

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 1887**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 4 October, 1887.

Petition.—Questions.—Question without Notice.—Personal Explanation.—Valuation Bill.—Consideration of Report from the Clerk of the Parliaments.—Divisional Boards Bill No. 2.—Question of Privilege.—Electoral Districts Bill.—committee.—Adjournment.

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

## PETITION.

Mr. PALMER presented a petition from the Carpentaria Divisional Board, praying the House to make arrangements for the holding of the divisional elections in some of the districts of that part of the colony at some specific time between the months of June and October, as, in consequence of the annual elections being held in January or February, when the country in ordinary seasons was more or less flooded, large numbers of electors were disfranchised. He said that the petition was similar to one he had presented some days ago, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

## QUESTIONS.

Mr. JESSOP asked the Minister for Works—

1. What has been the cost of all the surveys of the proposed *via recta* from various points on the Southern and Western Railway to Warwick, incurred at the instance of the Warwick Progress Association or any other person or persons?

2. How far is the survey towards Goondiwindi and St. George completed, and is the surveyor still at work?

3. Is it the intention of the Government to continue the survey on that route?

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

1. Between Harrisville and Warwick—trial—£1,025 1s. 8d.

Rosewood towards Warwick—trial and permanent—£1,606 7s. 11d.

Swan Creek route—trials survey made at instance of Warwick Progress Association—£196 14s. 4d.

Spicer's Peak Road Gap to Warwick, £1,242 18s. 6d.

Spicer's Peak Road Gap to Mumbilla—preliminary and detailed trial survey—£1,616 8s. 3d.

Spicer's Peak Road Gap to Mumbilla—permanent—£88 18s. 7d. Total, £5,776 9s. 3d.

2. The permanent survey is completed to Thane's Creek, 24 miles 50½ chains, and the trial survey is completed to about 55 miles from Warwick. The survey parties recently employed on that line have been transferred to other surveys.

3. Not at present.

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

Does the amount of Robb and Co.'s tender, as published, £291,000, include the item of the supply of concrete for piers to bridges?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

The item of cement concrete in bridge piers is not included with the items making up the sum of John Robb's tender, as prices were only asked for this item as a guide in the event of its being substituted for timber in bridge piers.

## QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish, without notice, to ask the Minister for Works if he has any further information in regard to the timber being used on the Cairns-Herberton railway bridges?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall have no definite information beyond what I have already given the hon. member, until I receive a detailed explanation by post. So far as I remember, I gave the hon. member the latest information I had on the matter.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to make a personal explanation. I have not been reading the papers very much lately, having been otherwise engaged; but my attention was called only a few hours ago to some remarks made in another place, in reference to myself, in connection with some land-orders. I will read what is reported to have been said there by the Hon. A. C. Gregory:—

“When our present Minister for Lands was returning to the colony, after having fulfilled his duties as immigration agent, he was able to obtain land-orders for himself and his family as an immigrant. As the law stood at the time he was quite right to take what he could get. I am not in any way criticising what he did, because I believe I would have done the same thing myself if I were in the same position.”

The law then stood, Mr. Speaker, very much as it is now—that persons who had paid their passages in full, and who had not been in the colony before, could claim a land-order. I was in this position: A number of my children had been born in England—I was not administering the Immigration Act at that time, as I resigned my office about fifteen months before—and, of course, I received land-orders for the children born there, they not having resided in the colony. That was quite within the law; and especially as I received no allowance for bringing myself and family back to the colony, I considered that I had a perfect right to act within the law, and the land-orders were issued to me by the gentleman in charge of the office without the slightest question. I never received them for myself or my wife, but only for my children who were born in England, and for one servant whose passage I paid in full.

## VALUATION BILL.

## CONSIDERATION OF REPORT FROM THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith), the House went into Committee of the Whole to consider a report on this Bill from the Clerk of the Parliaments.

The PREMIER said the Clerk of the Parliaments had pointed out, according to the 20th Joint Standing Order, two clerical errors in the Bill—one in clause 11, where the word “board” was used in place of the words “local authority,” and another—the same mistake—in clause 18. The term “local authority” was the proper term to use, because the Bill dealt with municipalities as well as with divisional boards. He moved that in the 11th clause, line 5, page 4, the word “board” be omitted, with the view of inserting the words “local authority.”

Mr. ADAMS said he did not know whether the present was the proper time or not, but he might say that he had received a letter—in fact, several letters—asking certain questions in reference to the Bill. His correspondents were not satisfied with the answer he had given; and therefore, now the Bill was before the Committee again, he desired to read the letter, in order that the Premier might give an answer. The letter was this:—

“What would be the position of a board?”—

Mr. LUMLEY HILL rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member for Mulgrave in order?

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot tell what the hon. member was about to read.

Mr. ADAMS said it was not the first time the hon. gentleman had risen to a point of order unnecessarily. If he chose he could move the adjournment of the House to draw attention to

the subject he wished to bring forward, but he was of opinion that it would save time if he read the letter now, and the Premier gave an answer. The letter ran as follows:—

“What would be the position of a board or its members under the new Bill in the following circumstances: Suppose a gentleman gets hurt on one of our roads. He takes action against us, and gets £1,000 damages?”—

The PREMIER: You are thinking of the next Bill—the Divisional Boards Bill.

Mr. ADAMS said he would bring the matter up again at the proper time.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER moved the omission of the word “board,” in clause 18, line 28, with the view of inserting the words “local authority.”

Amendment put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported the amendments to the House.

The report was adopted.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Bill was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council, with a message inviting their concurrence in the amendments suggested by the Clerk of the Parliaments.

## DIVISIONAL BOARDS BILL No. 2.

## QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.

The SPEAKER said: Several hon. members have called my attention to certain amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Divisional Boards Bill, being under the impression that the other branch of the Legislature have gone beyond their rights and privileges in making amendments, and in inserting money clauses. I desire to inform those hon. members that such is not the case. I have most carefully gone through the whole of the amendments made by the Legislative Council, and I find that they are quite in harmony with what this House has always conceded. The 268th Standing Order says:—

“With respect to any Bill brought to this House from the Legislative Council, or returned by the Legislative Council to this House, with amendments, whereby any pecuniary penalty, forfeiture, or fee shall be authorised, imposed, appropriated, regulated, varied, or extinguished, this House will not insist on its privileges in the following cases:—

“1. When the object of such pecuniary penalty or forfeiture is to secure the execution of the Act, or the punishment or prevention of offences.

“2. Where such fees are imposed in respect of benefit taken or service rendered under the Act, and in order to the execution of the Act, and are not made payable into the Treasury, or in aid of the public revenue, and do not form the ground of public accounting by the parties receiving the same, either in respect of deficit or surplus.

“3. When such Bill shall be a private Bill for a local or personal Act.”

The principal amendment made by the other branch of the Legislature is a new clause which imposes a penalty of £200. That penalty is not paid into the consolidated revenue; it goes to the person who lays the information. Consequently the amendment comes within the 2nd section of the Standing Order—

“Where such fees are imposed in respect of benefit taken or service rendered under the Act, and in order to the execution of the Act, and are not made payable into the Treasury.”

All the amendments, therefore, made by the other branch of the Legislature in the Divisional Boards Bill are quite consistent with their rights and privileges, and do not in any way infringe on the rights and privileges of the Legislative Assembly.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill.

On clause 15, as follows:—

"Every male person of the age of twenty-one years who is a natural-born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty, and who is a ratepayer of a division, and is not under any of the disabilities hereinafter specified, shall be qualified to be elected and to act as a member of the board of such division, but so long only as he continues to hold such qualification.

"Provided that no person shall be qualified to be elected unless before noon seven clear days before the day of nomination all sums then due in respect of any rates upon land within the division for the payment of which he is liable have been paid.

"And provided that any male person of the age aforesaid who is a natural-born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty, and is an occupier or owner of rateable land within the division, and is not under any of the disabilities hereinafter specified, shall be qualified to be elected and to act as a member of the first board of the division.

"When a division is subdivided it is not necessary that the qualification should arise in respect of land within the subdivision for which the member is elected."

The PREMIER said, the first amendment made by the Legislative Council in that clause was the insertion of the words "of the age of twenty-one years" after the word "person," in the 1st line. There could be no objection to that amendment, and he moved that it be agreed to.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked whether that clause prohibited Asiatic or African aliens who had become naturalised from becoming members of boards?

The PREMIER said the clause did not prevent such persons from becoming members of boards. They discussed that question at considerable length when the Bill was going through committee. The amendment did not affect the question in the slightest degree. It only required that a person, before being elected as a member of a board, must be twenty-one years of age.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I think it is very undesirable that Chinamen should be allowed to become members of boards.

The PREMIER: So do I.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I think it is very undesirable, and that we ought to take steps to prevent it.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER said the second amendment in that clause raised a question upon which there might perhaps be some difference of opinion. The scheme of the Bill as agreed to by that Committee was that no person should be qualified to be elected as a member of a board unless he had paid all rates due by him before noon on the day of nomination. The amendment proposed by the Council was that they should be paid seven clear days before the day of nomination, the object being, as he understood it, to allow more time to ascertain whether a person was eligible to vote by having paid his rates, and also to give sufficient time to prepare a list of ratepayers for the poll afterwards. In that Committee the question had been raised as to whether the rates should not be required to be paid by the 31st December, but no such compromise was suggested as that now proposed by the Council. He was disposed to think that there could be no objection to the amendment, and would move that it be agreed to.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the Bill was better as it stood. He did not see why a person should be debarred from being elected a member of a board unless he had paid his rates seven clear days before the day of nomination. If he paid them on the day of nomination that was quite sufficient, and therefore he thought they should not agree to the amendment proposed by the Council.

The PREMIER said he did not profess to have had any experience in the practical working of divisional boards. Probably those members of the Committee who had had experience might assist them in coming to a conclusion. He did not see that it made much difference whether the rates were paid on the day of nomination or seven clear days before.

