

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 1887

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 22 September, 1887.

Question.—Motion for Adjournment—"Courier" Misreporting.—Queensland Fisheries Bill—third reading.—Prosecution of Mr. Greetham—resumption of debate.—Supreme Court Judge at Townsville—resumption of debate.—Message from the Legislative Council—Valuation Bill.—The "Corea" Inquiry.—Railways in the Wide Bay and Burnett Districts.—Auriferous Sulphide Ores.—Refreshment Rooms Committee.—Printing Committee.—The Immigration Act Amendment Bill of 1887—committee.—Supply—resumption of committee.—The Rabbit Question.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTION.

Mr. SHERIDAN (for Mr. Annear) asked the Minister for Works—

1. Did the Vernon Coal and Railway Company deposit with the Government the sum of two thousand pounds (£2,000)?

2. If so, at what date should they commence operations to prevent the deposit from being forfeited?

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

1. Yes.

2. No date is fixed by the Act to begin operations. The forfeiture of the deposit can only ensue if the works are not completed by the 23rd December, 1887.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

"COURIER" MISREPORTING.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I want to make a personal explanation, and I shall conclude with the usual motion. I think it is advisable to draw attention again to a very short paragraph in the *Courier* newspaper, the so-called leading newspaper of the colony, which I think should rather be called the misleading

newspaper. I called attention the other day to the fact that the *Courier* made me say something the very opposite of what I did say, and they did not even print my explanation. I found on reading *Hansard* afterwards that it made the proper statement, but the *Courier* did not acknowledge that it had done anything wrong. This is a very small matter contained in three lines, but, as I said the other day, the *Courier* can put more falsehood into three lines than any other paper can put in a foot. The statement is simply this:—

“Mr. KELLETT disagreed with Mr. Morehead, and deprecated the remarks of the judge in reference to the letter he had written. (Oh!)”

Well, that is simply absurd. I have been asked by a good many people the meaning of that paragraph. I may sometimes make mistakes, but I do not think I could have made such a very stupid mistake as that. Yesterday evening I got a slip from *Hansard* and find myself reported as follows:—

“The judge's remarks showed me, when I read them, that the man was evidently off his head. No sane man would use such remarks.”

I did not say that the judge wrote any letter. This shows that the *Courier* makes deliberate misstatements. I do not say that it is the managing proprietor who deliberately makes the misstatements, but evidently he has someone in the gallery to do it for him—or else he has very incompetent reporters. I make these remarks to show people outside that it is advisable to take *Hansard* if they want reliable reports of what goes on in this House, for certainly they do not get them in the *Courier*; and the *résumé* in the same paper also says that Mr. Kellett did not seem to understand what he was talking about. Certainly the outside public cannot get reliable information from this most misleading paper, and whether it is the managing proprietor who is at the bottom of it or whether it is the incompetent persons whom he has got in the gallery it is not my business to say.

Mr. MELLOR said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not wish to be an advocate for the *Courier* newspaper, but I think the hon. gentleman did make use of the statement of which he complains. I certainly understood him to do so. It was a misquotation on his part, but I think he really said what he is reported to have said. It was not what he intended to say, but I think he was excited at the time. As I have said, I do not wish to appear as an advocate of the *Courier*, but I think at the same time justice should be done to that paper.

Mr. CAMPBELL said: Mr. Speaker,—I was listening very attentively to the hon. member for Stanley when he was speaking, and I am sure the *Courier* newspaper has reported him correctly. I was very much surprised to hear him make the remark he did, but I knew it was a mistake on his part, and I was very pleased to see that *Hansard* corrected it.

Mr. BAILEY said: Mr. Speaker,—We are evidently getting into a little bit of a fog, and it would appear now that, instead of the *Courier* making the mistake, it was made in the *Hansard* report. We must recognise the fact that it is a very difficult thing for the reporters to boil down a report of a speech which occupies five or ten minutes in delivery into three lines. Unless the reporters are “in touch” with the speaker, it is always a difficult task to give a condensed report. So far as I know, they are not subject to outside influences, and generally report fairly and as well as they can. If they can follow what a member intends to say, they generally report pretty nearly what he says. From my own experience I know that to boil speeches down is a very difficult task indeed, though I was never accused of

misreporting in any way. Unless you feel with the speaker and go with him in what he says or intends to say, it is impossible to report exactly what he says. Whether it is advisable that these boiled-down reports should be issued to the public as verbatim reports is another question altogether, and I admit there are difficulties in connection with that subject. I think a member reported verbatim is much better reported than a member reported in shorthand, cut-down shorthand again. I remember one case in which a member of this House who stammered and stuttered was reported verbatim, and he quickly bought up all the copies and got them out of sight. It sometimes happens in this House that the best speaker and the most intelligent member may, by hesitation and repetition, get so mixed in his speech that if he was reported exactly verbatim it would be very difficult to understand him. My sympathies are with the reporters, and less with the speakers, for I am sure we give them a great trial sometimes to report us as we speak.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I think hon. members are getting a little too sensitive and too apprehensive of what appears in the papers. This difficulty, too, has been brought about in consequence of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, being so very sensitive about what took place in the Supreme Court. The remarks were of no consequence whatever to the public at large, and certainly do not affect the hon. gentleman's position in this House in the least. The hon. member for Stanley seems to think the country generally takes an interest in this matter.

Mr. KELLETT: I never said so.

Mr. BLACK: I do not think the country generally cares whether the reports in the *Courier* are correct or not. Hon. members are too fond of talking to their constituents and the country.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who more than yourself?

Mr. BLACK: I suppose as we are approaching a general election it is necessary the hon. member for Stanley should set himself especially right with his constituents, but I am sure nothing that has appeared in the *Courier* has in any way altered the very high opinion this House has of that hon. member. The hon. member need not be so sensitive about what he is alleged by the *Courier* to have said. There seems to be a difference of opinion on the subject. He says he did not say what the *Courier* reports him to have said, and two hon. members on his own side declare that he did say it. These are, after all, very trifling matters compared with the important affairs which necessitate our coming down here. We all get hard rubs from the newspapers at times, and it entirely depends upon which side of the House we are sitting, or which of the two leading newspapers in Brisbane give utterance to the remarks about us, as to whether we are pleased or not. If they praise us we are very much flattered, and if, on the contrary, they take the other side—which they are perfectly entitled to do—we think ourselves treated rather hardly. The best plan is to take no notice of any remarks that appear in the newspapers unless a gross wrong is done, which does not appear to be the case in the present instance.

Mr. KELLETT, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—The remarks made by the hon. member for Mackay were a good deal longer than my own, though he seems to accuse me of taking up the time of the House unnecessarily. I take no notice of what the hon. gentleman says about my speaking to my constituents, as I do not think they care twopence-halfpenny what the *Courier* reports me to have said, or whether the

judge wrote this letter or not. As to the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough, I do not know whether he takes an interest in this newspaper or not, or whether he is a part proprietor; but he made some very uncalled-for remarks. He seems to think that he knows more about this matter than the *Hansard* reporters, and can hear better than they can, and is a cleverer man than any of them, and that he knows what people meant to say and what they said. Did anyone ever hear more absurd language than the hon. member makes use of? Then there is the hon. member for Aubigny, and I do not know whether he has got better ears than other people. He says the *Hansard* people put my remarks right, and I say that is a calumny on the *Hansard* reporters. I take it they are not paid to put any member's speech right; if they do the sooner they are removed from their place the better. The hon. member distinctly states that I made use of certain remarks, and the *Hansard* reporters altered them. I say they did not alter them, and I have the "proof" showing they have not been altered, nor did I alter them myself. We are paying the *Hansard* reporters to report our speeches fully and fairly, and that, I believe, they do; but the member for Aubigny gets up in this House and condemns them for making a false report, for that is what the hon. member's remarks are tantamount to. I think it is advisable when any paper misstates what a member may have said in this House to draw attention to it, and I intend to make it my business whenever they misrepresent what is said to draw attention to it. Possibly, if attention is called offener to these misstatements, they may get tired of making them. This matter is not important, but when a debate in which great interest is taken occurs we may at last expect a fair report of it in the *Courier* newspaper.

Motion for adjournment put and negatived.

QUEENSLAND FISHERIES BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

PROSECUTION OF MR. GREETHAM.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read—

"Resumption of debate on Mr. C. Lumley Hill's motion, 'That the papers, as laid on the table of the House on the 6th September, in the case of the prosecution of Mr. Greetham, be printed,'—which stood adjourned (under Sessional Order of 20th July last) at 7 p.m. of Thursday, the 8th instant!"—

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—When the debate on this question was adjourned, my colleague (Mr. Salkeld) was about to explain that I had nothing to do with the matter, though my name was brought into it. I may say that so far as the discussion has gone it has been an unprofitable one, and has tended to no particular good; but I should very much like the Colonial Secretary to have an inquiry into the whole matter. So far as the papers are concerned, it will be simply nothing, but there are rumours still going about which implicate Mr. Greetham, and even for his sake a searching inquiry into the facts of the case ought to be made, because if half the stories in reference to this gentleman are true—and some of them are very revolting—it is time he was not only out of Ipswich, but out of Queensland. I believe the women of Ipswich would be very glad if he were tarred and feathered and sent out of the town. In reference to the gentleman who moved for the papers, I believe this is just such a case as pleases the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Why?

Mr. MACFARLANE: Cases of this kind seem to be quite in keeping with the temperament and nature of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I never brought forward a case of this kind before.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I have been told that the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, is the son of a clergyman.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Then you have been told a lie.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I was told that only yesterday.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Did a newspaper tell you?

Mr. MACFARLANE: Whether he is the son of a clergyman or not, he has a father.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I had one.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I was told by a relative that he was the son of a clergyman.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You ought to ascertain the truth before you make a charge against anyone.

Mr. MACFARLANE: A good many rumours have been repeated in this House before. In reference to this matter the discussion does not tend to throw much enlightenment on the case. When I spoke on the last occasion I used some strong words in reference to the lawyer who conducted the case for Greetham. He, like the *Courier*, took his information from Greetham, and they both fell into the same mistake. Of course, I naturally felt aggrieved at my relative's name being brought into the inquiry when it ought not to have been.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: It was your name.

Mr. MACFARLANE: My name was never brought into the inquiry.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: It was in the *Courier*.

Mr. MACFARLANE: But it was not used in the inquiry. Speaking in reference to the lawyer who conducted Greetham's case, I used words to this effect: that a person who could draw into a case of this kind—a very revolting case—a person perfectly innocent, knowing that he was innocent, was unworthy of the name not only of a lawyer but of a man. I have since had a conversation with that lawyer, and he assures me on his honour that he was under the impression that my relative's name was brought in. But the name was not brought in at all unless in the way I explained to the House when I spoke on a former occasion on this subject. The little girl said to my relative, who took the depositions and signed the warrant, "That was the gentleman," meaning Greetham; and the nurse, over-hearing her, said, "You must be mistaken; that is Mr. Macfarlane." So that my relative's name was simply accidentally mentioned by the nurse, and the lawyer ought to have known that. He should not have taken his information entirely from Greetham. If he had gone to the nurse she could have informed him what was said. So far as that is concerned, however, I am perfectly satisfied; but I should like a searching investigation to be made into the whole matter. I have no desire whatever to injure the lawyer, or say anything that would militate against him in any way,—he is my own lawyer—I do all my business through him, and shall continue to do so,—but I think I used the words fairly under the circumstances. Having made this explanation, I will withdraw the words I made use of, and conclude by asking the Colonial Secretary to be kind enough to inform the House, before the debate closes, whether he means to have an inquiry into the matter or not.

Mr. FOOTE said: Mr. Speaker,—I can hardly think that the Colonial Secretary will fail to have an inquiry into a case of this sort, with reference to which there seems to be so much rumour. I have not heard any rumours myself, neither am I prepared to support the statement of the hon. senior member for Ipswich with reference to those rumours. On the last occasion when this matter was brought before the House I was ignorant of the person whose name has been brought into it; but I think it is rather unfair to go and attack a man as he has been attacked; to me it amounts to persecution. A member should not come to this House and make statements which he would not dare to make outside with reference to anybody's character. I think a person should be treated respectfully in this House as well as out of it, especially when he is not in the House to defend himself. Now, within the last forty-eight hours that gentleman has called upon me, and he is very desirous of inquiry; he courts inquiry; he covets inquiry, and he is not afraid of his own character in the matter. I did not say I would say one word in reference to it, because these are matters I like to keep out of, but I sincerely hope that the Colonial Secretary will grant an inquiry. As to talking about a searching and thorough inquiry, I presume that all inquiries conducted by the Government are of that character, and are intended to bring out the truth, and I have no doubt it will be so in this case. In fact, if the Colonial Secretary does not give way in this matter, I feel sure that if a committee is asked for the House will grant it, but I trust it will not be necessary to go to that extreme. In the face of matters as they now stand, when so many people are perplexed about the case, and parties consider themselves disgraced in it, the Colonial Secretary should grant an inquiry in order to clear their characters.

Mr. FOXTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to say a few words with reference to what has fallen from the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, in connection with the gentleman who conducted the defence in this case. I have some delicacy in doing so, because although I know nothing of the case whatever, probably less than a great many hon. members of this House, the gentleman in question happens to be my partner. I am very glad that the hon. member has withdrawn what I think was his extreme statement made on a former occasion; but with regard to what he said as to the lawyer in question having taken his information from Mr. Greetham only, I would ask the indulgence of the House while I read a few lines from the cross-examination of the prosecutrix:—

"I remember swearing an information in this case at the hospital. The sergeant was there and another gentleman who signed his name to the paper after I had signed it. I said to nurse Costello as the gentleman who signed the summons walked out of the room, 'That is the man who did it to me.' This gentleman had hair all over his face. Nurse Costello said to me: 'No, Grace, you must be mistaken; that is Mr. Macfarlane.' It was before I signed the information in the hospital that I heard the man's name was Mr. Greetham."

Now, I ask what else could a lawyer do after eliciting that fact in cross-examination than comment most strongly on it, as being a contradictory statement made by the prosecutrix? I mention this to show that the fact as stated by the hon. member is not exactly correct. There was a good deal to go upon.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) said: Mr. Speaker,—Since the debate on the production of these papers commenced, some remarks have been made about Mr. Greetham by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, which place the circumstances somewhat differently to my mind. Such comments having

been made about Mr. Greetham, I think I have a right to assist him to prove whether they are untrue or not. I shall therefore take the first opportunity of communicating with the Attorney General on the subject, and shall also do what I can to investigate the matter as far as the police are concerned.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—The end that I aimed at is pretty nearly achieved. Before the Colonial Secretary gave us this information I intended to amend my notice so that at all events a *précis* of the papers should be printed, in order that hon. members might have an opportunity of judging for themselves what are the contents of the papers. There is no doubt that very disagreeable insinuations have been made, both against the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, and against Mr. Greetham. Now, I look upon the hon. gentleman in what he said with reference to myself as guilty of the most base ingratitude, because I was defending his character in the first instance from what appeared in the public Press—in the leading organ of this colony.

Mr. MACFARLANE: "Save me from my friends!"

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I considered that it was due to the hon. member and to this House that he should clear himself from any charge in relation to this girl. These are the two paragraphs as they appeared in the *Courier*:—

"Grace Jones was taken to the hospital, where subsequently she told several contradictory stories about the assault upon her. Mr. Macfarlane, M.L.A., visited the hospital and she pointed him out to the nurse as her assailant."

The second paragraph is—

"Why was the only person Grace Jones identified as her assailant—namely Mr. Macfarlane—not placed under arrest and charged with the offence?"

Taking those two paragraphs in conjunction, the only inference any intelligent man could draw is that Mr. Macfarlane's position as M.L.A. protected him from being arrested and placed on his trial. That is the version given by the leading newspaper of the colony.

Mr. KELLETT: Misleading!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Or "misleading," if the hon. member likes. I do not believe it is true, and if I were in the hon. member's place I should have taken a very different method of procuring a remedy for this kind of thing. I consider that Mr. Macfarlane had a first-rate action for libel against the proprietors of that paper, and he should have taken it. Possibly it was very inconvenient for Mr. Macfarlane, for several reasons, to go into the witness-box and subject himself to a severe cross-examination on matters of this kind.

Mr. MURPHY: Is that the way you clear his character?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: So I have been told, and it is the only inference I can draw from the matter being left in the state it is. Mr. Greetham is a man whom I have never seen, and with whom I have never had any communication. The hon. member tells us that if the women of Ipswich were aware of the contents of these papers they would tar and feather Mr. Greetham. All I can say is that I have read the papers carefully, and I cannot see anything in them that would induce the women of Ipswich to tar and feather him. The hon. member, Mr. Macfarlane, seems to be an extremely credulous individual. He has been informed that I am the son of a clergyman—which is by no means the fact. I am not the son of a clergyman, although, as far as that goes, it would not matter a bit in the world if I were. The hon. member seems to believe everything he hears. I am glad to find that this matter is going to be sifted. I have pretty well

attained my object, and it does not matter whether these papers are printed or not so long as there is to be an official investigation. Though the case may be regarded as *sub judice*, I have no hesitation in saying that I believe the result of the inquiry will be that both Mr. Macfarlane and Mr. Greetham will be exonerated from any charge which may have been made against them with respect to this girl. As for the subject of the inquiry being an indecent one, it is necessary for the protection of individuals that matters of this kind, no matter how disgusting they may be, should be brought to light and sifted. It may be a very unpleasant duty, but it is a necessary one.

Mr. CHUBB: A kind of moral scavenging.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: That may be so. With the permission of the House I beg to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

SUPREME COURT JUDGE AT TOWNSVILLE.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read—

"Resumption of debate on Mr. Brown's motion, 'That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived for the appointment of a judge of the Supreme Court to reside at Townsville'—which stood adjourned (under Sessional Order of 20th July last) at 7 p.m. of Thursday, the 15th instant"—

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I have not had the advantage of listening to what the speakers on the motion of my hon. colleague, the member for Townsville, said on the matter, but I think the time has arrived when an additional judge is required for the North. If we look at the amount of work which the present Northern Judge has to do in criminal matters, and the additions to his circuit which must be made very soon, owing to the discovery of the Croydon Gold Field, I think very few hon. members will disagree with the motion; and if we resolve to have a Northern judge, it will be admitted also that Townsville is the place where he should be located. There he will be in the midst of his work.

The PREMIER: I think they ought both to be located there.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It will be so much the better if they are. There will be no possibility of obtaining a good Northern Bar so long as one of the judges resides at Bowen.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The only chance the North has of obtaining cheaper law is to have two judges located in the chief towns. At present the Supreme Court is constituted of a single judge, and it is rather an anomaly to appeal from that gentleman to himself. Even on that ground it would be much better, and would be more conducive to Northern interests and to the administration of justice in the North, that we should have an additional judge; and I am quite certain, as I said before, that he ought to reside at Townsville, where local matters could be brought before him, in Chambers especially. There is no necessity for a long discussion on this matter. I understand the Premier said he would like to hear the opinions of Northern members upon it.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I am told he said so, and that he adverted to the selection of the district in which the judge should reside. At the time the Bill was passed, giving a judge of the Supreme Court to the North, I was a member of the House. I do not know whether the Premier is aware of the reason why Bowen was selected as the place of the judge's location.

The reason was this: One of the Northern members told the others that he had discovered that there was an attempt about to be made, with the consent of the Government, to locate the Northern judge at Rockhampton. Sooner than have any difference of opinion amongst the Northern members they all agreed that Bowen should be the place. The member for Bowen would not have been willing to vote for Townsville, and the Townsville member and the other Northern members were quite willing that Bowen should be selected so long as that would prevent the judge from being located at Rockhampton. That was the sole reason. I do not wish to give names. I could give the name of the member who made the discovery, but he is no longer a member of the House. Such is the fact. Townsville was not left out because it was ineligible, but Bowen was selected to prevent the selection of another place which was supposed to be more ineligible than itself.

