. Again, I cannot see why North Rockhampton should be called Fitzroy. What has it got to do with the Fitzroy? The Fitzroy, after it leaves Rockhampton, has not twenty electors along its course. I think, therefore, that that name should not be given, and that North Rockhampton should have a member to itself. There are from 800 to 900 ratepayers there, and 500 or 600 householders; that would make 1,400 votes with Lake's Creek included. We find in England that a distinction is made between town and country constituencies. Counties like Yorkshire and the North of Scotland send to Parliament one member for only 3,000 or 4,000 electors; while the city of London members represent from 20,000 to 30,000 electors. I think we are entitled to have members allotted to us on the same basis. The Northern members live away from home at great expense. They have to neglect their business, and labour under other disadvantages. Further, I think that not only should the population basis be taken, but the revenue and extent of territory should be taken into account. I would like to ask what there is in common between one district on the coast and another 200 or 300 miles away to the west, and yet members are supposed to represent interests which are not alike. I think in the case of a district which includes such a place as Croydon, more representation should be given. We should go more into details and see if these places are fairly represented. I do not think they are, and if they are a little short of the population required to entitle them to a member, it must be remembered that the population is increasing. I shall certainly vote against this Bill, and if it gets into committee I shall endeavour to obtain fairer representation for the Central district.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—In the petition sent home from Northern Queensland in favour of separation, one of the reasons given was that the North was not fully represented in Parliament, and the Premier in combating that said that it was intended to bring in a Redistribution Bill, thus conveying the impression that he intended to remove the disability which Northern Queensland laboured

under. Taking his answer to that petition, and also the fact that, on more than one occasion, when in the North, he has conveyed the impression that the representation was not sufficient, it was, I think, only to be supposed, and the North did suppose, that our representation would be increased by this Bill. But instead of that our representation has actually been reduced, because, although we have an additional two members, the southern portion of Queensland has a larger addition. Now, I think the adult male population should be the chief basis of representation, at any rate in places far removed from the capital; and if we take into consideration the population of Croydon, which has from 8,000 to 10,000 inhabitants—so I am credibly informed—if we take that into consideration, and also the fact that the North will contribute a quarter of the entire revenue, and more than one-third of the Customs duties—I think it will be seen that we are entitled to at least one-fourth of the representation, which would be twenty-two instead of fourteen members. Now, the distance from the seat of government ought certainly to have more weight attached to it, because we know very well that the further removed a place is from the capital the more difficult it is to get its wants attended to, and according to this Bill it appears that the electorates near the seat of government are to be specially favoured. For instance, I notice that the number of adults in the northern portion of Queensland required to return a member is 1,399, whereas on the Darling Downs, which is within a few hours' journey of Brisbane, the proportion is 1,063. The list is given here upon which the representation is supposed to be based, but that is not correct. I saw a letter a couple of days since from one of the oldest wardens in the colony, who is at present at Croydon, to a gentleman in the Civil Service in Brisbane, and he stated in that letter that the population of Croydon now is estimated at from 8,000 to 10,000; and a man who lived at Normanton for the last year told me that the population of Normanton is about 1,000. Taking the Croydon population at the lowest estimate—8,000—and allowing that there are another 1,000 in the district, as Normanton alone has at least 900, it makes the population in Carpentaria 9,000; and yet in the returns we have the population given at 1,730. I suppose the reason for all this is that the Premier does not consider these wandering vagrants are entitled to the same representation as other constituents. In my own district—the Cook district—the population is said to be 3,997, but, since the census was taken, it is known that there has been an increase of 200 or 300 at the Bloomfield tin-mines. At Cairns, again, the population is stated to be 2,615, and the population is estimated by the residents of Cairns at between 3,000 and 4,000. The Bill is certainly a good Bill from a party point of view, but not from any other point of view. The Premier, no doubt, will make a point of the fact that members object that their constituencies do not get more members, while at the same time many of them consider the present number of members sufficient; but what we most object to is not the increased number of members, but the manner in which they are distributed. Our present position is far better in the North than the position we shall be placed in by this Bill. This appears to me only another of the Premier's moves to keep the cry for separation alive, and certainly no stronger reason has come before us in this Parliament to intensify that cry than the Redistribution Bill, and the unfair representation afforded by it to the North. When the Bill gets out of committee, if it ever does get out of committee, I think it likely that the framer of it will not know it,

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—I was disappointed to see an increase in the number of members of this House proposed, as I think we have a sufficient number of talkers already. If the Government were to draw the boundaries of the electorates according to the directions of every hon. member who has spoken, they would make a pretty hash of it. The main objections raised to the Bill have been against population being considered. I am sorry to see so many hon. members ignoring population altogether. If there is no woman suffrage, and not likely to be in this colony, still we know the value of wives in general. We know they have good judgment, and the good influence they exercise over the community in which they live. We know they are not generally unintelligent, but are often more intelligent than their husbands; and because of the beneficial influence they exercise they should, with their families, have some weight, and some consideration should be shown them. Hon. members representing Northern and Western pastoral districts are opposed to total population being considered at all. I have a suspicion that members in the pastoral districts look to the influence they can exercise over the people that are comparatively under them, even in the townships. Though there are many intelligent men working in those districts on the stations, still there are a number who are not so good by a long way as the wives in the population we are ignoring. Look at the men who go "lambing down," and who then go and get "lambled down"! They have votes, but do they deserve them? Then there are the miners, and I know there are a number of them most intelligent men, and on the various diggings southward it is surprising to find the number of intelligent miners, but they are not all so intelligent. The hon. member for Townsville mentioned the fact of the miners being generally so intelligent, and referred to the miners in the North of England as being the most intelligent class of working people in the world. There is a peculiarity there, and it is that the North is entirely Liberal, and the hon. member who expresses this opinion of them is a Conservative, and they would repudiate him. The miners in the North are all Liberal and they have leavened the whole lump, and have rescued the agricultural community from the grasp of the landlords by their intelligence. I listened to several hon. members speaking so bitterly about the way in which they were served, and as I had got hold of the wrong paper I felt inclined to take their part and become as indignant as they at the way in which they were treated. But when I came to look over the other paper I did not see that they had anything to complain of, because, instead of population being strictly the basis, we find that each member in the North represents a population of 3,477, and, in the Central division, 3,624. Then we find that each member in the Darling Downs group represents a population of 4,295; West Moreton, 4,385; and East Moreton, 5,204—or very nearly 2,000 more than in those districts whose members complain so bitterly. In the Metropolitan group there is an average of 7,077, so that the Government have not taken the population as the basis; and if any favour has been shown it has been shown to the North and the West.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. WHITE: Therefore I am inclined to look with a certain amount of disfavour on the objections made by hon. members opposite to the Bill. I shall support the second reading.

Mr. GRIMES said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the discussion has been pretty well thrashed out, but I should like to refer to one or two points. I

have gone through the electorates, as shown on the plans, and have carefully studied the tables, and I really do not see that there is anything to complain of in regard to the proposals for the distribution of members. Looking at the tables, no one, without being prejudiced, will say that there is any unfairness; and looking at the maps we find that geographically the electorates are arranged as conveniently as possible. The electorates are pretty well square, and are placed in the most convenient way for working during an election, and all the electors will be at a convenient distance from the member if he resides in the district. I notice that the objections came principally from the Northern members, who wish to have the adult male basis of representation, ignoring the total population; and some of them even claim that the revenue derived from the adult male population should be taken into consideration. If we admit that, I suppose a thorough good solid drinker, whether a whisky drinker or a brandy drinker—one who imbibes pretty freely and pays pretty freely into the revenue—ought to have two votes, whereas a Good Templar should have only one. That is a legitimate conclusion to draw in following out the idea of revenue. Then a difference ought to be made in regard to tobacco-smokers on the ground that they contribute largely to the revenue. But I am surprised that Northern members, when objecting to the way in which Northern electorates are arranged, did not claim that Polynesians, Chinese, and other alien races should be reckoned.

The PREMIER: That is what they claim practically.

Mr. GRIMES: They forgot to notice the heading on the top of the page; and I think it is in this direction that they fell short. In looking over the last census I find that there are in the Northern electorates, as arranged in the tables, 5,093 Polynesians and 573 natives of other alien races, making a total of 5,666. Now, if they had European labour only in the Northern territory instead of black labour, according to the basis of representation set down in the tables they would have been entitled to four additional members. This will probably work itself right by the next census and the next Redistribution Bill, when Polynesians are prohibited from coming here, and Europeans have to be employed in their places. If we go a little further and take into account the Chinese who, I believe, are to a large extent employed as day labourers on the plantations, and substitute Europeans for half of them, the North would be entitled to two more additional members in that way, making a total of twenty members for the Northern division. Surely they would be satisfied with that proportion, and if they adopt the course I have suggested and go in for European labour, not only will the number of electors be increased but they will make a better show for representation also.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I believe I have the opportunity of making a few remarks on the amendment, and I shall briefly refer to something that fell from the hon. member for Oxley—not that I particularly object to anything he said, but when he said the Northern members ought to have claimed additional representation on the ground of the coloured labour in the North, the Premier interjected that that was what they practically claimed. Now, I will take the opportunity of pointing out to the hon. the Premier that they do nothing of the sort. Any member of ordinary intelligence can read the heading of these tables, "Showing population, according to the census of 1886, exclusive of Chinese, Polynesians, and other alien races," etc. When the hon. gentleman



interjected that the Northern members practically did claim representation for coloured labour. he was stating, I think, what is not strictly true. He endeavoured to mislead the Northern constituencies, and possibly the Southern constituencies also. It was not a fair remark to make.

Mr. SALKELD said : Mr. Speaker.—We are all quite aware that a good many of these speeches are addressed to the various electorates throughout the colony. I have not very much to say about this Bill. There is one fault I find with it. If the Premier had left the West Moreton electorates as they stand at present they would be entitled to another member.

The PREMIER : No.

Mr. SALKELD : I think that if the population had been taken they would have had a right to another member. Darling Downs, with 34,000 odd, has eight members. Of course, I am aware that these divisions are not necessarily permanent ; the population is constantly increasing and altering its locality, and a new Redistribution Bill will undoubtedly be brought in after each census, so that it will be altered again. I would prefer to have seen the West Moreton electorates left as they are. I think they have thrown too much of Stanley into Aubigny ; it is quite a mistake altering the old natural boundaries of the districts. However, in looking at the Bill, I see that there is great difficulty in making isolated alterations, because if you take from one to put into another you upset the balance of the whole. I am not surprised to hear strong speeches from the Northern and Western members with regard to this measure. Now, is it not a fact that a good deal of this indignation is simulated with reference to the injustice to the West and North ? I have talked with gentlemen from those districts, and they have all thought that, whatever fault there may be in the boundaries of individual electorates, the measure has dealt out justice very fairly to all parts of the colony. We find that the Bill has not been framed on the basis of the adult male population or the total population ; neither has it been framed, as one hon. member suggested it should have been, on a revenue basis. It is a modification of two, in fact three bases. First it takes into account that the metropolis is not to be represented as heavily as other parts of the colony. Some hon. members have quoted the case of London in Great Britain, but there is no analogy between the two cases, none whatever. The distribution in Great Britain does not profess to be based on population—it is a compromise from beginning to end. Anyone looking at the glaring inconsistencies that still exist in connection with the latest Redistribution Bill will see that they did not profess to take a population basis at all—it was simply rectifying some of the most glaring inequalities. Some hon. members spoke as if they would like to have an acreage representation—so many thousand acres to return a member. I see no sense in that. I think the basis that has been taken, midway between the total population and the adult male population, is the fairest to take. Of course they use the argument that the adult male population have votes, but, as the hon. member for Stanley says, we might extend the principle of voting and introduce female suffrage. I do not know if that is within measurable distance yet, but no doubt we shall have it in time, and it will get over some part of the difficulty. Of course some hon. members wish to be dissatisfied. It has been circulated broadcast through the North, so that the residents in the North have come to accept it as a matter of course, the same as the sun rises and sets every day, that the South are all in league to oppress and grind them down.

The PREMIER : They don't believe it.

Mr. SALKELD : A great number of people in the North that I have met with have that idea. Now, since I have had the honour of a seat in this House, I have seen no indication of a disposition on the part of Southern members to do injustice to the North or to any part of the colony. Some members, I suppose, look after their own districts very particularly : the Northern members do it pretty persistently themselves. Let any impartial person look at the administration since the present Government came into office, and he will see that there has been, not only a disposition to do so, but an actual doing, of right and justice all through. There has been no tangible ground for complaint during the last four years, at any rate. Of course, if hon. members are determined to be dissatisfied they will have to be dissatisfied, that is all ; we are not going to give way to the clamour of a few Northern members down here. They will not be satisfied whatever is done for them. I think this measure, so far as it deals with the various districts of the colony, is a fair attempt—and it will succeed if it is passed into law—to remove the inequalities in representation between North and South. This House has before granted two additional members to the North and one to the West. Of course, one was given to Fortitude Valley here, but there was no disposition in any way to refuse to give the North and West justice in these matters. They believed it was fair and right, and they acquiesced in it. Northern members do not do their cause any good by raising that cry whenever anything is attempted to be done for them. I approve of the Bill, and I shall vote for the second reading of it, and if any necessary alteration can be made in some of the boundaries when the Bill goes into committee, I shall be very glad to assist in doing so. It would be better, whenever possible, to have a homogeneous representation, such as an electorate of miners or an electorate of agriculturists ; but that is a difficult thing to do, I am aware. I believe the Bill as a whole is a very fair measure, and I hope it will pass into law.