Mr. MELLOR said that in his opinion the Bill was better as it stood than it would be with the amendment proposed by the Legislative Council. He did not see what object could be gained by the amendment, except that it might sometimes debar really good men from being elected members of boards. He thought that any person should have the privilege of paying his rates up to the day of nomination, in order to make himself eligible for election.

Mr. NELSON said he was quite sure that in the country districts the clause would work much better as it originally stood. If it was to be amended as was now proposed, persons would be excluded from coming forward at the last moment. He was in favour of retaining the clause as it stood.

Mr. KATES said he thought the clause should remain as originally passed. They should give as much time for the payment of rates as possible. The clause worked very well as it stood, and he thought people should have an opportunity to pay up on the last day.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he hoped the Premier would not adhere to the amendment. Why should seven days be selected instead of fourteen or twenty-eight? He thought the clause was very much better as passed by the Committee.

Mr. BUCKLAND said the clause as it stood was all that was required. It would be very hard if ratepayers were not allowed to pay up on the day of nomination, and it might be inconvenient for many of them to find the money seven clear days before the day of nomination. The clause as it stood was very much better than as amended.

Amendment put and negatived.

The PREMIER moved that the Legislative Council's amendment on line 31, substituting "division" for "district," be agreed to. It did not matter which word was used, although "district" was strictly correct.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Legislative Council's amendments in lines 33 and 35 were agreed to.

On clause 28, as follows:—

"The following shall be the qualification of voters at elections of members or auditors:—

"Every person, whether male or female, of the full age of twenty-one years, whose name appears in the rate-book of the division as of the occupier or owner of rateable land within the division, shall, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, be entitled to vote in respect of such land, and each such person shall be entitled to the number of votes following, that is to say:—

If the land, whether consisting of one or more tenements, is liable to be rated upon an annual value of less than fifty pounds, he shall have one vote;

If such value amounts to fifty pounds and is less than one hundred pounds, he shall have two votes;

And if it amounts to or exceeds one hundred pounds, he shall have three votes.

"When a division is subdivided, every person entitled to vote shall be so entitled for every subdivision wherein any rateable land in respect of which he is so entitled is situated.

"Provided that no person shall be entitled to vote unless seven clear days before the day of nomination all sums then due in respect of any rates upon all land within the division for the payment of which he is liable have been paid.

"And provided also that no person shall be allowed to give more than three votes at any election for a division or subdivision.

"Provided, nevertheless, that the owner and occupier shall not both be entitled to vote in respect of the same land. When the rates have been paid by the occupier he shall be entitled to vote and not the owner, but if the rates have not been paid by the occupier within sixty days after demand made as hereinafter prescribed and the owner pays the same, the owner shall be entitled to vote."

The PREMIER said the first amendment in that clause followed upon the amendment in clause 15, which had been disagreed to. He herefore moved that it be disagreed to.

Amendment disagreed to.

The PREMIER said that in the next amendment the Council proposed to strike out the words "the land in respect whereof he claims to vote," and to insert the words "all land within the division for the payment of which he is liable have been paid." That raised a very important question, and it was discussed very fully by the Committee both this year and last year. The original scheme was that no man should be entitled to vote if there were any rates in the whole division for which he was liable and which were unpaid, but the scheme which was agreed to after full consideration was that the vote was attached to the land, and that if in respect to any piece of land the rates had been paid, the owner or occupier was entitled to vote, otherwise this might happen, as had been pointed out: A man might be the landlord of several properties, the rates on which were paid by his tenants; one tenant might neglect to pay before noon of the day of nomination, and the landlord would be entirely disfranchised for that election. He did not see any sufficient reason for that. The occupier was the person primarily entitled to vote, and if he did not pay the rates on one property he did not see why the landlord should be deprived of his vote for all other properties? He moved that the amendment be disagreed to.

Mr. SALKELD said it appeared to him that a disqualification still existed under clause 15.

The PREMIER: That applies to members. A member must not be in arrears.

Mr. SALKELD said the landlord's tenant might be under agreement to pay, and if he did not pay the rates, then the landlord would be disqualified.

Mr. ALAND said he thought it very possible that a person might be a property owner in a division, and might purposely pay all the rates on one particular piece of property rated at a low figure and not pay the rates on another, and then claim to vote. He might own properties none of which were let to tenants, and might pay on one property and not on the other for a purpose, and claim to exercise his vote.

Mr. NELSON said the clause was not intended as a clause for the recovery of rates, but that was the use the hon. member seemed to think it was intended for. There was a proper way to recover rates. They were merely defining what the qualification for a vote was to be, and if a person had

complied with the requirements contained in the original clause he was entitled to vote. He thought the clause should remain as it was passed.

Mr. MORGAN said that while the hon. member for Northern Downs was quite right in saying that that clause was not inserted in order to enable the local authority to recover rates due, it still formed a part of what was perhaps about the best machinery in the Bill to enable the local authorities to get in their revenue regularly and promptly, by depriving persons, who did not pay their rates on properties within the division at a certain time, of the right to vote. As he had pointed out when the Bill was before the Committee on a former occasion, if the clause was allowed to pass in the form in which it had left that Chamber they would soon see the effect of it in the large aggregation of arrears of rates in the various divisions. As to the point raised by the Premier, if a landlord had a number of properties in a division, his proper course, in order to protect himself, was to have them rated in the names of his tenants; then their default would not injure him in the manner complained of.

The PREMIER: Yes, it would.

Mr. MORGAN said the landlord could be made liable for the ultimate payment of the rates, he knew, but he would not be deprived of the right to vote.

The PREMIER: He would under the proposed amendment.

Mr. MORGAN said if that were so it was a matter upon which the provision embodied in the Local Government Act was an improvement upon the Bill before them. Under the Local Government Act, where a landlord had properties in a municipality, rated in the names of his tenants, the tenants could be proceeded against for the rates, and if the local authority could not obtain redress from them by reason of their having no means, the landlord in that eventuality could be proceeded against; but that did not deprive him of the right to vote.

The PREMIER said if the proposed amendment was agreed to it might prevent the owner from having any vote. If a man had one piece of property and paid his rates on it, he should be entitled to vote, and if he had another piece of property on which the tenant was supposed to pay the rates and neglected to do so, the landlord should not on that account be deprived of his right to vote in respect of the first property. Why should the right to vote to which a man was entitled in respect of one piece of property depend upon what happened in respect of another? That was what would happen under the proposed amendment, and they might just as well say that he should be deprived of his right to vote in one electorate on account of something which might happen in respect to his right to vote in another.

Mr. McMASTER said that, as a matter of fact, under the Local Government Act if a man's tenants neglected to pay their rates he would be responsible for the rates himself. The hon. member for Warwick seemed to contend that it would not disqualify the owner from voting if one of his tenants neglected to pay up his rates; but it would disqualify him; it would prevent him from having a vote, and it would also prevent him from standing as a candidate.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought the clause as it stood had rather a tendency to give a monopoly in the way of voting to the landlord. The matter was very fairly discussed in committee before, and he was inclined to think that if the Legislative Council's amendment was carried it would do away with that. What had been pointed out by the hon. member for Toowoomba was really very likely to happen. A person

might choose to pay the rates on one piece of property for a purpose, and claim the right to vote, and yet neglect to pay the rates on other properties. He rather thought the amendment was an improvement upon the Bill.

Mr. SALKELD said they had already passed a clause disqualifying a man from becoming a candidate under certain conditions, and that was far more serious than to disqualify a man from voting. There was no doubt, if the amendment was adopted, that it would have a good effect in the way of getting rates paid up that would not otherwise be paid up. He would much rather that the other clause to which he referred was altered than the one under discussion.

The PREMIER said there was this difference in the matter. It was not desirable that a man should be a member of a board who was in debt to the board. He might be elected chairman, and might not take any measures to recover the debt from himself. In the case of an elector it might happen that he would be accidentally disfranchised because of certain rates not being paid. It might cause also a very great deal of trouble in the compilation of the ratepayers' list. Supposing a man had six properties, five of which he let to tenants, and occupied the other himself. He might pay the rates on the one he occupied, and his name would appear on the ratepayers' list as the person entitled to vote; but before the board could make up the list they would have to go through the whole list and see that the rates were paid up on all the other properties, and they would have to be assured that all the rates were paid in respect of all the properties owned by him, before his name could be put upon the list. If the amendment were carried, therefore, the work of making up the list would be extremely complicated.

Mr. PATTISON said he had always contended that a tenant should have the right to vote. It appeared that the amendment, as proposed by the Legislative Council, would prevent the landlord having a vote if the tenant did not choose to pay his rates. He thought it would be a mistake to agree to the Legislative Council's amendment. The tenant should certainly be considered in the matter of voting, but, by the Council's amendment, neither the tenant nor the landlord was considered. He would vote against the amendment.

Mr. SCOTT said that according to the amendment it would appear that the more property a man had, the less chance he had of securing a vote. A man might have two or three pieces of property, and be able to get two or three votes; but a man who had twenty different properties in a division might lose the right to vote because the tenant of one did not choose to pay up his rates.

Mr. MELLOR said he did not see it in that light. Hon. members were speaking now of special elections, not general.

The PREMIER: All elections.

Mr. MELLOR said the owner of a property had the right, within sixty days after the demand was made for the rates, of paying up the money if the tenant refused to pay it, and the owner could then claim the right to vote in respect of that property. Plenty of time was therefore given to the owner to protect himself in that respect. He thought the amendment a desirable one to adopt.

Mr. PATTISON said he did not agree with the hon. member for Wide Bay, and he could not understand why the neglect on the part of the tenant to pay up the rates in respect of certain pieces of property should deprive the owner of the right to vote in respect of other properties upon which he might have paid up the rates.

Question put and passed.