The PREMIER: I was not a member of that Government.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No; the hon. gentleman was not. That is quite true. The Attorney-General at that time was Mr. McDevitt. The hon. gentleman succeeded him, I believe, some time after. But that is the reason why Bowen was selected, and I believe the Northern members have never moved in the matter since, for the simple reason of not stirring up strife amongst themselves. But now that the matter has been raised, I think it is time that an additional judge should be appointed, located at Townsville, and if the hon. gentleman's motion goes to a division I shall vote for it.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I never knew before to-day why Bowen was selected as the place for the Northern Supreme Court Judge to reside in. The matter has been pretty clearly explained by the hon. member for Townsville, and there is no doubt the reasons given are correct. That hon. gentleman is generally correct in anything he states with regard to the history connected with the northern part of the colony. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that situated as the Supreme Court Judge is in Bowen, it is a most unsuitable place for people who have any business to do there, especially on account of the way in which the steamers call in. A great many steamers avoid the jetty altogether, and those that do haul alongside only stop half-an-hour, or an hour at the most, and people who have legal business have neither time nor opportunity to transact it. In fact, unless a person misses the steamer and stays there a week he can do no business at all in connection with the Supreme Court. There can be no doubt it is an extremely unsuitable site to locate a Supreme Court judge on that account. The motion is rather vague, as it does not lay any definite proposal before the House to consider. It would scarcely be advisable that one judge should be placed at Bowen and another in Townsville, although I think the time has arrived when there should be an additional Supreme Court judge for the whole of the northern part of Queensland, especially when we take into consideration the two visits of the District Court judge to Normanton, and that right away to our western boundary we have courts of petty sessions, and business coming in to Normanton from all parts of the north-west. I have no doubt that a Supreme Court judge would be a very great convenience to the inhabitants of Croydon, the Etheridge, Cloncurry, Normanton, as well as to Burketown and the far western parts of the colony. I feel quite certain the time has arrived when it is desirable that that should be established. As to where the extra judge is to reside, that is a matter for the

Government to decide. There is no doubt that Townsville is the most convenient place for one judge, and as to where the other is to be located, of course the Government must take upon themselves the responsibility of saying.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I think most hon. members will feel that this compromise, which seems to have been made some years ago, is one of those unfortunate compromises that are now and then made in politics. I, in common with many others, have often wondered how it came to pass that a Supreme Court judge was ever located at a place like Bowen in the beginning. At present I know very well that the local work of the Northern Judge is very slight indeed. Taking the two matters which occupy mostly a judge's attention here: Chamber business—that is civil procedure on writs of summons for debt—and insolvency business; in the first I do not suppose the Northern Judge deals on an average with more than one case a week. Certainly it does not reach fifty-two judgments in the year. From twenty to forty has, I believe, been the average for the last four or five years. And as to insolvency, it is not possible that insolvency procedure can be carried on in the North at present. The commercial relations of Northern storekeepers are so close with the merchants in Brisbane that it is only fitting and right that insolvency procedure affecting Northern storekeepers must, for some time, take place in Brisbane, and Brisbane only. This motion means, if it means anything, that there shall be two Supreme Court judges in the northern part of Queensland. I think it is an injustice to the North to suggest for one moment that they need two judges. It is another of those injustices of which we have had so many lately. It argues such a degree of litigiousness, demand for law, and general lawlessness of the community, that I think we should not for one moment entertain it. I do not think the colony can afford to keep two judges in the North, but if we can by any means remove the present judge from Bowen to Townsville I shall be glad to support it.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—There can be no doubt that a second judge is necessary for the northern portion of Queensland. That fact has been admitted, therefore it is useless to lose time in discussing it. But I do not quite agree with the position which some Northern members take up, as to where the Northern Judge should be located. I think, considering the very large population at Croydon, and the large and increasing population in Normanton and in the Cook district generally since the last census, that a more central place than Townsville could be selected. Therefore, although I quite agree that a second judge should be appointed, I think a more central position than that mentioned might be obtained.

Mr. MORGAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The motion, as the hon. member for Burke has said, is rather ambiguous. When I first read it, I was not quite clear whether it proposed that Townsville should have a second judge, or, in the alternative, the present judge should be removed from Bowen to Townsville. If a second judge is required it should be clearly proved that he is required, and then I think the House would be disposed to vote for such an appointment. But it has not been shown yet, and even if it were shown I think it would be necessary to locate both these gentlemen in one town. If we had one in Bowen and another in Townsville we should have the Bowen judge visiting his learned brother in Townsville very frequently, to consult upon matters requiring consultation; and travelling expenses would be multiplied indefinitely. We should probably

have to pay a larger bill annually for that item than we do at present. I think the hon. member for Townsville in his reply might make it clear to the House whether he wishes a second judge to be appointed or merely the removal of the present judge from Bowen to Townsville; and if he does wish a second judge, whether he wishes that the two judges should reside in two different towns. I certainly think that if there is to be a second judge the two should reside in the one town.

Mr. BROWN, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I endeavoured to show, when speaking on this question the other day, that two judges are required in North Queensland. My hon. friend the member for Bowen then pointed out that last year the Northern Supreme Court Judge had tried seventy-nine criminal cases, while the three Supreme Court Judges in the South had tried only eighty-two. That shows that the Northern judge has more than a fair share of the work now. I am reminded that he has no Chamber work. He has a certain amount, but not as much as he would have if he lived in a more central position. I said the other day that Bowen is more inaccessible to a number of the Northern residents than Brisbane, and, as has been pointed out, the steamer now stays simply for half-an-hour, and unless one is prepared to spend a week at Bowen, it is impossible to do any Supreme Court business. In wording the motion I purposely left it in such way that the Government need not feel themselves committed to appoint two judges, and at the same time I took great care and pains to point out that there was really work for two judges in Northern Queensland; and in a few months it will be found that my statement is correct. I know that it takes some time to make provision for a Supreme Court, and I have given the Government this early intimation so as to make the provision if they think necessary. I have no idea what the amount of business will be, but it will be large considering the large accession to our mining population. I do not mean to say that miners are more litigious than others, but in a prosperous goldfield there are large numbers of people who give a certain amount of practice. The question then is, if the Government do not see their way to appoint a second judge immediately, where is the present judge to reside? I say in that case he should reside at Townsville; but I hope the Government will not only erect a Supreme Court at Townsville, but take an early opportunity of appointing a second judge. I showed the other day that there are 25,000 people within easy radius of Townsville. They can get there by rail and by steamer running in daily from different ports, and therefore these people should have some better facilities than at present of doing their Supreme Court business. An hon. member remarked just now that the judge at Bowen had very little Chamber business. That is quite true, because a large proportion of it comes to Brisbane. Nearly all the insolvency business comes to Brisbane. I should be glad if the Premier had said a little more positively that he would take the matter into early consideration. I believe he did express himself as favourable to the judge residing in Townsville if he heard the various Northern members express that opinion. I think that opinion has been expressed, and I hope the Government will say that they intend to act on the suggestion thrown out.

Mr. DICKSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I trust the hon. member will not deem me discourteous in speaking after he has replied, as I am not going to traverse any of his remarks. I rose to say that the lay members of the House would require a considerable amount of information before they could record their votes in favour

of the motion, and until they learn from the Government primarily whether, in their opinion, an additional judge for the northern districts of the colony is absolutely necessary. The ambiguity of the motion has already been referred to by previous speakers, and, as it now stands, I take it that hon. members who are giving their votes in favour of the motion will pledge themselves to recognise the necessity of an additional judge for the North. That is a matter of very great importance undoubtedly, Mr. Speaker, and ought not to be passed over very lightly. I was not present when the Premier spoke, and therefore I do not know exactly what his views are; but so far as I can gather he desired to learn the opinions of the Northern members with reference to the matter of the Northern Judge residing at Townsville, without pledging himself to an opinion as to whether a second judge would be necessary. I myself should not like to concur in anything to injure Bowen, and rather demur to the desire to have everything centred at Townsville when the judge has been so long a resident at Bowen. Still, if it can be shown that the interests of justice will be advanced, and the judicial business better promoted, by having the judge resident at Townsville instead of Bowen, I shall offer no objection; but I certainly desire more information before arriving at a conclusion as to whether a second judge is necessary. It is not only the salary we have to take into consideration, but the buildings and all the retinue consequent on a separate judicial establishment in the North; and while I quite recognise that at the present rate of progress of the North an additional judge may shortly be required, I do not forget that at the present time we are endeavouring to retrench as much as possible. With a view, therefore, of giving hon. members of the House an opportunity of hearing the opinion of the Government, I will formally move the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I am obliged to the hon. member for Enoggera for giving me an opportunity of speaking again on this matter. I spoke on a previous occasion, as hon. members will remember, just before 6 o'clock, and compressed my remarks with the desire of leaving time for hon. members to follow me, because the debate stood adjourned at 6. I believe myself that the establishment of the Supreme Court at Bowen is perfectly useless—at least the only use it is is that the judge is nearer to his work when he starts on circuit, but that is the only advantage. Practically he does no work there, in consequence of Bowen being practically inaccessible to the northern part of the colony. Probably it is more from that cause than from preference that so much of the work is done in Brisbane. I believe that if the judge were located at Townsville, and the Supreme Court located there, a very large amount of business would be done there locally. A very large proportion of the present work of the Supreme Court here comes from the North. I have an opportunity of knowing that, and I am sure if the judge were at Townsville there would be a very large amount of work done there. So that the amount of work done in Bowen now is no criterion of what would be done, and no criterion of whether a second judge is required. But it must be apparent that the usefulness of the Supreme Court being located at Townsville would depend upon its continued accessibility to suitors, and if a judge were absent from town half the year or a large proportion of it it would be no more use there than at Bowen. Of course we know that the circuits of the North, though they are not very long now, will be longer. The frequency of the present circuits to Townsville from Bowen

would have to be increased, but if the judge were at Townsville there would be no necessity for that. If the circuit is extended to Normanton, which is contemplated by the Government to be done immediately, that will necessitate the absence of the judge from the seat of his Supreme Court for something like a month each time in consequence of the time occupied in travelling; that would make about two months in the year. If to that time is added the time occupied on other circuits—I forget how many days were occupied last year.

Mr. CHUBB: About sixty-six days.

The PREMIER: Something over two months. That would make up nearly four months, and if to that is added the vacations of two months it is seen that for six months in the year the judge would be absent from the seat of his Supreme Court. Under these conditions I do not think much more could be done at Townsville than at Bowen; so that the question of a local court at Townsville involves also the appointment of a second judge for the North. If the judge in the North is to be wandering about for a considerable part of the year on circuit—I do not use the term "wandering about" offensively—if the judge is to be moving about, the work of his Supreme Court cannot properly be carried on, because a very small part of the work of a Supreme Court consists in the judge sitting and hearing trials. That is the case in Brisbane, where there is much other work done, and much of it is brought from the North; and it is because it cannot be done at Bowen that it is brought here, so that I think the appointment of a second judge for the North is involved in this motion. I am somewhat reluctant to support or advocate the appointment of another judge at the present time. I think, however, I have stated the position fairly, and I understand the circumstances probably as well as anyone in the colony. That, then, is how the matter appears to me, and I think no substantial improvement can be made unless we are to have two judges in the North. They must be in the same place, in order that when one is on circuit, the other may be present at the seat of the Supreme Court in order to carry on the ordinary business of the court. I never heard before the anecdote told by the hon. member for Townsville as to why Bowen was selected for the seat of the Northern Supreme Court. It was always understood, I think, that the Northern Judge should reside there, or at Townsville, and it must be remembered that the relative importance of the two places—Bowen and Townsville—was then much less distinct than it is now. Bowen, as I understand it, was generally thought to be the best place at that time. I do not think I can throw any more light upon the matter, and it seems to me simply a question of whether the time has arrived for the appointment of a second Northern judge.

Question—That the debate be adjourned—put and negatived.

Original question put and passed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

VALUATION BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council had agreed to the Valuation Bill, with an amendment, indicated in an accompanying schedule, in which amendment they requested the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the message was ordered to be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

THE "COREA" INQUIRY.

Mr. BLACK, in moving—

That there be laid upon the table of this House, copies of all papers and correspondence referring to the inquiry into the conduct of Government agent Jones, in connection with the late voyage of the s.s. "Corea," to the South Sea Islands—

said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to refer to the reasons for asking that these papers should be produced. As hon. members are aware, somewhat recently certain planters in the northern part of the colony, in order to carry out the introduction of Pacific Island labourers in the most satisfactory manner possible, chartered a steamer known as the "Corea," at very considerable expense. They did everything they could in order that the Government might be satisfied that all due precautions were being taken in the introduction of those islanders. Such preparations were never attempted before; the steamer was fitted out thoroughly to the satisfaction of the Government authorities, and extra precautions were taken to see that the provisions of the Polynesian Act were complied with, and two Polynesian inspectors were appointed by the Government to accompany the steamer. So far everything shows that the charterers of the vessel were most anxious that everything should be done to remove any cause of dissatisfaction as to the way in which the islanders were to be introduced. The steamer returned after about three months' absence with an extremely small number of recruits. I may tell the House that the chief Government agent on the vessel was named Jones, and he had unlimited control of the whole voyage; in fact, the vessel was in charge of the Government agent. He was subsequently proved, by an inquiry into his conduct, to have been perfectly incapable. In fact, it appears from the evidence, which is included in the papers I wish to move for, that this individual was in the habit of misconducting himself almost from the time the vessel started; he brought himself into antagonism with all the men on board, and the most serious charge against him was that he was continuously drunk. So that the whole object for which he was employed and for which the vessel was chartered was entirely frustrated, and the voyage resulted in a total failure for the purpose for which it was made. This involved a tremendous loss, amounting, I am informed, to something like £3,500; and the expenses were very great, the vessel being chartered at £1,600 a month, and she was away for three months. The loss was certainly a very heavy one. No doubt the papers are somewhat voluminous. The Chief Secretary gave me an opportunity of seeing them, but I came to the conclusion that, though comparatively voluminous, they are not so voluminous as many papers that are printed, and I could not see my way to agree to a portion of them being laid on the table, and not the whole of them. The most voluminous part consists of the examination held into the conduct of the Government agent, Mr. Jones; and as it is proposed later on to found a subsequent motion in reference to this matter, it would be hardly fair for hon. members to be supplied with only a portion of the evidence.

The PREMIER: What is the subsequent motion?

Mr. BLACK: It is intended, should these papers be supplied, to bring forward a claim, I assume, for compensation.

The PREMIER: Oh!

Mr. BLACK: I think the hon. gentleman clearly understands that.

The PREMIER: No, I did not know that.

Mr. BLACK: And for this reason: The charterers of the "Corea," acting entirely in accordance with the law, endeavoured in a way never attempted before to provide the labour necessary for carrying on their industry; and we maintain that it is the duty of the Government to send as Government agents people in every way capable, competent, sober, and steady; and that if they send men who prove to be incompetent and utterly incapable, and entail on the charterers of the vessel a very heavy loss, the Government are not entitled to entirely escape censure. A very heavy responsibility rests on the Government in the appointment of these Government agents, and we know how on many previous occasions the position of Government agent has been looked upon as a refuge—I won't say by this Government, but by the Government for the time being—and how they sent down the most incompetent men. I am sure that hon. members who wish to see fair treatment to every class of the community will agree in asking for the production of the papers connected with this very serious case—the most serious case that has ever occurred—a very heavy loss having been entailed on people doing what the law entitled them to do. I think I am perfectly right in asking not only that the papers be laid on the table, but also that they be printed for the information of hon. members. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the hon. gentleman has now made out a case for the production of the papers, though they are voluminous. I made the motion "not formal" because I thought that if the hon. member merely wanted information he could get it by making inquiry. I do not think, however, that the papers will throw much light on the case; and I should not have taken the trouble to rise but that the hon. gentleman before he sat down went on to say that the Government had appointed most incompetent persons as Government agents, and by this means had put innocent persons to great loss. The hon. member's attack was made without any foundation whatever so far as the present Government are concerned; this Mr. Jones was a legacy from a previous Government.

Mr. BLACK: I did not blame this Government.

The PREMIER: When the hon. member spoke, he intended it to be understood by everybody here as an attack on the Government.

Mr. BLACK: No.

The PREMIER: And no one could take it in any other way. I am quite aware that it was at one time the practice to appoint incompetent persons as Government agents, but I had not been very long in office before they were nearly all gone, although I was unfortunate enough to make one or two bad appointments. For several years, however, no complaints have been made with this exception; and Mr. Jones was the oldest member of the staff, and had done good service for a great many years. I shall not offer any objection to the production of the papers.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad the Premier has consented to the production of these papers, because I do not think it will be borne out that the Government agent, who was a legacy from the previous Government, bore such a bad character.

The PREMIER: I said he had done good service for a great many years.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I have known Mr. Jones for eighteen years. I knew him as a miner in the North before he became a Government agent, and I always knew him as

an extremely sober, moral, and well-conducted man, and I understood that while in the Government service he always bore a high character—

The PREMIER: He did.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: And had been complimented several times by the head of his department. I was astonished when I read the report of his misconduct on board the "Corea," and could scarcely believe it. I looked with great anxiety for the finding of the board appointed to inquire into the matter, and I was very sorry when I saw that he was dismissed. I shall be very anxious to read the papers, and see whether Mr. Jones received fair play.

Question put and passed.

RAILWAYS IN THE WIDE BAY AND BURNETT DISTRICTS.

On the following notice of motion being called :—

"Mr. BAILEY to move that there be laid upon the table of the House,—

"1. A Return showing, separately, cost of railways—

- (a) From Maryborough to Howard;
- (b) From Maryborough to Gympie;
- (c) From Kilkivan Junction to Kilkivan;
- (d) From Bundaberg to Mount Perry.

"2. Monthly traffic returns on each, during year ending 30th June, 1887.

"3. Percentage of profit or loss on each line."

Mr. BAILEY said: Mr. Speaker,—My reason for putting this motion on the paper was the somewhat astounding statement in the Railway Commissioner's report to the effect that the Maryborough and Wide Bay Railways only paid 9s. 5d. per cent. last year. I knew very well that the railway from Maryborough to Gympie was paying, not only working expenses, but also a considerable amount over the interest on the cost of construction; I was almost sure that the branch line to Kilkivan had already begun to pay handsomely, and I had not the slightest doubt that the line from Maryborough to Howard was paying; but I found out that the reason why we were debited with this extraordinary loss—or rather not credited with a profit—is because in the Commissioner's report there has been tacked on to the railways in the Wide Bay district the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway, which has been a losing concern from the beginning, and does not pay working expenses, let alone interest on the cost of construction. I have no doubt, from information I have received, that next year the returns will be made out properly, that the Maryborough and Gympie line will be credited with its earnings, and that the railway in the Mulgrave district will be credited or debited with its loss or gain. I find that the return will cost a good deal of money and a month's time, and as we shall have a proper return next year showing what I have stated to the House now and what we know now, I beg to withdraw the motion standing in my name.

AURIFEROUS SULPHIDE ORES.