Mr. NELSON said : Mr. Speaker,—I wish to ask the indulgence of the House to allow me to withdraw the amendment I proposed. And I may further trespass on the indulgence of the House to refer to a personal interjection of the Premier's. The man to whom I referred—I may say so without any discredit to the present House—this House at present does not contain, but I have no doubt that the occasion will bring him forth. I am still of opinion that while the Premier is fiddling away over those Bills the colony is going to the dogs.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—If no other member desires to speak, I wish to say a few words before the Bill goes to a second reading. I have listened very attentively to the debate on the motion that this Bill be read a second time, and I must say that I have never heard a debate in this House which has been more unsatisfactory. I claim, sir, that the Government approached this subject, which is an extremely difficult one, with a sincere desire to do what is right and just to all parts of the colony. We have been met, with the exception of a few members on this side of the House, as if the Government had deliberately set themselves to do the grossest injustice they could ; it is said that they have fixed ridiculous and fantastic boundaries ; that they have effected a clashing of interests ; that they have done, in fact, what nobody but fools or madmen would ever have attempted. That has been the tone of the debate from a great many hon. members on the other side. I say the Government have not been treated fairly. I challenge any fair-minded man

whatever, who will consider the facts, to say that this matter could have been approached in a fairer and juster spirit than it has been by the Government. We have been met by the most extraordinary objections. I shall deal with some of them. One hon. member said that no regard whatever has been paid to natural features or to community of interests. I asked him to give a case in point, and he named the district of Taroom being joined to Maranoa, and said it ought to have been joined to Northern Downs. The formation of that constituency was most carefully considered by the Government. If those two districts had been joined as suggested by that hon. member, you would have had them in the shape of an hour-glass, which would have been a most ridiculous thing to have on the map, and would be the least convenient arrangement that could possibly be made. That is a matter which was carefully considered and rejected on account of its manifest absurdity. Then, again, we have been told that we ought to regard area. It has been said, "Take Cape York Peninsula; look at that enormous district practically unrepresented!"

**THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN:** Who said that?

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member for Burke, Mr. Palmer; and the hon. member who interrupts me said things quite as absurd, which I will refer to by-and-by.

**THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN:** And he will have something more to say on the subject by-and-by.

**THE PREMIER:** Other members also spoke of areas. "Look," they said, "at the vast area of the Western districts; look at the vast area of Burke." But what we represent here are people, not acres, whether of Crown or alienated lands.

**THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN:** You represent babies.

**THE PREMIER:** What is represented in this House is not acres but people. Some hon. members assert as an axiomatic principle that the adult male population is the only basis of representation, and, having asserted that, they seem to think that there is no other principle to be taken into consideration. Anyone listening to them would be led to believe that the Bill had been framed on that basis, and, being framed on that basis, it was so framed as to do the most deliberate injustice to certain parts of the colony. That was the entire argument of the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan. Anyone reading his speech, and being guided by it, would say that the Government had deliberately adopted the basis of the adult male population, and had as deliberately proceeded to work injustice.

**THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN:** I said you had not discontinued it.

**THE PREMIER:** That is the effect of the hon. member's argument. Just a word about the representation of the metropolitan constituencies. Why should 48,000 people who live in the Northern division be entitled to more consideration than 49,000 people living in the metropolitan districts?

**THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN:** There are good reasons why.

**THE PREMIER:** And the Government, thinking that those reasons were good, decided to give them exactly double representation. How much more do they want? But that is not because they live at a distance from the metropolis, but because of their circumstances, as I stated when I moved for leave to introduce the Bill. And here, lest I should forget it, let me all attention to something which was

done by the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, during the course of the debate. While my hon. friend the Minister for Works was addressing the House, and was speaking about the proposition to base representation on the adult male population only, the hon. member adroitly interjected the words "wandering diggers." Hon. members who have had some experience in this House will know what the hon. member for Townsville had in his mind when he did that. He remembers the great crusade made against a former Minister for Works because he once used the words "wandering diggers"; and I accuse the hon. member of having deliberately interjected those words in order that my hon. friend the Minister for Works might take them up and say something about them, and so afford the hon. member a text that he might preach from afterwards throughout the northern parts of the colony, saying, "Look here, gentlemen; this is the kind of Government you have in Brisbane, where the Minister for Works talks about you, in terms of the profoundest contempt, as wandering diggers." He will not tell them that it was he who called his friends "wandering diggers" in order to get the Minister for Works to repeat the words. Such conduct, if it is not out of order to say so, was a parliamentary artifice which, I think, is unworthy of any member of this House. Now, sir, let me say a word or two on the proposed basis of representation contended for by hon. gentlemen opposite—adult male population. Does the adult male population alone represent the actual condition of a district? Does it in any way represent the electoral force of a district? I say it does not. Take the 1,444 people in the Gregory district, which the hon. member for that electorate referred to just now. How many of those are settled inhabitants of the district?

**MR. McWHANNELL:** The whole of them.

**THE PREMIER:** How many of them? There may be generally as many men as that there; but, sir, how many of them are there for two years together?

**MR. DONALDSON:** More than that, generally.

**THE PREMIER:** I daresay there are. But I ask how many of those men are there two years running? A very good test of that is to be found in the percentage of men in those districts who get on the electoral rolls at any time. How many, I should like to know, get on the electoral rolls in those Western districts?

**AN HONOURABLE MEMBER:** All of them.

**MR. McWHANNELL:** When they go others take their places.

**THE PREMIER:** I say how many get on the electoral rolls?

**MR. DONALDSON:** That applies to Brisbane as much as to the Gregory.

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member is interjecting without being quite sure of his facts. I have my facts before me. I have here the report of the census by the Registrar-General, and if hon. members will look at pages xvii. and xviii. they will find the proportion of adult males in the different electorates who had got on the rolls.

**MR. McWHANNELL:** There are great difficulties in the West in getting on the rolls.

**THE PREMIER:** We know all about the difficulties. We also know how many voted out there.

**THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN:** No "bul-cocking" the roll there!

**THE PREMIER:** There is certainly not the same amount of one kind of voting there that we have so often seen in some other districts, where not only have a small number of people

recorded a large number of votes, but where at two polling-places within sight of one another, but neither within the electorate, five or six times as many votes were polled as there were people within accessible distance of the place. I wish particularly to call attention to the Western districts. In the electorates of Burke, Barcoo, Warrego, and Gregory there is the lowest percentage of registration of electors in proportion to the number of adult males—only 28·59 per cent. In the Gregory, whose member is one of the great champions for the representation of adult males, the percentage was 15·15 of its total adult males.

Mr. McWHANNELL: You did not explain how that census was collected.

The PREMIER: Why, sir, if the population was larger the percentage would be so much lower. Out of the 1,444 males found there at the time the census was taken, how many were on the electoral roll?

Mr. DONALDSON: No one disputes that.

The PREMIER: Two hundred and seventy-nine. And I do not believe there have ever been any more. Let me ask on what principle you are going to say that this is to be the sole basis of representation. Why should people in that part of the country, where the majority are not likely to take any interest in elections, have as much voting power as four or five times the number of people in parts of the country where they do take an interest in elections?

Mr. McWHANNELL: There has never been a contested election there.

The PREMIER: Well, I will take the Warrego, where there has been a contested election. That electorate is so large that it must be divided. Well, sir, there were 756 electors on the roll. That is a large number.

Mr. McWHANNELL: What time was it taken?

The PREMIER: The roll up to last December.

Mr. DONALDSON: Is that the roll that was purged?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. DONALDSON: Then they are not half in.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Is your Bill based on the rolls?

The PREMIER: No, it is not; but I want to point out how utterly absurd the contention is that we should take only adult males as the basis when we know, as a matter of fact, that a large proportion of them are nomadic.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No matter?

The PREMIER: I said "nomadic." I shall mention the proportion of the other districts. Northern division, 45 per cent. of adult males on the rolls; Central division, 38 per cent.; and Southern division, 61 per cent. That is a very good test, and it approximates pretty nearly to the actual amount of settlement—the permanency of settlement.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: A test of "bulcocking" in that district. That's the test.

The PREMIER: I do not know that it is. My hon. friend the member for Enoggera is not exactly a ubiquitous person, although he has taken a great interest in seeing that people should have an opportunity of exercising the franchise—that is, existing people, not corpses, sir; and I think he deserves great credit for having done so. I only wish we had a few more like him in the community. I say, sir, that anybody who knows the circumstances of the country—I have given a good illustration of it—I say anyone who knows the circumstances of the

colony knows that the number of adult males in the Western and Northern constituencies is no test whatever of the permanent population there. And I am sure that no person professing Liberal principles in politics would attempt to propose that as the basis of representation. If anyone dared to get up in a democratic country—and I claim this to be a democratic country—and put forward such a contention, why, sir, it would be scouted. No such proposition has ever been put forward in a democratic country. Just imagine anyone getting up in America, at any time you like, from the time of the establishment of the United States to the present, and proposing that Texas, the most difficult State in the Union to get at and the largest, should have representation, not in proportion to population, but in proportion to distance, its area, and the difficulties of moving about.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: You do not know what you are talking about.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Townsville does not like to be reminded that the proposition he is now standing up for in this House is one totally repugnant to the democratic principles he elsewhere professes. I take it, sir, that the true principle in representation is to divide the colony according to the interests to be represented, and not according to area, or sheep, or coolibah-trees, or rolling downs, or anything else. Every claim I have mentioned has been put forward in the course of this debate.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who said "coolibah-trees"?

The PREMIER: I do not know that any one mentioned coolibah-trees on this occasion except myself, but it is practically the basis which has always been put forward by the party now sitting on the opposite benches. Now, sir, a great deal has been said about the North, and I wish to say a word or two about that. According to the contention of the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, and the hon. member for Mackay, this Bill is a deliberate attempt on the part of the Government to add to the injustice they have always done to the North. Sir, if we believed that those gentlemen are the true exponents of the political feeling in the northern part of the colony, it would be a most disheartening thing for those who have the true welfare of the colony altogether at heart. But I know enough of the sentiments of the Northern people to know that those two members do not express their real sentiments.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: We shall see about that.

The PREMIER: The people of the North do not believe that the inhabitants of the rest of the colony are actuated merely by a desire to do them wrong and injustice. I know something about the sentiments of those people, and I venture to say, Mr. Speaker, that I have some friends in the North, and as many people there who believe in me as there are who believe in the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan. And I am quite sure that a very large number of those people—three-fourths at least, probably five-sixths—believe that the present party who sit here have a sincere desire to do what is right and just, as far as they are concerned.

Mr. HAMILTON: Nonsense!

The PREMIER: We are tired, sir, of this continual cry. I remember very well in 1878, when the last Redistribution Bill was before the House, and a general election was immediately at hand, that the hon. member for Townsville did exactly the same thing that he is doing now. He was then preparing for a great election

campaign in the North, and day after day we heard of nothing but the perpetual injustice that was being done by the South to the North. The hon. member had his chance then. He did not get in himself at that election, it is true, because he was beaten in his own constituency, but he came back afterwards and had every opportunity of doing justice to the North, being a Minister for several years. Then, sir, the people had an opportunity of seeing what kind of justice he did to the North, and they have also had an opportunity of seeing the kind of justice this Government has done to that portion of the colony. And I venture to say that no one can stand up and say honestly that during the time this Government has been in office any injustice whatever has been done to the North either in the way of the appropriation of money, in its expenditure, or anything else. If any injustice has been done it has been to the other portions of the colony. Those are plain facts. Now, what is the other side of the picture? Can any hon. member point to any instance in which a work has been proposed for the exclusive good or the special benefit of the southern part of the colony which has not encountered the solid opposition of members coming from the North? There has been a very different temper shown by the South towards the North from that shown by the Northern members to the southern portion of the colony. They have been deliberately fomenting ill-will all these years, and now when this measure is brought in with a desire to do justice and not to favour any one part of the colony, hon. members are simply endeavouring to make use of it to foment still further ill-will. I say I trust their efforts will not be successful. Now what are the objections? We are told that the North ought to have a great many more members. But why should it have a great many more members? On the adult male basis? Well, I pointed out on the second reading of the Bill that on that basis they are entitled to 14·4 out of sixty-eight members.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Eighteen.

The PREMIER: I take the census returns.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: You know the census is not correct now.

The PREMIER: I know it is not; but I also know that the North is not the only part of the colony where it is incorrect. It is just as incorrect in the South, and I say that, since the census was taken, for every one man who has gone to the North two have come to the South.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What nonsense!

The PREMIER: It is a fact.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: So you say.

The PREMIER: But, Mr. Speaker, we have this sort of thing told us every day, and we are getting very tired of it. Now, a good deal has been said about Croydon. According to hon. members on the other side, Croydon ought to have five members, because they say there are 5,000 people there. I believe there are about 5,000 adult males at Croydon.

Mr. HAMILTON: 8,000.

The PREMIER: That is the reason given.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: There are more than that.

The PREMIER: I believe there are about 5,000.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Ask the warden.

The PREMIER: Well, I do not care whether the population is 5,000, or 10,000, or 15,000. We have seen a great many goldfields in this colony with a large population for some time after they were first discovered, but those populations have

not been permanent. We remember when there were more than that number on the Palmer, and how many are there there now? We have seen as many as 10,000 on the Hodgkinson, and the returns from that field were larger than they have been, so far, from Croydon.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No.

Mr. HAMILTON: Not half as much.

The PREMIER: My informant is the gentleman who had charge of the gold escorts from both fields. We have seen other goldfields with very large populations indeed. We remember that Ravenswood had a member of its own in this House for some years—a small constituency taken out of the Kennedy—but unfortunately afterwards it had to have its member taken away because the population was not large enough. So that we should not be justified in treating a new goldfield population as a permanent population. I think if you look at a permanent goldfield you have a much better basis to go upon. Look at Gympie, the oldest goldfield in the colony practically. It now, with all the settlement and work which has been done there, is only just entitled to two members, and the total number of adults there now, including everybody, is 2,659. Take the case of Charters Towers, and that is a great goldfield—a settled goldfield—certainly with more people than are likely to be permanently employed at Croydon for some time. How many adult males are there there? On the goldfield, 2,769.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: There are not half as many on Charters Towers as on the Croydon.

The PREMIER: I do not suppose there are, but I say that we cannot assume the population of Croydon to be permanent, and we cannot assume that there is likely to be a permanent population at Croydon as large as the population of Charters Towers or Gympie. Things are not settled there, and we cannot see what the permanent population will be. That is the reason why we are not justified in taking into consideration those 5,000 people on Croydon as a permanent factor in considering a matter of this kind. And where did that population come from? Most of the people did not come from abroad. They came there from the various parts of Queensland. A good many came from the Northern goldfields and other parts in other electorates. Now, those are facts that must be taken into consideration. What hon. members want is to count those men who have gone to Croydon as belonging to the electorates they have left, and count them again at the place where they have gone to, but I am afraid we cannot accept a basis of that sort. Now, with reference to the adult male basis of population. If that is to be the basis, it must be as between the divisions of the colony, and upon that basis the North is entitled to only 14·4 members; but for the reasons I have given it would be absurd to adopt the adult male basis, which represents to a great extent an unsettled population, as the true basis. Now, hon. members say that the North is entitled to several more members, but where are you going to put them in unless you are going to create districts for the members instead of allotting members to population?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: We will find places for them.