On the Legislative Council's amendment to omit from lines 41, 42, and 43 of clause 28, the words "notwithstanding that he is entitled to a larger number of votes in respect of land within the division or subdivision"—

The PREMIER said the amendment did not make any difference to the meaning of the clause, although he thought the words had the effect of rendering it clearer. He moved that it be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the Legislative Council's amendment, in line 47 of the same clause, after the word "occupier" to insert the words "within sixty days after demand made as hereinafter prescribed"—

The PREMIER said the effect of the amendment would be that, as at present, the occupier would have sixty days to pay the rates, but he could not, until the expiration of that time, be deprived of his vote by the owner stepping in and paying them for him. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the Legislative Council's amendment in line 31 of clause 31, after the word "division" to insert the words "or any subdivision thereof"—

The PREMIER said the amendment met an obvious omission in the original Bill, and he moved that it be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the Legislative Council's amendment in line 6, clause 41, to add the words—

"Provided that the Governor in Council may direct that the election in any division shall be held in the month of July instead of January. When any such direction is given, the members of the board who would go out of office at the conclusion of any annual election in January, shall continue in office until the conclusion of the election in the month of July following."

"Any such direction may be given at any time after the passing of this Act."

The PREMIER said the clause as it originally stood provided for the annual elections being held in January. To that matter the attention of the House had been called since the Bill left the Assembly by two petitions—one from the Cloncurry Divisional Board, and one from another Northern board—to the effect that on account of its being the wet season there it would be extremely inconvenient to hold the elections in January, and pointing out that the month of July would be more convenient. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. ADAMS said he thought that would be the proper time to bring forward the matter which he had previously mentioned when he was out of order. He would therefore, with the permission of the Committee, read the following communication which he had received:—

"What would be the position of a board or its members under the new Bill in the following circumstances: Suppose a gentleman gets hurt on one of our roads. He takes action against us, and gets £1,000 damages, to which may be added £600 law costs, or a total of £1,600. Suppose, also, that our board have only £200 cash at the time. Our rates come to £300, so that we can only borrow that amount, or a total of £500, towards paying the £1,600. Where is the deficit of £1,100 to come from?"

"1. Will the Government lend the money to the board, and on what terms?"

"2. If not, can the board go insolvent, and pay with a dividend of, say, 6s. in the £1?"

"3. If neither of these can be done, are the members of the board to be personally liable?"

"As this is a case which may happen at any time, if it necessary it should be settled, and if there is to be a liability on the members of the boards, it is only just that they should know of it."

That was a letter he had that day received. Several communications on the subject had passed between himself and his constituents; but they did not seem satisfied with his replies, and it was therefore thought that he should bring the matter forward in committee, so that the Premier might, if he thought fit, for the benefit of the large number of boardsmen, give them some idea as to what would be done in the case stated.

The PREMIER said that, as to the third question, the members of the board would not be liable personally for a debt of the board. He could not give an answer to the other two questions, no case of that kind having yet arisen. Probably the plaintiff would collect the board's rates under legal process. Of course, if the members of the board illegally spent money they would render themselves personally liable for repayment.

Question put and passed.

On the Legislative Council's amendment to clause 51—to omit the words—

"Any such direction may be given at any time after the passing of this Act, and any such direction given before the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight, shall take effect on and after that day"—

with the view of inserting the following—

"Provided nevertheless that in any division in which voting by post is in force at the passing of this Act, the poll shall be taken in the mode prescribed in Part VI. of this Act, unless and until the Governor in Council, on the petition of the board, or of a majority of the ratepayers of the division, or a subdivision thereof, praying that voting by post may be discontinued and voting by ballot established, directs that the poll in such division or subdivision shall thereafter be taken in the mode prescribed in Part V. of this Act, in which case it shall thereafter be taken in the division or in such subdivision in the latter mode accordingly."

The PREMIER said he should have preferred the clause as it originally stood, but as he did not think it mattered very much he was prepared to move that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 69—

The PREMIER said the first amendment of the Legislative Council in that clause was to the effect that a person applying to vote might be asked, "Are you of the full age of twenty-one years?" He saw no objection to the amendment. The second amendment was to insert "for this subdivision," which was an obvious omission. He moved that the amendments be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 70—

The PREMIER said the amendments in that clause were to the same effect as in the previous one, and moved that they be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 95—

The PREMIER said that clause as it stood provided that in the case of voting by post the name of the voter must be attested by a justice of the peace, or the returning officer, or "some other voter for the same division." Under that provision the question might arise whether a person who had not paid his rates, and was therefore not entitled to vote, would have power to attest the signature. It was therefore proposed to amend the clause by omitting "voter for the same division" and to insert "person whose name appears on the rate-book of the division as the occupier or owner of rateable land therein." That meant that a ratepayer, whether he had paid his rates or not, might attest the signature. That was the amendment as printed in the Bill, but in the message sent down from the Legislative Council, which was the only thing they could take official notice of, it was not stated in the same way. It said, "person whose name

appears on the rate-book of the division or subdivision as the occupier or owner of rateable land therein." That would necessitate the ratepayer attesting the signature being of the same subdivision as the voter, which he did not think was necessary. He therefore moved that the amendment be amended by the omission of the words "or subdivision."

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

On clause 191—

The PREMIER said that the amendment was merely verbal, substituting "division" for "district," and moved that it be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 207—

The PREMIER said the Legislative Council proposed to discontinue the practice of allowing standing timber to be cut for rates, and had amended the clause by omitting the words "standing or" and the words "cut down and." He did not know any instance of standing timber having been cut, and it did not appear of very much consequence whether the amendment was agreed to or not. For the purpose of raising discussion he moved that the amendments be agreed to.

Mr. PATTISON said he thought the matter was one that might fairly be discussed when the Bill was in committee. He thought it would be giving the boards very great power indeed if they were allowed to enter upon the property of any ratepayer who was in arrear with his rates and cut down his standing timber. They might make all sorts of paltry excuses, and in some cases might do a man serious injury; while in other cases they might do good by removing timber that was of no use. He had previously expressed himself strongly on the question, and could only repeat what he had said. As an old boardsmen, and possibly as a boardsmen in the future, he thought it was a dangerous power to place in the hands of a board.

Mr. GRIMES said the hon. member might as well say it was dangerous to give boards power to enter upon a ratepayer's property and levy upon his goods. The provision for levying upon timber growing upon an estate was intended to apply in cases where the individual was not occupying the property, and where there were no goods to levy upon. In that case they could levy upon anything standing upon the ground. Again, the provision would sometimes prevent a property from being leased by the board. If the amount of timber on the land would pay the rates for some time there would be no need to lease the property. He thought the provision a very good one.

Mr. PATTISON said he could not at all agree with the hon. member that it was a proper power to give to divisional boards. If they were to levy let it be upon a man's furniture and effects—something he could replace. They might almost as well levy upon his children as upon his living trees. The board might attach no special value to them, but to the owner they might be of great value, and that was a good reason why they should not be cut down. It would be a thing that was growing—a thing of beauty—in the one case, which could not be replaced, and in the other things that could be replaced.

Mr. FOOTE said he thought the amendment was a very good one. He did not think it would be an advantage to the divisional board to have that power, neither did he think it would improve their security, because the rates lay on the land, and if they were not paid at one time they would be at another. In many cases it would not pay the divisional boards to cut down the timber and remove it; it would cost more than the timber

would bring. The clause would only apply in the case of valuable timber, such as pine or cedar. He did not think the boards should have that power, because some of them, if they had it, might abuse it.

Mr. CHUBB said the clause did not specify what timber could be cut, and perhaps ornamental trees, planted to beautify a place, might be destroyed under it. There might be a board malicious enough, for instance, to cut down a fine row of bunya-bunyas; it was not probable, but it was quite possible. Again, the person occupying the land might be only a tenant for life who, in certain circumstances under the Settled Land Act, had no power to cut down timber. That Act provided that if there were timber fit for cutting he might obtain power to cut it. If they passed the clause it ought to be so amended as to meet only trees valuable for timber, and not ornamental trees.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he agreed with the amendment. He thought it was a very arbitrary power to give a divisional board. There were many reasons why persons did not want trees cut down, and the board might cut down the very trees that a man wanted to preserve.

Mr. GRIMES: Let him pay his rates.

Mr. MACFARLANE said a man could easily agree to pay the rates by selling timber to the divisional boards if they required it. He did not think it would be wise to give the divisional boards power to cut down perhaps valuable trees.

Mr. ADAMS said he considered the amendment was a very good one. In such seasons as the last three or four years a man who took up a selection might be hard up through the drought and unable to pay his rates. There was only a certain amount of timber that was useful for fencing and improvements, and if that were cut it would do him a very great injustice. It would be a very arbitrary power to give a board—to be able to go and select the very timber, perhaps, that a man required.

Mr. WHITE said the discussion seemed rather a curious one to him. It was very strange to see so many hon. members taking the part of a man who had land with timber growing on it, who set the board at defiance, would not pay his rates, and left nothing on the land to levy on, while his land was growing more valuable through his neighbours paying their rates, and making a road towards his land. If he wanted to preserve some trees, and could not get the board to wait till he raised the money, let him cut the timber himself and dispose of it to pay his rates. There was no reason why they should give him a chance to evade the payment of his rates.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member would see by clause 214 that the board had power to lease the land if the rates had been unpaid for four years, and after another term of years they could sell. That was a very good security for the payment of rates. He did not think the board should have power to destroy trees useful for shade, or ornamental, or fruit-trees; in fact, it would do no harm if the clause were omitted altogether.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he had no sympathy with people who did not pay their rates, but at the same time he thought the amendment was a very good one. He knew a case where the owner of a piece of land of about 300 acres was out of the colony, and the timber was sold to recover rates. It was fenced property and there was some very valuable timber on it. The rates due were something like £10, and he (Mr. Buckland) was assured that upwards of £40 worth of timber was removed from the estate, and the fence was destroyed and pulled down to get the timber out.

The man suffered to the extent of over £40. He considered that the clause gave the board too much arbitrary power, and the amendment of the Upper House was a very good one. He knew cases in the neighbourhood of Brisbane where the board had offered timber under the clauses of the Act, and had not got a bid. He admitted that it was very unreasonable for persons to leave the colony without paying their rates, but at the same time he thought the amendment of the Upper House was very much better than the original clause.