Mr. ADAMS, in moving—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider an address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates the sum of fifty thousand pounds (£50,000) for the purpose of erecting works within the colony for the effectually treating auriferous sulphide ores—

said: Mr. Speaker,—In rising to move this motion, I can only say I am extremely sorry that the duty has not fallen to someone more competent to perform it. It must be admitted that we ought as far as we can, to keep in the colony the money that is made in the colony, and to endeavour to utilise the labour that, as was

shown last night, it costs so much to bring out. I remember, sir, the leader of the Government saying the other night that when all mining companies are floated in the old country the money hardly ever finds its way out to the colony, but remains at home to enrich the people who float the companies. I think the motion I have tabled is a step in the direction of stopping the floating of companies as has heretofore been done. There is no need to say anything as to the importance of the mining industry to the colony. We have only to look back to 1866, when the country was in a deplorable condition, and when but for Gympie breaking out it would hardly have recovered as quickly as it did. Now, we know that at the present time there are great mineral properties in Queensland not developed, and I think it is the duty of the Government to assist private enterprise in developing them. Mines are opening in various districts of the colony, so I have not asked that these works should be erected in any particular locality, but that they should be erected somewhere within the colony. If that were done there would be no necessity for people to go to the old country to float their mines; it would give the populace here an opportunity of endeavouring to develop those mines, because they would have greater confidence in works erected and supervised by the Government than in those started by private enterprise. It would not interfere so much with private enterprise, because the example of the Government would lead private enterprise to invest largely in machinery of that kind. At present, sulphide ores raised in the colony have to be sent to Germany or England. Would it not be better to erect works here under the supervision of the Government, so that we could utilise the labour we are sending for, and keep the money in the colony to pay wages? I am credibly informed that it costs something like £5 a ton to send these ores to where they are treated. This goes to the assistance of, I may say, foreign nations—they are foreign to us. When people come here to settle they are Queenslanders, and why should we not support our own people rather than those outside of the country? The working classes in the colony at the present day are generally what are called prospectors; they go out into the wilds seeking for something that may be remunerative hereafter; but as soon as they find something that would remunerate them for their time, trouble, expense, and labour, they find it is impossible for them to work it themselves, and they have to float it into a company or send to someone who has capital. Now, that is a state of things that ought not to exist. I think that when the working population find anything of that description they ought to be encouraged, and what better encouragement could they have than that the Government should take upon themselves to erect works so that their ores may be manipulated? I am convinced that there are any quantity of mines in the country such as I have described. I know of two within my own district, and I know of other places in the district where working men have found ores that would give a handsome return, but owing to the sulphides it was found impossible for them to work them in the usual way with the battery. They are utterly powerless unless some one comes in with capital to assist them; and these capitalists do not come in unless they can get the property for less than one-fifth of its value. Therefore I think it is absolutely necessary that such works should be erected. It would be far better for us to keep in the colony the £5 a ton which it costs to send this material to be treated in the old country, and spend it in the colony in paying working men; we would then keep the money in the colony and give them work.

I am satisfied that 3,000 or 4,000 men could be easily employed in the district which I have the honour to represent if such works were erected. These men add to the wealth of the colony, and contribute to its Treasury, and I think they ought to be considered. I do not wish to take the whole credit for this matter to myself, for the simple reason that it has been carefully worked out by the Chamber of Commerce at Bundaberg, and has been some time before the country. Last session I tabled a *fac-simile* of this motion, but on account of a promise that was made to the Chamber of Commerce by the Premier, I was requested to withdraw it for the time being. Whether that promise has been fulfilled or not I am not prepared to say; but as the hon. gentleman has several times declared lately that he never breaks a promise, I presume that that promise has been kept.

The PREMIER: What promise is that?

Mr. ADAMS: I am not aware of the precise promise, but it was contained in a communication received from the Premier by the Chamber of Commerce at Bundaberg. As I said, I do not wish to take the credit for this matter upon myself, simply because it originated in the Chamber of Commerce at Bundaberg. One gentleman, Mr. D. F. Johnston, of Kolan Station, went to considerable trouble to work it out, the results of which are contained in a paper read by him before that body, and which has since been reprinted. I think the better plan will be, with the indulgence of the House, to read a portion of Mr. Johnston's address to the Chamber of Commerce on that occasion. He deals first with other matters, but I cannot omit them, because they lead up to the question now under debate. Mr. Johnston's paper is as follows:—

"I feel very great diffidence in speaking to the resolutions I have just moved."

One of them was a resolution that the Government be requested to erect works of this kind—"because the subject is one involving so many issues of the first importance to the settlement and advancement of Queensland that it is altogether beyond my humble ability to treat it as it deserves; in fact, the only two men, I believe, who could do full justice to it are our present and our late Premiers. This matter is one that should commend itself not only for the approval and support of every man interested in gold-mining, but also of every intelligent mind in Queensland; and in order that it should command general attention, not only in this Chamber and district, but throughout the whole colony, I have, after much consideration, framed the resolutions at considerable length so that the purport of them might be clearly understood. To exemplify what might be expected to result from the establishment of such works, as the first resolution indicates, I must ask your permission to digress for a few moments from the main question in hand, while I allude to the results that have occurred to this district by the starting in it of one industrial establishment. In the year before the Messrs. Cran and Co.'s refinery opened the population of this district was under 5,000 people, and the annual export value of its products was £34,400. The present population of the Mulgrave district is 9,800, and its probable agricultural output this year will be over £240,000."

You must understand, Mr. Speaker, that this address was delivered last year, not this year.

"I need not waste time to prove what all here will know, that this increase of people and wealth is almost entirely due to the successful enterprise of Mr. Cran and the encouragement thereby given to others to settle and invest capital here. Mr. Cran's efforts to develop the agricultural resources of this district have raised in the minds of Bundabergians a monument that will last for generations; but, Mr. Chairman, though so much has been accomplished, far more remains to be done, as at present only about one-sixth of our agricultural land is under cultivation; the balance remains awaiting development. To put this to its proper use we want more capital and a far bigger population, and my contention is that nothing will so quickly provide both as will the means to develop our mineral resources. Now, if this argument applies

to this district, so it does, with more or less force, to many other parts of this country. What we want is that the Government shall by the establishment of the necessary works give to those interested in mining full encouragement, as Mr. Cran did here to the agriculturists, to make the most of their opportunities. The Government that does this will earn the lasting gratitude of most Queenslanders, and in all probability will send Queensland ahead as much as the refinery did Bundaberg. From a paper read by Mr. R. L. Nash, on July 5th, in the conference room of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, Sir James Cockle (late C.J. of Queensland), presiding, I find it is stated 'that Queensland has been aptly described as a young giant'; her exports per head of population are the largest of any country in the world, being between £15 and £16, while the mother-country (and the mother-country prides herself on her trade) exports of home products but £6 to £7 per head, even though these products are largely manufactured from raw material obtained from the colonies and the United States. The above statement is grounded upon the fact, laying the basis at per head of population, that, firstly, our productive or occupied area is greater; secondly, the number of our live stock is upon the same grand scale; thirdly, that our mineral production is unequalled; and lastly, because, with the exception of New Zealand, we have borrowed capital on a similar unprecedented scale to develop our resources. Now, our Colonial Treasurer has just told us that, less the balance of loan authorised but not negotiated, our public debt is £20,820,850, and as we well know the greater part of this money has been spent in supposed reproductive works, railways that are costing millions are being built, and cannot possibly pay without some further great stimulus be given to the development of our resources, and this requirement might be provided if, say, £200,000 were spent in the direction my resolutions indicate. With such an establishment at some central place in Queensland and possibly being within easy reach of coal (a great consideration), near the sea, and in a most promising mining locality, Bundaberg might be selected as the site for the works; scores of mines now almost useless would quickly be opened up, new fields would be started, once more would we see a constant flow of fresh capital and people coming to our land of promise. Not only our mineral but our agricultural and pastoral resources would receive such an impetus that our railways, our shipping trade, our manufactories, merchants, tradesmen, in fact all classes and all industries, would derive immense benefit, and Queensland deserve the name of the most prosperous of the Australian group. I hope, gentlemen, that my remarks will not be considered tedious nor too wide of the main subject; but I feel that it is necessary to generalise to a certain extent upon the position of that main subject in its relation to the prospects and the present position of Queensland, which, as a field for investment—especially mining investment—is attracting great attention at home, and for very strong reasons, to show some of which, and to prove the immense importance of the gold-mining interests of this colony, I have collected the following facts, partly from official announcements and other reliable resources, the rest from material kindly lent me by Mr. Andrew M. Goodwin and forwarded to him by our Agent-General. The population of Queensland at the date of separation from New South Wales in 1859 was but 23,000; its present population is 379,000. When Gympie first started Maryborough had about 2,000 inhabitants; greatly helped by Gympie, it now numbers over 11,000; while the leading goldfields of the colony now stand within municipal boundaries as follows:—Gympie 9,000, Charters Towers 4,000, Ravenswood 1,500, Cloncurry 900, and we can safely allow 12,000 for all other fields; and we find that one-twelfth of the population is supported by gold-mining, and, directly or indirectly, it largely contributes to the welfare of all pursuits and all classes in the colony. Having shown approximately the population of the goldfields, I will now endeavour to make plain the results obtained from them, and to which I would draw your particular attention."

This, Mr. Speaker, is a return of the quartz crushed in the different colonies in 1884. I have no reliable statistics since that, but these, I believe, are tolerably correct:—

"In 1884.			
Quartz crushed.	Gold obtained.	Average per ton.	
Tons.	Oz.	Oz.	dwt. gr.
Queensland ... 148,552	259,254	1	14 21
Victoria ... 876,691	432,997	0	9 21
New South Wales ... 52,759	32,979	0	14 10
New Zealand ... 98,460	84,184	0	17 12

Thus we find that our gold reefs yield per ton of quartz nearly four times as much as those of Victoria, almost two and a-half times those of New South Wales, and double the New Zealand return—in fact, such an average as we get here has never been obtained by any other country in the world; most of this, if not quite all, is what is known as free gold; if we could add to our returns that which is locked up in refractory ore, our annual output would be far more astounding. The annual yield from our mineral resources now is £1,400,000, equal to that of New Zealand with nearly double our population; and estimating the gold obtained on the basis of population, there is no colony in the British Empire can compare with Queensland. There stands now in the Queensland Court of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, a trophy representing the gold obtained in Queensland since the first discovery of the metal here in 1861, after separation from New South Wales. This trophy is 21 ft. high, its cubic contents are 332 ft., and it represents a solid mass of gold containing 4,846,560 oz., valued at £17,623,234, giving a general average to the ton of 1 oz. 10 dwt. 16 gr.—said to be the highest average known. Now, when we consider that the gold-mining industry of the colony has produced (without calculating the enormous indirect benefits derived from it) within £3,200,000 of the total debt of Queensland, and at least one-twelfth of its whole population live by gold-mining, surely such an industry is deserving of direct assistance from the Government, especially when beyond a doubt money so spent will return a more certain and better interest than any public work that can be undertaken. It may be said that such works should be carried out by private enterprise, but we might with consistency apply the same argument to railways and many other works which are established to assist in developing the resources of a country—if it is worth our while to build railways with Government money it must be advisable to spend a little more in another direction to promote enterprise and settlement to such an extent as to make profitable railways that otherwise cannot pay for years to come. Another great argument in favour of the Government building such works is that the sender of ore would not only save largely in the cost of carriage and treatment, but that he would be sure of a *bona fide* return from his product, which is not always the case in regard to private works. He thanked them for their attention, and trusted he had put the motion before them in such a manner as to ensure their hearty support. The subject was a most important one, and in consideration of the present unsatisfactory state of the colony's finances it would be wise of the Government to start works of this kind as a means of largely developing the mining industry."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not think I could put the case much plainer before the House than by reading that paper, which has been compiled by Mr. D. F. Johnston, of Kolan Station. That gentleman, I know, went to considerable trouble, and some expense, to be able to compile that paper in its present form, and I think it is shown pretty plainly there that it is desirable, as I believe every member of the House will admit, that something should be done by the Government to assist in developing those mines which working men are not able to undertake for want of capital.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ADAMS: I do not know whether my remarks are tedious or not, that hon. members should stand outside the bar of the House in conversation. I can hardly hear myself speaking. It is rather discourteous, if nothing else, that hon. gentlemen should stand outside the bar conversing in that manner. One thing that must be considered, sir, is that in developing mines of this description we are not only bringing capital into the country, but we are in reality creating employment, not only for men but for the railways that we have already built at considerable expense. I think that ought to be taken into consideration; I do not say it in regard to my own district only, but as applying to the whole colony. Our resources have not been half developed yet. Many mines will be opened up yet that have never been thought of. I could point to parts of the colony that I rode over thirty-four years ago that have since turned out

rich in minerals. Although it is only of comparatively recent date that valuable deposits have been found there, yet it was known for years that reefs existed, but they could not be developed for want of capital. It is the same in many other parts of the colony. Reefs are known to exist, but they cannot be developed for the simple reason that those who know where they are are not in a position to do so for want of capital, and are not disposed to sell for whatever capitalists like to give for them. Therefore, it matters not in what portion of the colony these works are erected, so that they are erected somewhere on the seaboard where the material is easy at hand—that is to say, where the ores can be conveyed easily and profitably, and there is a supply of coal for the furnaces necessary to conduct the manipulation. As far as my own district of Mulgrave is concerned—I daresay other members can speak for themselves as to the resources of their districts—I know that coal can be found in it, and that very near to water carriage. I also know that a gentleman in Brisbane has put down no less than four bores and found payable coal within six miles of Bundaberg, and he is only awaiting the completion of the railway and the erection of the bridge across the Burnett—which the Government have not positively refused, but have put off to time indefinite—to develop those mines. Now, taking those things into consideration, I think that I have shown pretty plainly that it is desirable that the Government should establish and assist the development of these works. During last session, in my remarks upon the Mungarr Railway, I read an extract from one of the local papers in which it is stated:—

"We learn from an outside source that the Reid's Creek Gold-mining Company intend entering into extensive operations with respect to the valuable property they are now working by ordinary means. The results of the past twelve months are considered by the proprietary as highly satisfactory. During that time 300 tons of ore, of an assay value of 2,000 oz. of gold, have been sent away to dealers in refractory ores."

These had to be sent to Germany or England to be manipulated.

"The difficulty, however, is that it is not possible to obtain assay value from the purchasers, and consequently the actual returns are always sent to the raisers. This company, being firmly convinced of the undoubted value of the mine, intend to arrange for the introduction and erection of suitable works for the treatment of the stone, and we understand Captain Bennett leaves for Europe shortly to investigate the various methods of treatment there, and choose an effective plant for Reid's Creek."

Therefore you see that even here there were 300 tons of ore obtained at Reid's Creek out of one mine only. But there are other mines at Reid's Creek, and there are also other parts of the district which produce ores of this description. I know myself of a place called Mount Webster, where there are two mountains of ore. I visited the district some few months ago and saw what the mines contained. They had been worked for three or four months by men who were trying to develop them, and finding that they had no capital to test the ores, I said I would select some myself from three separate places in the mine and get them assayed in Brisbane. I did select the ore, and I will now give the House the assay value. Mr. Staiger says:—

"On opening the box I found that the contents consisted of three different samples, marked Nos. 1, 2, and 3. No. 1 is composed of a greenish, probably hornblende, rock, highly interspersed with iron and copper pyrites, also small quantities of galena and blackjack. There was also a small quantity of arsenic, as arsenical pyrites were present. I crushed the half of every piece of No. 1, and made an analysis of it. I found that it contained 6·3 per cent. of metallic copper, and assayed 2 oz. 5 dwt. of free gold and 10 dwt. of silver to the ton. No. 2 is oxide of iron, with oxide and

carbonate of copper. It yielded, per ton, 1 oz. 18 dwt. of gold and traces of silver. No. 3 was pyrites with a good deal of specular iron ore (oxide of iron). It gave 4·8 per cent. of metallic copper, 3 oz. 2 dwt. of fine gold, and 6 dwt. of silver to the ton. To treat this class of ore successfully it will be necessary to resort to roasting the pyrites after being concentrated or liberated from the gangue. The further treatment of the roasted ore depends on the facilities afforded by the locality. Chlorination is decidedly very good; the only objection is the chemicals, especially the transport of acid to the mine. It is true the roasting of the pyrites could be made to produce the necessary acid on the spot, but this requires scientific skill, and it is expensive, but can be overcome by an interested, intelligent party being broken in by a competent person. Another way is to save the gold by long trituration of the roasted pyrites with mercury in adapted Wheeler's pans with copper bottoms. This method saves nearly all the gold and can be executed by any person, provided he is careful and steady."

Now, there is plain proof that the men who are working at the mine cannot go on with the work, because they have no capital. I might mention that only a few miles away there is another mountain, the ores from which were sent to Mr. Staiger, and he got an assay of 6 oz. to the ton. There are also other places around that district which I am perfectly satisfied will produce ore which will assay even more than that, and I say it is a great pity that we are obliged to send these ores out of the country, and that we should help to support other nations rather than our own. It would be better for the country even if we had to pay £5 a ton extra for the treatment of the ores. These things, I maintain, should be a great factor in the support of our railways, and, moreover, all classes of the community are interested in the development of our mining resources. Carters, timber-getters, coal-miners, and every class must be interested, inasmuch as employment will be provided for them. Therefore I say that even in the present state of the finances I think the Government should see their way to erect these works. It is not a speculation, as I have proved from the quotations I have read; it is a certainty. It is a certainty that these works will pay from the start. The Government has laid out £50,000 in the erection of central sugar-mills, and I think these works would be of far more value not only to the colony but to the Government itself. In Germany they are trying to get everything they possibly can for their own country; and why should we blame them? I think we should rather blame ourselves for sending these ores out of the country instead of treating them ourselves. I think we should endeavour to do what we can for the maintenance of our own people as they come here, and do all we can for the benefit of the country generally. As I said at the outset of my remarks, I certainly should have preferred to have seen this question more ably dealt with by some other hon. member; but of this I am certain, that if the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government cannot give me his support, I shall at least have his sympathy, and I hope that I shall have more than his sympathy. I hope I shall have his support, and I can only say that, even in the present state of the finances, if such works as I have described this afternoon are erected, Queensland will come to the front and be more prosperous than it has been hitherto. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—This subject was first suggested to me some time ago by a friend of mine who had considerable knowledge and experience on the subject of smelting ores. He suggested to me that it might be desirable, in view of the difficulty and expense of treating some of these refractory ores—not only auriferous, but other ores—that the Government should follow the example of the German Government, and establish works similar to theirs. Subsequently the matter was raised formally by

a communication from the Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce, to which the hon. member has referred. I then undertook to obtain what information I could with respect to the great works in Germany. I got a good deal of information—which I regret I have not by me just now—but that information was not so satisfactory as I anticipated it would be. I was unable to get any information that would enable me to come to a definite conclusion as to whether it was practicable to start works on the same basis here at all. They have, in the German works, very elaborate arrangements, and they buy the ore according to an assay made of it, and pay for it as per unit, according to the amount of the different metals contained in it. I am fully sensible of the great importance of treating sulphide ores, but I am afraid that no satisfactory system is yet known of dealing with them. If the auriferous ores at Ravenswood could all be dealt with, and all the gold taken out of them, it would be one of the most valuable fields in the colony. Various systems have been tried there, and each with great hopes of success, but up to the present none have been entirely successful or even fairly successful.

Mr. NORTON: They were miscondacted.

The PREMIER: Unfortunately something of that kind always seems to happen. I have often said the man who can discover a practicable method of treating sulphide ores in Queensland will make an enormous fortune. A great many people have tried their hands at it without success.

Mr. NORTON: They are treated now in my district.

The PREMIER: Are they successful?

Mr. NORTON: Yes.

The PREMIER: I am very glad to hear it. I do not think auriferous ores are the only ores that might be advantageously treated, and I will say at once that I believe it would be a very good investment on the part of a Government to establish Government works on the principle of works of the German Government at Freiburg, if it can be shown to be at all practicable here. I believe some people think the Government have no right to interfere in matters of this kind, but I do not think any hard-and-fast rule should be laid down as to what the Government should or should not undertake, and I should be very glad indeed if it could be shown to be practicable to undertake the establishment of works of this kind. At the present time there is no use disguising the fact that it is not practicable. We have not got the £50,000 for the purpose. Unless we are prepared to raise considerable contributions for such purposes out of our own pockets, we have no money to be expended upon schemes of this kind. I believe myself it would be for the advantage of the country if we did raise a good deal more money than we do, to have it available for many purposes we are now unable to engage in. Things being as they are, however, and as we certainly have not got the £50,000 mentioned in the resolution, the Government would certainly not be justified in bringing down such a proposal upon the Supplementary Estimates. So that in this matter I can only give the hon. member my sympathy and not my support, only hoping that before very long it will be practicable to carry out some such scheme, because I quite agree with the hon. member as to the great advantage of the establishment of works of this kind.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I am perfectly certain sympathy will not smelt those ores, and therefore the Premier's speech goes for very little. I do not altogether agree with what has fallen from the hon. member for Mulgrave, or the Premier, on this subject. It

has not been made at all clear to me that, even supposing the Government had the £50,000, they would be justified in applying it to this purpose. My own impression is that if there is so much in this business as the mover of the resolution says there is, it would be readily taken up by private enterprise. As intimated by the hon. member for Port Curtis, a successful mode of dealing with those ores exists at present in the district which he represents. While quite sympathising with the hon. member for Mulgrave, I think that even if we had the £50,000 to make use of, in the present state of affairs we could put it to a better purpose. For any hon. member to imagine that he can extract £50,000 out of the Treasury in the present state of our finances is too much of a joke, and an hon. member making applications of this sort at present is like a man drawing a bucket out of a well and growing old without bringing anything up. There is not the least use in members putting motions of this sort on the paper, no matter how good what they propose may be. If the finances of the colony had been properly administered by the Government I believe we should have had very large sums of money to devote—I do not say to matters of this kind, though it could then be considered—but to matters of acknowledged public benefit. If it had not been for the gross mismanagement of the finances of the colony we should not have had such a speech as the Premier has just delivered, and that is a matter of more importance to the country than this application for £50,000 for reducing refractory ores. I mean to say that was a lamentable statement of the Premier, "It is no use hon. members asking for money as the Government have got none to give them." And whenever he makes that statement he looks across at the Opposition as if to say, "And this is all your fault."