The PREMIER: I ask where these members are to be put. Croydon, as I have pointed out, as far as we can assume, has not a settled population. Take the case of the Cook. You cannot move the boundary of the Cook district so far north as to exclude the Palmer or Cooktown. You cannot bring it any further south than it is unless you take in a district entirely disconnected with it—Port Douglas and the Hodgkinson.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: You have moved it down already.

The PREMIER: We come down as far as the Bloomfield River, because it is entirely connected with Cooktown, and that is the boundary. You cannot take any other convenient boundary without joining on Port Douglas, and the Hodgkinson, and that country. Of course that could be done, but we should then be repeating the present inconveniences of the Cook electoral district. There is no connection between Port Douglas and Cooktown. You cannot move the boundary of the electorate further north. The boundary is a natural one, and as the district does not contain a large enough population to entitle it to two members, we propose to give it one.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is entitled to two.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is as big as Toowoomba.

The PREMIER: If we do that kind of thing and give two members where one is a fair share, then other parts of the colony will think that they are entitled to equal consideration. But hon. members say, "We are entitled to additional representation," and in the same breath say, "By no means must there be an increased number of members."

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: We are asked to give a member to a certain number of the population in the North while the South receives a member for a very much larger population. By that means, of course, you may increase the representation of the North, but I do not imagine that Parliament will ever agree to such a scheme. Then let us come further south. It is suggested that the district of Port Douglas should have a member, and that is one of the very few suggestions as to what would be better than the scheme proposed by the Government; but according to the boundary given by the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, I find there would be only 1,200 people in the electorate, and only 500 adult males. That may suit hon. members, and if so let that district have a member. Now, where else shall we go? The Burke district. That is very large; give that two members. Then the Etheridge, give that a member. Adopting the principle of hon. members opposite you can get beautiful divisions on the map—they look big enough there; but unfortunately there would be no population to represent. I say if hon. members want additional representation they must show where the population is to come from, and the proposals will require very careful consideration.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I will show you.

The PREMIER: Hon. members know that this measure has been very carefully considered, and I say that the assertion that was made that the Government have endeavoured to work injustice in any part of the colony is most unfair; it is as unfair and unjust as any assertion I have ever heard made within the walls of this House.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is true.

The PREMIER: I did not anticipate such a charge except from one or two members, from whom I anticipate always nothing but what is unfair, but with those exceptions I did not anticipate such an attack. I have been in this House on similar occasions when previous Governments have undertaken the same difficult task as this has been, and I never remember to have seen a Government met in such a manner as we have been met by some members on this

occasion. Now, I pass to a more general aspect of the question. We are told on the one hand that we must not disfranchise a single electorate, and on the other hand we are told that we must not increase the number of members. Members get up in succession and say, "We are under-represented, and we are entitled to more members"; and they are immediately followed by other members, who say, "We have been disfranchised." The same arguments were no doubt used when it was proposed to disfranchise a rotten borough in the old time. Under the circumstances of the colony, there are great difficulties in dealing with extremely small electorates that are really not entitled to a member, but yet they must have something done for them. I pointed out, in moving for leave to introduce the Bill, one or two instances of that kind, and they are the only ones that have been referred to during the debate. Not a single case has been mentioned that has not been fully considered by the Government, and, I may say, to which I did not refer myself in moving for leave to introduce the Bill, with the exception, perhaps, of the Logan. I propose now to refer to another basis put forward—the basis of capital, of money, or of contributions to the revenue. I interjected just now, when the hon. member for Oxley was speaking, and saying that the North ought to claim representation for their coloured population. Practically they do make that claim when they set up the basis of contribution to the revenue. The hon. member for Townsville, if I understood him aright, said yesterday, in referring to that, that the North contributed a third of the revenue.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I said one-fourth.

The PREMIER: It was one-third the hon. gentleman said. Well, their contribution to the revenue is two-ninths. That is very different from one-third.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What do you call revenue?

The PREMIER: Oh, the hon. member evidently means something else; not what they contribute to the revenue—to the carrying on of the country—but what they contribute to the Customs revenue. Well, that is an entirely new basis. Was that suggested in any other part of the world before?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes.

The PREMIER: Well, suppose we apply that in America.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: You may, since you quote America.

The PREMIER: How much representation would a Western State get upon that basis of contribution to the Customs revenue?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What it is entitled to?

The PREMIER: That would be nothing at all, on that basis. Will the hon. member tell me a case in which the representation is adjusted on that basis?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: There is one member for a "territory," we know, and the Indians taxed are represented.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman is presuming greatly upon the ignorance of his hearers. The Indians are not represented.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I say they are.

The PREMIER: Yes, they are represented much in the same way as the natives here are represented. Can the hon. gentleman tell us of a State where there is representation except according to the population, with the exception

of the "territories," which are outside the union, and are governed by the Central Government, and have each but one member in the House of Representatives where they can speak, but cannot vote?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: A delegate, not a member.

The PREMIER: Yes, a delegate. They are not represented at all, or represented in the way which was suggested to me when the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Brown, was speaking this afternoon, when he said the Northern members could not be here all at once. The best way to get over that difficulty would be, perhaps, to duplicate the Northern members so that they might relieve one another, only it would be necessary to arrange beforehand that both members for a constituency should be of the same opinion. It is no argument to say that the Northern members cannot all be here, and therefore the North ought to have more; could anything be more fallacious than that? If they cannot be here they should not be members of Parliament.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: They should be Brisbane men.

The PREMIER: If they cannot be here they should not be members of Parliament, and it must not be forgotten that last year we passed a law to assist them in coming here, and to give them greater facilities for coming here. That law, certainly, met with strong opposition from Northern members, who, no doubt, saw in it another instance of a desire to do the North injustice. We cannot consider that sort of thing as an argument. Hon. members should consider a question of this kind from a practical point of view, and recognise that in every change of representation some electorates must lose members, and others gain them, and they should also recognise that there are three parts of this colony, and not one only, and that the Government are bound to deal fairly with all of them. If the measure is looked at in this way I think it must be admitted that it is drawn on very fair lines indeed. While we desire to do all that is fair to the northern part of the colony, we are equally bound to do what is fair to the southern part of the colony. I am quite sure the people of the North do not desire anything else, although some persons who pose here as their spokesmen maintain not only by their words but by their votes, whenever they get a chance, that no justice whatever shall be done to the southern part of the colony. Well, we cannot admit government by a minority, but we will do what is fair all round. The Central division was clearly over-represented according to the population, and we have to take away a member. There were four members for the electorates of Clermont, Normanby, and Leichhardt, and I ask, could any hon. member point to any place in the colony where the number could be more properly reduced than there? And yet hon. members coming from those places say, "Take the members away from the metropolis." When they are strong enough to do that let them do it. I never heard of a Government making such a proposal. I never heard of any Government having the responsibility of making a proposition to Parliament, making a proposal of that kind. Such a wild proposition could only come from an irresponsible member. I will now refer to some of the objections made to the Bill, and they are really not many. Starting with the northern part of the colony, nothing was said about that except the absurd proposal to make Port Douglas and the Hodgkinson a district by itself. It was interjected—for I do not remember it being said in a speech—that Cairns and Port Douglas have no connection with each other. But they have a community

of interests in this respect: the country in both places is of the same kind; their industries are of the same kind precisely; they have the same climate, and they are close together, the distance by water between them being very small. It may be said they are rival ports for the inland trade, but that may be said of many other towns. Tambo and Blackall used to be rival townships, and Brisbane and Ipswich used to be bitterly rival towns in those days when they were called the "Stanley Boroughs." Those places, then, cannot have a member each, and we must join Port Douglas to something, and what other alternative was there except to join it to the Etheridge? Passing further south—for I do not know that any other exception was taken in the North, except perhaps that the Burke electorate was very big. I pointed that out before, and I do not know how it could be divided. It is all homogeneous. Hughenden is a place in a corner, and unless we depart altogether from the division lines of the districts of the colony, we cannot join Hughenden on to Mitchell. Moreover, it has no connection whatever with Mitchell. Going to the east we might join it on to the Kennedy, but that is a purely mining constituency, having very different interests. We could not join it to the Etheridge, from which it is separated by a difficult mountain range, and with which it has no connection geographically or commercially or in the nature of its productions, and what were we to do with it? We could only do with it what was done with it, and join it on to the rest of the pastoral district on the Flinders.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What about joining Bowen to Ayr?

The PREMIER: I think Ayr ought to be joined to Bowen, and I think the Bowen people think so too.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I am certain they don't, nor do the Ayr people think so either.

The PREMIER: What can be done with it? We could make it so small as to have nothing left of it, and then give it another member perhaps. Of course by dividing the land without reference to the population you can get as many members as you like; but we must bear in mind all along that hon. members insist that we are not to increase the number of members in the House. I pass now to the Central district, in which the arrangement is said to be unsatisfactory.

Mr. BLACK: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The hon. member says "Hear, hear," but nobody has suggested anything better. The old Mitchell electorate was extremely unwieldy, and when it was divided two years ago we had to make a somewhat unsatisfactory division, because we could not alter the boundaries of the surrounding electorates; but will anybody say that the boundaries now laid down are not the most convenient and sensible that can be suggested?

Mr. BLACK: The Western electorates should not be included in the Central district.

The PREMIER: I am speaking of the division of the electorates; and no objection has been taken to the boundaries, though I believe the boundary between Mitchell and Barcoo can be improved. Passing further east we come to some electorates which were absurdly small. Clermont has been enlarged, taking in country that properly belongs to it. Will anybody say that is not fair? Then to the east of that we have Normanby, which is at present absurdly small, and could not be allowed to continue as it is in any fair scheme of redistribution; and close by is Leichhardt, of which the same must be said. On the other hand, passing to the north side of the

Fitzroy a new constituency is proposed to be created. What was there to be done but extend Normanby up to the suburbs of Rockhampton on the south side of the river. The people there are not alone entitled to a member. The only other change that could be made would be to create an electorate on the south side, including the Mount Morgan Gold Field. That would be an advantage in one way, because it would relieve us from the anomaly of joining in the Port Curtis electorate, Gladstone, and all the coast as far down as the Burnett River, Mount Morgan, and the country between that and Westwood. But that anomaly has already been pointed out, and the reason has already been given that Gladstone and that district alone would not be entitled to a member; it is not a discovery made in the House of an instance of the unfairness of the Government scheme, but a matter to which I particularly invited attention as one of the great difficulties that beset us in dealing with the matter. Coming south, one or two suggestions were made by the hon. member for Mulgrave, Mr. Adams, as to the boundaries of the Mulgrave electorate, but I did not quite follow them. I am not prepared to say that it is best to include Isis in the Burnett, but it is done because their interests are not diverse, because they are not far away, and Burnett was rather small. But that can be remedied if it appears, on consideration, that a change would be an improvement. Then the other complaints were with respect to the Downs. The hon. member for Dalby and the hon. member for Northern Downs both said the arrangement was unsatisfactory, and referred to various things that might have been done; but if they had tried to do them they would have found that they could not be done, because we tried to do all those things; in fact, no part of the colony gave us more trouble than Dalby and Northern Downs. It was plain that they could not retain two members, and the question was which to take away. The population of Northern Downs was not sufficient, and you could not expand it without taking some away from Balonne, which would be objectionable on account of a want of community of interest, and also because it would have made Balonne too small. You could not expand it eastwards without taking in part of the Dalby electorate. Then what would have to be done with the rest of Dalby? Either it must be joined to some other electorate or nearly all of Aubigny must be joined to it in order to make up a population; and then there would be the absurdity of joining people with no common interests, because the people living in the eastern suburbs of Dalby and those living about Toowoomba have no connection with one another. If we had done that we should have had to wipe out Aubigny altogether, or take a fringe from the eastern edge of the Downs and join that with something a long way off to the south; but that would not do. So instead of starting from the west and spreading the electorates to the east we started from the south and extended them to the north and west, getting a fair population and reasonable boundaries. With respect to the Logan electorate, I have found that it is possible to divide Logan and Nerang by a line north and south, so that the population will be as nearly as possible equal as regards both adult males and total population; and that is a matter worthy of consideration. As to the West Moreton electorates it is not necessary to say much. Places connected with each other geographically and otherwise have been included in the same electorates. There is not much else to reply to. Some hon. members have said that we had no business to bring in the Bill because there is other important work to do. We have been called upon to bring it

forward; and it was all along understood that as soon as possible after the census was taken it would be brought forward. It has been accepted by both sides as the principal business of the session, and we have obeyed the call of the House. In bringing this Bill forward we have at any rate done our duty. There is just one other thing—a matter that has nothing to do with the Bill—an extraordinary statement made by the hon. member for Northern Downs. He tells us that we are living on trust funds, that we have no money, and do not know where we are. I can assure the hon. gentleman that he is entirely mistaken. We are not living on trust funds; and the only foundation he has for the statement he makes is that there is a deficit of £415,000.

Mr. NELSON: Where is the money we are living on?

The PREMIER: The hon. member need not be alarmed. If he will look at the Treasury tables he will find where the money is. I only mention the matter now because such a statement ought not to be allowed to go unchallenged; and I can assure him that if he wants any information about the Treasury he can get it if he asks for it. I am not going to trouble the House with a financial statement now. I have said all I think it necessary to say on the second reading of this Bill, and I hope the matter will be considered by hon. members, and that they will endeavour, as the Government have endeavoured, to do what is fair to all parts of the colony. That is what we desire, though we do not profess to have brought forward a perfect measure. It is a matter on which all parts of the House ought to endeavour to do what is fair and right, bearing in mind, as I have said before, that there can be no greater mistake than for any man, or set of men, or any party, to think that any permanent advantage is to be gained by an attempt to do what is unfair in a matter of this kind. We could never know what the result of such an attempt would be, even for a year; and I repeat that any attempt to do what is unfair with the idea of gaining a permanent advantage is not only a very wicked thing, but a most mischievous delusion.