Mr. BULCOCK said he confessed he could not see the difference in value between standing timber and timber lying on the ground; and he could not see that it was worse to take timber than to take a farmer's horse. If there was no horse on the land the board could not sell the horse; if there were no cattle, the board could not sell them. If there was only standing timber there, it could not be sold. He did not see why boards should have to wait for four years before they could lease the land. In all fairness the boards ought to be allowed to take the standing timber if they could find nothing else. He was told only last week by a chairman of a divisional board that they had taken advantage of the law and had sold the standing timber to recover the rates due, and such sale induced other ratepayers to pay rates which brought in a very considerable amount; a fact which was quite sufficient to prove that they ought to have the privilege of taking that timber.

Mr. MELLOR said he really did not see the advantage of the clause at all, unless standing timber could be taken also. They might fairly give that power to boards. Boards did not distrain upon timber as a rule; but he thought they might well have the power of doing so, because they all knew that a great many selections were unfenced, and there were no improvements upon them whatever. They could not be leased even upon the expiration of four years. There was any amount of that sort of land in the colony, and boards would never be able to get their rates unless through a clause like that in the Bill.

Mr. BUCKLAND said in the case he referred to the land was fenced in, and there was some valuable pine, beech, and he was not sure that there was not cedar also upon it. For something like £8—the board's claim—upwards of £40 worth of timber was removed, besides the fence being destroyed.

Mr. GRIMES said there were numbers of instances of unoccupied lands in the various country divisions, and the boards had been able to get no rates whatever from them. It was exceedingly unfair to those who were paying their rates that absentees should get off scot-free. The clause would give boards power to sell standing timber, which was a marketable commodity, worth from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per 100 feet, and they would not have to lease the land. If they leased the land the timber would all be swept away, so that the owner would be in a still worse position.

Mr. ADAMS said there might be a few isolated cases like that referred to by the hon. member, but the hardship would come upon those who had small farms. It would not come upon those who had land at a considerable distance away. As for getting from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per 100 feet, that depended upon the distance. If the land were alongside a railway line there was not the slightest doubt that that price would be obtained; but if it were at a considerable distance it could not be sold at all. It would not pay the cost of getting it.

Mr. KATES said he would like to see the ratepayers as well as the boards protected. There might be an amendment to the clause excluding



fruit trees and ornamental trees, and all other timber up to a certain size. An owner might desire to keep the timber until it became of more value, and a malicious man connected with a board might cut down that young timber and do a great deal of damage.

The PREMIER said they could only deal with the amendment before them.

Mr. CHUBB said under the 111th clause of the Crown Lands Act the lessee of a grazing farm was prevented from cutting down the timber. He pointed that out to show that the clause would give a board power to cut timber, which was not given to Crown tenants, in order that the value of the land might not be depreciated. If they allowed boards to cut down timber, as the hon. member for Bulimba had said, £40 worth of timber might be destroyed to recover £8 worth of rates.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he did not wish to be understood to be in favour of encouraging ratepayers who were not willing to pay rates; but he would suggest to the Premier that the insertion of a word or two in the clause might meet the case. They could make it apply to land the rates on which were three years in arrears. He did not think that would be too long. If a man had just taken up a farm and had very little money, it would answer the purpose if the board could not touch the land for two or three years.

Mr. DICKSON said there seemed to be a division of opinion as to the merits of the clause. He was sorry that more attention had not been given to it before the Bill went to another place, because it seemed to him that it gave a very summary power to boards and affected property to a very serious extent. He could well understand rates being in arrears for a time, possibly owing to a member of a family—a breadwinner possibly—having met with an accident, or something of that sort. It would be very dangerous to give boards power to summarily enter property and cut down timber. Had there been a certain time fixed as had been suggested by the hon. member for Ipswich, it would have removed his objection. But it seemed a very great power to give to boards, because rates were over sixty days in arrears. He did not think boards were likely to use that power in the spirit of injuring property maliciously—he gave them credit for wiser and better administration than that; but still very serious consequences might ensue. They could not amend the clause then, and therefore he was inclined to vote against it altogether, and give boards other ways of recovering rates than by allowing them to destroy valuable timber.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it seemed extraordinary to him that a man who refused to pay his rates should receive any more consideration than a man who refused to pay his grocer's bill, or his butcher's bill, or any other debt. An hon. member had spoken of the damage done to a man's property by a divisional board entering on land and removing timber; but he would point out that when a tradesman's debt was put into the hands of a lawyer, the debtor very often had to pay quite as much for the lawyer as the amount of the debt. If a man would not pay his debts, he should be got at in some way; if his goods and chattels could not be taken, it was only right to take any trees standing on the land; and that was more considerate than waiting for four years and letting a man pay if he liked, and then leasing his land for several years if he did not pay. If a man did not occupy his land or take sufficient interest in it to pay his rates, it was far better to take the timber and convert it into money for the purpose of paying the rates; and it would be better in the

long run. With regard to ornamental trees, if a man had what he looked upon as such, if he had an eye for the beautiful, he (the Minister for Works) would make him also have an eye for paying his debts. In fact he would take his ornamental trees or anything else ornamental a man had, for the purpose of paying rates due to divisional boards, because they were just as much debts as any other debts which a man contracted. Therefore he thought it would be wise to insist on the clause standing as it was.

Mr. FOOTE said the hon. member spoke as though ratepayers persistently refused to pay their rates from choice, and not on account of being placed in circumstances over which they had no control; and he also said that rates were debts just as much as debts contracted in any other way. When rates were due they were debts, inasmuch as they had to be paid according to Act of Parliament; but the hon. member said they were debts just as much as money owing to the grocer, the butcher, and the baker. He might point out, however, that if the butcher, the grocer, the baker, and other tradesmen were as well secured as the divisional boards were under that Bill they would not want such a clause as that before the Committee, because they would consider themselves amply secured. They would know that they might have to wait a little till adverse circumstances were tidied over, and that they would then be paid. The hon. member spoke as if it was a matter of choice as to whether they would or would not pay; but he could not understand a ratepayer declining to pay simply on principle. It was utterly ridiculous to suppose that a man was going to allow his premises to be leased by a divisional board, rather than pay his rates. It was true that in many cases there was nothing on the land to seize when rates were due, but the board had power to lease the land after the rates remained unpaid for four years, and he thought that was ample security. In his opinion the clause was utterly useless, and might as well be struck out.

Mr. McMASTER said the hon. member for Bundamba agreed that the board had ample security. Suppose a number of ratepayers in a division had large tracts of land and did not pay their rates on account of absence from the colony or some other reason. Suppose, in consequence of that, the roads past their properties got into a very bad state, and a man broke his leg or his neck, and the board had to pay heavy damages for not keeping the road in repair. If the board could not get the rates they could not keep the roads in repair, and it was hard that the board should be blamed. He thought they should have power to take timber after due notice was given by the board. Four years were allowed to elapse before land on which the rates remained unpaid could be leased, and he thought two years should be allowed before timber could be removed. He thought the board should be protected as well as the ratepayer. The ratepayers were pretty well protected, and if the boards were to keep the roads in repair they must have the wherewithal. It was as great a hardship to take a man's horse as to take his timber. Not long ago a man had to stop his horse in the field and take it out of the plough or the harrow and give it up to the board.

The PREMIER: Where was that?

Mr. CHUBB: Did he not sue the board?

Mr. McMASTER said the man did sue the board, because the board made a mistake in levying on the wrong person; but that did not do away with the fact that they could have kept the horse if the man had been liable. He did not think any board would be so demoralised as to take fruit-trees or ornamental trees.

Mr. ADAMS said it appeared to him that the hon. member had not been very much in the country since the Act came into operation, or he would know that it would cause great injustice to allow the clause to stand as it was before. He was rather surprised to hear the Minister for Works speak in the manner he did, because when administering the Land Act that hon. gentlemen had received many applications from selectors for concessions in the matter of paying their rents—not being able to pay at the time—and he had allowed them time in several cases. He did not see why power should be given to a board, because a man had not a few shillings to pay his rates, to go on his land and select the best timber they could get—they would not take it as it came—when it might be of vast importance to the small selector to allow the timber to stand.

Mr. ALAND said it was not the small men referred to by the hon. member for Mulgrave who were in arrears. As a rule, the men with 80 acres, 160 acres, or 320 acres paid their rates; but the owners of larger areas, who were not to be got at, who were away from the district, and possibly out of the colony—those were the men the boards were troubled with; and he thought they might as well leave the clause as it originally stood.

Question—That the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 20.

Messrs. Salkeld, Black, Adams, Buckland, Morehead, Pattison, McWhannell, Jessop, Govett, Palmer, Kates, Macfarlane, Macrossan, Philp, Murphy, Foote, Dickson, Chubb, Hamilton, and Norton.

NOES, 24.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Rutledge, Jordan, Moreton, Dutton, W. Brookes, Bailey, Lumley Hill, White, Thorn, Isambert, Higson, Wakefield, Bulcock, Grimes, Mellor, McMaster, Sheridan, Aland, Campbell, Smyth, Morgan, Annear, and Nelson.

Question resolved in the negative.

On clause 246, as follows:—

"For temporary accommodation a board may obtain advances from any bank by way of overdraft of the current account. Provided that no such overdraft or accommodation shall, at any time, or under any circumstances, exceed the amount actually raised in the division by general rates in the year then last past."

The PREMIER said that and the two following clauses were new. The Legislative Council had adopted from the Local Government Act provisions prohibiting improper borrowing. As the law at present stood it did not appear that boards had any power to borrow money except from the Government. It was proposed by clause 246 to allow them to borrow by way of overdraft a sum not exceeding the amount of rates raised in the previous year. That was the same provision as section 232 of the Local Government Act, except that in the latter case the overdraft was not to exceed the prior year's income. He did not think divisional boards should be allowed to incur large liabilities, and he was of opinion that the restrictions proposed to be placed upon them would be very useful. He might as well refer to the other clauses—247 and 248, which were also adopted from the Local Government Act, and provided that, if boards borrowed money unlawfully, the persons who incurred the debt should be personally responsible. As far as he knew that was the law now, but it would take a very costly mode of procedure to enforce it. In England it was done by a process called *certiorari*, which was a much simpler one than the old process. By the older process a complaint was made by some objector, in the name of the Attorney-General, against the persons guilty of the illegal act, to compel them to refund the money to the corporate fund. In the meantime he moved that new clause 246 be agreed to.