The PREMIER: How do I look when I look like that?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Just as the hon. gentleman looks now—evidently well pleased with himself. I hope this will be remembered, that it is owing to the reckless extravagance by the Government of the funds at their disposal that all an hon. member can extract from them in support of a scheme which he believes to be a good one is their sympathy.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I should have liked to hear what the Minister for Works has to say on the question, and I hope we shall hear something from him before the matter drops. He is the gentleman in charge of the department more immediately concerned than that of which the Premier has charge. The Premier has simply to find the money, while the hon. gentleman at the head of the Mines Department would have to find—as I am told by an hon. member behind me—the brains to spend it. I certainly can give my sympathy with the intentions of the hon. member for Mulgrave, but even if I were a member of a Government with plenty of money to spend, I should think twice before spending it in this direction. It is all very well to talk about the example of Germany. The German Government is a very different Government from ours.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Thank God!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Another thing, Germany is full of able scientists, and it has taken them ages in experimenting on refractory ores to arrive at the present state of perfection in that country; and we are scarcely prepared to spend the amount of money necessary, and run the risk of mismanagement under our system of government in attempting to do

what has been done in Germany. The German Government is a very paternal Government; ours, I hope, will never be a paternal Government.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: A maternal Government.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Not even a maternal Government. I hope we shall allow private enterprise to carry out such projects as this. It would be a very risky thing for us to spend £50,000 on a project of this kind, and find after all that we had wasted every penny of the money. There have been several instances of that sort of thing; and I know of one instance in which more than £50,000 was spent in trying to deal with refractory ores, and the matter is now as far from being brought to a satisfactory conclusion as it was before the company was formed. Then, again, we have an example of which we have heard very little lately—that is, the £50,000 voted for an experiment with central sugar-mills. One of the objects of that expenditure was to prove the possibility and the capability of people of European extraction, growing and manufacturing sugar, such as would receive a fair price in either the European or Australian market. What has become of that expenditure? Is the sugar being manufactured by European labour solely?

Mr. BLACK: Yes, up to the present time.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I have been informed by a resident of the Mackay district that the cane is being grown by Polynesian labour; and if that is so, the £50,000 has been entirely thrown away. I believe in the central mill system, but I do not believe in expending £50,000 on an experiment to prove that Europeans can grow and manufacture sugar profitably, when I am informed that the thing is not being done by Europeans.

Mr. BLACK: The mills are not at work yet.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No doubt the mills are not at work, but the cane is being grown, and I am informed that it is being grown by Polynesian labour. If such is the case our money has been entirely thrown away, and I am afraid that in experimenting on a grand scale, requiring the expenditure of many thousands of pounds—as this motion would require—we should probably be wasting our money in the same way, if not in a worse way. I think the intentions of the hon. member for Mulgrave are good, and that he wishes to do his best for the country, but my opinion of what is best for the country is that such experiments should be left to private enterprise, and if the ores are as profitable as we are led to believe, they will certainly be taken up by capitalists, and carried out to a successful issue.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I take the opportunity of referring to a subject of general interest—namely, the position of the vote for central sugar-mills, referred to just now by the hon. member for Townsville. As hon. members know, £50,000 was voted by Parliament to try an experiment, which, if successful, will be of great advantage to the colony—namely, to prove whether European labour is suitable for the successful production of sugar, commercially speaking; and whether it can successfully be produced without the assistance of coloured labour. The House considered it worth while to make the experiment, and I have been watching it with a great deal of interest; and no one will be more pleased than I to find that the result of the experiment is successful. The money voted, however, is only in course of expenditure, and I think it is hardly right that the experiment should be subjected to criticism before it has had a fair trial. Two mills are being erected

in the Mackay district, involving an expenditure of something like £20,000 each, for the repayment of which certain farmers have given ample security in the shape of all the land they possess; and that security has been accepted by the Government as sufficient. Those mills will not be at work till some time next year, and then I have no doubt that hon. members will be very anxious to know whether the terms of the contract are being carried out. I think it is quite likely that in the case of one of the mills the amount of cane grown immediately round the mill by the shareholders of the mill may prove insufficient to keep the mill going.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Cane grown by kanakas?

Mr. BLACK: No; by white labour. And in that case, in order to meet their liabilities to the Government, they may be under the necessity of purchasing cane. But, as a railway goes right up to the mill, and cane may be bought from outside farmers living at a distance of ten or twelve miles from the mill, it is quite possible that such cane may not be grown entirely by European labour. I think the House has no reason to be dissatisfied with the experiment so far as it has gone. It is being fairly and honestly tried, and the farmers are acting in a *bonâ fide* manner; and if the experiment turns out unsuccessful it will be a matter of regret, not only for this House, but also for the whole colony.

At 7 o'clock,

The SPEAKER said: In accordance with the sessional order, the private business which has been under discussion now, stands adjourned until after the consideration of Government business.

REFRESHMENT ROOMS COMMITTEE.

Mr. BLACK brought up the report of the Joint Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms Committee, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

Mr. FRASER brought up, on behalf of the Chairman, the third report of the Printing Committee, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

THE IMMIGRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL OF 1887.

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 this Bill.

Clause 1—"Construction and short title"—put and passed.

On clause 2, as follows:—

"The amounts payable to the Agent-General in respect of assisted passages shall be those set forth in Schedule G to this Act, instead of those set forth in Schedule A to the principal Act. And the said Schedule A is hereby repealed."

Mr. BLACK said he thought it was a matter for the Committee to consider as to whether the increase from £2 to £3 for males, and from £1 to £4 for females, was not too great in the payments for assisted passages.

The PREMIER: That is for nominated passages.

Mr. BLACK said clause 2 stated that the amounts payable for assisted passages were those set forth in Schedule G in the Bill, instead of those contained in Schedule A in the principal Act.

The PREMIER: They are double the former rates.

Mr. BLACK said they were quadruple.

The PREMIER: No, not for assisted immigrants; the hon. member is mixing up assisted and nominated.

Mr. BLACK asked what the amounts were under the original Act for assisted passages?

The PREMIER said they were £2 for males and £1 for females under twelve years of age; between twelve and forty, males £4, females, £2; between forty and fifty-five, both sexes, £3; and over fifty-five, both sexes, £10.

Mr. BLACK said: At all events, the question of increasing the rates for assisted or nominated passages was a matter for that Committee to consider. He was inclined to think that if those two schedules passed in their present shape they might say that the immigration of the colony was virtually suspended.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

Mr. BLACK said the Agent-General had received instructions not to send out any free immigrants, and he was very much inclined to think that the people of the colony who had been availing themselves of the nominated system lately would not be prepared to pay, and could not pay the sums now proposed. It was a matter for consideration whether it was necessary to stop immigration altogether. If they stopped immigration, with their increased loan expenditure, he did not know how the increased interest on loan was going to be met unless by additional taxation on the people already in the colony. They had been depending all along upon a steady stream of immigrants settling in the country to provide, to a great extent, for the increase of revenue necessary to meet their additional loan expenditure, and it was a serious matter for the Committee to consider whether, in the event of that Bill passing in its present shape, they were not virtually stopping immigration, with the exception, of course, of those whose nomination fees had already been paid.

The PREMIER said he thought there could be no question at all as to the necessity for an alteration in regard to assisted passages. As he had pointed out last evening, at the present time—and he thought rightly—no assisted passages were granted at all. The system had fallen out of use altogether at the present rates; but it was a form of immigration which might be resumed with advantage. It was not likely to go on at existing rates at all.

Mr. NORTON said it was really better for the colony to get assisted immigrants who paid £2 for their passages than free immigrants who paid nothing at all. If the selection were properly made at home, it would be better to have them than absolutely free immigrants. So long as the colony could get good immigrants, it was better to get those who could pay even a small part of the passage money than those who paid nothing at all. If a restriction was to be imposed, it would be better to impose the restriction on the free immigrants, and insist upon care being exercised in every case so as to prevent that class of people coming out that was not wanted. If people who were nominated belonged to the country, and would settle on the land, or were single women, well and good, but the colony had no right to bring them out at a lower cost than the others.

The Hon. G. THORN said he held somewhat the same views on the matter as the hon. member for Mackay. He thought it would be a great mistake to stop immigration, and he believed the Bill would stop it unless the Minister for Lands got a great many people out under his land-order system, and then what were they to do with that land-order system in operation and no land to go on?

He did not know what provision the Minister for Lands was making for those whom he was going to bring out under his land-order system; he did not know where there was any land open in the colony, unless the whole land policy of the country was to be reversed. They were talking of reversing the land policy in New South Wales, and that would be the way to profit here by assisted immigration. If there was a good Land Act that would be the best immigration Act. He was inclined to think that the proposed rates were too high; they would get no one to come from the old country at those rates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said that no doubt very great evils had arisen under the assisted immigration regulations, as they had frequently been taken advantage of by people in England to get rid of the most unsatisfactory people in their localities. People who were a burden to their own parish—who had been born and bred paupers, and were of such a character that they would never be anything but paupers—were foisted on immigration agents and inspectors and sent out here, so that they would be no more trouble to those who had had to provide for them all their lives. He thought that, by adding something to the contribution those people had to make towards the passage money, it would tend to stop those evils. Did the hon. member for Fassifern suppose that men brought out in that way were the men who would settle on the land? Did he think the change in the land laws which he advocated would induce those people to settle on the land—selling it by auction? It would destroy the chance of those who were likely to settle on the land if they were to sell it by auction or get rid of it in any way like that. He did not want to see a stop put to nominated passages, because persons brought out in that way frequently settled on the land. They often had friends and relations here who put them in the way of settling, and assisted them, not only with advice but with money, and he believed they were a very valuable class. As to assisted immigrants, there was great danger in allowing them to come out at too low a rate.

The HON. G. THORN said he had said nothing about auction, and he was not an advocate of auction sales of land, though he thought a little might be sold in that way. What he thought was that facilities should be given to people from the old country and the other colonies to take up land, but all the best land in the colony was locked up at the present time in thirty years' leases and fifteen and ten years' leases—all the lands of the colony that were fit for settlement. The late Minister for Lands would not dare to contradict that. He (Mr. Thorn) knew where all the good land of the colony was, and he repeated that none of it was open for selection. That was one of the reasons why the colony was in its present state of indebtedness. The Land Act itself had thrown the colony back five years, and the maladministration of the Land Act by the present Minister for Works had thrown it back another five years.

The PREMIER: Say fifteen.

The HON. G. THORN said he had no hesitation in saying that recent land legislation had thrown the colony back ten years. It was high time the land policy of the colony was reversed. What did they see in New South Wales? One of the first acts of the new session of Parliament there was to reverse their land policy in order to afford facilities to agriculturists to take up land; and that was being taken in hand by Mr. Garrett, one of the ablest men in New South Wales. If that was to be done in New South Wales, why should it not be also done in Queensland?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would tell the Committee why there was so little available land open for agricultural settlement in Queensland. It was owing to people like the hon. member for Fassifern and his family and others like them who were here in the early days, and who took advantage of the Land Acts of 1868 and 1876 to get possession of the choicest lands of the country at a nominal rate, in order to prevent settlement. Nor were there any means of making such lands available for settlement until the Government put a heavy land tax upon them. Holders of those lands were grazing stock upon them, which were not paying them 2½ per cent. on the price the land cost them, but meantime they were lying in wait for the increased values which would by-and-by recoup them. There were countless thousands of acres of land in the colony open for selection, but the vast portion of it was beyond the reach of the class of settlers under discussion, inasmuch as it was too far away from markets. It was the large land-owners who had thrown the country back, and the hon. member for Fassifern was one of them.

Mr. BLACK said it might be both interesting and useful if they diverted the discussion on immigration to the land question; and as the matter had been referred to he would ask the hon. gentleman how it was that, in direct opposition to all his formerly expressed principles, he had within the last week or ten days sold no less than £20,000 worth of land at Cairns and Townsville—land which was not sold to be settled upon but for purely speculative purposes? The hon. gentleman had always hitherto expressed himself in the most uncompromising terms against any selling of land.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Was this country land or town land?

Mr. NORTON: The hon. gentleman invents towns for the sake of selling land.

Mr. BLACK asked if the Premier could inform the Committee how many land-orders had been issued to immigrants since the passing of the Act; how many had been registered as having been issued by the Agent-General?

The PREMIER said he knew that a considerable number of warrants came out by every mail, but he could not state the exact number.

Mr. ADAMS said that, as the Minister for Works had introduced the administration of the Land Act, it was only right that other members should have an opportunity of saying something on that question.

Mr. MURPHY: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Fraser. Can the Land Act be discussed on the motion at present before the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: The question before us is the 2nd section of a Bill to amend the Immigration Act. My attention having been called to fact that the subject of the Land Act has been introduced, I am bound to say that the discussion on it is irregular.

Mr. ADAMS said the objection ought to have been raised sooner.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that upon the land policy of the colony hinged almost entirely their immigration system. He was therefore inclined to differ from the Chairman's ruling. So intimately were the two subjects connected, that one could not be discussed without constant reference to the other.

Mr. NORTON said he agreed with the Chairman's ruling that they were discussing the 2nd clause of the Bill, but as the Bill related to immigration, it was surely open to hon. members to discuss the question whether assisted immigrants had opportunities of settling on the land.

Mr. ADAMS said he was quite willing to leave the Land Act where it was, more especially as the Minister for Works had simply been touting to the electors by giving them some information about the land tax. The hon. gentleman said the hon. member for Fassifern and his relatives had picked the eyes out of the country for their own benefit. If they had had the chance of doing that, he (Mr. Adams) did not blame them. But the land tax would not touch those gentlemen who had large estates a considerable distance away from cities or towns. They would be only taxed at the rate of 1d. in the £1, and if a man had 500 acres of land valued at £1 an acre, he would be able to hold it as long as he liked, or until it became more valuable, without being taxed. Whereas if a man—

Mr. W. BROOKES : I rise to a point of order. I would like you, Mr. Fraser, to read the marginal note attached to the clause under discussion.

Mr. MOREHEAD : That is not a point of order.

Mr. W. BROOKES : Well then, Mr. Fraser, I submit that the hon. member for Mulgrave is not discussing the question before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member for Mulgrave is certainly not discussing the question before the Committee.

Mr. ADAMS said it seemed strange that hon. members on his side were not allowed to talk about the land tax, after it had been introduced by hon. members on the other side; but no doubt the subject, coming from the Opposition, would be very disagreeable to the Government. Coming to the section itself, he would like to know the difference between an assisted passenger and a nominated passenger. According to his view, nominated passengers were assisted passengers. They had friends who had been settled in the colony for a considerable time, and when they sent home for them, asking the State to assist in paying the cost of the passage, they generally placed them on the land. He had been in the colony since 1853, had resided principally in the country districts and had seen how those Acts had worked, and he could assure hon. members that those persons who sent for their friends generally sent for them to place them on the soil of the country, whereas those who came out from the old country free had not sufficient means to go on the lands for a considerable time. It was impossible for persons to settle on the land at the present time, because it was not open to selection. But as they were not to trespass on the land question, he should say no more about that. For the reasons he had stated he thought it would be very unwise for them to step in right away and raise the rates from £2 to £8. If they were to have immigration at all he thought the schedule should remain as it stood in the principal Act. If, on the other hand, they were not to have immigration, by all means put on the extra amount, but the present was not the time to stop immigration. The immigrants sent out by the lecturers—by Mr. Randall—had turned out an excellent class, and he was very glad to see them coming to the colony. In the district he had the honour to represent, they had each and every one, without exception, turned out well; and some who came out two and a-half years ago had already sent home for their friends. That showed what they thought of the country. He thought the Government were to be congratulated upon having such an excellent officer, who was doing good work by sending out such a desirable class of immigrants. At the same time he thought it was unwise to raise the rates in the schedule to £8, and if the question went to a division he should oppose it.

The Hon. G. THORN said the Minister for Works had stated that he (Mr. Thorn) was a large landholder.

Mr. ADAMS rose to a point of order. He had not been allowed to discuss the land question, and therefore he thought no other hon. member should be allowed to do so.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member for Fassifern was simply replying to a remark made by the Minister for Works, and was quite entitled to do so.

The Hon. G. THORN said he could tell the Minister for Works that he (Mr. Thorn) was not a large landholder. Under the Acts of 1868 and 1876 he did not avail himself of half the land he might have taken up. He did not think he had taken up a twentieth part of what he might have taken up under those Acts. He was heartily opposed to the Bill. It was quite unnecessary, because on the reversal of the present land policy of the Government they would have any number of immigrants pouring into the country. Until that reversal took place no doubt the Bill was necessary. It was quite in keeping with the policy of the Government—locking up the lands, bringing no more people to the colony, and making the few who were in it pay all the taxes. If the Bill passed he was quite sure it would be quickly repealed when the land policy of the Government was reversed, as he hoped it would be at the next general election, when he hoped there would be no side issues, no question of a land tax, or anything else, in order to send into the House voting machines.

The PREMIER said it would be more to the credit of the hon. member for Fassifern if he studied a subject before talking about it. He had told them first of all that there was no land open to selection, and that the only way to get plenty of people without any trouble at all—the only way of meeting the difficulty—was to adopt the system of sale of land by auction.

The Hon. G. THORN : I did not.

The PREMIER : The hon. member did. The fact was he talked so fast that he did not know what he said.

The Hon. G. THORN : I never mentioned it.

The PREMIER said the hon. member might not have said it just then, but he had said it several times before. When he talked about the reversal of the land policy of the Government, he meant doing away with the present unprecedentedly easy method of getting land and having sales of land by auction; and then having sold all the lands by auction there would be plenty to select from, which there was not now, and then immigrants would pour into the country, and the rates might be raised. That was the kind of argument the hon. member chose to make use of. If he was opposed to the Bill, why did he not vote against the second reading? They were in committee now to consider the details of the measure. One hon. member had asked what was the difference between assisted and nominated immigrants. Assisted immigrants was a familiar designation that had been in use for the last twenty-five years almost. Assistance was given by the Agent-General in England to persons who appeared to be suitable persons to be assisted out to the colony, but, as he (the Premier) pointed out last night, part of the system had fallen into disuse for two reasons. First, because the amount the passenger contributed was too small, and secondly, because, to desirable people who wanted to come out, it appeared too small—they did not care to ask for what they looked upon as pauper passages. With respect to nominated immigrants, that was a system by which persons resident in the colony could nominate their

friends or relatives in Europe to come out here, and that system had been very much used, so much so that about 2,000 persons had accumulated, in England, at the beginning of the year, who were entitled to passages, and for whom special accommodation had to be provided. The demand for passages for that class of immigrants was becoming so great that the Government decided they might fairly ask the nominors to contribute a larger sum than had hitherto been paid. The attractions of the colony were great, and although they were a most valuable class of immigrants, it was thought that the nominors should be called upon to contribute a larger sum to the cost of their introduction. He hoped hon. members would discuss the real question.