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

Committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

##### REAL PROPERTY (LOCAL REGISTRIES) BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that they had agreed to a Bill to make provision for the establishment of branches of the office of the Registrar of Titles in the Central and Northern districts of the colony, without amendment.

##### IMMIGRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL OF 1887.

##### SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—Hon. members are aware that at the present time a very large proportion of our immigration is conducted under what is called the nominated system. It is provided by the 9th section of the Immigration Act of 1882 that any natural-born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty residing in Queensland may apply to the Immigration Agent in the colony, and on payment of the sum specified to the Immigration Agent is entitled to nominate any individual for a passage to the colony. The amounts as provided in Schedule D are—Between the ages of one and twelve years, £1 for both sexes; between the ages

of twelve and forty, £2 for a male and £1 for a female; above forty and under fifty-five, £4 for both sexes; and above fifty-five, £10 for both sexes. That Act also provides for assisted passages. The Agent-General may provide passages for persons approved of by him on the scale contained in Schedule A of the Act. The scale is—Between the ages of one and twelve years, males £2, females £1; between the ages of twelve and forty, males £4, females £2; above forty and under fifty-five, both sexes £6; and above fifty-five, both sexes £10. The assisted system has practically fallen into desuetude; there have been very few granted in the last year or two—I think only about six in the last two years, the other modes of immigration having been more fully used. The bounty system is another form of assisted system. That has also dropped out of use now for various reasons; but I believe there is reason to think the assisted passages might be revived, and a much larger amount derived from persons desirous of obtaining such passages. I am borne out in that opinion by the opinion, of my hon. colleague the Minister for Lands, who has had a large experience on the subject having been for some years Agent-General. With respect to nominated passengers, a very great number now come out. In the year 1885 the amount paid by nominors was £5,774, which represented 3,259 persons who came out during the year; and in 1886 there were 4,048, who paid £6,364. This entails a very large expense on the Government, because the total cost is not less than £16 a head, and all the difference is paid by the Government. By this Bill it is proposed that the assisted rates shall be raised to the amount specified in Schedule G, instead of those in Schedule A to the Act of 1882. In effect the rates are doubled right through and there is no provision made for assisted passengers above fifty-five. If people above fifty-five want to come out they must pay their own passage money. For children between one and twelve it is proposed that the rate should be raised from £2 and £1, for males and females respectively, to £4 and £2, between the ages of twelve and forty—"forty-five" is a misprint in the schedule—from £4 and £2 to £8 and £4, and above forty and under fifty-five from £6 to £12. With respect to nominated passages, it is proposed that the rates should be made the same up to fifty-five as for assisted passages, and above fifty-five we will still undertake the duty of bringing out nominated passengers, on condition that they pay the full amount of passage money. There may be some difference of opinion as to whether so large an increase should be made all at once in the scale of payments for nominated passages. The difference that would have been made by adopting the proposals of this Bill on the transactions for 1885 would have been this: The Government would have received a contribution of £18,856, as against £5,774, an increase of £13,000; and on last year's transactions they would have received £23,138, as against £6,364, a difference of £17,000. These amounts for immigration are taken out of the loan vote; and, as that will not last for ever, it is a very serious question whether the system should be continued when the money is exhausted. I think it would be a good thing to continue it for a while; but in the meantime I think we may very advantageously raise the rate demanded to be contributed by persons coming out. The only class of immigrants we are bringing out free at the present time are female domestic servants and farm labourers; the others, except nominated passengers, pay their full fares. I certainly think we may fairly ask a larger contribution from these people themselves or their friends. The number has been increasing so

largely that at the beginning of this year the Agent-General, after consultation with me, came to the conclusion that it would be necessary to employ several extra steamers during the year, otherwise it would be impracticable to bring out the whole number during the twelve months for which the passage warrant is available. The only other provision of the Bill deals with cases that have sometimes arisen of persons procuring passages to the colony as free or nominated passengers, who have already been in the colony. I need say nothing about assisted passengers, because very few have come lately; but with respect to free or nominated passengers, persons obtaining passages are required to make a declaration in the form of Schedule B, in which they declare that they have never previously resided in any of the Australian colonies, yet a good many have come out who had been here before. I know of one case in which a woman took two trips to England, and on each occasion came out again either as a free or a nominated passenger. You cannot punish them here for a false declaration made in England, and, of course, you cannot punish them in England because they are here. What is proposed is, to provide that any person who comes to the colony under those circumstances, having made that declaration, shall be punished. They certainly ought to be, because they have been taking money out of the Treasury by distinctly false pretences. These are the chief features of the Bill. I do not think I need further explain the matter—it is a very simple one; and the only question, I apprehend, as to which there can be a doubt is whether it is desirable to raise the rates for nominated passages to the extent proposed. They certainly ought to be higher than they are at present. I move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—This question of immigration is one which, if we were disposed to go into it largely, might occupy a great deal of time, because I believe that during the time when it was most difficult for labourers to find employment there were a great many people introduced into the colony at the expense of the State. I do not wish to go into that question here, and what I have to say will be confined as strictly as possible to the Bill. I cannot help looking with some doubt upon the passing of a measure which will have the effect of increasing the charges made for nominated passengers, as I believe they are about the most useful class of passengers who come to the country. Although some few of them may have taken advantage of the regulations and have come to the country under false pretences, the great bulk of them are people who are nominated by their friends here. They do not come out so much to enter into competition in the labour market with those who are already here as to go into the country and settle on the land. I am told that the great bulk of the nominated passengers are nominated by people who have come out and formed homes for themselves in the country—that they first work on the farms and eventually take up land on their own account. For that reason, I doubt the wisdom of greatly increasing their passage money. As far as assisted passengers are concerned, we need not discuss them very largely; their number not being great they are not a very important element to take into consideration. Some alteration might be advisable in respect to ages. I do not see why, for instance, in the second schedule, we should go so high as the age of fifty-five. Although men who have settled here may be anxious to bring their parents out, yet a man or woman fifty-five years of age coming to the colony is not of very great value as a colonist, and the limit of age ought to be reduced. Indeed, I doubt very much whether it is desirable to bring out anyone



above the age of forty without charging the full amount; certainly they ought not to be brought out when they are as old as fifty-five. When they have arrived at that age they do not settle on the land as ordinary settlers do, and for all practical purposes they are of very little use to the colony. In cases of persons of that age who are unmarried, or who have no children, I do not think it is advisable to bring them out at all; let them come entirely at their own expense. Some difference should be made with regard to those bringing out children growing up, who will settle on the land and become good, useful colonists. With regard to the figures quoted by the Premier, as to the number of people coming out during the last year or two, the amount paid by them, and the amount which would have been paid by them if this Bill had been law at the time, I think he did not take into consideration the fact that if it had been law we should have had a much smaller immigration. It is only the low cost which induces them to come out in such large numbers, and the effect of increasing the rates will be to diminish that particular class of immigration. I cannot help thinking that, although some few persons do take advantage of the Act, and come out here under false pretences, it is a very doubtful policy to reduce the number of that class of immigrants, when at the same time we are bringing others out free. It is advisable that regulations should be made enforcing a strict examination at home, in order to prevent mechanics and persons following trades for which there is no opening here, from coming out. At present it is impossible to prevent a large number of such persons coming out under misrepresentation. And we should do all we reasonably can to encourage those immigrants who are nominated by their friends in the colony, and who settle on the land. In speaking thus, I do not wish it to be supposed that I would allow all persons to come out to their friends on those terms. There is just as much necessity for strict supervision in this class as in any other. But, as I said before, I look upon the proposal to increase the charges for nominated passengers, while we are bringing out others free, with a certain amount of doubt.

Mr. DICKSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think the apprehensions of the hon. member for Port Curtis in connection with this matter will be realised. I look upon it that the time has arrived when we can very fairly raise our rates of passage money for nominated passengers; and I fully agree that during the last year, and perhaps even before that, the system has been open to very great abuse, and that many people who have come out to the colony, leaving their friends at home, and who have made homes for themselves and have prospered, have taken advantage of the nominated system to get their friends out here at the cost of the State. I therefore think that, as a Treasury matter alone, this Bill should commend itself to our approval. But the Premier ought to have informed us—perhaps the Minister for Lands may be able to do so afterwards—as to the number of obligations which are at present outstanding in connection with nominated passengers. The ships hitherto have been filled up very largely by full-paying passengers, and nominated passengers have had to stand over from time to time until the arrival of a more convenient season; and I believe a very large number of applications are at present outstanding, which will require to be attended to. This Bill does not, of course, touch the case of warrants which have been issued prior to its introduction, and which will take, perhaps, a couple of years to discharge. I know there is a very large number indeed outstanding. I think there were some 3,000 or 4,000—I quote from memory—in connection with

the nominated system, and these are being sent out by the Agent-General as opportunity offers, full-paying passengers having precedence. I think the time has arrived when we may very fairly revise our whole system. Indeed, I think the colony has become so well known in Great Britain that there is no longer any necessity for keeping up this extremely low standard, which may be considered as an inducement to pauper immigration. We should now look to receive a class of immigrants who will bring a moderate sum of money with them to enable them to establish themselves comfortably in a new country. While the rates here are not prohibitory they will relieve the Treasury of the very large draw upon it in connection with the obligations which have been incurred. Possibly the Minister for Lands, who takes a deep interest in this matter, will be able to supply the information I have asked for with regard to the obligations yet to be discharged. I do not think this Bill will have the effect of preventing a useful class of immigrants arriving in Queensland, as appears to be apprehended by the hon. member for Port Curtis. I believe the colony is now so well known, and its circumstances so much better understood than formerly, that we shall obtain, even under this increased scale, quite sufficient suitable immigrants to settle the country. While I always regard immigration most favourably, still it is undesirable that the colony should be swamped with anything like pauper immigrants, who only disturb the labour market—men who have not the slightest idea of settling upon the lands of the colony, or of doing anything more than to hang about towns and endeavour to extract a precarious living by keeping in centres of population. That is not the healthy class of immigrants we desire to obtain; and, in my opinion, while the increased rates will not deter any from coming to the colony who desire to come, they will prevent many abuses which have crept in under the low rates which have hitherto obtained. I regard the Bill, therefore, as a very desirable measure. If the rates had been increased to £5 and £10 instead of £4 and £8, it would perhaps have been desirable at the present time; but as £4 and £8 are a large increase upon the present rates, perhaps it is sufficient for present purposes.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the immigrants who are intended to be affected by this Bill are certainly the most desirable class who come to the colony, and it is a matter for serious consideration by this House whether raising the price will not have the effect of arresting the introduction of that very excellent class. No doubt on the face of it it would appear that the cost of introducing a nominated passenger is comparatively small, but we must not forget that when those immigrants arrive here they are no further trouble to the Government. They very seldom go into the dépôt—they are met by friends, and at once absorbed amongst the working population of the country; and I think we may safely say that they very seldom appear amongst the unemployed. They come here to their friends, stay a few weeks with them until they get familiar with the conditions of the country, are then employed at a fair rate of wages, and are not brought seriously into competition with the existing labour classes we have here. And I cannot help thinking that this proposed alteration—although it may appear that the Treasury is going to be benefited—will be a considerable loss to the future prosperity of the country. We shall lose this very desirable class of immigrants, and in the present state of our industries, which we hope to see developed, I do not think it is judicious to interfere with or suddenly check the stream of immigration

necessary to develop those industries. I believe from what I heard recently, whilst in England, that there is a considerable number of nominated emigrants awaiting means of transit to the colony. I do not think it is quite so large as stated by the hon. member for Enoggera, who said it would take probably two years to bring them here. I understood from the Agent-General that there were about 2,000 applicants on the books, who, I suppose, will not be in any way affected by the alteration in the law.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. BLACK: I notice that the number of remittance passengers, which I assume are nominated ones, brought out last year was 4,041, and assuming immigration to continue at the same rate it will take only about six months to bring out those who are now waiting. The Agent-General and other gentlemen connected with the passing of emigrants before they come out here assured me that as a rule the nominated passengers are a very excellent class indeed. No doubt abuses do occur occasionally under the system—it is possible that some woman did come out who had been here twice before—but I think we may very safely leave it to the officials in London to check abuses of that kind. It has been said also that when immigrants come here they do not stop six months, but go off to other colonies. But I do not think that is a very serious matter either. It is, at any rate, not sufficient reason for altering the law. We may require a little more supervision, and above all we want to offer inducements to immigrants to stop in the country. When they land here, I take it, they go away because they find that they have been to a certain extent misled as to the opportunities of getting on in the colony; and I say let us offer inducements to them to settle upon the land, or go into manufacturing industries, such as I hope to see established here. I am satisfied that the majority of them have sufficient intelligence to come to the conclusion that if they can see their way to do better in this colony than in any other they will not leave it. Naturally a new-chum coming to the country, having had the advantage of cheap fares, having been well treated on the voyage, being well received on coming here, and seeing a reasonable opportunity for settling down and rearing his family, has a feeling almost of gratitude to the country, and is not inclined to leave, but remains and becomes a good colonist. There is one class of immigration which has not been referred to and which I regret to see has not been more largely availed of up to the present time—that is indented immigrants. I am not quite clear as to whether it is intended that this proposed addition to the cost of the introduction is to apply to indented immigrants.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. BLACK: I am very glad to hear it. I find that in the schedule to the original Act the scale of payments applied to both nominated and indented immigrants. I am very glad to find that it is not proposed to alter the rates for indented immigrants. As hon. members are no doubt aware, it was intended that the facilities offered by the Act should be largely taken advantage of by those engaged in tropical agriculture, and it was anticipated at the time that large numbers of agricultural immigrants from the continent of Europe would be obtainable to work on the Northern plantations. For various causes that expectation has up to the present time not been realised, chiefly, I believe, through the opposition of the Continental Governments; but I certainly do hope, and I think as time advances and a somewhat different system of cultivation is brought into use on those tropical lands of the North, that the prejudice

against allowing Continental labour to come here will be gradually removed. I must say that in anticipation of the proposed abandonment of Polynesian immigration altogether it will be absolutely necessary, if the sugar industry is to remain in existence, that some attempt should be made to induce the Continental powers to give us their surplus populations. I do not think the difficulties are insurmountable, and I am sure hon. members from all parts of the colony will be very glad if effect can be given to the principles of the indented clauses of the Immigration Act as originally passed. However, I am very glad to see that it is not proposed to increase the difficulty of getting indented immigrants for agricultural purposes, for that is the sole purpose for which they are introduced. With regard to the general principles of this Bill I have no objection to offer. The Government, no doubt, have carefully considered the engagements of the Treasury, and the necessity, perhaps, of adopting some means of checking the great immigration to the colony at the present time. I have no doubt when our industries revive again, and when we find we can absorb a much larger number of immigrants than are likely to come under this new amended Act, that this House will see fit to retract any regulations which may have the effect of preventing immigrants from coming here as freely as they would go to other colonies or other countries.