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Mr. MELLOR said he trusted the new clause would not pass. He supposed they had no power to amend it.

The PREMIER: You can amend it as much as you please.

Mr. MELLOR said it would be a very great mistake to put restrictions of that kind upon boards. In fact he knew a great many instances in which it would cripple the boards completely. They would not be able to carry on their necessary works. If the clause were carried it would be impossible for boards to carry out their works during the next year, because he knew that a good many boards had borrowed to the full extent of their revenue of last year. If a clause of that sort were passed, it should be on the same lines as that contained in the Local Government Act, the boards having power to borrow to the extent of their income, instead of being limited to borrowing to the extent of their rates only. If any restriction was to be placed upon them, that would be the fairest method.

Mr. GRIMES said he quite agreed with the hon. member that it would restrict the operations of boards to limit their borrowing power to the amount of the general rates. He should not have so much objection to the clause if the boards could borrow to the amount of their income.

Mr. ALAND said hon. members forgot that boards were not cramped very much in their borrowing from the Government. They could borrow from them, and it was proposed that having borrowed from the Government they should be restricted from borrowing in any other direction. He thought the limit fixed that the boards should be allowed to borrow to the extent of their rates was as much as they were entitled to. If any body was given the privilege of borrowing it created a spirit of extravagance.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was glad to hear the hon. member express that opinion. It was one that had been shared on that side for a very long time. With regard to borrowing from the Government, it must be remembered that some time possibly there might be a Government that was not in a position to lend. He did not even know that the present Administration could find a very considerable amount of money to lend. Did he understand from the Premier that the words "general rates" would include the endowment?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the hon. gentleman said it did, and it struck him that the phraseology did not cover it.

The PREMIER: The Local Government Act limits the amount to be borrowed to the amount of the income.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought there was a great deal too much borrowing among the boards, and the provision which made the members jointly and severally liable would make them a little more careful. As regarded borrowing from the Government, it must be remembered that when the boards did that they borrowed large sums of money, but in borrowing from a bank they borrowed money as they wanted it, and only paid interest on what they used.

Mr. MELLOR said that when the boards went to the Government they must go with the sanction of the ratepayers. It was said by some people that the boards had to pay more to the banks than to the Government, but they had the opportunity of paying back the money when the rates came in, and they only borrowed at the beginning of the year; whereas in borrowing from the

Government they had to pay back the amount in instalments. Borrowing from the banks was not such a bad transaction as some people thought.

Mr. BAILEY said he was obliged to disagree with his hon. colleague a little bit. He would like to limit as much as possible the borrowing powers of divisional boards. They had power to make rates at present, and they could strike them up to the maximum if they pleased, but if they were given a borrowing power the taxpayers might get into great trouble. He would rather that the clause stood as it was, and that the boards should have no power to borrow more than the previous year's rates. He did not like to give people the power of borrowing money when they had no responsibility afterwards, and the boards which might be in existence this year might not exist next year.

Mr. McMASTER: Yes; one-third of them.

Mr. BAILEY said he would prefer to see the power limited. The ratepayers did not believe in those borrowing powers at all, and would far rather pay their rates and have done with it; and they did not want any of those extra rates with which a board might come down upon them at any time without any previous sanction.

Mr. McMASTER said there was no doubt the hon. member would like to see the boards and local authorities restricted in their borrowing powers, but he would like to see the roads kept in order too. He thought himself that the boards were restricted quite sufficiently. The new clause said that they should be allowed to borrow up to the amount of the last year's rates, but he thought they should be allowed to borrow up to the amount of their income. There was restriction enough put on the boards by the banks. No banker would advance a board more than he thought he was likely to get back again. The banks demanded security, and would take care to protect themselves. As for the remarks that the members of the board might retire, and would not share any responsibility, it must be remembered that they would still be ratepayers. If they left the board they were not likely to leave the district, and therefore they would be liable for their share of the increased rates. He thought that in a young colony like this, where there was so much road-making to be carried out, in the outlying districts especially, the boards ought to be allowed to borrow pretty freely. Of course they should not be given unlimited power, but they should be allowed some latitude until such time as they could get their roads in fair order and repair. Then if the ratepayers did not see the necessity of borrowing any large amount, they could reform the board, as they had the chance every year of turning out one-third of the members. Unless they wanted to cripple the boards altogether by limiting their borrowing powers too much, he thought the amendment ought to be on their actual income.

Mr. BAILEY said he still thought the actual income of the board was the rates they raised, and not the endowment collected on them.

Mr. McMASTER: They may have rents.

Mr. BAILEY said if they included the endowment, which might or might not be granted, they could not look upon that as a fair income or a fair source of borrowing power. He thought it would be quite sufficient if they had power to borrow up to the amount of the rates they collected. The ratepayers did not like those large loans or borrowing powers, and they did not pay their rates with the great willingness which the hon. member seemed to think they did. They paid them because they were forced to pay them. They wanted good roads, of course, and the

boards generally made them for them, but in some cases the boards indulged in extravagance, and they might go in for heavy loans which would seriously compromise a division for a number of years. The ratepayers did not like that, and would prefer the clause to stand as it was. The boards should have power to borrow when the necessity arose, up to the amount of the rates collected in the past year, but to say the amount should include a possible endowment, which might or might not be granted by Parliament, was absurd on the face of it, because they would then be permitted to borrow more than they might possibly receive.

The PREMIER said he thought the amount in the clause was too small, and if they made it the same as in the Local Government Act—the actual ordinary revenue—that might be considered too much to allow, because at the present time only one-third of the actual ordinary revenue was raised by rates and the other two-thirds came from the Government. If a board actually overdraw their account to the extent of a whole year's income they would have nothing to go on with next year. If, when they met in January, they had expended the whole of the previous year's income they might mortgage the whole of the future year's income to carry on, and they might go on in that way. He thought the amount raised by rates might possibly be too small a limit. It would be better to take the ordinary revenue, which was described in clause 189. He was disposed to think it would be a good compromise to take one-half the actual ordinary revenue of the division raised in the year then last past. That, at present, would be a great deal more than the general rates, because it would mean one-half of the general rates and one-half of the other sources of income, which together would be at present about one and a-half times the amount of the general rates. He proposed to move that the clause be amended by the omission of the words "the amount actually raised in," with the view of inserting the words "one-half the actual ordinary revenue of."

Mr. MELLOR said he hoped the Committee would consider the question fully. He believed such a provision would do a very great deal of harm in some divisions. Some boards had very great difficulties to contend with at times in making ends meet, even with the borrowing powers they had at present. Many a time emergencies arose, such as heavy floods, which destroyed the roads and sometimes washed away bridges. The boards were bound to rebuild the bridges and repair the roads, or they would lay themselves open to actions for damages, and the proposed restriction of the borrowing powers would, in many instances, very seriously affect the work of the boards. There were some boards, he knew, that had no occasion to borrow, but there was such a variety in the conditions affecting the different boards throughout the colony, and the extent of the roads that had to be kept in repair under them, that a proposal of that kind, though it might not affect one board at all, would very seriously affect another. He thought it would be better to give all the boards the same powers in respect of borrowing as were given to municipalities.

The PREMIER said he was very much disposed to agree with that view. He must say he was very much impressed with the argument concerning the inconvenience occasioned by floods and things of that sort. Some boards, during the present year, had certainly suffered very great inconvenience, at any rate, on that account, and they had been obliged to borrow money by overdraft; whether it was lawful to do it or not they had done it. It would therefore be

unwise to make too small a limit, and he was therefore disposed to think that probably it would be best to make the restriction the same as under the Local Government Act, the actual ordinary income.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That would mean the endowment as well as the rates.

The PREMIER said that was the limit in the Local Government Act. It was too much, under ordinary circumstances, he was sure, but there were cases, such as they had seen during the present year, where it would be necessary. Some representatives of boards who had come to see him lately had said that they were obliged to overdraw their account to a very large extent. They must endeavour to make a general rule which would cover all cases, and he did not know that there would be any hardship in assimilating the provision to that under the Local Government Act.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it appeared to him that in the clause the words "temporary accommodation" were misleading, because he took it that in many cases it would probably be a permanent accommodation, and increase if the revenue increased. He did not think the words "temporary accommodation" squared with the way in which the boards would deal with the matter, because they might borrow with no intention of repaying the capital sum, but merely to meet the interest. Such accommodation would be not temporary but permanent. He quite agreed that the time had come when some check should be given to the borrowing powers of divisional boards. The return laid on the table in another place, on the motion of an hon. member, disclosed a most disgraceful, a most profligate borrowing on the part of one divisional board—the Booroodabin Board—something like twice the amount of their income.

The PREMIER: They have an overdraft of about £10,000.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the Premier was going too far in giving that power to borrow for temporary purposes, as it was called. If they allowed them to borrow up to one-half of their income they would be going quite far enough.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was inclined to approve of the law as it stood. It would be far better to treat the question on a sound business basis than to give boards the power proposed. What would be said of any business house giving credit to any customer who was exactly twelve months behind paying up? To allow boards to borrow up to the rates of the previous year was quite sufficient for either a divisional board or a municipality, and the Committee would be making a mistake if it went further in that direction. He felt rather inclined to keep them in somewhat straitened circumstances, so that they would not fall into extravagant ways, and what money they had would be economically spent.

The PREMIER said he thought the amount of the rates would be too small. One-half of the actual revenue would be a fairer thing, provided it was a larger amount. If there was no objection he would ask permission to withdraw his amendment in order to introduce another to that effect.