Mr. DICKSON said he thought a significance had been attached to the remarks of the hon. member for Fassifern which they did not bear to many hon. members who had heard them. Significance was attached by the Premier and the Minister for Works to the fact that the hon. member advocated sale of land by auction, and they wished to show their abhorrence of such a dreadful system by referring to his remarks in the way they had done. He (Mr. Dickson) had supported the Bill, and intended to support it, on its own merits, because in his opinion the time had arrived when the scale of immigration charges might very fairly be revised. The colony had now arrived at such a condition of development that those who intended to make it their home might very reasonably be asked to pay a larger sum to come to it than heretofore. He believed abuses had crept into the nominated system, by the scale being fixed at such a low rate; and as outstanding obligations in connection with that system would take a long time to be discharged, it was therefore undesirable that those obligations should be increased at a loss to the Treasury. He preferred consequently to see the rate increased to those people who came here in the future. But he objected to the statements made by the Premier and Minister for Works, that people would not settle on the lands of the colony if they were allowed to purchase freeholds at auction.

The PREMIER: I did not say so.

Mr. DICKSON: The hon. gentleman did not say so, but the remarks of the hon. the Minister for Works were to the effect that it was only under the leasing clauses of the Land Act of 1884 that anything like extensive settlement on the land could be effected. He (Mr. Dickson) expressed his entire dissent from that view of the case, because he contended that immigrants coming to the country should be allowed an opportunity, not only to select under the leasing provisions of the Act of 1884, but that opportunities should also be afforded them to secure freeholds upon deferred payments. They should endeavour to encourage settlement by both those means. He did not approve of the Premier and the Minister for Works confining themselves to such a narrow interpretation of the Land Act as to say that settlement could take place under the leasing clauses solely. He did not think the hon. member for Fassifern's remarks ought to have been so ungenerously interpreted, because, as he (Mr. Dickson) had already stated, he believed the greatest factor in settlement would be a judicious and liberal interpretation of the Act of 1884, in regard to both its leasehold and freehold clauses.

Mr. SALKELD said most members of the Committee would agree that it was desirable to make an alteration in the rates both for assisted and nominated passengers. He was not against the proposal, but he hoped the Government would see their way to reduce the charge in the case of

nominated immigrants. He was aware that the system had been abused by persons in the other colonies getting people here to nominate their friends with the intention of bringing them to another colony. A great many persons had been brought out in that way, and that accounted for the statements made by the newspapers about the number of new arrivals going away to the other colonies; and if the payment were doubled it would prevent them to a certain extent. As far as assisted passages were concerned, he thought the increase was very necessary.

Mr. NORTON said he would ask the Premier if he intended to continue free immigration?

The PREMIER: Yes; of the present kind.

Mr. NORTON said the Agent-General had to pass both free and assisted immigrants, and if free immigrants would pay something towards their passages they should be allowed to do so. The hon. gentleman said just now that some were desirous of paying part of their passage money, but did not like to pay so small a sum, but it seemed to him desirable that if they were willing to pay part of the expense of their passage money they ought to be allowed to do so. The country ought to get as much out of them as possible, but if the increase was made too great the consequence might be that many who might otherwise pay would not pay but come out as free immigrants.

The PREMIER said free immigrants were those who came direct to the colony without paying any money. They contributed nothing. The people who would come as assisted passengers were a different class altogether. He thought he had said that during the last two years only six assisted passengers had come out. The system had fallen entirely out of use. The Agent-General had not thought right to continue that system, considering the large number of people who wanted to come out under the nominated system, or free system. So far as that was concerned the hon. member might be quite at ease. The nominated system was quite different from the assisted system.

Mr. NORTON said he only referred to the matter to initiate discussion. He did not attach any importance to the assisted immigrant system, but he did to the nominated system.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 3, as follows:—

"The amounts payable by persons desiring to provide a passage to the colony for a friend or relative in Europe under the provisions of the ninth section of the principal Act shall be those set forth in Schedule II to this Act, instead of those set forth in Schedule D to the principal Act. And the said Schedule D is hereby repealed."

The PREMIER said, passing the clause simply affirmed the principle that the rates should be increased. The amount could very properly be discussed under the schedule.

Mr. CHUBB said he would like to ask the Chief Secretary if he had considered the effect of clause 11 of the principal Act in connection with that clause 3. As the law stood at present under clause 9 of the principal Act any person in Queensland requiring a passage for a relative or friend in Europe had to apply to the immigration agent, and had to pay the money required by the schedule for the nomination of that friend; but under clause 11 of the Act it was provided that the immigration agent might issue to applicants free passage warrants on account of friends or relatives on the continent of Europe. But by the Bill it was proposed to double the amount to be paid by nominated passengers. That was to say they were putting a heavier burden on persons nominated here, and handicapping them in favour of Continental

emigrants. If they were going to double the amount on persons nominated here, they ought to make some change in the 11th section, in regard to persons brought over from the continent of Europe.

The PREMIER said he had considered the matter. If clause 3 passed, he did not think any Government would use the powers of the 11th section. He did not think they ought to, or, if it was used, the law should be amended so as to provide for a deposit equivalent to the amount prescribed in the schedule, less the cost of a passage from the Continent to England. The clause had always been considered discretionary.

Mr. CHUBB said there was this to be said, that under the 9th section only agricultural people might come out, but under the 11th section anyone might come.

The PREMIER: No; under the 9th anyone may come.

Mr. CHUBB said there was no limitation under the 11th clause.

The PREMIER said only by Order in Council. There was this difference that under the 9th section persons by going to the immigration agent's office and paying the money required by the Act acquired an absolute right to the persons on whose behalf the money was paid to come out, and the Government would be liable to an action if they did not bring them out.

Mr. NORTON: We had better alter that.

The PREMIER said that was altered by the Act of last year, but it never applied to the 11th section.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it applied to the 11th section under the previous Act. Unless the Ministry made a promise to the Committee that they intended to disapprove of that in the future, they should not be allowed to increase the amount of nomination fee required for immigrants from Great Britain and allow Continental immigrants to come in free. The thing was ridiculous.

Mr. SALKELD said he would like to point out that the nominated immigrants were the best immigrants the colony received, and those who gave least trouble to the Government. He had often gone to the immigration depot to see how the work went on, and he found that a very large number of the nominated passengers had gone to their friends within a day or two after their arrival. Their friends came to receive them, and took them away and provided for them. Another reason why that was the best kind of immigration was because it was family immigration. When members of a family settled in the colony family ties induced other members of the family to come and settle around them. He believed one of the principal arguments used in favour of the village settlement scheme, recently discussed, was that it would encourage family immigration and that kind of settlement. He hoped it would, and he hoped that when they got to the schedule the Government would see their way to reduce the proposed rates for nominated passengers by one-half. The amount paid last year by 4,644 nominated immigrants was £6,364, and if they doubled the rates as was proposed, he believed that, while they would not get so large a number of immigrants of that class, it would also result in less loss to the colony.

Mr. CHUBB said he would like to make his point a little clearer. The 9th section of the principal Act only gave the right of nomination of immigrants from Europe to persons who were British subjects; but the 11th

section would allow a person who was not a British subject to nominate a friend who was not a British subject and have him brought out to the colony free. That ought not to be, and the right of nomination ought only to be given to British subjects. At present a Frenchman, a German, or an Austrian resident in the colony, and who had not been naturalised, could go under the 11th section to the immigration agent and say, "I want to bring out my friend from Europe." He had nothing to pay, and he got a free passage given him which he sent home to the friend, and the Agent-General had to allow that man a free passage, though he was not a naturalised British subject either. On the other hand, an Englishman, Irishman, or Scotchman, or a naturalised foreigner who wished to bring out a friend, had to go under the 9th section and get his nomination passed and pay the nomination fee, which according to the schedule in that Bill would be double what it used to be. If they passed the schedule to the Bill providing for the increased payments, they should certainly either repeal the 11th section of the Principal Act or modify it in some material way.

The PREMIER said he was disposed to think that the 11th section ought to be repealed. He did not remember having been asked to sanction a nomination under the 11th section during the time he was in charge of the office.

Mr. CHUBB: Five hundred and twenty-six came out in 1886.

The PREMIER said he did not remember being asked to sanction any by the immigration agent.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he supposed the Minister had given a general approval, under which the immigration agent acted.

The PREMIER: That must be the way in which it was done.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The 11th section should be repealed.

The PREMIER: I think so too.

Mr. NORTON said there had been some discussion about that 3rd clause last night, and it appeared to be the general opinion that the scale should not be raised. He thought also there was room for amendment in the clause and the older class should be altered, as he thought the age stated—fifty-five—was too high.

Mr. MELLOR said every hon. member appeared to be satisfied that the majority of the nominated immigrants were the best immigrants they got, and under the circumstances he thought it best to leave the nominated passengers alone, and make no alteration with respect to them.

The PREMIER said he did not agree with the hon. member. As a matter of fact many of the poorest people who came out were nominated passengers. He read regularly the reports of the despatching officer, and a great many people who came out as nominated passengers were very poor, and of poor physique, and yet they could not be rejected.

Mr. NORTON: Why not?

The PREMIER said it would be very hard to reject them, because a friend in the colony went and paid down the money and got the passage warrant for them, and sent it home, and they had then often to wait six or nine months for a passage. To reject those people at the last moment after they had sold up all their things, and gone down to Blackwall to embark, would be very hard.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It would be cruel.

The PREMIER: Yes; as the hon. member said, it would be a cruel thing to do. It had to be done sometimes; though, when it was done, the Agent-General had usually taken it upon himself to pay the passage of the intending emigrant back to the place from which he came. He thought they ought, in fairness to themselves, to ask a higher sum of money, and he believed they would get it. He recognised the advantage of that system of immigration, but it had been abused. The principal abuse was that persons coming out under that system had gone to the neighbouring colonies as soon as they arrived. Another way in which it had been abused was, that it had been made a trade of in England. Persons there had undertaken to procure nominated passengers, and paid persons in the colony a commission to nominate them. That was stopped a good deal by the Orders in Council, and by requiring the person nominating an immigrant to satisfy the immigration agent that he was personally acquainted with the person whom he nominated. Only that day a case came under his notice. A woman and her husband came from England about the end of last year, and shortly afterwards the husband died. Application was made to the Government to send the woman home again, and inquiries were made as to how they came out. It was found that they were nominated by a well-known Civil servant, who was invited to say what he knew about the woman; but the only explanation he (the Premier) had seen up to the present time—he had called upon the officer in question for a further explanation—was that some lady in England who interested herself in charitable work, especially in emigration, had written to him requesting him to nominate these persons. It was probably a very convenient way of getting rid of them out of the parish in which they resided. That sort of thing had been stopped to a great extent, but still there were great abuses under the nominated system. The matter had been fully considered, and he thought the rates might safely be raised, though there was room for doubting whether the proper amount had been named or not.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had no reason to doubt what the Premier said about the physique of the nominated immigrants coming to the colony, but it seemed very strange that they were inferior to the others. It was a well-known fact that a very large proportion of the immigrants who left Great Britain for the United States and Canada had their passages paid by their friends in America, which was the same as the nominated system here. More than half of the Irish immigrants had their passages paid by their friends in America, and it was very strange that the few coming to Queensland under the same conditions should be so inferior to the other immigrants. There must be something wrong in the working of the system, because those who went to America were grand fellows as far as physique was concerned; at any rate, he could not understand why all the good ones should go to America and all the bad ones come to Queensland, under similar systems.

The PREMIER: They have to pay a good deal more to go to America.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said a little more had to be paid for them than was proposed in the Bill, but steerage passengers were taken to the United States and Canada for 30s. and upwards.

Mr. PALMER said the last report on lunatic asylums showed an increase of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. last year on the number of inmates the year before, and in 1885 the increase was 10 per cent. over the previous year. He did not know whether the increase could be traced to the source suggested

by the explanation given by the Premier; but it was a serious question to consider the source they came from, and to what extent the increase was due to the people who arrived as immigrants.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the people who nominated immigrants should be held responsible for the persons they nominated.

The PREMIER: A very good rule.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he at first thought the amount for a nominated passenger should be less than that for an assisted passenger, but now he thought it would be mistake to make any difference between the two. It was well known that during the late drought complaints were made by the working classes as to the over-supply of tradesmen; and if the rates for nominated passengers were made less than those for assisted passengers more tradesmen than were requisite would still be brought out, and the consequence would be a further outcry. Another thing was that they had no power over nominated immigrants; but the Agent-General or officer at home would be able, in the case of assisted passengers, to choose only such labourers and tradesmen as were required in the colony. And it must be borne in mind that it was not proposed to do away with the free immigration of agricultural labourers and domestic servants. The object of the Bill was to obtain a superior class of immigrants—people who would not come free, but would come if part of their passage money were paid; and it would be a mistake to alter the rates either in Schedule G or Schedule H.

Mr. CHUBB said that if the schedule in the principal Act corresponded with the section under which immigrants were brought out as nominated immigrants, it would have been impossible for the Civil servant referred to by the Premier to nominate those people, because the section only allowed the nomination of immigrants by their friends or relatives. If the schedule were amended so as to require the applicant to state what relation he was, or to state that he was a friend, that would meet such a case.

The PREMIER said they did not allow any applications at all now unless that was done.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 4, as follows:—

"Any person who arrives in the colony under the provisions of the seventeenth section of the principal Act, or as a free, assisted, or nominated immigrant, having previously resided in any of the Australian colonies, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds, with or without imprisonment for any period not exceeding twelve months."

"In any prosecution under this section the averment in the information that any person named therein arrived in the colony under the provisions of the seventeenth section of the principal Act, or as a free, nominated, or assisted immigrant, shall, upon proof of his actual arrival in the colony, be sufficient evidence of the fact that he arrived under the provisions of the aforesaid section, or as a free, nominated, or assisted immigrant, as the case may be, until the contrary be shown."

Mr. CHUBB said it would be quite sufficient to have the penalty. As the Bill stood the offence must be tried in the Supreme or District Court and a long time might elapse before the case would be heard, and it would be better if the penalty were recoverable before justices of the peace.

The PREMIER moved that the clause be amended by the omission of the words "guilty of a misdemeanour and shall be," in the 4th line, and by the insertion of the word "summary" before "conviction," in the 5th line.

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER said that the word "penalty" was commonly used in cases of summary conviction, and he proposed to further amend the clause by the omission of the word "fine" in the 5th line, with the view of inserting the word "penalty."

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

The PREMIER moved the insertion of a new clause to follow clause 4 of the Bill, as follows:—

The 11th section of the principal Act and Form 2, Schedule D, are hereby repealed.

Mr. DICKSON said that was a matter that required very full consideration. He thought when they took into consideration the matter mooted by the hon. member for Bowen many hon. members would arrive at the conclusion that it was only right for the same justice to be dealt to immigrants from Europe which was dealt out to their fellow-countrymen. They still retained under clause 7 of the principal Act the system of free immigration in connection with domestic servants and farm labourers. He was apprehensive that if the 11th section were repealed, so far as Continental immigration was concerned, it would wholly stop it, and that would be a very serious matter for the country. He looked upon the German immigrants as a very excellent class to settle on the lands of the colony; and they had done a great deal to reclaim the wilderness, and bring it into a state of cultivation, and it was a matter that should not be lightly dealt with. So long as they retained the free immigration from Great Britain for certain classes of their own countrymen, seeing the free immigration from the continent of Europe had acted so beneficially they ought not to shut the door against it. He was inclined to vote against that clause, as it would undoubtedly have the effect, under the revised scale of nominated passengers, of stopping a large number who would otherwise come to the colony, which was very much to be deplored. The impression of some members of the Committee was that they would be placing German immigrants on a par with British immigrants, but that was not so; and if that clause would stop the introduction of German immigrants here, he thought they ought to be very careful in considering it.

Mr. McMASTER said he would certainly object to a clause that would prevent German immigrants from coming here on the same footing as the British, if they chose to do so. He would not give them any privilege which did not extend to their own countrymen; but he certainly would object to Germans being debarred altogether from coming as colonists. He thought the knowledge the Committee possessed of the Germans who had settled amongst them—some of them having been colonists of many years' standing—tended to show that those people had proved themselves to be as good colonists as any persons they could possibly import into the colony, and he should be very sorry to see them debarred from coming. Hon. members were working somewhat in the dark, as they had not got the Act, and they did not know exactly what the effect of the amendment would be. He thought it desirable they should be made aware of the effect of the amendment on immigration from the Continent, more particularly from Germany.

The PREMIER said the 11th section of the principal Act provided that the immigration agent, with the approval of the Minister, might issue free passage warrants for nominated passengers from the Continent during the suspension of direct immigration to Queensland from the continent of Europe. The idea, of

course, was that a passage from the Continent to London was equivalent to the amount paid here in the case of other immigrants. He did not think it would have the effect of restricting or stopping immigration from Europe, and he would be very sorry if it did.

Mr. CHUBB said he should like to say that under the 11th section of the principal Act, which it was now proposed to repeal, foreigners in Queensland got a warrant from the immigration agent here, and sent it home. The Agent-General was bound to give the person nominated a free passage, so that there was no way of getting out of the difficulty, provided they complied with the regulations. All the other sections of the Act remained in force. Under the 7th section he might have a free passage granted to him by the Agent-General, or he might be nominated under the 9th section the same as anyone from Great Britain; and he might come under the 15th section; he was exactly on the same footing.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he hoped no restriction would be placed on immigrants from the continent of Europe. Among our very best colonists had been the Germans. They were the first to settle on the land, and they had been the least expense to the country generally. They were a particularly law-abiding people, and, taken as a whole, they were less before the courts of the colony than any other people in it. He would be exceedingly sorry to see any restriction placed on their coming, and he would like to see them treated exactly as if they were our own countrymen and women, so that they could come as unrestrictedly as if they were British people.

Mr. MURPHY asked if our own countrymen would have to pay while foreigners could come in free?

The PREMIER: If this clause is not put in they will.

Mr. MURPHY: And if this clause is put in they cannot.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. MURPHY: Then I agree with the clause.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he understood from the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Sheridan, that the hon. member wished to give preference to the Germans over our own countrymen. Now, as he (Mr. Morehead) had frequently stated, he distinctly objected to Germans or any other nationality having preference over the inhabitants of the British Islands.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he merely wished immigrants from the continent of Europe to be placed on exactly the same footing as if they were British people.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would say, as he had said before in the House and out of it, that they ought to exhaust the British Islands before they went further afield. As the hon. member for the Valley and other hon. members said the other night, they had as good people in the British Islands, and people as willing to come out, as there were abroad; and he did not see why he or any other member of the community should be taxed to bring foreigners to the country when they could get their own flesh and blood, and their own kith and kin.

The PREMIER said he wished to amend the new clause he had proposed. Form No. 2 in Schedule B to the principal Act provided for special certificates when passage warrants were issued to Continental immigrants, and on consideration he saw they would be very useful—a certificate from the burgomaster or chief magistrate of the town, a doctor's certificate, and a

declaration by the immigrant, which were very necessary. He proposed, therefore, to withdraw the new clause he had moved, and substitute the following:—

The 11th section of the principal Act is hereby repealed. But any person residing on the continent of Europe, on account of whom a passage warrant is issued, must produce to the Agent-General a certificate in Form No. 2 of Schedule B to the principal Act.

New clause put and passed.

Clause 5 passed as printed.

On Schedule G, as follows:—

"SCALE OF PAYMENTS FOR ASSISTED PASSAGES.

Sex.	Between one and twelve years.	Between twelve and forty-five.	Above forty and under fifty-five.
	£	£	£
Male	4	8	12
Female	2	4	12

The PREMIER moved the omission of the word "five" in the 2nd column.

Mr. NORTON said he would suggest that the column should be left as it was, and that the last column should be left out.

The PREMIER: I am inclined to accept that.

Mr. NORTON said what he proposed was to allow the first two columns to remain as they were, but to leave out the last column, so that all persons over the age of forty-five would have to pay the full amount of passage money.

The PREMIER said it occurred to him that a man bringing out his family might very likely be over forty-five. Perhaps it would be better to let the age remain as it had been hitherto—between forty and fifty-five.

Mr. NORTON: Make it apply only to the case of families.

The PREMIER said the Agent-General would see to that. The Agent-General need not approve anyone unless he chose; so perhaps it had better stand as before.