Mr. ISAMBERT said: Mr. Speaker, — I understand that the raising of the passage money to be paid for assisted and nominated immigrants is chiefly on account of the system having been abused to a very large extent; but this Bill is somewhat contradictory to the rest of the immigration policy, inasmuch as we still introduce agricultural labourers from Great Britain free. Now, the agricultural labourers brought from England are not so exclusively agriculturists as the Germans and Scandinavians, who are exclusively agricultural settlers. They are nominated by their friends, are met here on arrival, and taken to their friends' farms, where, after spending a few months, they are assisted on to the land. Now, I contend that those agricultural labourers with their wives and families arriving here are far more desirable immigrants than the class of agricultural labourers imported from Great Britain, and I see great injustice in charging these high rates. In many instances these families have money with them, and that is the best form of introducing foreign capital. We once before had this introduction of capital when the Minister for Lands was immigration agent, and a good many thousands of pounds were brought here in that way. I think there is a way out of the difficulty. The Government is in duty bound to protect the Treasury, and provide against abuses, but I would suggest that if under this Bill immigrants who come out here settle on the land, the payments they have made should be accepted as part payment of the land. In this way the country would not be deceived, and if the families became actual settlers they would give the very best value for the money they cost to bring them out here. I believe if the Government carry out their policy—if the country endorses the policy announced by the leader of the Government of encouraging all our industries—we shall be able to do away with all free immigration. The colony will then enjoy such unexampled prosperity that it will be attractive enough to immigrants from abroad. There are not many spots on the face of the earth where emigrants can go to. America is fast getting over-stocked, and Queensland will then be the only desirable place for emigrants from Europe. I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—I am inclined to think that this Bill will encourage a better class of immigrants than we have had hitherto. I think the people who will come out under it will probably be a class who will settle on the land—men of small capital. We do not get them now, I am sorry to say. I am told that the very last batch of immigrants that came here by the “Jumna” have been spoken of as anything but desirable. I have heard that some of the officers have made complaints that they were not of the class that have been in the habit of coming here. I think that, whilst we should encourage immigration in every form, we should be very careful that we do not, at the cost of the State, encourage people to come here who will be a burden when they do arrive. We should be very careful that we get a class of people who will assist us. Many of us have been here for years, and have assisted to lay the foundation of the colony; in fact, some of us were here before it was a colony, and we are naturally anxious to increase our numbers, but not with a class of people whom we shall have to assist on their arrival here. I think it desirable that immigration should be eased off for a time. We have ample labour in the towns at present, and what we require is a class of men who will go upon the land. To hear the hon. member for Rosewood, one would imagine that there are no agriculturists in Great Britain at all, or that they are not of that class which it is desirable to bring out to this country, and that on the Continent they are very much superior.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: He did not say that.

Mr. McMASTER: That is what I understood him to say. No man in the House thinks more of the German population than I do. I lived many years amongst the German settlers, and a more industrious people you could not find, but I do not consider them as superior to Britons. I think the charges made in this scale will encourage middle-class people to come out and settle upon our lands, and in a year or two when the farming districts prosper a little more, the labour in the towns will be absorbed, and we shall be able to hold out higher inducements to immigrants to come out to fill up our requirements. I think the Government have taken a wise step in raising the amounts for nominated immigrants, for by doing so they will prevent many coming out simply to loaf about our streets looking for work with the hope that they may not find it. We have had too many of that class coming out, and the bounty system has been a curse to the colony. What does the skipper care so long as he gets his £10? He cares very little; and he and others have taken men off the corners of the streets, and I have heard of their giving men bonuses to come out as immigrants. Those men are filling our gaols, and are a burden upon the people. By making the proposed charges we are likely to get a better class of immigrants, who will be more likely to settle upon the land, and I shall therefore support the Bill.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—No doubt this Bill will tend to ease off immigration. At the same time I do not regard it in the same light as the hon. member who has just sat down. He stated that raising the scale of payments for nominated passengers will have the effect of bringing out a superior class of immigrants to those we are in the habit of receiving. I do not look at it in that way, because I remember that these nominated passengers are immigrants nominated from the colony; the passage money is paid by residents in the colony nominating their friends at home; and so I do not see what effect it can have upon the ordinary run of immigrants who leave the old shores for these. I feel somewhat doubtful of what the effect of

this Bill will be. When the last amending Bill was going through the House I said a word or two in favour of nominated passengers, sincerely trusting that, under the regulations which that Bill gave the Government power to frame, they would not seriously interfere with the nominated passengers. We know that nominated passengers are almost the best class of immigrants we could receive into the colony, because they come here generally to homes provided for them; they are not the slightest burthen whatever to the State; they remain with their friends until employment other than that which their friends can give them is provided for them, and they ultimately become good citizens amongst us. There are a considerable number of persons who have come out under the same regulation, and they are straining all they possibly can to save enough money to send home for their wives, children, or parents, as the case may be; and it does seem somewhat hard that after leaving home, believing that they would in the course of a very short time be able to save sufficient money for that purpose, they should now be called upon to find four times the amount which they would under the old regulations have had to pay. I hope, therefore, the Government will see their way to reduce these amounts considerably when the Bill gets into committee. I am not so sure that immigration has been on too large a scale lately, because I have heard hon. members outside the House—and I think I am not doing wrong in mentioning it—say that they have found some difficulty in providing labour for their several requirements, and could only obtain it by payment of high wages. If such was the case I am very pleased to hear it, for I like to hear that wages are high; at the same time I like to know that there is sufficient labour for the amount of work to be done. I hope, then, that this change may not prove to be of too sweeping a character. We are led to believe at the present time that not many tradesmen are being imported into the colony. If they are coming they are coming under false pretences. This reminds me of what I heard not long since, that a large number of journeyman tailors applied to a large tailoring establishment for employment, stating that they were immigrants who had just recently arrived from the old country; and when asked, in consequence, “How did you manage to get here?” they said, “We came out as farm labourers.” No doubt many tradesmen try to pass themselves off as farm labourers in order to get out free. One man I heard of was pulled up in the Immigration Office in this way. He was asked a question like this: “You say you are a farm labourer; now, how many acres could you plough in a day?” The answer was, “I believe I could plough six, sir;” and he was told, “You can stand aside, for you are evidently not a farm labourer.”

Mr. ADAMS said: Mr. Speaker,—When I read this Bill it struck me that I had better ask whether we want immigration or not. We have at present a lecturer in England who is sending out farm labourers and domestic servants free to the colony. If we want immigrants at all, why should not the people who have come out here and helped to lay the foundation of the colony be allowed to send for their friends on the same terms as those who are at present at home are allowed? By raising the amount for nominated passengers we are making a grand mistake; and if we can get immigrants nominated by their friends already here why should we go to the expense of paying a lecturer at home to send out farm labourers free? We know that domestic servants are very much required, but I was told by a lady who visited

the Immigration Depôt the other day, that she could not get one to suit her. I myself saw what was supposed to be a domestic servant standing up against a wall trying to steady herself, and put a bottle into her pocket. That was not a nominated immigrant, but one who came out free; and I think we have quite enough of that sort. The hon. member for Port Curtis said he thought the Government should not pay the passage of anyone over forty years of age, but I have found that very often people come out here with the object of saving enough to send home for their relatives; and many people would not come out here if they could not get their parents out afterwards without paying the full passage. I know an instance of a family of fifteen coming out here—thirteen children and their father and mother. The parents were fifty-five and fifty-six years of age, respectively, and if those two could not have come out without paying their full passages, the colony would have been deprived of the services of the family; therefore I think the passage money for nominated passengers should not be as much as £8 for males and £4 for females, as provided in the Bill. Of course, the Treasury ought to be protected; but, if we have sufficient immigrants, the better way would be to stop immigration for a time and leave the passage money as it is.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to call attention to the large amount of money paid during the last few years for immigration. During the last six years the Government have paid an average of £239,306 annually for immigration; and I am of opinion that a very large amount of this expenditure was unnecessary. Not that I am opposed to free immigration—there must be a certain amount of free immigration to provide labour for those who require it—but I have always been of opinion that we might get a sufficient supply of labour at a very small expenditure as compared with the large expenditure incurred during the past six years. One person in every hundred of the 34,000,000 people of Great Britain is an emigrant, and the great bulk of them are voluntary emigrants, persons of thrift and intelligence, such as constitute the best emigrants. Now, the great bulk of these emigrants go to the United States and to Canada. The bone and sinew of England and millions of money are drifting away every year to swell the greatness of that great country, the United States, at the expense of Great Britain. I have always held that the true policy of Great Britain is to encourage the emigration of those people to the British colonies, because those who come here from Great Britain are customers to the British manufacturer to an amount twenty times as great as in the case of those who go to the United States. And it is the true policy also, because I believe those hundreds of thousands of people who have gone to the United States might all have been comfortably settled in the Australian colonies. We have a Land Act now capable of settling a large population, and I am pleased to hear from the Chief Secretary that the land-order system provided last session is likely to prove a great success, and be the means of inducing a large number of very desirable immigrants to come to the colony. With reference to that class of immigration required for supplying the labour market for the convenience of employers I am satisfied that we can get a full supply of persons who will be willing to pay a proportion of their passage money. I know that to be so from my experience when I was in the old country. A large number of persons, when informed about Queensland, were unwilling to come as free passengers. They had been saving their money to go to America—the amount of

passage money to that country was about £4 per head—and they would have been willing to come here if they could have come as assisted passengers. At that time there was no provision under the Crown Lands Alienation Act, which included our immigration system during the early part of our history, for such a class. Finding this was the case, I represented to the Government that they should establish assisted immigration, and the rates fixed were £8 for adults and £4 for single females over fourteen. Under that system I collected £53,000, and brought out the very best class of labourers to the colony. During the last six years, as I have said, the average yearly expenditure has been £239,000, and for the very poorest class of immigrants. The greatest difficulty in England is in the matter of selection, for the reason that every parish in Great Britain has a lot of waste, which it wants to get rid of; and the idea is that the colonies are made on purpose to relieve those parishes of their destitute people.

Mr. NORTON: That applies to free immigration and not to nominated.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Every-where the clergymen, including those of the Established Church, interest themselves in the question of immigration, with the view of getting rid of those who are a burden on the parish. That is the idea that has obtained, and the Agent-General—whoever he may be—finds that one of his greatest difficulties is to select a suitable class of immigrants. The most careful scrutiny is necessary in order to keep that refuse class from the colony. I instituted a very strict system in the selection. Every person who applied for a free passage had to produce a certificate from his present and one from his late employer, two certificates from respectable householders to whom he was personally known, a certificate from a magistrate or minister of religion, and one from a doctor. I am sorry to say that the strictness of this system has been much relaxed. They have apparently done away with the two certificates from householders, which was a most important part of the system, and, I think, with the certificate from a magistrate. Hon. members of this House have spoken of the lecturer who sends out people. We have a lecturer at home who does a great deal of good, because he works in the agricultural districts, and induces a very respectable class of farm labourers, who are eligible for free passages, to come. But he does not select one-thirtieth of the people who come here. The free immigrants are obtained through the sub-agents, who work all over the United Kingdom, who are paid by commission, and they do not care how or where they obtain the immigrants so long as they get their commission paid. Now, I believe this Bill will be a most valuable one. We want to diminish the quantity of our free immigrants and raise the quality. We want to get that class of people I have indicated, who will bring a little money—the intelligent class of labourers at home, who are willing to pay something for their own passages. This Bill will work admirably in that direction, and I believe we can get a sufficient supply of labour from this assisted class. I think the time will very shortly come when this system, if properly worked, will enable us to get the very cream of immigrants, just the very class we want, who will come here at very little expense to the colony, and this £239,000 which we now annually expend might very soon be reduced to £50,000. Then we should not have the refuse coming, who cost about double the amount to bring out. As for the nominated system, I am not sure that class is so valuable. I admit that a very large number of labourers come out here, and very soon send

home for their friends, and that that should be encouraged; but when we have accepted money for people as nominated passengers we can hardly refuse them a passage, and I am very much afraid that the Agent-General at home finds that he has very great difficulty in selecting these people. He is not able to apply any rule in the selection, as the Government here have accepted the money, and are therefore bound according to English law to give them a passage without asking any questions; and I think the only wise way of diminishing the number of that class, who cannot be carefully selected, is to raise the rate as provided by this Bill. I do not think I need waste the time of the House any longer in regard to this question. I heartily support the Bill, and believe the system may do away with free immigration and save from £150,000 to £200,000 every year.

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

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

## QUEENSLAND FISHERIES BILL.

### COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Bill.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—"Short title"—passed as printed.

On clause 2, as follows:—

"In this Act, unless the context otherwise indicates,—

1. The following terms have the meanings set against them respectively, that is to say—

'Treasurer'—The Colonial Treasurer of Queensland;

'Port'—Any port, harbour, haven, roadstead, channel, or navigable creek or river in Queensland;

'Boat'—Any boat, punt, or vessel of any description;

"2. The term 'Queensland waters' includes all salt and fresh waters which are not upon land which is the property of a private person;

"3. The term 'from knot to knot' means the measure taken diagonally from knot to knot of the mesh of a net when wetted ready for use and stretched so that the opposite knots on the alternate corners are in contact."