Mr. BAILEY asked whether there would be included in the amendment all sorts of rates, such as loan rates, sewerage rates, and so on?

The PREMIER: Yes. The clause as it stands says only general rates.

Mr. McMASTER said it was unfortunate that all boards should have to suffer on account of the faults of one or two. The existence of the

clause was entirely owing to the fact of the Booroodabin Board having obtained such a large overdraft from the bank, and they were all in consequence to be treated with suspicion. But that board had gone out of its way in getting overdrafts, for which a previous Act was to blame. It had levied a general health rate, so that it might increase its revenue by getting the full endowment upon it. He believed the general health rate in Booroodabin was equal to the ordinary rate.

The PREMIER: One-half.

Mr. McMASTER said that by that means the board hoped to pay the interest on the overdraft, and the overdraft itself in instalments. But it would be very much better for boards to borrow direct from the Government to carry out their permanent works. Drainage works, especially, ought to be carried out in that way, so that the repayment might be distributed over a number of years. But it was hard that other boards should be crippled in their endeavours to carry out improvements because one or two boards had gone out of their way to raise funds in another way which was objectionable.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he hoped the clause would be amended in the way suggested by the Premier. As a member of a board he might say that they had always found it very convenient to get an overdraft from a bank, and he need hardly add that the manager, in making the advances, always took care that the bank was well protected. At the end of January in each year the endowments to divisional boards were generally paid, and that afforded them the means, or should do in every case, of wiping out the overdraft. A bank would make a mistake if it allowed a board to borrow more than the amount of its endowment would cover. The amendment to be proposed by the Premier was a good one. Many country boards, especially such as had been referred to by the hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Mellor, would suffer considerably if they were not allowed to borrow beyond the amount collected for general rates.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The PREMIER moved that the clause be amended by the addition of the following words:—"Or one-half the actual ordinary revenue of the division for that year, whichever is the greater amount."

Mr. MELLOR said that after the expression of the opinion of the Committee there was no doubt the amendment would be carried. His remarks did not refer to what he might call wealthy divisional boards, but to such as existed in his own district, which had worked very well up to the present time. They might safely trust to the divisional boards in the matter of borrowing. The members had the interests of the division at heart, and they gave their time and worked very hard for it, and when it happened that they found themselves unable to carry out some necessary work because they could not get a larger overdraft from a bank than one-half of their ordinary revenue they would find it very discouraging. In a great many cases—in some, at all events—there was great difficulty in boards carrying out necessary works, even with the amount of borrowing power they were supposed to have at present; and he believed that they would be hampered by even the amendment as now proposed.

Mr. NORTON said there was no doubt the divisional boards did require borrowing powers, because they could not carry out extensive works, such as bridges, drains, and such like, without being able to borrow money for the purpose; and that was very properly provided for in the Bill. But in adopting any other provision

they would be running some risk. Up to the present time boards had been able to get accommodation from the banks, although power was not given to them by the Act to do so, and it was very possible that they would continue to get it as long as they wanted it, that was if they did not want too large an advance. But he would point out that the policy of giving them greater power than they now possessed was not altogether a wise one. What the Committee had to remember was that in limiting or curtailing the powers of the boards to borrow they wished to protect the ratepayers, not against well-conducted boards, but against boards who did not attend to their business, and who borrowed lavishly. In limiting the amount which those boards might borrow, they were really protecting the ratepayers. He believed the majority of the boards carried out their work fairly well—a great many very well—but they must remember that in limiting the amount that might be borrowed they were protecting the ratepayers against the chance of getting incompetent men, or men who would not attend to their business. The Committee ought therefore to be very careful before they gave the boards large power to borrow money when they managed to get it without having any Act at all enabling them to do so.

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

On new clause 247—

The PREMIER moved, as a verbal amendment, the insertion of the word “board” for “division.”

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

On new clause 248—“Members borrowing illegally liable to a penalty of £200”—

Mr. MELLOR said he really thought that was a very arbitrary clause. They were legislating too far against divisional boards, and would have great difficulty in getting persons to fill the position of members, as they would not take the responsibility.

Clause put and passed.

The Legislative Council's amendments in clauses 253 and 270, and in the 4th schedule, were agreed to.

On the 6th schedule—

The PREMIER moved that it be disagreed to. He said it related to standing timber.

Question put and passed.

The amendments in the 7th and 8th schedules were agreed to.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to some amendments of the Legislative Council, disagreed to others, and had agreed to others with amendments, and the report was adopted.

The PREMIER moved that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council, with the following message:—

The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's amendments in the Divisional Boards Bill—

Disagree to the amendments in clause 15, line 30,

Because it has been found in practice to be very convenient to allow rates to be paid up to noon on the day of nomination;

Disagree to the amendment in clause 23, lines 36 and 37,

For the same reason;

Disagree to the amendment in line 38 of the same clause,

Because it appears unfair that an owner should be entirely disfranchised by the accidental omission of an occupant of part of his property to pay rates;

Agree to the amendment in clause 95, with an amendment in which they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council;

Disagree to the amendments in clause 207,

Because the power to levy on standing timber has in practice been found of advantage, and may obviate the necessity of leasing the land;

Agree to the first and second new clauses, to follow clause 245, with amendments, in which they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council;

Disagree to the amendment in the 6th schedule, for reasons previously given;

And agree to the other amendments of the Legislative Council.

Question put and passed.

## ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

### COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to further consider this Bill.

Mr. FOOTE said he intended to move that Bundanba should have two members, and that the boundaries of that electorate should remain as they had previously been. His reason for doing so was that the Bundanba electorate had been cut down very much—in fact, more than half of it had been taken away—and he considered that according to the population of the present district, if the boundaries were left unaltered, it was entitled to two members. It might not have so large a population as Ipswich, but the present population was quite equal to any of those which were to receive additional members. Another reason for his intended motion was that the West Moreton group was virtually being deprived of its proper representation—that was to say, portions of the Stanley electorate were being added to other electorates—a part to the Darling Downs, another part to Moreton, and a part on the Fassifern side to the Logan electorate. The Rosewood district had also been very considerably altered—in fact, it had been reduced so as to divide Fassifern and Bundanba. He thought that was a very erroneous boundary. He believed Rosewood had the same representation now as it had during the previous five years, and if any amendment had been required in its boundary it should have been taken off the Stanley and brought down to the Pine Mountain—

The PREMIER: I do not follow the hon. member.

Mr. FOOTE said the part of Stanley which came down to the Brisbane River came down almost like a V, embracing Pine Mountain, and that was the part that Rosewood should have been carried over. It would have left the upper part of the Bundanba electorate intact. It was only fair that the West Moreton group should have an additional member, because the interests and population of the district had very much increased. He did not complain that an additional member had been given to the Darling Downs group, nor that an additional member had been given to the Central districts, but he thought that the West Moreton group was entitled in the same way to an additional member, considering the great addition the passing of the Bill would make to the number of members of the House. That could be easily done by Bundanba returning two members and retaining its old boundary, while Rosewood embraced that part of Stanley coming down to the Brisbane River and including Pine Mountain. He thought that those difficulties could in that way be met with justice to the group of West Moreton without any great confusion which would delay in any way the passage of the Bill. He therefore moved as an

amendment that after the word "Bundamba" the words "one member" should be omitted, with the view of inserting the words "two members."

The PREMIER said that the hon. member proposed in effect that Bundamba should have two members. The population of Bundamba at the time of the census—and it was a district which did not increase very rapidly—it increased steadily, but not disproportionately to other districts—the total population at that time was 5,676, and the number of male adults 1,607. He did not think it would be justifiable to give two members to Bundamba with that population. The Rosewood population was—total 3,994, male adults 899. Now there were two districts side by side, the external boundaries of the two being extremely convenient ones, and what seemed the most natural thing to do was to take the country within the external boundary of the two, and divide it more evenly. That would give Bundamba a total population of 3,909 and an adult male population of 1,179, and Rosewood would have a total population of 5,138 and an adult male population of 1,081. In the population of Rosewood there were a great number of children, and the population was also tolerably well settled, while the total population of Bundamba was smaller in proportion to the adult males, but it was well known to be rapidly increasing in consequence of the mines; so that he did not think it could be said that the proposed division was an unfair one. The hon. member said the West Moreton group was entitled to another member. The population of what had hitherto been the West Moreton group was no doubt entitled to another member; but the boundaries of the West Moreton group had been altered for geographical reasons. The part they were talking about the other evening, which was proposed to be added to Aubigny, contained a very small population. He took that opportunity of saying that the boundary contended for by the hon. member for Fassifern—the boundary of the police district of Crow's Nest—had been followed, except that in one place the boundary of the Aubigny electorate had been brought further to the west. The only place where the boundary left that of the police district was to make it further west. A small population was taken out of what was at present part of the Stanley electorate and thrown into the district of Moreton because it formed part of the Caboolture division. All the traffic went from there to Caboolture and thence to Brisbane. Therefore it was thought that, being part of the divisional district of Caboolture, it was more convenient to join it to the Moreton division. The population, however, was comparatively insignificant—only about 250. The part of the West Moreton district which really got another member was the part proposed to be taken from the old electorate of Fassifern, which was a good deal too large. He did not think that anybody could doubt that the proposed boundaries were correct. The eastern part must be joined on to something contiguous to the eastward. In fact the people who lived within the old West Moreton district would get an additional member; but it was not proposed to give them exactly the same boundaries as at present. He was sure the new boundary was a good one, and the population of the West Moreton group could not be said to be fairly entitled to more than the seven members it was proposed to give them. Coming to the electorate of Bundamba, an additional member for it would involve the dismemberment of a good many of the surrounding districts and an entire change in the boundaries.