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

On Schedule H, as follows:—

"SCALE OF PAYMENTS FOR NOMINATED PASSAGES.

Sex.	Between one and twelve years.	From twelve to forty.	From forty and under fifty-five.	Fifty-five and upwards.
	£	£	£	
Male ...	4	8	12	The full amount of passage money.
Female...	2	4	12	

The PREMIER (after moving verbal amendments in the headings of two of the columns) said he gathered from the discussion that the rates proposed were thought rather too high, and he was disposed to think so too. At present the rates were—For children between one and twelve years, £1 each, male or female; between twelve and forty, £2 and £1; and from forty to fifty-five, £4 each. He thought it would be better to double the present rates. He therefore proposed to omit after "male" the figure "4," with the view of inserting the figure "2."

Mr. CHUBB said he was of opinion that the first column might be left at the old scale, and the others increased. Children under twelve years of age would be a desirable acquisition to the colony.

The PREMIER said that sometimes they got a nomination of ten children, six or seven of whom were under twelve years; and they cost £8 or £9 each. He did not think the State ought to pay the passages of very large families of young children.

Mr. McMASTER said that was a class of immigration they ought to encourage. They did not want old people.

The PREMIER: If you bring out younger parents, they will have just as many children afterwards.

Mr. McMASTER said that if the children were strong and healthy he should be inclined to allow all of them under twelve to come out free. It was often a strain upon a man's purse, after buying the outfit for his children at home, to get them out to the colony; and it was most desirable to encourage that class of immigrants—more especially when, as had been admitted by the Chief Secretary, people who might almost be said to be taken off the streets were being nominated by charitably disposed individuals at home, in order to save them from being sent ultimately to the poorhouse and becoming a burden on the ratepayers. It would be far better to have children brought out while they were young; they would grow up into most useful colonists, and if he had any say in the matter he would let all children under twelve come out free.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member for the Valley evidently wanted to swell the vicious electoral basis of the Premier. It was a metropolitan dodge which, he felt sure, the Committee would see through.

Mr. SALKELD said he was of opinion that the increased scale proposed in the schedule was quite low enough for children under twelve. Children from twelve to eighteen or twenty years of age were of far more use to the colony than children of three, four, or five years of age. The new scale, for females under twelve years, which was twice that of the old one, seemed to him to be about a fair thing.

On motion of the PREMIER, further amendments were made in the schedule, which was agreed to as follows:—

"SCALE OF PAYMENTS FOR NOMINATED PASSAGES.

Sex.	Between one and twelve years.	From twelve to forty.	From forty and under fifty-five.	Fifty-five and upwards.
	£	£	£	
Male ...	2	4	8	The full amount of passage money.
Female...	1	2	8	

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

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the chair, and that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to further consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

THE RABBIT QUESTION.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I put a notice of motion on the paper for yesterday to the following effect: That on the motion being made that the Speaker do leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Supply, I should "call attention to the rabbit question and its great national importance." Now, sir, I think in the wording of this motion that it is a question of vast national importance. It is a question that every member in this House and every member in the community should well think over and study. The invasion of this pest into this colony will be simply a national disaster, and I hope, sir, that every member of this House will have so much patriotism in him that he will listen to what I have to say upon the subject. I am only sorry, sir, that the question has fallen into the hands of one who is so unable to put it in its best light before the House and before the country. I know, sir, that I shall be subjected to a great deal of ridicule by some members in this House, and by many men out of the House, for bringing up this question.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. MURPHY: I know ridicule has been cast already to a great extent upon one hon. member of this House who persistently brought the matter under notice. History repeats itself, sir, and in the colony of New South Wales, in which this pest at the present moment amounts to a national disaster, the history there is that when Mr. Quin, then a member of the Parliament of that colony, first brought the matter before that Assembly he was subjected to a good deal of ridicule. But, sir, the gentleman who was loudest in his laugh when Mr. Quin first mentioned that matter is the gentleman whom the irony of fate has called upon to deal with this very business—that is Mr. Abigail, the present Minister for Mines. That gentleman who laughed so loudly at Mr. Quin on that occasion is now the one who has to find the money and the brains, and devise means to fight with this enemy. Having drawn the attention of the House to the subject I wish to discuss, I will point out shortly what has been done in New South Wales with regard to this pest, and the result of it. On the 14th April, 1883, an Act was passed for the abatement of the rabbit nuisance, and I will give a *résumé* of that Act, to show the steps that were taken there for the abatement of the nuisance. The measure, sir, was framed on the recommendations of persons who were interested in this question—squatters, farmers, and others, whose runs and holdings were infested by this pest. It was done, of course, with the intention of ridding the country of the nuisance. The Act provided for its own administration, and this was raised by an annual assessment on the owners of cattle to the amount of 1½d. per head, or 12s. 6d. per hundred on cattle, and 1d. per head, or 20s. per thousand on sheep. The assessment was to be placed to the credit of a special account called the rabbit account. From this were to be paid all subsidies, expenses, and salaries to the amounts authorised by the Act. It was declared, however, that in the event of the amount being inadequate it should be subsidised from the funds of the State, and that money should be voted annually by Parliament. Such appropriations were to be subsequently recouped to the general revenue from which they were drawn, whenever it happened to be in funds, which, under the present state of the country, will never happen, unless they adopt some different means of destroying the pest. The subsidy was paid in the following manner:—Every man employed

upon a station as a rabbitier has to produce to the owner the skin of every rabbit destroyed. The owner upon the production of the skin pays the man what he has earned according to the rate agreed upon by the rabbitier. The man gives a receipt, which sets forth that he has received so much for so many rabbits killed by him on the run in question, whatever the number may be. The receipts are signed in the presence of a witness. The rabbit inspector visits the run, counts the skins and destroys them, and gives the owner a certificate that upon a certain date he destroyed so many skins upon the holding. The owner produces the receipts which he obtained from the rabbitier, and the inspector examines them, compares them with the entry of the journal which the owner is compelled to keep, and after satisfying himself as to the genuineness of the receipts, initials them. Then application for subsidy is made to the officer of the Rabbit Branch, who has to be furnished by the owner with a certificate from the inspector, and a statutory declaration that he has expended so much in the destruction of the rabbits during the period for which he claims. The officer examines the receipts, sees that the number destroyed corresponds with the number given by the inspector, and having found that the work has been done properly, payment is recommended. Now, I must ask hon. members to bear with me, because it will be necessary, in order to illustrate my argument, to read rather copiously from some New South Wales journals of a tour taken by the present Minister for Mines in New South Wales for the purpose of seeing with his own eyes what was actually going on in the rabbit-infested district. A reporter from the *Sydney Morning Herald* and one from the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* accompanied that gentleman, and, although it may be wearisome to hon. members to listen to, I hope they will remain here and listen. I know many hon. members are very much inclined to shirk this subject, and it is a very disagreeable one. Studying the subject has made me feel very, very sad indeed, to think that such a pest is coming down upon us which is so difficult to destroy, and so difficult to devise means to combat it; to see what enormous amounts of money have been spent in the neighbouring colony, and to find that after all the expenditure has been of little avail; that the wrong way has been taken. I want hon. members to listen to me, because the facts that I shall read will show the present state of New South Wales, and the conclusions of people who have studied this question. I will read the 18th section of the Rabbit Destruction Act of New South Wales, because it contains the pith of the whole Act, so that hon. members may know exactly what they are doing. It provides:—

"If the owner of any land can prove to the satisfaction of the Minister that he has done all in his power required by this Act to exterminate the rabbits upon such land, and that he is willing to do all such things and to take all such steps as may be necessary in the opinion of the Minister, then the Minister, subject to the conditions of regulation as to price, and the cost of such work, shall authorise such payment to such owner from time to time of a sum of money not exceeding three-quarters of the total cost incurred by such owner on and about such work, of such sums and such payments as the Minister shall think fair and reasonable."

Now, I will read an article from one of the Sydney morning papers bearing upon this matter. It is an article from the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* of 19th August, 1887, and it is headed "The Problem of the Far West," and written by one of the reporters taken by Mr. Abigail on his tour. I must remark that New South Wales has a Land Act dividing the country into divisions, and that their Central

division does not run in the same way as the line of our Central division runs on the maps hanging on the wall. It runs in an exactly opposite way. Well, this gentleman says:—

"The present state of things prevailing throughout the greater portion of the vast territory beyond the western boundary line of the Central division cannot possibly be continued much longer. It is only owing to the public ignorance that it is tolerated now. When once the country realises the true position of affairs in these regions, a change will be demanded in a tone of voice which representative Governments never dare to disregard. It is not too much to say that New South Wales would be in a far better position to-day if the major part of her far western territory had never belonged to her. At present she is holding it at a price which is absolutely ruinous, and unless this is put a stop to by some means which I have not yet seen made public, the ultimate result will be most serious to contemplate. It is already eating into the consolidated revenue at a rate which the general taxpayer has not the slightest notion of; and if this goes on, it is only a matter of time when it will cost us more to keep our Western division than the rest of the colony will be able to earn."

"I have not the slightest doubt that this will be considered by many of my readers as an extravagant statement—perhaps as the mere wantonness of pessimistic hyperbole. Very probably I would have jumped to the same comfortable conclusion myself had I heard a similar statement made a month or two ago. Since then, however, it has come in my way to make a careful investigation into the conditions of settlement in the Far Western territory, the result of which has convinced me that the case as I have just stated it is one of absolutely demonstrable fact. In company with the Ministers for Mines and Justice I have just accomplished an extended journey through the Far West with the view of obtaining information regarding the rabbit question, and testing by personal observation the nature of the ravages which this pest was alleged to be committing."

"During this tour I have had an opportunity of inquiring into the whole question of Western settlement, and testing, in the light of what I saw with my own eyes, the value of the information obtained. The essence of all these facts I now propose to place before the readers of the *Daily Telegraph*, and I will ask them to suspend their judgment as to the gravity of the problem of the Far West until my series of articles on the question is complete."

"What I am setting out to prove is this: That under present conditions almost the whole of our Western territory is instead of being any support to the financial strength of the colony, a ruinous and daily increasing down-drag which, unless matters are speedily altered, will cause a serious state of national embarrassment."

This letter is written by a gentleman specially sent to report, and who had special opportunities of arriving at all the facts stated in these articles. The two reporters got their information from the lessees of all the stations as they went along, from the rabbit inspectors, and from men who were rabbiting themselves; so that there can be no question as to the genuineness of the facts disclosed in these papers. I will quote now from article No. III., from the same paper, of 20th August, 1887. He says, referring to a gentleman (Mr. Quin), whom I just now mentioned as being the first man to introduce the rabbit question into New South Wales:—

"About six years ago a pastoral representative, fresh from the western wilds, was selected by the Parkes-Robertson Government to move the adoption of their Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech. This was Mr. Quin, then the newly-elected member for Wentworth. The speech which Mr. Quin made on that occasion is a matter of history. It gave the first warning of the approach of an enemy with which the pastoral industry of the Far West has now to prepare for a mortal grapple. Mr. Quin expressed regret that the Ministerial programme as then propounded did not include a Bill for the extermination of rabbits. The House laughed at Mr. Quin. And one ironical cackination sounded high above the general titter. It came from the ruck of the Ministerial supporters where sat Mr. Abigail, and it was followed by a suggestion from the same quarter that Mr. Quin should go further and propose a Bill to exterminate fleas. In this manner was received the first public announcement that the rabbit had seriously invaded New South Wales."

"Quite ignoring this invasion, the Government succeeding the Parkes-Robertson coalition framed its new Land Bill. It was Belshazzar's folly over again. Mr. Quin's writing on the political wall was understood by no one. While the rabbit was like the Medo and the Persian, swarming into the country from both the south and the west and taking possession of it, we went on feeding our imaginations with the dreams of fabulous rents that the pastoral territory could be made to yield us under the new Act. The pastoralists themselves are, more than anybody else, to blame for this. The tremendous prices paid for the good-will of western runs and the money sunk in experimental improvements, placed a fictitious value upon the land in the eyes of the public, to which the extravagant estimates of the present Act are mainly to be attributed."

"The squatters accepted the new Act, however, with eagerness, and on went the dance. Meanwhile, the warning that Mr. Quin had sounded three years before began to be loudly repeated from other quarters, and eventually the country woke up to the fact that the rabbit invasion was a reality. In 1883 a Bill to cope with the nuisance was brought in. On the first of May of the same year it assumed the form of law, and along with their new Land Act the squatters had also presented to them a new Rabbit Act. Both were to a very great extent measures of their own choosing. The Rabbit Act especially was framed almost entirely from recommendations made by direct representatives of the pastoral interest. Instead of being an Act for the destruction of rabbits, however, it has simply turned out to be an Act to enable the squatter and the State to mutually ruin each other. The rabbit thrives under it while the State beggars the squatter, and the squatter retaliates with financial havoc upon the State."

"This is the condition of affairs now actually prevailing, and it is this which has now brought the problem of the Far West to a head. The rabbit has now got such a footing in many portions of the Far West that the cost of dislodging him by any method so far tried is found to enormously exceed the value of the land. Take one instance. Just this side of the Darling there is a run of close on a million acres, owned by a Victorian proprietary. From these blocks we expected to get under the present Land Act £3,000 a year. The present subsidy paid by the State for rabbit destruction on this run is at the rate of £25,000 a year, while the owners have to pay about double their rent as their share of the cost."

I call hon. members' particular attention to this: The State is receiving £3,000 a year from this run in the shape of rent and they are expending £25,000 a year upon it in the destruction of rabbits; while what the owners pay is in addition again to that."

"What it means is ruin to both parties if persisted in. Despite this expenditure the rabbits are rapidly increasing on the run. Even by paying the occupiers a bonus of £22,000 a year, which we are doing instead of demanding anything from them in the shape of rent, they are not able to work the run and keep down the rabbits. This is only one case cited for illustration's sake, but before concluding I hope to be able to place before the public the total rents received under the Land Act of 1884 from the infested country and the total amount handed back to the lessees under the Rabbit Act of 1883. When it is remembered that the area of the infested country is rapidly extending, and the rabbits upon it are increasing, it will then be seen that I have made no rash statement in saying that if the present state of things goes on it will soon cost us more to keep our Western division than the rest of the colony is able to earn."

Now, sir, I think I am quite justified in going on quoting from these articles, though it may weary hon. members, because it is the most reliable information we have been able to glean from these rabbit-infested districts. This information is far more valuable than we could obtain by sending a dozen commissioners from Queensland to report upon the subject, and we may learn more from these reliable reports than by any other means it is possible to devise. Here is an extract from the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* of 23rd August, 1887:—

"The war against the rabbit was entered upon with a light heart, which arose from ignorance as to the nature of the undertaking. It was by no means intended to develop any such state of things as that which it has brought about. The country never for a moment imagined that it was creating a standing army,

larger and more expensive than our permanent military force, to guard the runs of the western lessees. The intention was simply to exterminate the rabbit pest off-hand and be done with it. Certainly no one dreamt of making rabbit repression the enormous and permanent charge upon the public revenue that it has since become.

"The woful mistake which the country then made is due in great measure to the difficulty most uninitiated people experience in realising the power for evil that the rabbit possesses."

I commend that to all those hon. members who have had no experience of the pest.

"Many regard him with a sense of peculiar tenderness, as one of the cherished pets of their childhood."

I think you, sir, when the pest was first mentioned in this House, pleaded for your children's pets. I think I am perfectly right in saying that; and I think many other hon. members who have seats in this House pleaded in the same way then for their children's pets. Little did they realise that those pets were going to become in time such a pest as to amount to a national disaster.

"To think of him as an enemy threatening the destruction of great national interests appears to them absurd. The coral insect, however, is a smaller animal than the rabbit, and he is the builder of vast islands and effects alterations in the map of the world. The power he exercises is the power of numbers indefinitely multiplied, and in the rabbit this is as effective to destroy as in the coral insect it is to build up. The fecundity of the rabbit is simply phenomenal. Various calculations have been undertaken with the view of ascertaining to what extent a single pair of rabbits are capable of reproduction, but usually the investigator loses himself in the appalling vastness of the mathematical vista which immediately opens out. Mr. Riddick, of Wienteriga Run, makes the statement, which I give for what it is worth, that in four years' time the descendants of one doe have the power of multiplying to the astounding number of fifteen hundred millions."

I think the gentleman has rather overstated it.

"Those who care to check this calculation may occupy their spare hours in doing so. I have no spare hours to devote to the purpose. It is sufficient to know that the development of rabbit life is one of nature's marvels; and having seen the demonstration of this in practice, I am indifferent about theory."

"Now, the average weight of a wild rabbit is, I believe, about 3 lb., and a fair sheep should weigh about 60 lb. That is to say, that every twenty rabbits have the same amount of tissue to sustain as every one sheep. Both mutton and rabbit flesh are made from the one material, and approximately, therefore, for every twenty rabbits that a run has to sustain its sheep-carrying capacity should be reduced by one. Most squatters whom I interrogated on the point gave the number of rabbits required to eat as much as a sheep at considerably less than twenty, but taking the latter number as a reasonable proportion, it can easily be seen how soon a colony of rabbits established on a run would drive the sheep clean off it. Instances have already occurred where they have actually done this despite all the efforts of the runholder, backed up by the most lavish expenditure on the part of the State to keep them down. In South Australia, where the conditions of back settlement much resemble ours, many cases of this kind can be cited, notwithstanding that repressive Acts have been in force in that colony for years back. Many of the runholders there are now said to be merely holding on till the end of their leases, which expire with the present year, when they will be entitled to claim the value of their improvements, after which whole blocks of country will be entirely abandoned to rabbits. On these runs the work of killing is given up in despair, and the Government are afraid to enforce it lest the lessees should surrender and claim their improvements at once. What the Government intend to do when the leases fall in, and the infested runs are thrown upon their hands, is a question seriously agitating the public mind of that colony. Here we have not yet had any runs thrown up in consequence of the rabbit invasion, but there are, nevertheless, holdings which the rabbit is rapidly conquering."

"At Terryavynia I saw a paddock of 62,000 acres which, after a desperate struggle, he has succeeded in entirely subduing, and now holds absolute possession of, to the exclusion of a single hoof. On this run half-a-million rabbits have been killed and paid for within the past three months, and they are now more numerous

than ever. This case, again, I merely cite for illustration's sake, as it is by no means the only one of its kind that the recent history of the back country affords. How the rabbit got into the back country is useless now to inquire. The fact to be faced is that he is established there, and strengthening his footing day by day in defiance of every effort that is made to dislodge him. According to the report of the select committee of the Legislative Council, appointed to inquire into the rabbit question during the early portion of the present year, at the passing of the Act in 1883 the pest had already extended over the south-western portion of the colony, bounded by a line commencing at a point on the river Murray where the colonies of South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales meet; thence northward to a short distance above Silverton, then across the Darling easterly between Wilcannia and Menindie, then down to the Lachlan above Hillston, then by a line almost due south to intersect the Murray near Corowa. This took in an area comprising about a fifth of the whole colony. Since the passing of the Act the infested area has been extended to the Queensland border, between the South Australian boundary line and the Warrego River, and now embraces about two-fifths of the colony."

That is, the area of the infested runs in New South Wales has just doubled in four years. It now extends over two-fifths instead of one-fifth.

"This is in itself a sufficient commentary on the efficacy of the present Act. Under it we pay now an army of about 2,000 men at rates ranging from £3 to £10 per week, and the result is that after four years' fighting the rabbits have succeeded in spreading themselves over just double the area which they previously occupied."

I have a large number of articles here bearing on it, but I do not think it necessary to quote from all of them. I will merely read some short extracts from some of the others to show how grave the matter is. This is part of an article by the same writer—article 7 from the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*—

"I have already pointed out that since the passing of the present Rabbit Act the area of the infested country has been doubled. In 1883 one-fifth of the whole colony was infested. Now the pest is established in two-fifths. Roughly estimated in round numbers, therefore, the rabbit conquest of New South Wales, since we have begun to resist it, has been at the rate of about ten million acres of our territory per annum. Unfortunately, I am able to give no approximate statement as to the rate of this advance before we commenced legislating to oppose it, but it is quite clear that there could not have been many years of similar progress before 1883, as otherwise the rabbit would by this time have been in possession of the whole colony."