Mr. STEVENS said he thought there should be an amendment in the 3rd subsection of that clause, as to whether the knot should be measured from the outside or from the inside. It would be easily understood that measuring from the outside the knots would make a very great difference in the measurement, in some instances a quarter of an inch, and in some instances half-an-inch, which would defeat the object of that clause.

The PREMIER said the measurement was intended to be taken as the hon. member suggested. He moved that the words "on the inside" should be inserted after "from knot to knot."

Mr. DICKSON said he would like to know if the definition of "port" would include fresh water?

The PREMIER said the word "port" did not seem to occur in the Bill, so that the definition was unnecessary. He would withdraw his last amendment in order to move that the definition of "port" be omitted.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he would like to know whether the Bill would apply to the Enoggera and Gold Creek reservoirs. His reason for asking was that at considerable expense some very valuable fish had been turned out there—trout, perch,

tench, and carp—and he had every reason to suppose that they would acclimatise themselves. Therefore, he should like an amendment introduced to protect those waters, if the Bill did not already do so.

The PREMIER said that the definition "Queensland waters" included "all salt and fresh waters which are not upon land which is the property of a private person." He fancied that the Enoggera reservoir would be considered the property of a private person, as the term "person" included a corporation. Those fish were really the property of the Board; he apprehended that the Board would take care of them.

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER moved the insertion of the words "on the inside" after the words "from knot to knot."

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

Clause 3 passed as printed.

On clause 4, as follows:—

"No person shall, except as hereinafter provided, take or attempt to take fish with a net having a mesh of less dimensions than three and a-half inches from knot to knot.

"Provided as follows:—

(1) For the purpose of taking whiting it shall be lawful to use a net, not exceeding one hundred fathoms in length, having meshes of dimensions not less than one inch and three-quarters of an inch from knot to knot.

(2) For the purpose of taking garfish it shall be lawful (but only during such periods and at such places as the Governor in Council may from time to time by proclamation appoint) to use a net the length of the bunt whereof does not exceed sixteen fathoms, and the total length whereof does not exceed sixty fathoms, having meshes in the bunt of dimensions not less than one inch and one-eighth of an inch from knot to knot, and having meshes in the wings of dimensions not less than one inch and a-quarter of an inch from knot to knot.

"For the purpose of taking prawns it shall not be lawful to use a drag-net or any net but a scoop-net used with the hand.

"Every person who offends against or acts in contravention of the provisions of this section shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds, and the justices by whom he is convicted may order the nets and tackle used by the offender in so doing to be destroyed or forfeited.

"The placing of two or more nets behind or near to each other, in such manner as to practically diminish the mesh of the nets, or the covering of a net with canvas, or any other artifice to evade the provisions of this section with respect to the size of the mesh of nets, shall be deemed to be an act in contravention of this section."

Mr. SHERIDAN moved that after the word "garfish" in the 2nd subsection the words "or flat-tailed mullet" should be inserted. He had been requested by professional fishermen to propose that amendment, because the flat-tailed mullet was a small and valuable fish which would come under the same category as garfish and be caught with the same net.

Mr. STEVENS said he had an amendment to move in the earlier part of the clause. Subsection 1 provided that the mesh for whiting should not exceed an inch and three-quarters. He had seen both white men and Chinamen fishing for whiting, and he had noticed that as a rule the white men used the larger mesh. In conversation with fishermen in the Bay he had found most of them agree that a mesh of 2½ inches was quite small enough, and all of those he had consulted were agreeable to use nets with a mesh of that size. He moved that the words "one inch and three-quarters of an inch" be omitted, with the view of inserting the words "two inches and half an inch."

The PREMIER said he did not pretend to be an expert at fishing; but he held in his hand a remonstrance addressed to the Colonial Treasurer from twelve fishermen at Amity Point, in which they said that the present width of the mesh—2½ inches—was too large; that it had been copied from the Act of New South Wales, where the whiting was a larger fish than in Queensland waters; and that they desired that the mesh should be 1½ inches. Who was to decide when doctors disagreed?

Mr. STEVENS said that the fishermen were strongly interested in having a small mesh, because a small mesh meant a greater haul of fish. His informants stated that 2½ inches was a fair size, and they would not have said so unless such had been the fact.

Mr. MELLOR said that such a mesh as the hon. member for Logan proposed would prevent fishermen from catching whiting at all. The whiting here was a very much smaller fish than in New South Wales; and no doubt what the Amity Point fishermen suggested would be better than what the hon. member for Logan proposed.

Mr. DICKSON said the matter had received careful attention from the Treasury. The main object of the Bill was to provide for the size of the mesh. The present dimensions were copied from the New South Wales Act, and were found to be unsuitable for Queensland waters; and unless the hon. member for Logan could give some very good reasons why the dimensions in the Bill should be departed from, he should feel inclined to support the Bill as it stood. Not only had the greatest pains been taken in the matter by the port officer, but the fullest information from those interested in the fishing industry was obtained before the dimensions were finally accepted.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he should support the amendment, notwithstanding what the late Colonial Treasurer said; and when they came to the schedule it would be proved that the port officer knew nothing about the matter.

Mr. STEVENS said that if hon. members would look at the diagram they would see that a 1½-inch mesh would catch very small fish. His object was to let the small fish escape, and that could only be done by having a larger mesh. The schedule provided that no whiting of less than 4 oz. should be taken, but a 1½-inch mesh would catch them half that size. A 2½-inch mesh, hon. members would see, was not at all too large.

The PREMIER said he was disposed to think that a 1½-inch mesh was too small, and that on the other hand a 2½-inch mesh was too large. He did not like to express a positive opinion, but he was disposed to think that a 2-inch mesh would be the best.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was inclined to agree with the hon. member for Logan that the mesh as proposed in the Bill was too small. It would catch very small fish indeed. That was the opinion of a man who knew something about the matter, and who had just been speaking to him about it outside, and he was of opinion that it ought to be made larger.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he had seen whiting caught so small as to be unfit for food—utterly useless. If those fish had been allowed to grow a little they would have been good wholesome food. He knew a good deal about nets and netting, and about fish and fishing—about as much as most people; and he thought the hon. member for Logan did not require the mesh to be one bit too large or too small.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought the present Act provided for what the hon. member for Logan now proposed to reintroduce. There was a general complaint amongst fishermen that they were not able to catch any fish with a 2½-inch mesh. He thought it was a little too large for the whiting on our coast.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he had seen whiting in both Sydney and Melbourne, and the whiting on our coast were just as large as they were there, so that the same rule would apply throughout.

Mr. BULCOCK said a fish-seller had complained to him that the mesh was too small, so small that the fish caught were too small for sale. He said the fishermen wanted the mesh larger.

The PREMIER said the fish referred to were not caught in a 2½-inch net, but in a garfish net, and it was now proposed to make it unlawful to catch whiting in such nets as that at all. There seemed to be great conflict of opinion between competent judges as to the proper size of the mesh. They had the opinion of a great number of fishermen, who said that 2½ inches was too large. On the other hand they had competent judges in the Committee, who said 1½ inches was too small. He was disposed to agree with both, and thought 2 inches would be a fair size to adopt.

Mr. STEVENS said he was perfectly satisfied that the fishermen who had consulted him on the subject would not have agreed to 2½ inches if they had thought it was too large. They were making a living by catching fish, and if they had thought they were going to be very badly treated they would not have mentioned that size. The fact of small fish being caught was all the greater reason why they should have a larger mesh. At present great destruction of fish was going on in Moreton Bay. As had been stated the other evening, some kinds of fish had totally disappeared from our waters owing entirely to too small a mesh being used. The fish when caught were immature, not old enough to have spawned, and had been killed off the coast altogether. However, he did not wish to dispute the point to the bitter end, and would be quite agreeable to alter his amendment, so as make the mesh 2¼ inches instead of 2½.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. STEVENS moved that the words "one inch and three-quarters of an inch" be omitted, with the view of inserting "two inches and a quarter of an inch."

Mr. DICKSON said he would remind the Committee that the Bill had received very careful attention. It was not merely the opinion of the department that he laid stress upon, but upon the opinion of a large number of fishermen in Moreton Bay who had been consulted concerning it. The Bill was not the production of the department this year. It had been under consideration for the last two years, and the fullest information from those who were interested in the industry had been sought. He therefore thought that they would be taking an unwise departure in altering the dimensions or the mesh. That was all he wished to say. If the Committee thought well to amend it, of course he could not help it.

Mr. FOXTON said he would like to call attention to one point. He had some doubt whether the fishermen who were personally interested in the matter were really the persons who were most competent to give an opinion upon it. It seemed to him that the interests of the fishermen and those of the public might very fairly be expected to conflict. It all depended upon the way in which a fisherman looked at it. If he was a patriot, and looked to

the ultimate condition of the fishing trade ten years hence, when possibly he might be dead and buried, he would probably give his opinion just as it had been described by the hon. member for Logan. On the other hand, if he simply looked to what he could make out of his calling at the present time, then it would be to his interest to advocate the small mesh. Possibly he (Mr. Foxton) might be doing an injustice to the fishermen.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought the hon. member for Logan was pushing the matter a little too far. He thought the provisions of the Bill imposing a penalty upon any fisherman offering for sale any fish smaller than was specified in the schedule ought to be sufficient to prevent people from catching small fish.

Mr. BULCOCK: It will not.

Mr. MELLOR said, as a rule whiting were not large, and he thought 2 inches would be quite large enough for the mesh.

Mr. STEVENS said he would point out that it was very little use having the size of the fish mentioned in the schedule and then providing for a mesh that would catch smaller ones. The great object in view was the preservation of fish, and that could not be accomplished if they allowed a mesh to be used that would destroy small, immature fish.

The PREMIER said he should like to know what the length of the whiting would be. What sized whiting would be caught in a 2½-inch mesh? Would it be a fish 8 or 9 inches long?

Mr. STEVENS: Fish are always judged by weight.

The PREMIER said he knew that, but he believed a fish 8 or 9 inches long would be caught in such a mesh.

Mr. SHERIDAN said that had nothing whatever to do with the size of the mesh, because it might catch an eel.

The PREMIER: We are talking of whiting.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the length had nothing to do with the size of the mesh; it was the thickness that had to be considered.

The PREMIER said he hoped the hon. member did not suppose that he thought fish were caught lengthways. He was not familiar with the weight of fish, and had asked what would be the length of a fish caught in a 2½-inch mesh.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put and negatived.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put.

The PREMIER said he thought they ought to pause before making the mesh 2½ inches. Judging from the arguments they had heard, 2 inches would be better.

Mr. STEVENS said he did not know that there had been any argument in favour of reducing it to 2 inches. They had a statement from an interested lot of fishermen, and was it likely that they would recommend a smaller mesh than they could help? Was it likely they would injure their own market? They wanted to make a living, and of course preferred a small mesh. At Southport, where there was a small market, and the fish were plentiful, people would not buy small fish, and the fishermen could consequently afford to be honest when they knew that they could not sell small fish.

Question put and passed.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he wished to move as a small amendment, the insertion of the words "flat-tailed mullet" after "garfish" in line 25.

Mr. FOXTON said he did not know much about flat-tailed mullet, but he saw by the schedule that the size allowed for garfish was ¾ oz., and for flat-tailed mullet 3 oz. He thought the amendment required some explanation on the part of the hon. member. Was he prepared to reduce the size of the flat-tailed mullet down to the size of the garfish, or increase the size of the garfish up to the size of the flat-tailed mullet? He did not see why the same sized mesh should be provided for both.

Mr. SHERIDAN said his intention was to increase the size of the garfish up to the size of the flat-tailed mullet, and with that view he meant to propose an alteration in the schedule.

The PREMIER said, would a 3-oz. flat-tailed mullet have a smaller head than a 2-oz. garfish?

Mr. MOREHEAD asked how were they to get at the weight of the fish? Were they to be weighed in their own scales? One might be a good judge of weight, and not be able to tell a 3-oz. garfish from one ¾ oz. larger.

Mr. SHERIDAN said it would be the duty of the inspector to periodically examine the fish exposed for sale.

Mr. MELLOR said the amendment required some consideration. They should not have a mesh that would catch garfish and flat-tailed mullet at the same time.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he would remark that in the clause they were discussing the words "flat-tailed mullet" were not mentioned, and it was with a view of making the clause consonant with the schedule that he had introduced the amendment.

The PREMIER said he would like some opinion given on the subject of this equation of a 2-oz. garfish with a flat-tailed mullet. He believed, also, those fish were called "fan-tailed" mullet, and not "flat-tailed" mullet.

Mr. STEVENS said they ought not to insist that the garfish should be the same size as the mullet, as a 3-oz. garfish was much too large. They were usually sold in Brisbane under 1 oz., and whilst that was too small 3 oz. was too large.

The PREMIER said the word "flat-tailed" was used in the schedule, but he was informed that that was a mistake, as those fish were really called "fan-tailed" mullet. He did not care to set up his opinion against that of experts in the Committee, but he was informed that was the proper name.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he had known that fish for many years, and he had always heard it called the "flat-tailed" mullet, and had never heard it called the "fan-tailed" mullet till that evening.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that as the hon. member for Maryborough had evidently a greater knowledge of those fish than the Premier, the Premier should give way to him. It was a very important matter, he admitted.

The PREMIER said he was quite prepared to take the assurance of the hon. member for Maryborough that the correct word was "flat-tailed," still he was not satisfied that it was desirable to put them on an equality with garfish if the weight of one should be 3 oz. and of the other only 1½ oz. It must be borne in mind, however, that if something of the kind was not inserted they would be in this difficulty: that the flat-tailed mullet would not be allowed to be caught at all, except in a 3½-inch net, which would not catch them, so that really the matter ought to be considered.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS said some provision should be made with regard to the size of the mesh for taking sea mullet. They were much larger than the other kind of mullet, and ran up to 15 lbs. or 16 lbs. weight. The ordinary selling weight of sea mullet was about 2 lbs. Many of them were very large, and were used for smoking and drying. They came in large shoals in the winter months; and a larger net should be used for taking them than the ordinary whiting net of 3½ inches. That was too small. He had had conversations with fishermen who caught many tons of them every season, and their opinion was that the size of the mesh for taking sea mullet should be 4 inches.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, supposing an immature whiting got into a garfish net, and supposing the whiting did not know of that law they were passing, and did not know it was a garfish net he had got into, were they to punish the fisherman for the error of the fish? They were, he thought, legislating too much.