Mr. FOOTE said the hon. Premier admitted that if the recent boundaries had remained, the West Moreton group would have been entitled

to another member. The proposed division was not just to the West Moreton group; it was robbing them of what belonged to them, and it was by no means a fair representation. Portions were given to the various electorates all round, as he had already stated. One part of Moreton was given to Aubigny, and a part of Fassifern to the Logan, while Rosewood was altered so as to make it very difficult for the electors to understand to what electorate they really belonged. The electorate of Bundamba was made so very small and circumscribed that it would only include the mining population; all the population representing other interests being simply disfranchised by the Bill. It was cut up in such a way that only a few electors living near the centre would know in what electorate they were. He considered that the electors of West Moreton district were unjustly deprived of representation which they were thoroughly and properly entitled to, in consequence of the increased population there since the last Redistribution Act was passed. As to what the Premier had said in regard to Rosewood being settled with families, so was Bundamba; every part of it was settled with families, quite as numerous as Rosewood, and a great deal more so, especially about the mines. The farming and grazing parts were also well settled, and in any part of the district there was very little land that did not belong to private persons, except some solitary reserves. Nearly the whole of the district belonged to private persons, and there was a permanent population, not a population which was likely to move. What was more, it was increasing every day, and the possibility, or rather probability, was that it would be doubled before another Redistribution Bill came in. Hon. members had heard a great deal about what was likely to take place within a short time, and what had already taken place, and all that should be taken into consideration. In regard to the census returns it had frequently, if not generally, been said that the number of people stated there was very far short of what the electorate really possessed. He did not think the suggestion he had made would produce much confusion. It would be giving West Moreton its proper representation, and no more. Rosewood was brought down between Fassifern and Bundamba; but he thought the boundaries should have been left as they were, and, if necessary, that portion of Stanley which included the mining country to the left of the Pine Mountain might have been added. He trusted the hon. member would see his way clear to grant the additional member. With that the district would be satisfied, but without that it would not be satisfied, unless he could suggest any other improvement whereby the group would receive additional representation.

Mr. SALKELD said that on the second reading of the Bill he stated his belief that the measure was a very fair one as a whole, and did no serious injustice to any district, but since then the Government had granted to their opponents two additional members—one for Dalby and one for Blackall—and there were rumours in the air of several other members being given to other parts of the colony, so that by the time it was all fixed up there would be about eighty members. If members were going to be given all round, the different groups would have to be satisfied, but if only the additional members he had referred to were to be admitted, the West Moreton group would not be satisfied. He would suggest that if there was to be an increase all round the Bill should be re-committed, and the additional members given on the basis laid down in the Bill. He would suggest that the part of the district about Nanango might be added to Esk, and Stanley might go

further up the river to increase Rosewood, taking in Pine Mountain. The boundary of Bundamba should go round the north and west of the town, and a part of the present Bundamba electorate should be thrown into Fassifern, giving Fassifern two members. The Darling Downs group, with 464 less of that population, and 370 less of adult male population, had nine members, and the West Moreton group was entitled to eight members at least. He hoped the Premier would see that one of two things must be done—either give no additional members or give them all round on the basis laid down in the Bill.

The HON. G. THORN said that on whatever basis the West Moreton district was taken it was entitled to another member. The portions clipped off represented a general population of 2,445, and an adult male population of 718; but, notwithstanding that, the West Moreton group would have a greater population than the Darling Downs group with nine members. Even if they had eight members in the West Moreton district, the average adult population would be greater in proportion than in the case of the Darling Downs group. The Darling Downs group had a general population of 34,000 and an adult male population of 8,500—or an average for each of the nine members of about 4,000 of general population and 944 adult males. The electorates in the West Moreton group were settled; the people did not go about like the population in the pastoral districts, or—he said it with all due deference—like the mining population; they were wedded to the soil. If the Premier could not see his way clear to give an additional member to Bundamba, he (Mr. Thorn) hoped he would see the propriety of carving out another electorate in the Upper Brisbane, with Esk as its centre, which was outside both the metropolitan and Ipswich influence. It would take the old boundaries of the Stanley electorate to the north, east, and west, and would include the goldfield of Nanango. He might point out that what the Burnett would lose by Nanango forming a portion of another electorate it would gain by the increased population at Eidswoold, which was now an important mining district. He could also tell the Premier that machinery was already on the road to Nanango, which was likely to prove the centre of an important goldfield. It was proposed to take Mount Perry and the Isis in with the Burnett electorate, but he would ask the Premier what interest the people of the Upper Burnett had in common with the people of Isis and Mount Perry? None whatever. In the district which he proposed to form into a new electorate there was a large amount of unalienated land which, before the next census was taken, would be largely settled, now that the hon. member for South Brisbane was at the head of the Lands Department. That was another reason why a member should be given to the Upper Brisbane and the south-east end of the Burnett electorate. Again, the people of the parishes of Byron and Kilcoy had no interests in common with the rest of the proposed Moreton electorate, which was sufficiently large without them. Moreton was one of the largest electorates. It had an adult male population of 1,442—almost the largest in the Moreton group. It could stand clipping, and leave Moreton sufficiently large to return one member without the Upper Brisbane part of Stanley being tacked on to it. It was certainly as much entitled to eight members as Darling Downs to nine.

Mr. BULCOCK said hon. members would see that it must be a very difficult matter to rearrange the electorates. There had been a great deal of labour in connection with the proposed redistribution of representation, and they would experience a considerable amount of difficulty if

they attempted in any sense to please the present sitting members. The remarks made by the hon. member for Bundamba in reference to the proposed alteration of boundaries would apply not only to Bundamba, but also to all other electorates where the boundaries were to be altered. The remark made by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Salkeld, that the general population of the West Moreton group was 464 less than that of the Darling Downs group, and the adult male population 370 more than that of Darling Downs, applied to those districts under the old boundaries, and not the boundaries as proposed in the Bill. If the boundaries of electorates were to be altered at all, he (Mr. Bulcock) did not see why they should not be altered in Bundamba, if it was found convenient so to do; and if the general population were taken as the basis of representation, the West Moreton group was entitled to less representation than it would be if it remained as it did before, as under the new boundaries the population was about 3,000 less. He did not see why the West Moreton group should be made an exception in the alteration of boundaries, and as far as he could see there appeared to be a fair division of the population, both as regarded the general population and male adults. How the community of interests might be in different parts he could not say, but looking at the figures he thought the division was a fair one.

The HON. G. THORN said he would like to hear the opinion of the Colonial Secretary with reference to the boundaries he had suggested. He thought his views were strictly in accord with those of the hon. gentleman, who would, he felt sure, agree that the interests of the part of the Burnett to which he had referred were not the interests of Isis Scrub or Mount Perry. The hon. gentleman knew that what population the Burnett would lose at one part would be made up by the population it would gain at Eidswoold, which was now a goldfield.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) said he certainly did not agree with the hon. member that it was necessary to add another member to the West Moreton group; but he agreed with his suggestions that it would be advisable to take that portion of the Burnett district which he had mentioned into Stanley. He (the Colonial Secretary) had not been in communication lately with the people living there, but from what he had heard he believed it was their wish that such a change should be made, and he understood that a petition to that effect was now in course of signature.

Mr. FOOTE said he would state, in reference to what had fallen from the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Bulcock, that the West Moreton group was entitled to an additional member in consequence of the increase in the population, especially when it was compared with the Darling Downs group. They complained that the district of West Moreton was carved about, part of it being added to an electorate in one direction, part to another—in fact, all round, except on the eastern side, and even there a little—in order to make up the deficiencies of other electorates. The consequence of that was that they were deprived of the representation of one member, which they were justly entitled to. He would not have made a stand on that point if the Bill had been carried on in its original form, but it had not been. For instance, the member for Dalby made out a case, and the Premier acceded to his request, and by an alteration of boundaries gave Dalby the member they had proposed to take away from it under the Bill. The same thing was done in the Central district; still the Premier remained firm in reference to West Moreton. They had, he

thought, made out a good case for an additional member. They had shown that the population of the district had increased, and that they were in every way entitled to additional representation. They complained, as he had said before, that the boundaries had been altered in such a way as to take away from them the representation that properly belonged to the West Moreton group. The district would not be by any means satisfied with having that taken from them which properly belonged to them. The member for Enoggera, Mr. Bulcock, had said that he considered the proportion of population was fair. He supposed it was, under the present scale, but it was not fair, when the representation of other districts was increased, and they got back their original member, that the West Moreton group should not also receive another member. He trusted the Premier would see his way to accept the amendment.

The PREMIER said that if the Darling Downs group were to be taken as the basis of representation there would be a good deal of force in the contention of the hon. member for Bundamba, but he (the Premier) did not think the Darling Downs should be taken as the basis. On the contrary, he thought that the West Moreton group would be a much better basis. No doubt the Darling Downs had been treated exceptionally well, on the ground that it had a sort of vested interest. Dalby and Northern Downs had each had a member for so long that it would be, to a certain extent, an injustice to deprive them of their members. Besides, in the Southern pastoral group there was a larger population than in other electorates. He felt a repugnance to do anything that would be manifestly unfair. He was impressed the other day with the arguments used by hon. members opposite, as regarded Dalby and Northern Downs, that the arrangement in the Bill would destroy constituencies which had existed for the last fifteen years, and that they were being treated rather more hardly than any other part of the colony. He therefore yielded—whether weakly or not, was a matter of opinion—to the contention that Dalby should have a member restored to it. But he did not think that ought to be a reason for increasing every other constituency in the colony. A similar argument was applied to the Central electorates. There it was proposed to take away one member. No doubt a member ought to be taken away from the three districts that he mentioned, Leichhardt, Clermont, and Normanby. They were not entitled to more than three members between them. On the other hand, there had been, since the census was taken, a large additional population in the district to the south-west of Rockhampton, including Mount Morgan, and it was manifestly unjust to join that on to the Port Curtis district. Those were the arguments urged, and he did not feel that he could offer any satisfactory answer. Under those circumstances he accepted the amendment. Hon. members understood exactly how the matter was dealt with. They appeared to him to be very forcible arguments, and he did not feel equal to offering better arguments to meet them. Unless hon. members were prepared to deal with the whole subject in a fair way they could never arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. He did not think they could by any means take Darling Downs as a basis, but if they did they would certainly want eighty members. That group was treated in conjunction with the Southern pastoral group, and when Darling Downs group proper was taken into consideration, leaving out the pastoral part of it, it would not be found that the basis of population there was much smaller than in the West Moreton group. He thought himself that