"Why, then, has his advances been so rapid since we have set ourselves to oppose it? The report of the select committee of the Legislative Council which recently undertook to elucidate the whole rabbit question directly blames the present Act for the alarming rate at which the pest is now spreading. 'The committee,' says the report, 'without desiring to draw any imaginary picture, think it is their duty to emphatically point out the possible position which will be the result of the present system of abating the rabbit nuisance. Instead of abating the pest it is really spreading it, and it will only require a few years' further delay and disregard of the danger to consummate the fact that from one end to the other this colony will be rabbit-infested.'"

That is from a report of a select committee of the Legislative Council of New South Wales. I am reading this article to show the utter failure of the means adopted in New South Wales to check the pest, so that we may avoid adopting the same principle that they have done.

"The committee, however, do not think it their duty to point out the manner in which the present Act operates for the spread of the pest."

"In the opinion of most men practically versed in the subject, the great cause of the extraordinary increase of the pest at the present time is to be found in the breaking up of the drought. The rabbit can appreciate a good season just as well as the squatter can, and in their competition for the possession of a run it ultimately helps the former perhaps more than it helps the latter. Just now there is in most parts of the country enough feed for both sheep and rabbits put together. This, however, is not going to last for ever, and after the first spell of dry weather one or the other will, on many

of the runs, have to succumb. The rabbit and the sheep have lived together, both in their limited numbers, during drought, and it was hard enough for the sheep then. With the return of good times the sheep have increased, but the rate of their natural progress has been nowise comparable to that of the rabbit. The change from good times to bad, therefore, or even from abundance to ordinary sufficiency, will find the situation quite different from what it was during the last dry cycle.

"There is one instinct in the wild rabbit which works to spread the pest in a somewhat peculiar way."

I draw the attention of hon. members to this, because it is an important factor in the spread of the rabbit.

"The male rabbit, dreading evidently the abnormal fecundity of his race, will destroy the young ones whenever he gets a chance. He is, by instinct, a Malthusian of the most inveterate type. The female, on the other hand, appears to hold the opposite theory, and consequently always takes care to remove her young out of her lord and master's way. The instinct of the male to destroy seems to have developed a counteracting instinct in the female to protect, and the two working in conjunction cause the tribe as it multiplies to be continually spreading out. A female about to bring forth young always goes away from the burrow where she previously resided, and makes a new home for herself at a safe distance. Here a new rabbit colony is founded, and so on. The plentifulness of feed and water everywhere necessarily favours this advance, making it possible where it were otherwise impossible, and there is no question of a doubt about its having largely assisted the rabbit invasion since the breaking up of the late drought.

"But where was the repressive legislation while this was going on? Why the rabbits have been able to spread since 1883 is a matter simple enough to be explained; the interesting point, however, is to be found out why they were not prevented from spreading."

I will not read any more of that article, because what I have read is enough to show that the repressive Act they passed was entirely in the wrong direction. I will now quote some figures to show the enormous expense that the Government of New South Wales are under at the present time in repressing this pest:—

"From fifty promiscuously selected runs, covering an area of several millions of acres, we derived during the past six months £35,261 as rent, and handed back to the tenants £51,381 to enable them to stand against the rabbit. We lost in hard cash over £16,000 on that transaction. As the State subsidy only is supposed to cover three-fourths of the cost of rabbit repression, the pastoral tenants on these runs had presumably to pay another £16,000 or so in addition to their rent—equal to almost an increase of 50 per cent. And the net result of all this is that the rabbits have made more progress during the past six months than ever they did before. But the totals for the fifty runs put the case in its mildest form. A number of the runs have only been recently attacked, and on these, as a rule, the subsidies have not yet exceeded the rent. Take, however, such individual cases as Marfield, where we pay £2,896 and receive £867, or Albermarle, where we pay £5,566, and receive £1,400. There is no reason in the world why, on any of the other fifty runs, the same state of things will not be in existence by the end of the next half-year. Indeed it is only a question of time when, as I have said before, the whole revenue of the colony, at the present rate of going on, would be insufficient to pay the 'rabbit subsidies' of our western runs."

Now, sir, I think I have read sufficient extracts from the report of this gentleman to show that the rabbit question in New South Wales has become a very serious one for the people of that colony. I now, sir, propose to say a few words about the result of their legislation. I explained at the commencement of my speech what that legislation was—that it was very similar to our Marsupial Act. A bonus was paid for the scalps, and the pastoral lessee or selector, or whoever the landowner was, had to pay an assessment of so much a head on his sheep and so much a head on his cattle. If this amount was not sufficient, it was supplemented by a subsidy from funds specially appropriated by Parliament. I want to show from an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which I have here, how

this bonus system has been an utter failure and that we must look for some better means of suppressing the nuisance in this colony. The articles I have read from the *Daily Telegraph* distinctly showed that the Act had been a failure so far as preventing the spread of the pest was concerned. The reporter who wrote the articles in the *Daily Telegraph*, and also the reporter who wrote some very similar articles in the *Herald*, corroborate each other entirely in that respect; and both writers are corroborated by the fact that the Government are fencing the railway line from Narramine to Bourke, and from Bourke to the Queensland border, pointing to the fact that fencing is the only remedy, and that the bonus system established in New South Wales under the present Act has been an utter failure. I have myself come the same conclusion, from reading those articles, that fencing is the only remedy for the pest. That is what the New South Wales Government should have adopted in the first instance, instead of going in for the bonus system. When a district is infested with rabbits, and you scatter an army of men over the district killing the rabbits, unless you have previously fenced the district round, the only effect will be to spread the rabbits still further. The effect of men and dogs going there in large numbers and continually trapping and hunting, is to drive the rabbits from the district which was then infested into neighbouring districts, which up to that time had been infested. Whereas, if they had previously fenced off that district before commencing to destroy them they would not have been able to spread beyond the boundaries in which they were first found, and in which they were destroyed. I want now to deal with the question as far as Queensland is concerned. I have shown pretty conclusively, I think, that the rabbit question has become a national question of vast importance in New South Wales. I wish now to show to the House that the position which New South Wales finds herself in with regard to rabbits will in a very short time be our own. In New South Wales, in 1883, when they passed that Act, they hardly realised the danger that was so close to their doors. They passed the Act in the House in almost a humorous kind of way. Many members were inclined to laugh at it, and thought Government were pandering to the fad of some of the pastoral tenants. I hope the question will not be approached in the same light-hearted way by this House, because we are now in exactly the same position with regard to this pest that New South Wales was in four years ago, in 1883. An hon. member sitting near me suggests that we have not the number of rabbits in Queensland now that New South Wales had in 1883. I admit that. But we know they are in the colony, and we do not know how many there are of them. This rabbit question, I find on looking through our "Votes and Proceedings," is a very old one. As early as June, 1879, Mr. Simpson, who was then member for Dalby, moved the adjournment of the House to call attention to the rabbit question. That is the first trace I can find of the question being referred to in the Queensland Legislature. Shortly afterwards the late Mr. Davenport, who was then member for Drayton and Toowoomba, brought in a Rabbit Nuisance Bill; but I suppose that hon. gentleman was laughed down, because he never, as far as I can trace it, got his Bill beyond the first reading. I suppose the ridicule of the House was too much for him, and compelled him to abandon his Bill. The next gentleman to take the matter up in the House was Mr. Stevens, the present member for Logan, who was then member for Warrego. He introduced a Rabbit Bill in 1880, which he persevered with, I imagine, in the face of some ridicule—not open but

private ridicule—and his Bill passed through the House on the 3rd August, 1880. That was merely a Bill to prevent the keeping of rabbits. On the 13th of February, 1884, Mr. Stevens asked the Government the following questions:—

"1. If the Government are aware of the proximity to the border of the colony of the rabbit pest?"

"2. Whether the Government are preparing, or have prepared, any measure to deal with the rabbits when they enter the colony?"

The answer he received was—

"1. The attention of the Government was a few days since called by the Government of New South Wales to the fact that rabbits are approaching the border of the colony, and were now about 120 miles distant. There is reason to suppose that they are also approaching from South Australia.

"2. The Government will introduce a measure to deal with the subject probably in the next session."

Then, sir, a commissioner, Mr. Golden, was sent to New South Wales to report upon the rabbit pest. That gentleman, on his return, reported that there was no danger from rabbits at all, that they were not approaching Queensland in any way, and that the New South Wales Government were coping thoroughly with them under the Act which I have just been quoting from, and which I have shown conclusively was an utter failure; that they were so successful in checking the spread of the pest by means of that Act that Queensland had nothing whatever to be afraid of. That report was one of the most disastrous reports ever sent in to a Queensland Government. It was utterly untrue, and the gentleman who compiled it could not possibly have had eyes in his head to see, what otherwise he must have seen, in the districts he went through. In October, 1884, Mr. Stevens again put a question to the Government on the subject, and got a reply that the Government did not propose to deal with the matter that session. That was, of course, after having read Mr. Golden's report. Another commissioner, Mr. Humphry Davy, was then sent, and his report awakened the Government to the fact that the rabbit pest was a question worthy of their most serious attention. The result was the passing of our present Rabbit Act, and a proposition to vote £100,000—subsequently reduced to £50,000—for the erection of a rabbit-proof fence along our southern border. I am very sorry indeed that the Government thought fit to reduce that amount from £100,000 to £50,000.

The PREMIER: The House reduced it, not the Government.

Mr. MURPHY: I accept that explanation, and I am just as sorry that the House reduced it. I do not want to blame the Government in this matter in any shape or form; I only want to awaken their attention and interest in the matter, and to thoroughly convince them of the gravity of the position. I am quite satisfied that they will do in this matter as much as any other Government would do. I do not blame the Government for any steps they have taken in the matter, because they have only done what the Governments of the other colonies have done—neglected this pest until it has amounted to a national disaster, and we are on the brink of that disaster. But I want to awaken the attention of the Government, of the country, and of this House especially, to the fact that if we do not take immediate steps to combat this enemy we shall very soon find ourselves in the position that New South Wales is in at the present time. I shall just quote a few figures that I have extracted. I am not going to weary the House with any more long lists of figures, but just want to show the amount spent *in globo* during the last four years for the rabbits, and we shall see what we shall have to

pay ourselves in four years if we allow them into the colony. New South Wales has spent £465,000 in subsidies for the destruction of the rabbits in four years; and that money has simply been wasted. During that time the lessees of the infested runs have paid £116,215; and besides this there is a very large amount of disputed and outstanding claims, the amount of which I could not find out, and which I could not even venture to guess at, but it is a very large sum. I will now give some figures to show the number of men employed in the first seven months of this year, and the number of rabbits destroyed; and I wish hon. members to pay attention to this because it will show that without any very great increase in the number of men the number of rabbits killed increased very largely, proving that the pest was increasing all the time. In January there were 2,145 men employed, and they killed 665,417 rabbits; in February, 2,000 men killed 729,917; in March, 2,800 men killed 777,719; in April, 2,500 men killed 850,000; in May, 2,153 men killed 920,506; in June, 2,959 men killed 1,883,304; and in July, 3,089 men killed 2,166,057 rabbits. The numbers killed were trebled in seven months, and that without having any effect whatever in stopping the spread of the pest. I now draw the attention of this House to the position of this pest with regard to the Queensland border, and I am sorry to say—I have it upon the most reliable authority—that the rabbits are across the border at Bulloo Downs. They are also across the border in the neighbourhood of Hungerford; and they are very close at Barringun, on the Warrego River. I have also an extract here from the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 13th September. A telegram in that paper, headed "Narrabri, Munday," said, "Mr. Huxley, lessee of the Coombah Run, caught four rabbits within three miles of Narrabri. He states that several rabbits have been seen in the scrub adjoining the run." Narrabri is within 100 miles of the Queensland border, and about 100 miles opposite the eastern portion of the Balonne and the western portion of the Carnarvon constituencies, at about the 148th parallel. Hon. members will see from that, that they are very close to our border now in a good many places, and across the border in more than one place. How far they may be from the border on the South Australian side I cannot say, as there is no reliable information on the subject; they may have spread there for hundreds of miles for all we know. The next thing is to see what steps we are taking to combat them at the present time. It is well known, as I stated before, that £50,000 was voted for putting up a fence along our southern and a portion of our western boundary. There are about 100 miles of that fence partially erected at the present time; but I do not think there are more than seventy miles completed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes!

Mr. MURPHY: There is more than that going on. The Minister for Works is quite right, but he does not see what I am driving at. There is more than seventy miles in progress, but not finished.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; there is more.

Mr. MURPHY: All along the line there are gaps in the fence unfinished, and that is just as bad as if the fence was not there at all. The only complaint I have against the Lands Department is that they have not pushed on fast enough, though I daresay there are obstacles they could not overcome. Another complaint I have against the Government, or against this House, as it was the House refused to give more than £50,000, instead of £100,000, is this: The

fence should be continued as far towards the eastern as towards the western boundary. I may say the fence at present only goes thirty miles to the west of Hungerford. If that fence is not pushed on immediately we shall have the rabbits over the border within twelve months, if indeed they may not be over it now, which, I hope to heaven, sir, they may not be. We must, in my opinion, extend that fence from that point thirty miles west of Hungerford right to the sea, if we want to have any chance whatever to cope with this serious pest. The other fence at present under construction ought to be pushed on as fast as possible, and carried up to the South Australian border far beyond where any sign of the pest can be found. I know it will be objected that the colony is in such an impecunious state that we cannot find the money to fight this pest; but I think the facts I have laid before this House must convince the Government that some extreme measure must be taken in order to keep this pest from invading the country. I have nearly exhausted my subject, sir, but I feel so keenly about it that I am very much disinclined to sit down. I feel as if I could not possibly say enough upon it, and I only hope that I have induced hon. members to realise the grave position the colony is in in some ratio towards the way in which I myself feel upon the question. I can assure you, sir, that ever since I have taken the matter in hand, and have been reading it up, I have felt that if I did not do my utmost to make the country thoroughly realise the danger that is hanging over us, I should not be doing my duty nor acting patriotically either as a member of this House or as an Australian.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) said: Mr. Speaker,—I am afraid that I am not sufficiently acquainted with the details of this question to be able to deal with it in the manner that its importance demands. But, sir, I have no doubt that my hon. colleague the Minister for Works, who understands the question very much better than I do, will be able to supply any deficiencies in the statement I have to make in reference to the progress that has been made in connection with this work. The House is, of course, fully aware that £50,000 was voted on the Estimates of 1885-6 for the construction of a rabbit fence as a protection against the incursion of rabbits. That sum has been expended. In the first place, steps were taken immediately after the passing of the vote by the then Minister for Lands for carrying it into effect, evidently very vigorously and with very great promptitude. Tenders were invited about the end of 1885 for the material necessary, and early in 1886 tenders were invited for the erection of the fence. Three months' notice was given for sending in tenders. They were accepted, I think, in April, and the work, or most of it, was to be completed in September and October of this year. That work is now nearly completed. The hon. gentleman who has just sat down is mistaken in saying that only seventy miles have been completed. Nearly double that extent has been completed.

Mr. MURPHY: Not closed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It stands in this way: 266 miles from the southern and western boundary of the colony has been very nearly completed. That brings it up, I think, to within about twenty-three miles of the Warrego River. Six sections, at all events, have been completed. The work was let in sections of twenty miles; six are fully completed, and the remainder, up to within about twenty-three miles of the Warrego River, is nearly completed. It will be completed in all probability by the end of October, perhaps before. All the contractors were bound down to time, and

the work will be completed to within twenty-three miles of the Warrego River, at all events, by the end of October. I understand the Government of New South Wales have desired that the line should be extended eastward forty-four miles beyond the point which it was thought would be the point of junction between the two colonies, and as far as I understand the question—we shall hear it more distinctly from the Minister for Works—we shall have forty-four miles to construct east of the point to which we have at present brought the 266 miles. The money voted has been all expended, and there are considerable liabilities in addition. All the material has been bought. It was supposed at first that the line would be 450 miles in length, that is, including the portion of our western boundary line in contact with the border of South Australia. As I have said, all the material has been bought and paid for. The erection of the fence has been half paid for, and there is still about £10,000 due. The amounts that have been expended are:—Wire, £4,822; netting, £25,324; strain-ers, £420; agency charges, £598; railway carriage, £5,326; cartage, £7,392. The item for cartage is very heavy. Some of the material has been carried long distances, portions of it from Government Gums to the south-west corner of the colony, about 250 miles. Part also came from Sydney towards Hungerford, about 200 miles, which accounts for the large amount for cartage. There has been already paid for the erection of the fence, £8,290; paid, A. Donaldson, salary, £998. He is the superintendent of the works. Rabbit inspector, salary, £786. That is the gentleman who, I understand, is employed in the destruction of rabbits. H. Davy's report, £417; sundries, £31. Altogether the expenditure amounts to £53,808. The outstanding liabilities are as follows:—Carriage of netting to Wompah, say £3,090; railway carriage, New South Wales, say £370; fencing contracts, balances, £10,506; and erecting balance of fencing 183½ miles at same rate as portion contracted for—namely, 266½ miles at £66 10s. per mile, say £12,185. That is for the completion of the fence along our western boundary, besides completing the southern boundary line and other expenses. So that we have to pay £13,000 for what work has been done, and over £12,000 for work that has to be done. To complete the line of 450 miles will cost £80,000, or £30,000 more than has been voted. It was considered by the late Minister for Lands that it was very important that the work should not be checked, and therefore £15,000 has been authorised as unforeseen expenditure and will have to be provided for by the vote of the House; and in addition to that, another £15,000 will be required to finish the work. Now, sir, I think I have said, as briefly as possible, all that I know on the subject. I have no doubt the Minister for Works will be able to add a great deal on this question, and if we were in committee I should be happy to answer any questions. I hope I have stated enough, at all events, to show that the Government are pushing on the work. There has been great difficulty connected with it, and no time has been lost. The whole of the material is in the colony, and the work is very nearly completed between this colony and New South Wales, and it will not require a great deal more to complete the remainder of the line—140 miles on our western boundary.

The Hon. G. THORN said: Mr. Speaker,—I am not going to follow the remarks of the hon. member for Barcoo, who has gone into the subject very extensively. The hon. member, however, did not tell us what antidote he proposes. Now, I can tell the hon. member that the wire-netting fence will do nothing more towards protecting

the colony from the incursion of rabbits than the system pursued in New South Wales. I am satisfied of that, and the hon. member will see it before very long. I give the Government great credit for the expedition they have shown, but I consider all the labour useless. The rabbits are in the colony, or if they are not they will be soon here. But I am not a bit afraid of this pest overrunning Queensland, as it has overrun the other colonies, because the rabbit has so many natural enemies here.

Mr. DONALDSON: What are they?

The Hon. G. THORN: I myself have turned loose large numbers of rabbits, and have even constructed burrows for them, but in a few months' time they have all disappeared. We have the iguana as one enemy, and they are numerous in the saltbush country.

Mr. DONALDSON: Oh, nonsense!

The Hon. G. THORN: Some of them are as large as small alligators. Then we have the spotted native cat.

Mr. DONALDSON: Where?

The Hon. G. THORN: In the Western districts.

Mr. DONALDSON: Nonsense!

The Hon. G. THORN: We have the domestic cat which has gone wild, and the tiger-cat, which are all enemies of the rabbit, so that hon. members need not be under any apprehension in regard to this pest overrunning Queensland. I do not think it will do the harm hon. members imagine. There can be no question about that. I believe there are other gentlemen who have turned loose rabbits in the Mary River and Burnett districts, but they have never increased.

Mr. STEVENS: What kind of rabbit?