The PREMIER said that was a difficulty he had pointed out on the second reading of the Bill, and the only way it could be dealt with was by the 7th section precluding the sale of fish below the proper size. He did not think it worth while to provide a special net for sea mullet. If they were to deal with such special cases they would require too many kinds of nets. The only answer that could be given to the objection raised by the hon. member for Balonne was, that if a man caught whiting in a prawn-net for instance, he must not sell them if they were too small. His attention had been called since the Bill was introduced to what was alleged to be a great hardship under the clause. An old fisherman of Moreton Bay, well known by name, had asked if a net would be forfeited or destroyed if fish happened to get into it that should not be caught with such a net. That, of course, would not be the case; but if it could be shown that a man deliberately went fishing on a whiting-ground with a garfish net he should be punished.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 5, as follows:—

"No person shall drag or draw on to the dry land any net containing fish, but all nets containing fish shall be emptied in the water.

"Any person who offends against, or assists any person offending against, the provisions of this section, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds."

The PREMIER said the same fisherman asked how they were to take sharks or stinging rays out of the net if it was to be emptied in the water; and he said it could not be done.

Mr. STEVENS said that just went to prove how very anxious the fishermen were to make that a good Bill for themselves. It was quite easy for a fisherman to empty his net in the water. The nets were not dragged to steep or "bluff" banks, because, if they were, by the time the net was dragged half-way up all the fish would be out of it. The nets were dragged on shallow banks, and it was easy to kill the shark or stun the stinging rays with a stick in the net, and that had often been done. They wished to deal fairly with the fishermen, but they wished also to prevent the destruction of immature fish.

Mr. NORTON said he had hesitated in saying anything about the matter in the presence of hon. members who were fishermen, but it struck him that they were over-legislating. They were not content with defining the minimum size of the fish, but wanted also to define the size of the mesh which caught the fish. If the Bill became law it would interfere with the unfortunate blacks, and he did not see why they should not be allowed to catch fish in the way they had always done.

Mr. STEVENS said they had discussed the size of the net and dealt with that part of the question. What the hon. member just stated had nothing to do with clause 5, which was inserted for the protection of young fish. If the net was kept in the water while the fish were taken out the small fish were not knocked about, and did not lose their vitality; and that was the chief reason for emptying the net in the water. It was a very simple matter, and there was very little more difficulty than in emptying it on dry land, where the young fish got knocked about and injured.

Clause put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, clause 6 was amended so as to read thus:—

No net shall be staked, fixed, or otherwise set, nor shall any stakes be placed across the mouth of any creek or tidal stream. And no net having meshes of less dimensions than four inches from knot to knot shall be staked, fixed, or otherwise set in any Queensland waters. Any person who uses a net or places stakes contrary to the provisions of this section, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds.

On the motion of the PREMIER, clause 7 was amended so as to read thus:—

No person shall take, sell, or expose for sale, or have in his possession or on his premises, any fish of any of the species mentioned in the schedule to this Act of a less weight than the weight set opposite the name of such fish in the schedule.

Any person who offends against the provisions of this section shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds; and all such prohibited fish, and all other fish contained in any basket or other receptacle of fish which contains more of such prohibited fish than one-twentieth of the whole number of fish contained therein, may be seized by any constable or officer of police, or any person authorised by the Treasurer, and shall be forfeited.

The Governor in Council may, nevertheless, by proclamation alter the said schedule by omitting any fish therefrom, or by including other fish therein, or with respect to the weight of any fish, or declare that the said schedule, or any part thereof, with or without any such alterations, shall apply only to such parts of Queensland or such Queensland waters as are specified therein, and the provisions of any such proclamation shall have the same effect as if they were contained in this Act.

On clause 8, as follows:—

"Every person who takes prawns shall, in order to separate the marketable from the unmarketable prawns, riddle them in the water where they are taken in such a manner as to allow the small prawns to escape; and any person who fails to comply with the provisions of this section shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds."

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the prawns were being badly treated. There was no definition given of the difference between marketable and unmarketable prawns, and there was no weight for a prawn given in the schedule. Then he thought the hon. member in charge of the Bill ought to point out the difference between a shrimp and a prawn.

The PREMIER said he thought it would be easy to distinguish between marketable and unmarketable prawns. People would not buy very small prawns, and they ought to be allowed to go back into the water.

Mr. MURPHY asked what would be done if a man riddled the prawns with a tin dish?

The PREMIER said they had to be riddled so as to allow the small ones to escape.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they might be riddled with shot.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 and 10 passed as printed.



On clause 11, as follows:—

"Any net which is fitted as a working net, and is found either on shore or in a boat or vessel, and which appears, either by reason of use, wear, or tan, to have been made use of or to be intended to be made use of, and which net has its meshes of a size smaller than that which is allowed by this Act, may be seized by any inspector, officer of police, or person authorised by the Treasurer. Any such seizure shall be reported forthwith to the Treasurer, who, if he be satisfied that the net seized is contrary to the provisions of this Act and has been or is intended to be used for fishing, may order it to be forfeited to Her Majesty, and the same shall be forfeited accordingly."

Mr. CHUBB suggested that any licensed fisherman should be allowed to seize a net. The inspector would not always be on the look-out, and those nets would be used surreptitiously. Before the matter could be reported to the police magistrate the men using the nets would be gone.

The PREMIER said he was afraid that would give rise to quarrels, and would be too dangerous a provision to make. He wished to insert some words which had been omitted by inadvertence. The 10th section provided that either the Treasurer or a police magistrate might authorise a search, but this clause as it stood would not give power to the person so authorised to seize a net. He proposed to insert the words "or a police magistrate," after "by the Treasurer."

Mr. STEVENS said it might be as well to give justices of peace the power. In many places along the coast and in the Bay a man would have to travel a long distance before he could find a police magistrate. Justices of the peace were allowed to sign summonses and perform other important functions, and they were not more likely to do an injustice in this case than in any other. Whilst an informer was travelling a long distance to find a police magistrate, the offender might escape altogether and take his nets with him.

The PREMIER said he did not like to place such large powers in the hands of justices of the peace. Some experienced person should be required to act in such an important matter as seizing a man's nets.

Mr. MELLOR asked whether the Act would apply to all persons, whether licensed or not, who made use of nets for fishing?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. MELLOR said there were many persons living along the coast who fished for pleasure, and not for profit, and if they were compelled to buy fresh nets for all the different kinds of fish it would be a very great hardship.

Mr. STEVENS said it might be a hardship to them, but at the same time they must comply with the requirements of the Act. They were not compelled to take out a license, and it would be absurd to allow them to destroy fish, and to prevent professional and licensed fishermen from doing so. He had known private persons net large quantities of fish, and give them away to anyone who chose to ask for them. On one occasion he saw at least a ton of fish netted by a private person. If those fish were under the size required by the Act great harm would be done.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Mr. SHERIDAN moved that after the word "fishing" in the last line but one of the clause, the words "shall be destroyed" be inserted. It would be unfair if nets that had been forfeited should again, by any chance, get into use, and the only way to secure that was to have them immediately destroyed.

The PREMIER pointed out that the effect of inserting the amendment in that place would be that "the Treasurer shall be destroyed." It would be better to insert the words at the end of the clause.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he had no wish to destroy the Treasurer, because if the Treasurer was destroyed what would become of the Cabinet? He moved that the words be inserted at the end of the clause.

Mr. CHUBB said a net might be seized as being too small for a certain kind of fish, while it might be the right size for another kind. Some of those nets cost a great deal of money, and it would be a pity to have them destroyed because they had been improperly used in one case.

Mr. SHERIDAN said there was quite a confusion as to the number of nets required. All was fish that came to a fisherman's net, and many kinds of fish could be caught in the same net. Whiting, garfish, and prawns might be caught with the largest sized mullet-net. One description of net, with a penalty attached to the size of the various kinds of fish, would be quite sufficient. He was still of opinion that nets forfeited for having been illegally used should be destroyed.

Mr. NORTON said the objection could be met by slightly altering the clause, so as to make the latter part of it read—"Any such seizure shall be reported forthwith to the Treasurer, who, if he be satisfied that the net seized has been or is intended to be used for fishing contrary to the provisions of this Act, may," etc.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the suggestion of the hon. member for Port Curtis was so good that he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

A verbal amendment, substituting "is" for "be" in the phrase "if he be satisfied," was agreed to on the motion of the Premier.

Mr. NORTON moved, as an amendment, that the words, "is contrary to the provisions of this Act, and" be omitted, with the view of inserting after the word "fishing" the words, "contrary to the provisions of this Act."

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

On clause 12, as follows:—

"It shall not be lawful to employ a boat in taking fish for sale with a net or nets in Queensland waters unless the owner thereof has obtained from the Colonial Treasurer a license to employ the same for that purpose.

"The fee payable for such license shall be £1, which shall be paid into the Treasury in advance.

"Every such license shall specify the name of the owner and of the boat licensed, and a description of the nets to be used therewith, and shall expire on the thirty-first day of December following the date of issue.

"Any person whose boat or net is so employed without a license, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds."

Mr. NORTON said, in connection with those licenses, he should like to know if licenses would apply to the whole colony or only to the localities where they were granted. He did not know how the present Act worked, but he gathered from a letter he had received from a fisherman that licenses only applied to the localities where they were granted. The letter ran thus:—

"I see that the House is about to amend the Fisheries Act. I therefore beg to draw your attention to the following hardship which the present Act entails.

"Why should not one license apply to the whole coast of the colony, and be produced on demand at the various ports, like an ordinary trader's clearance? A fisherman following the migration of the fish along the coast is compelled to take out a separate license for every district chance may bring him to, which greatly retards the development of the Queensland fisheries."

If a man paid a license for the Bay it ought to hold good all over the colony. He thought the request a very reasonable one.

The PREMIER said he did not see anything in the present regulations requiring a man to take out a separate license for each port. The license would apply, according to the Act, to any boat fishing in Queensland waters.

Mr. NORTON said that was according to the Act, but by the last clause of the Bill, regulations could be framed which might make a difference.

The PREMIER said the regulations could not alter what was laid down in the Act. He had never heard of a case of that sort before.

Mr. NORTON said of course the regulations could not override the Act, but they might unintentionally not agree with the Act. It seemed rather remarkable that a man who had been engaged in the fisheries for years should labour under the impression that he had to pay for a fresh license in each port. He knew that man had been engaged for a long time in fishing.

Mr. DICKSON said no such regulation had been framed by the Port Office, for the excellent reason that the license fee chargeable under the Act was an annual one.

Mr. GRIMES said he would point out that the fishermen who were really making a living by their fishing would prefer to pay a license fee of £3 or £4 instead of £1 as proposed in that clause. He was told there were fishermen who just took up that occupation for a couple of months or so in the season when fish were most plentiful, and it was worth their while to pay £1 for the two months. Immediately after the season was over they threw up the business, and so interfered considerably with those who made their living from it year after year. He would suggest, therefore, that the license fee be raised to a higher sum than £1.

The PREMIER said it was not a usual thing for men to propose that their license fee should be increased. He did not care to do that, as he did not know whether it would operate harshly or not.

Mr. STEVENS said they all knew that at certain seasons very valuable fish were much more plentiful than at others, and men engaged in other occupations, such as keeping boats for pleasure parties, often used their nets for a few months when the fish were so abundant. In addition to paying the license fee of £1 fishermen had to pay their men, and every time they changed a man they had to pay 2s. 6d., and very often they had eight or ten men.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he had an amendment to propose. He proposed that after the word "issue" there be inserted the words, "and the name of boat and the owner's name shall be legibly painted on the bow of such boat." At present oyster boats had to have the number and distinguishing name painted on them, and he saw no reason why, for the protection of fishermen themselves as well as others, they should not require licensed boats to have the name of the owner painted in some conspicuous place, so that the inspector or the police or other persons would have no difficulty in identifying the boat.

Mr. STEVENS said he thought the amendment would only put the owners of boats to a great deal of unnecessary expense. They ought not to make the Bill more severe than was absolutely necessary for the preservation of fish. Few fishermen were able to paint their own names, and would have to employ a professional painter, which would cost some shillings. If a man had a long name it would cost at least 8s. or 10s., and in the case of a fisherman who had seven or eight boats, that would amount to a considerable sum. He once knew a man whose name was Alister Macalister Mactavish Macgregor. It would take a 20-foot boat to carry that name.

Mr. DICKSON said under the Oyster Act there was an abbreviation in the shape of the letters "O. B.," which was required to be painted on the sail, together with the number. It would take some time to introduce a clause into the Bill, which would have relevancy to the subject of boats, names, numbers, and so on, and he would point out that as clause 22 gave the Governor in Council power to frame by-laws the proposed amendment might very well be left to form part of the regulations.

The PREMIER said if they adopted a number it would involve the issuing of a separate license at each port, and that was not intended. Under the Oyster Act each boat had a number, and there might be any number of boats with the same distinguishing number in the different ports.

Mr. MELLOR said they seemed to be legislating entirely for the fishermen. Sometimes people hired a boat and took a net and went down to the islands for the purpose of fishing there. He did not think those people should be required to have their names painted on the boat.

Mr. STEVENS: This clause only applies to persons offering fish for sale.

Mr. MELLOR said he understood it applied to everybody who fished with a net.

Mr. STEVENS: No.

Mr. GRIMES said under clause 9 any person who could get near enough to shout to an individual might demand the name of any person using a boat or fishing, and probably he could make himself heard as far as he could read the name painted on the boat. Therefore he (Mr. Grimes) did not see the necessity of painting the name of the owner on the boat.

Mr. SHERIDAN said there was no certainty that the person demanding the name would get the correct one, and having the name painted on the boats would be a protection to honest fishermen, because they would be easily identified. He thought they would not object to it. Besides, the Merchant Shipping Act required the names of all owners to be painted on boats, so that his amendment would be only conforming to a law which now existed.

Mr. NORTON: Better brand the fishermen too.