The Hon. G. THORN: All kinds. Fences may be erected by the mile; but I do not think that will keep rabbits out, and it will be found that we shall always have a certain number of rabbits in the colony. Those people who make a living out of them will bring them here. I remember when I first went into the bush, on to a station owned by my father, I came across two men cutting down burr. I told them they were not doing it properly. They did not know who I was; but they replied, "Oh, if we cut it down altogether we shall have no work next year;" and so it will be with the rabbits. I sympathise with the hon. member and with the pastoral gentlemen of the Western districts; but I doubt whether the calamity will be anything like so great as hon. members seem to think it will be.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am sorry to hear the hon. member make so light of the rabbit pest, and I think he knows very little about it. That is my opinion. He has had very little experience of it. The hon. member talks about having turned out rabbits, and that they were destroyed by their natural enemies; but a few rabbits are very different from a wave of them coming up from the south; and besides, it must be remembered that the enemies themselves become destroyed, and I venture to say that the enemies of the rabbit in New South Wales were at one time just as numerous as they are now in Queensland. Many of them have been killed off, and the same process will go on in Queensland. The native dogs are being killed off, and many other enemies that the rabbit would be likely to have; The eaglehawk and iguanas are fast disappearing. I think the hon. member is entirely wrong when he says that the wire-netting fence will not keep rabbits out. I believe it will, and that

that is the only way by which they are likely to be kept out. As far as the statement that rabbits will be brought here by the rabbiters to provide work for themselves is concerned, I have not such a poor opinion of the working man as to think he would do any such thing. I do not believe that anyone would be likely to carry rabbits and put them over a fence. There is no mistake about the importance of this subject, and the undoubted strides the rabbits have made in the last twelve months. I receive letters every week from people on the border telling me of the strides they are making—men such as Mr. C. B. Fisher, whose word cannot be doubted. I think, therefore, that strong and immediate steps should be taken to cope with the evil and to free Queensland from the same trouble which New South Wales has gone, and is going, through. Indeed, when the pest becomes so numerous as it is in New South Wales it is difficult to know what to do with them. I should like very much to see the Government push on the work of erecting the fence a little faster. I know that there is a patch from Barrington extending eastward, which ought to be fenced off as soon as possible. I am satisfied that the pest is close to the border, if not already over it, and the sooner steps are taken to extend the fence eastward the better. I am convinced that the hon. member for Fassifern knows nothing whatever about the question, and I thoroughly sympathise with the member for Barcoo in the statement he has made to the House. He is not the only member in this House who feels strongly on the question; but, indeed, many members are almost tired of talking about it. There have been a number of deputations to the late Minister for Lands, now the Minister for Works, and they were always led to believe that what they asked for would be done, but the work has gone on very slowly indeed. That particular part of the country to which I have referred should be protected—namely, from Barrington east. I hope hon. members will consider this as a very serious matter, and that immediate steps will be taken to do something more than is at present being done.

Mr. ALLAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I noticed that the hon. member for Fassifern spoke of the wire-netting fence as being practically useless for the purpose of stopping rabbits, and I think from that remark, that the hon. member cannot have had much experience in that subject. My own experience of the wire-netting fence is this: About ten years ago I was in Victoria purchasing some stock from Messrs. Robertson Brothers, of Colac, and at that time, in order to eradicate the rabbits from one part of their run 30,000 acres in extent, they had paid £30,000, or £1 an acre. They did eradicate them by putting up wire-netting. I think we are very much indebted to the hon. member for Barcoo for having brought this matter so earnestly before the House, and for having drawn attention to the disastrous effects of this pest. We in this colony have had little actual experience of it, but we know the destruction caused by it in New South Wales and Victoria, where men who were considered wealthy have been left with very little, and well-to-do men have been utterly ruined. We know something also of the vast amount that has been spent in New South Wales and Victoria in the effort to keep down this pest. This is not a matter affecting the squatters alone; for, if they suffer, the local storekeepers and town merchants will be affected prejudicially; people will be unable to engage workmen, and they will be affected also. In the month of January I was one of a deputation that waited upon the then Minister for Lands (Mr. Dutton) in regard to that part of the country

which has not been touched yet—from Barrington eastward, going across the Warrego and Culgoa right to Mungindi, and eastward of that place. We particularly urged the construction of the fence along that boundary, but I regret to say no steps have been taken to do so yet. We took occasion to point out to the Minister that at one run the rabbits had already got to the border. We were led to understand that steps would be taken to deal with the matter, but I am not aware that any have been taken or that any tenders have been called for fencing in that portion of the colony. I wish to point out to the Minister for Lands, if he happens to go on with the fence in that part of the colony, what may save a great deal of expense and also keep the rabbits from getting in. Along that boundary from the 90-mile peg on the west side of the Culgoa to the 113-mile peg on the east side of that river, is a network of small creeks running into the Culgoa from the south, and by running the fence inland into Queensland for about five miles and striking across to the finger-post on the Curriwildi Run, a short distance of twenty-three miles, it will save the crossing of nine creeks, and a great deal of expense. I hope that the hon. gentleman will accept that suggestion. I find that, in the report by Mr. Hume, under the heading of "Rabbit Fence," he says:—

"In concluding this branch of my subject I would draw attention to the fact that the department are not in possession of any reliable knowledge of the precise localities in New South Wales near our border, where the rabbits exist in large numbers, or in what numbers they are now approaching."

That is important information to get, and I can suggest to the Minister for Lands how we can get that information very easily, and without expense to the colony. At Mungindi, Texas, Curriwildi, and Barrington there are gentlemen employed by the Government to inspect stock, and there are also Custom-house officers placed out there to see what dutiable goods come over the border. Those gentlemen are in the habit of travelling along the border, and if they were specially appointed as rabbit inspectors they could not have better opportunities for getting information with regard to the advance of the rabbits than they at present have. I would suggest to the Minister for Lands that he should appoint those gentlemen as rabbit inspectors, and get from them monthly reports giving all the information they can upon this question. If this is done the department will be put in possession of the places on the border which are most likely to be first attacked by the pest, and will be able to give contracts for the erection of fences at those places. It is known that when rabbits are approaching in full force, by putting people amongst them to kill them they spread, and it is also a fact that where they are in small numbers their natural enemies are better able to keep them down. On this account I have another suggestion to make to the Minister for Lands, and it is this: If the rabbits show signs of coming across the border near the Bulloo and elsewhere, and if he appoints these Custom-house officers and stock inspectors as rabbit inspectors, he might empower them to engage the blacks in that country to assist in destroying the rabbits. They can be got to do the work for rations and a very small amount of remuneration for skins produced. I know the blacks in that country, where I have lived for many years, and they are a smart, intelligent, quick people; and this would be most congenial employment for them. These are suggestions which I think might well be acted upon. I do not wish to keep the House at this late hour, but I am glad that the question has come up for discussion, and as I have been in that border part of

the country for many years, if I can be of any use and can give any information about this matter at any time I shall be very happy to do so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—I certainly regret that the hon. member for Barcoo in bringing this question forward should have gone so much into details. His speech must have been rather wearisome to many members of the House, who do not take a particular interest in this matter, and who would have been glad to listen to him probably, and would have been more convinced of the real danger ahead, if he had concentrated the matter in his speech.

Mr. MURPHY: I am sorry to hear that there is any member in the House who does not take an interest in it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member must know that the articles which he read have previously been read by almost every member who takes any interest whatever in the subject.

Mr. MURPHY: I am quite sure that they were not read.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Every member in the House is more or less acquainted with the magnitude of the rabbit question in New South Wales, and I must say myself that the reports of those newspaper men are a good deal exaggerated.

Mr. MURPHY: I expected that from you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A good many of them go out to write sensational reports; and I do not feel inclined to swallow everything that is said about it, especially when it comes from a newspaper reporter who travels about the country and is open to be stuffed with everything people like to tell him. There is no denying that the pest is bad enough in New South Wales, and when the hon. member for Fassfern gets up and says that we have nothing to fear, because rabbits turned out here have invariably been destroyed, he is simply talking nonsense. In spite of the many difficulties small animals have to contend against, and in spite of the steps taken for their destruction, the rabbit has got a footing in New South Wales, has become acclimatised, and now exists there in millions. I must confess that I deluded myself into the hope that the hon. gentleman would suggest some way of dealing with the question more effectually, but he has not done that. He complains that the work of fencing has not been pushed on fast enough; but he must know that there have been great difficulties in the way. At first the weather was so dry that nothing could be done, and then the country was so flooded that the men could not get to work.

Mr. MURPHY: Why not go on with the eastern portion?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We never had the slightest intention of going eastward. When in Sydney I saw the Minister for Mines of New South Wales, to whose department the matter belongs, and he assured me that they intended to join our fence with a fence from Bourke.

Mr. ALLAN: The rabbits are inside that already.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We know they are. But there is no report of any more than those five seen some time ago. I sent a man to collect all the information he could in that instance, but he could get no information whatever of any more rabbits in the locality.

Mr. MURPHY: Was it Golden?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was Mr. Plunkett.

Mr. MURPHY: He is like Golden.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He is as smart a man as you are. If the rabbits were so near to the Queensland border in that direction, I think the pastoralists who affect to feel so deeply—and, I hope, do feel deeply—on the question would have communicated any information as to the existence of rabbits to the Government.

Mr. MURPHY: Have they not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They have not. Up to the time I left the department nothing had been heard by Mr. Plunkett of the existence of any rabbits, beyond the five in the locality to which I have referred. They were all young ones, and they were killed. Some people are under the impression that they were taken there, but I do not think that; I do not believe that people carry rabbits about with a view to spreading them over the country. As soon as a report was made that rabbits had been seen close to the border towards South Australia, I employed an old squatter, Mr. Dickson, to go down and see what he could do towards their destruction, and report on the existence of others supposed to be in the neighbourhood. Mr. Dickson was selected by myself as specially fitted for the work.

Mr. MURPHY: So was Golden.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I considered him specially fitted because he is a keen sportsman and a good hand at managing the blacks—a very essential qualification. He did find a small colony of nine or ten on the Bulloo Lake, a short distance inside the border, and he killed them. And those he believed to be all that were established there. After staying therewith a number of blacks whom he employed to assist him, he heard a rumour of rabbits being on the Caiwarroo Run, about 130 miles north or north-west of Hungerford, but he was not able to discover any there, nor could he find anyone who was able to state as a fact that he had seen rabbits there. I think he found two or three in another part of the Bulloo Downs Run, and they were all in that part of the country. He was not prepared to say that there were no more—no one could say that no matter how smart he was—but he could get no information of the existence of rabbits, either from the lessees or their servants. That was the last report I received from Mr. Dickson. As to the fence, the reason why it was not extended eastward beyond the third section was because we hoped to arrange matters with the New South Wales Government, so that the fence might be taken from Cuttaburra to Bourke; but they know that we must go on far enough to meet their fence, no matter in what direction they take it. My hon. colleague will, I presume, push on the work to join the New South Wales fence as rapidly as possible, and arrangements have been made with the lessees of runs to utilise fences already in existence, simply attaching the wire-netting to them. I am in hopes that by putting on a little pressure the two and a-half sections in that direction may be up before the rabbits reach our border.

Mr. MURPHY: Then we shall want an inner line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You have to get an outer one first. I understood the hon. member to say that the fence ought to be taken right along our southern boundary to the South Australian border. I believe it would be practically impossible to maintain that fence on our border line. You may leave part of the colony outside the fence; and before I left the Lands Office I cut off the extreme western corner, because I thought it would be perfectly hopeless to try and get the fence completed in time. I only regret that I

did not turn off before they got to the range. Another difficulty would be that before we could reach our border again there is a group of sandstone ridges, which it would be practically impossible to get the fence across, and we would have to go round. However, by keeping more to the west we avoid those sandstone ridges. Now, once Cooper's Creek is crossed, and the fence is extended, we ought to try to cut off a corner of South Australia; we would have to take some country from them, and give them a large piece of our own further on. Then, if it is to be extended further along the border line, we should have to keep to the watershed of the creeks. When we get into such a network of anabranches as on the lower Cooper's Creek, or even the Lower Diamantina, the rabbit fence would be practically valueless. The currents are not bad, but the drift, such as it is, would necessitate putting up the fence after almost every flood that occurs. A telegram has been put into my hands which was received from Mr. Dickson before I left the Lands Office, giving information about rabbits that were said to have been seen about thirty miles inside our territory—he does not specify where—in some rocky, broken scrub—extremely difficult country indeed. There are small caves in the sandstone, and a small colony of rabbits were supposed to have established themselves there. He had not seen any, but he was told they were there; and if they had to be dealt with, he recommended that some bisulphide of carbon should be sent out, as he could not shoot them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was sent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I daresay that would enable him to deal with them. Now, when the hon. member said that only seventy miles of fence had been actually completed I do not think he was quite right.

Mr. MURPHY: I said west of Hungerford.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was one break in the fence across a lake, where it was impossible to put the fence up. The fence was taken into the water, so that the rabbits could not pass without swimming across a large expanse of comparatively shallow water, and I do not think there is any danger of that if it is watched carefully. Of course, as soon as the water is low enough to enable the fence to be joined it will be done, but it is practically a barrier now. I think that the Government have done everything that they could possibly have done. I do not feel perfectly confident of the result, still I maintain this House and the country are justified in approving of our efforts to shut the rabbits out. To sit down and let them overrun the country would be a most miserable thing to do. Whether what we have done succeeds or not, it was the best thing we could do, and the only thing we knew how to do; and if the fence is to be extended I only hope the country will see the necessity of doing it, and of so apportioning the burden that will necessarily fall on somebody or other as to make it as light as possible on those who are indirectly interested in the matter. The main part of it must fall on those most directly interested.

Mr. MURPHY: That is the whole community.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot say that it is the whole community. I can understand that everybody is interested, whatever their occupations are, but it is very hard indeed to make a large section of the community feel that they are directly or indirectly interested in dealing with this pest. The danger and difficulty and mischief arising from it are too far away in the future for them to realise the

losses they must sustain; so that I do not see any help whatever for the future extension of the fence as well as for bearing the cost of maintaining that which is already erected, except by asking those who are directly interested in these matters to bear the whole cost of the work. I do not think there is any other chance of dealing with it. There are many places in the inside districts where people will say that if rabbits are brought there it is a matter of indifference to them, because the natural enemies of the rabbit are carefully preserved to keep at bay an enemy almost as dangerous—the marsupial. I look upon that as a sort of glimmer of hope for the future. There was a time in the Central districts of Queensland when I believe the country was in an infinitely worse state from the ravages of marsupials than any part of New South Wales is now from rabbits. A great many parts of the district would hardly keep a sheep or a cow. I know that on my own place I could hardly keep a small milking herd, where I am now able to keep 10,000 or 12,000 head of cattle.

Mr. MURPHY: All through the marsupials?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, they had taken possession of the whole country; it was absolutely worthless, eaten out root and branch; and yet within two years after they were at their very worst they disappeared, so that you would not see one in a week's ride, or even the track of one on black-soil country after rain. I do not know that the same thing is likely to happen with rabbits, but it is a sort of glimmer of hope I have.

Mr. DONALDSON: When it gets to the worst?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When there is no room for anything else in the country, if it ever does reach that point. I only hope the same thing may result as with the marsupials—that they will eat themselves out or die out suddenly, having exhausted their natural vitality. However, I do not think it would have been a right or proper thing under the circumstances to sit down and pray for anything of that kind. The Government did everything they possibly could. They pushed on the work, in spite of what the hon. member for Barcoo has said, with all the speed possible. We have had a very energetic and active man supervising the work, and I am quite satisfied from his report, as well as from my own knowledge of work that has been conducted elsewhere under similar climatic conditions during the last eighteen months, that the work could not have been any further ahead if we had had double the number of men. We could not possibly have got it up faster than has been the case.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Barcoo has been reproved for having occupied the time of the House by reading lengthy quotations. That hon. member certainly gave to the House a great deal of information which it did not possess before; and I only wish the Minister for Works had followed his example, and read us something that would have been as interesting, instead of maundering away in his usual drivelling style, saying the same thing over and over again, and after all giving us very little information. All credit is due to the hon. member for Barcoo for having gone so thoroughly and exhaustively into the subject, and when hon. members read his speech to-morrow they will see that what has happened to the adjoining colony may, and probably will, happen to us unless strong measures are taken to prevent the evil coming upon us. They will consider that he did not in any way waste the time of the House, but that, on the

contrary, he has opened the eyes of many hon. members on the other side who have not yet had an opportunity of gauging the immensity of the evil with which we are threatened. Having the example of New South Wales before us, I sincerely hope that we shall take time by the forelock. From the Estimates of New South Wales I notice that at the present time the taxpayers of that colony—not the pastoral tenants, but the general taxpayers—are contributing something like £93,000 towards the destruction of rabbits. And we can only avoid any such great expenditure in the future by judicious expenditure now. I was very much surprised to hear the Minister for Works say he had no intention of making the line suggested by the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Allan. It is a line which is highly necessary. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that although five rabbits have been found there it is not likely that there are any more. When Mr. Golden went to New South Wales he said he did not believe there were any. The Minister for Works may say what he likes, but it does not follow that there are not any amount of rabbits there. It is beyond question, from information which is or ought to be in the possession of the Government, that there are large quantities of rabbits to the north and east of the line constructed by the New South Wales Government. An enormous advantage would be gained by extending the line, because it would give a double line of fencing which I believe is almost essential to permanently check the advance of the rabbits. I have no wish to carp at what the Government have done. I believe they have had very considerable difficulties to contend against. All I say is that, having begun the work, let it be done thoroughly. The strength of a chain is its weakest link, and if we leave a gap in one rabbit fence we might just as well have no fence at all. I hope the Government will see their way to spend a considerable amount on an eastern fence; it will have to go further to the east to prevent rabbits getting in nearer to our seaboard, although possibly there is not so much danger there as a little further west. The Minister for Lands,—I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon, I mean the Minister for Works—there have been so many transpositions and changes in the Ministry that I cannot be held responsible for the mistake, but he has been more notorious as Minister for Lands than he has yet made himself as Minister for Works,—the Minister for Works said there was a glimmer of hope that rabbits would disappear in the same way that marsupials had disappeared from the Central district. But there is an Act on our Statute-book, called the Marsupials Destruction Act, which, I imagine, had a great deal to do with that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not at all.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Well, that is the opinion of ninety-nine men out of every hundred who know anything about it. I know the Minister for Works is a great believer in interpositions of Providence—that Providence does a special business on the hon. member's account, even going so far as to destroy marsupials without any act of man at all—but I hold that the Marsupials Destruction Act had more to do with it than anything else. There may have been other causes, but that Act did the business. However, I am not going to detain the House longer at this late hour, and I sincerely trust that the Government and the House, having put their hand to the plough, in the direction of trying to prevent the introduction of this pest into Queensland, will not pause in the good work, and will accept any suggestions that may be made by men with knowledge as to the best

strategic points at which to keep out the invader. We have possibly spent a more profitable evening in dealing with our invaders than if we had been dealing with our defenders; and to prevent this particular invasion is a matter of the supremest importance to the entire colony.

Mr. LALOR said: Mr. Speaker,—The subject of repelling the threatened invasion of rabbits is one in which I and my constituents take the deepest interest, and it is an almost unanimous opinion in my electorate that the rabbit-proof fence should be extended much further to the eastward than was at first contemplated. On this subject I will read a resolution which was passed some time ago at a meeting of the Western Agricultural and Pastoral Association at Roma:—

“That this association desires to impress upon the Government the necessity for vigorously carrying on the erection of the rabbit-proof fence between New South Wales and Queensland, and that such fence should be extended east from Barrington for about 100 miles as soon as possible.”

Indeed, I would go so far as to say that it should be extended in that direction for at least 400 miles. Unless something of that kind is done a dangerous gap will be left open, and, according to all accounts, it will not be long before they are over our border there. I have only one further remark to make, and that is, that I was sorry to hear the hon. member for Barcoo speak disparagingly about one of the men, Mr. Plunkett, sent by this Government to look after the erection of the fence. In my opinion the Government could not have chosen a better man.

Mr. DONALDSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I take a great deal of interest in this question, and I should have liked to say something upon it. But the hour is late, and I prefer not to speak to empty benches, or to keep the few members who are present longer from their homes. It is now 11 o'clock, and quite time we adjourned.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—It is not worth while going into Supply this evening, and with the permission of the House I will withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly, and, on the motion of the PREMIER, made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: I move that this House do now adjourn. Supply will be the first business to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

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