The PREMIER said he thought it was hardly worth while to insert the provision. Some boats were only employed for a short time; and if it were inserted and a man's boat got out of order he could not use another without getting his name painted on it.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he perceived that it would be quite useless to press his amendment in the face of the opinion of the Committee, and therefore, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. STEVENS said one other subject he would like to mention was whether it would not be fair to a fisherman, in the event of his taking out a license after the 30th June, to allow him to pay half the fee instead of the whole amount. A man might be commencing fishing, and it would be rather hard on him to have to pay for twelve months, and have only six months' fishing.

The PREMIER: There is a very good harvest at the end of the year.

Mr. STEVENS: The best harvest is in winter. Clause put and passed.

Clauses 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, passed as printed.

On clause 18, as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may, by proclamation, prohibit or restrict the taking of all or any kind of fish or prawns in any Queensland waters for such period as he may think necessary for the preservation and protection of the fish or prawns; and any person who takes fish contrary to such prohibition or restriction shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds."

The PREMIER said his attention had been drawn to the fact that it might be necessary to make some provision to prohibit fishing by certain means only. It might be desirable to preserve certain waters for rod and line fishing, and he would move an amendment to effect that object. He would first move the insertion of the words "crabs, crayfish" after "fish" in the 2nd line of the clause.

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER moved that the words "for such period as he may think necessary for the preservation and the protection of the fish or prawns" be omitted, with a view of inserting "specified in the proclamation, either absolutely or except by such means as are prescribed by the proclamation."

Mr. DICKSON said he was glad the Premier was giving his attention to the matter, because it was pointed out that the Bill might restrict the very enjoyable recreation of fishing by line or rod. While he thought the amendment a good one, it would be far better that it should be clearly understood that line fishing would not be interfered with. He could not imagine that for many years to come there was any probability of Queensland waters requiring such particularly close seasons as to prevent fishing by line, and he therefore somewhat objected to the matter being left to the discretion of the Executive.

Mr. STEVENS said it might be necessary to prohibit the taking of some special kinds of fish. There were waters that had been stocked by the hon. member for Maryborough and others and it might be absolutely necessary to prevent them being fished over either by rod or line for a certain period. That was all that was provided for. He did not think there would be any movement made to request the Governor in Council to prohibit ordinary rod or line fishing. In Victoria several rivers were closed entirely to net, but he did not know any river that had been closed against rod and line fishing, although the same powers were given to the Governor in Council there as were proposed to be given here.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the fish to which allusion had been made were those which gave the greatest pleasure to anglers, and it was necessary to protect them, in order that the rod and line fishing might become an amusement to the people. He hoped the amendment would be accepted.

Mr. McMASTER said the fish spoken of by the hon. member for Maryborough were confined to fresh water. He did not think it at all likely that fish would be imported to put in the Brisbane River. He therefore did not see why fishing in the river should be prohibited. There were many people who took a boat and went out fishing for the sake of getting the fresh air as much as for anything else, and he saw no reason why they should be prohibited from fishing.

Mr. STEVENS said the hon. member for Fortitude Valley misunderstood him. He said they should give the Governor in Council power to prohibit the taking of certain fish. The hon. member said there was no possibility of their putting imported fish into the Brisbane River; but that was not so, they might put salmon or salmon trout into that river. They knew that

salmon put into a river having an outlet to the sea, though they might leave it, returned during the breeding season. It was not intended to prohibit persons fishing in the river for perch or bream, but if they caught a salmon or salmon trout, supposing them to be introduced, they would be expected to put it back into the water.

Mr. McMASTER said it was not likely if a fisherman caught a nice salmon or trout that he would take it off the line and throw it into the water again. It was not likely that they would have salmon or trout in the Brisbane River for many years to come, and by the time they had them they would have passed two or three more Fishing Acts.

The PREMIER said there was a close season for many kinds of fish, and it was right they should be able to prohibit the taking of those fish with either net or line during the spawning season. They were not wholesome to eat at that time, and ought not to be taken.

Mr. DICKSON said the object of the Bill was to restrict the taking of fish for sale, and it was unnecessary at the present time to interfere with what he considered a harmless recreation. There was a tendency to over-legislate in many things here. The object of the Bill was clearly to prevent the wholesale destruction of fish by people engaged in that industry, and it was much better to have it plainly stated that the taking of fish "for sale" in nets, but not by line or rod, under the circumstances mentioned, would be prohibited.

Mr. MURPHY said he agreed with the hon. member for Enoggera that they should not throw any restrictions in the way of people fishing with rod and line at the present early stage. They had plenty of water and fish and very few fishermen, and very small harm would be done by the few fishermen they had being allowed to fish with rod and line. When they had imported fish in their rivers it would be time enough to extend the regulations to embrace those fish, but to do it now would be to prevent many people who were ardent fishermen from the enjoyment of a favourite pastime, and it would be great hardship to them.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the colonies of Tasmania, Victoria, and New South Wales had strict fishery laws to protect the fish there, and especially imported fish at certain seasons. An attempt was being made here to introduce fish, and he hoped it would prove successful. Very valuable fish had been imported into the colony, and at considerable trouble and expense, and turned loose to stock the rivers and waters of Queensland. It must be remembered that when those fish were turned loose they became every man's property in the course of time. The fish imported had been turned out in the reservoirs at Gold Creek and Enoggera. He loved angling himself, and would like others to enjoy what he enjoyed himself; and if, in the meantime, power was given to prohibit the taking of fish with rod and line at certain times or in certain places, there would be the greater opportunity when the imported fish increased, for the recreation referred to by the hon. members for Barcoo and Enoggera.

Mr. GRIMES said the contention appeared to be that they were giving too much power to the Governor in Council in framing regulations. Why not limit the power to protect only acclimatised or imported fish?

The PREMIER said there were many fish imported worth preserving, and there were some very rare fish in the colony. He could not see what objection there could be to the amendment. Was it likely that the Government were going to

be mad enough to prohibit anybody from rod and line fishing in the Brisbane River? It must be assumed that such a power would be exercised with some degree of sense.

Mr. McMASTER said if that was so, why include it in the Act? The Premier might not be always in power, and some persons might bring pressure to bear on the Government to enforce the prohibition. The hon. member for Maryborough had said the imported fish were, at present, in the Enoggera reservoir. He thought they might possibly be dead, as the Enoggera water in his bath smelt very fishy that morning. When they had imported fish in the Brisbane River it would be time enough to introduce such an amendment.

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

Clauses from 19 to 21, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 22, as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may from time to time make regulations, not being contrary to the provisions of this Act, for the due and effectual execution of this Act, and may by the regulations prescribe a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds for the breach of any such regulation.

"All such regulations shall be published in the *Gazette*, and when so published shall have the force of law."

Mr. STEVENS said there was one other subject to be taken into consideration. The fishermen at present had nets in conformity with the Act. Those nets cost a considerable amount of money and were valuable to them; and it would be hardly fair to pass an Act compelling them to do away with those nets without giving some sort of compensation. Hon. members had been fighting the battle of the fishermen, and now they had an opportunity of showing their sincerity.

Mr. NORTON said he was inclined to take the same view as the hon. member for Logan. At Port Curtis there were two or three fishermen who would be almost ruined if they had to lose their nets without compensation.

The PREMIER said that could only be done by a recommendation for the appropriation of sufficient money for the purpose; and no such recommendation would be made at the present time unless he entirely changed his opinion.

Mr. DICKSON said that if they entertained the proposition of the hon. member for Logan, claims would come in from all the vendors of nets who had stocks of nets on hand. He believed, however, that there would be no actual loss to the fishermen, because he had it on good authority that with slight alterations the nets at present in use could be used after the Bill became law.

Mr. GRIMES said that if there was any likelihood of claims for compensation being made, it would be better to defer the time for putting the Act in force for six or twelve months, so as to give the fishermen time to use up the nets at present in their possession.

Mr. STEVENS said he hoped some hon. members would take the case of the unfortunate fishermen into their consideration. Would any hon. member like to have the whole of his stock-in-trade, by which he got his living, taken away by a measure which professed to deal fairly by him?

The PREMIER: They are in favour of the alteration.

Mr. STEVENS said they were in favour of it so long as they thought it would provide for a small mesh, but when they found that the mesh was to be larger, and they were to get no compensation for having to do away with the nets at

present in their possession, they would be very strongly opposed to the Bill. The hon. member for Enoggera had opposed his suggestion. He could not forget that he had been Treasurer, and could not keep his eyes off the Treasury chest, but he ought now to look at matters from the standpoint of a private member, and then he would see that something ought to be done for the fishermen. The Premier had said that no recommendation had been made by His Excellency, but it was not too late, and he hoped the recommendation would be brought down. He only asked that the fishermen should be paid fair compensation according to the worth of their nets.

The PREMIER: Let the Government buy new ones!

Mr. STEVENS said he would not object to that; even that would be better than nothing; but by the Bill it was proposed to give nothing.

The PREMIER: When you seize bad grog do you pay for it?

Mr. STEVENS said that they would not be allowed to pass an Act declaring all the good grog in the colony to be bad, because that would interfere with the interests of a large body of men; but those unfortunate fishermen, being few, were not deemed worthy of consideration.

Mr. BULCOCK said that on the principle laid down by the hon. member for the Logan the Government ought to give compensation to the owners of omnibuses, because they passed an Act allowing the construction of tramways in the city of Brisbane.

The PREMIER: And to the bullock-drivers, for making railways in the interior.

Mr. McMASTER said that if they adopted the suggestion of the hon. member for Logan there would be some nice pickings for some of the smartest fishermen, who would buy up all the old nets they could purchase from people who did not know the law, and then go to the Government for compensation. There would be just as much reason in the Government paying Cobb and Co. compensation for running railways along their coach routes as there was in the proposition of the hon. member. It was a very good suggestion for the hon. member for Logan to make, because a large number of his constituents were fishermen.

Mr. STEVENS said that when hon. members could not see that there was more difference between a coach and a railway, and a tramcar and a 'bus—

Mr. McMASTER: The principle is the same.

Mr. STEVENS said if hon. members could not see the difference it was no use trying to show them the loss those men would sustain. He would not press his motion any further.

Clause put and passed.

On the schedule, as follows:—

" Bream	...	...	...	...	4 ounces
Black bream	...	...	...	...	8 "
Perch	...	...	...	...	4 "
Flounder or sole	...	...	...	...	3 "
Rock cod	...	...	...	...	6 "
Whiting	...	...	...	...	3 "
Flathead	...	...	...	...	6 "
Mullet, sea	...	...	...	...	8 "
Mullet, mangrove	...	...	...	...	6 "
Mullet, flat-tailed	...	...	...	...	3 "
Mullet, fresh-water	...	...	...	...	6 "
Garfish	...	...	...	...	0 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Jewfish	...	...	...	...	8 "
Pumba	...	...	...	...	6 "
Barramundi	...	...	...	...	16 "
Rockhampton perch	...	...	...	...	16 "

The PREMIER said he had some amendments to propose. He proposed to alter "bream" to "red bream," and to make the weight for whiting 4 oz., and for garfish 2 oz.

Mr. STEVENS said there were three sorts of bream, known as red bream, bream, and black bream. The proposals he would have to make were: Rock cod, 16 oz. instead of 6 oz.; whiting, 4 oz.; sea mullet, 2 lbs.; and garfish, 1 oz. There were hundreds of garfish sold in Brisbane that did not weigh an ounce.

The PREMIER: They are too small.

Mr. STEVENS said perhaps they were too small, but 2 oz. was too large. Then, for jewfish, he proposed to make the weight 2 lbs.; pumba, 8 oz. That was all he had to suggest.

Mr. SHERIDAN said there was a very valuable fish that was plentiful in the Mary River, though he had not seen it anywhere else. In that district it was called the kingfish, and he thought it ought to be added to the schedule. It was an admirable fish, and went up to 100 lbs. weight. He would propose that the weight in the schedule should be 2 lbs. He had sent a specimen to the man who knew most in the colonies on the subject, Mr. William Macleay, who gave it the name of "Polynemus."

Mr. STEVENS proposed that "16" should be substituted for "6" after "rock cod."

Mr. MELLOR said that was too much. There was plenty of rock cod under a pound; they seldom went over a pound in fresh water.

Mr. STEVENS said that was a different fish; there was no rock cod in fresh water.

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER moved the substitution of "4" for "3" after "whiting."

Mr. MELLOR said 3 oz. was a very nice whiting. If they increased the weight to  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb., the people in towns would not have fish so plentiful as they had been in the habit of getting it.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS moved that "8" be inserted instead of "6" after "flathead."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS moved the insertion of "16" instead of "8" after "mullet, sea."

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER moved the omission of " $\frac{3}{4}$  oz." after "garfish," with the view of inserting " $\frac{1}{2}$  oz."

Amendment put and agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS moved the omission of "8 oz." after "jewfish," with the view of inserting "2 lbs."

Mr. McMASTER said that, although the jewfish ran to a large size, he was of opinion that 16 oz. was a quite large enough minimum; and it would save a lot of discussion if the hon. member would accept the reduction to that figure.

Mr. STEVENS said that if such was the wish of the Committee he would withdraw the amendment, but it seemed ridiculous to fix the weight at 1 lb. of a fish which grew to 60 lbs. or 70 lbs.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

Mr. STEVENS moved that "16 oz." be inserted instead of "8 oz." after "jewfish."

Amendment put and agreed to.

The PREMIER moved that after "Pumba" the words "or Taylor fish" be inserted, and the omission of "6 oz." with the view of inserting "8 oz."

Amendment put and agreed to.

Mr. SHERIDAN moved that the following words be added to the schedule, "Polynemus, 16 oz."

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

Preamble put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the Chairman leave the chair, and report the Bill to the House with amendments. He said it would be necessary to recommit clause 18 for the purpose of inserting a few words which had been accidentally omitted.

Question put and passed.

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

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the Bill was re-committed for the purpose of further considering clause 18.

The PREMIER moved that after the word "fish," in the last line but one of the clause, the words "crabs, crayfish, or prawns" be inserted.

Question put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with a further amendment. The report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: I move that this House do now adjourn. I propose to take to-morrow the Immigration Act Amendment Bill in committee, and then Supply.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at five minutes to 11 o'clock.