the West Moreton group was a typical group that should be considered the proper basis, or nearly the proper basis. If hon. members would look they would see that the average total population of the Darling Downs group was 4,295, and the adult male population 1,063; and in the West Moreton group the average total population was 4,385, and the adult male population 1,128. So far as the male adult population was concerned, the Darling Downs group was less; and very little less so far as the total population was concerned. He thought hon. members fully understood the position. He did not think it would be fair to give an additional member to the West Moreton group, and even if Nanango were added, the numbers would not be much increased. He had not the exact figures, but certainly the population affected by that addition would not be more than 300 at the outside.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not see how the representation of the Darling Downs group, which, he took it, was exceptionally favoured, could be taken in conjunction with the Southern pastoral group. What had Aubigny, Cambooya, Carnarvon, Chinchilla, and Cunningham to do with Bulloo, Burke, Gregory, Maranoa, and Warrego? Their interests were in no way identical. Now, in the Darling Downs group the whole of the land was alienated, and in the Southern pastoral group the whole of the land was leasehold. It appeared to him that the nearer electors were to the metropolis, and the greater the advantages they enjoyed the more the preponderance of voting was increased; whereas the districts far away had to have an adult male population of 1,528, as against 944 on the Darling Downs group. The remote parts of the colony—the remote constituencies—had, in fact, no show. The Bill seemed to be framed on the principle of “the nearer you are, the greater facilities you have for sending down representatives to represent you, the more representatives you shall have.” He did not believe in taking into account vested interests alone. The Premier, when he undertook to frame the Bill, ought to have taken other things besides population into consideration—just as Mr. Gladstone in 1876, when on his Midlothian campaign, said that distance from port and the revenue contributed, were factors to be considered in representation. The capabilities of a district which were undeveloped wanted more proportionate representation than a district which had been known for years and whose capabilities were fully developed. But the very reverse was the case in the Bill. They found that the districts which were best known—the districts which had been thoroughly understood for years—were represented on a more favourable population basis than those far-away districts which were capable of an unlimited amount of development if they could only get people in the House who would properly represent their wants and capabilities. He regretted that he could not see his way to support the amendment of the member for Bundamba, because he did not think the West Moreton group compared unfavourably with other groups less favourably situated. The Western pastoral group was said to have an adult average male population of 1,694, while in the West Moreton group the male population was 1,100. No member of the Committee could deny that the Western pastoral group laboured under every disability of representation in the House. Even the representatives of that group did send down here, owing to their business duties and interests they could only afford to pass a little of their time in the House. He said as a producing district, and a district which added to the wealth of the colony and contributed to the revenue



of the colony, that there was not one district or one group of districts so badly, so inadequately, so unfairly represented as the Western pastoral group—unless indeed his own district of Cook was taken into consideration. He wished to point out that the redistribution was unequal and unfair as regarded the very portions of the colony that required more representation; he wished to make that statement without bringing forward the Northern grievance of under-representation. As far as that was concerned there was no denying that it was presumed that the Bill was going to in some way modify those grievances and give additional representation to the North. They found it did nothing of the kind. The additional members it was proposed to introduce now would more than counterbalance the additional representation given to the North. In the Bill, as it stood, three additional members were given to the portion of the colony above the line marked on the map and six below it. They had since had one added to the Central and one to the Southern division, and another was being agitated for for the Southern division; and he said that anything the Central and Northern divisions would get out of the Bill would be more than counterbalanced by the additional members that would be given to the extreme South.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not know whether the hon. member who had just sat down was trying to throw dust in the eyes of the Committee, but he hardly recognised the position with regard to the additional member given to the Darling Downs group. What was really done was to give an additional member to the Southern pastoral and Darling Downs group combined. The reason for that was that the quota of population of the Southern pastoral group was unquestionably too high, as to the adult population of the number of members granted.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Well, why did they not get an additional member there?

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would tell the hon. member why, and it was because it was not sufficient to justify an additional member alone; but when the Southern pastoral group was combined with the Darling Downs group, the additional member was justified by the quota of population in the combination. The hon. member said there was no community of interest between the groups, but if the hon. member studied the boundaries he would find they were most intimately connected in every way. By shifting the boundaries of contiguous electorates in the way suggested it would be found that though there might be a diversity of interests throughout the whole group, there was community of interests in the divisions created by the reconstruction of the electorates. The hon. member was a little wrong in his argument that the additional member was given to the Darling Downs group to give greater weight to the districts near the metropolis. The reason, he took it, why the Government consented to give an additional representative to those two groups banded together was because they recognised—in the direction the hon. member himself desired to go—that distance from the capital had to be taken into consideration in that matter. Therefore, the rights of the Bulloo, Warrego, and Balonne were taken into consideration. That was the reason urged on his side of the Committee for it, and that was one of the main reasons for which the Premier consented to the additional member being granted. He (Mr. Morehead) had no sympathy with the Darling Downs members, and it therefore could not be said that he was likely to fight their battles for them. It therefore might come with a little more weight from him when he said that there

was no intention or desire that the representation of the Darling Downs, pure and simple, should be increased. That was not their intention. The fact was that Northern Downs and Dalby had always returned a member each, and one of them had always returned a pastoral representative, it was advisable that those electorates should be retained by an alteration of the boundaries, and the Southern pastoral and Darling Downs groups treated as one for those electoral purposes. On the eastern and western sides it would be found they had community of interests. It was hardly fair for hon. gentlemen to rise in their places and say, "We will take the Darling Downs quota, taking the adult male basis"—as they always did for that particular argument—"as the basis throughout the colony." They should take into consideration that the quota fixed in that matter for the Darling Downs district was to a great extent altered by the combination which had taken place of the Southern pastoral group and the Darling Downs group.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he would not use the argument of the Darling Downs quota as a reason why West Moreton should have an additional member. He would use this argument: The Premier had admitted that, according to the old boundaries, West Moreton was entitled to an additional member. He maintained that it was not well to interfere with the old boundaries where it could be avoided. He said if they were entitled to an additional member, according to the old boundaries, why should they not retain those boundaries, and give them the additional member? They were reduced in West Moreton, towards the west, for the sake of Darling Downs, and Moreton stole something from them, and Logan stole something from them. No district liked to be clipped, and to have the districts surrounding it placed in a better position, and that was the way in which West Moreton was treated in the Bill. If some good reason could be given for reducing the West Moreton district, when under the old boundaries it was admittedly entitled to an additional member, he would like to hear it, as it had not been given yet. Though he would not like to see the membership of the House increased to such an alarming extent as eighty members, he hoped that the matter here referred to would be reconsidered, and that the old boundaries would be retained.

The PREMIER said he quite agreed it was not desirable to alter the boundaries if it could be avoided; but he had already given reasons why the boundaries of West Moreton were altered in the north between Stanley and Aubigny, and in the north-east between Stanley and Moreton. The other alteration made was in the south-east, where a part of the present electorate of Fassifern was taken off and proposed to be added to the present electorate of Logan. The reason for that was obvious. The part taken off was the heads of the Logan River. They were joined to Fassifern before, because it was necessary, in order to make the population in Fassifern sufficient to entitle it to a member. That part of the country used to belong to the Logan electorate, but when the last redistribution was made it was found that the proposed new electorate of Fassifern would not be large enough without the adjoining country being added to it. Now the population of that part of the country had sufficient to give the old electorate two members, and it was really proposed to revert to what was practically the original boundary.

The Hon. G. THORN said he would point out that while they were rightly getting rid of a part of the Logan they were wrongly getting rid of the upper part of the Brisbane.

The PREMIER: About 200 people.

The HON. G. THORN said there were more than that, and the population there would increase also. That part was being taken from West Moreton and being added to Moreton. The Government had put a portion of West Moreton with Humpybong. What identity of interests had the people on the Nanango Range with the people of Humpybong? There were far more than 200 people there, he was convinced. The population of that part of the Stanley district had more than doubled since the census was taken; and he could assure the Premier that the population of Bundanba had nearly doubled since the census was taken.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

The HON. G. THORN said he made that assertion most unhesitatingly. The Premier had given an additional member to the Central group in consequence of Mount Morgan, and, if he had done so in one mining electorate, why should not the same thing be done in the mining district of Bundanba? If the census were taken to-morrow, he believed the adult male population would be more than that of Ipswich. Shortly, the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, would be asking for two members for Croydon. When the census was taken Croydon did not exist, while now there were enough adult males there to entitle it to at least two members. A similar kind of thing had occurred in West Moreton. The thickly populated district of Dinmore, to mention only one place, was unknown when the census was taken. It was easy enough to carve out a new electorate by taking away that part of the district which had no identity of interests with East Moreton, and he hoped the Premier would see his way to give another member to the West Moreton group. Bundanba had become almost a suburb of Brisbane, and the hon. member for that electorate had made out a very good case why it should have another member.

Mr. SALKELD said the Government were evidently not going on the basis of the census returns; they were going behind the census returns; and if that was to be allowed in one case it ought to be allowed all along the line. Hon. members seemed incredulous as to the increase of population in Bundanba. He was not prepared to state the exact increase there had been, but he was assured that the increase had been almost abnormal. At Dinmore, Bundanba, Blackstone, and further up where the new mines were opened out, the population had increased very largely indeed since the census was taken. It must not be forgotten that when the census was taken all parts of the colony were suffering from the drought, but the returns of land selected during the year 1886 showed that since the end of the drought the amount of land taken up in West Moreton was unprecedented; and it was still going on faster, he believed, than ever. If, therefore, they were to go behind the census returns at all, it would now be found that there had been an abnormal increase of population, especially in the mining centres, and that there had been a far larger amount of land settlement in West Moreton during the fifteen months that had elapsed since the census was taken than for several years before. On those grounds he hoped the Premier would see his way to grant the additional member asked for. He certainly protested against West Moreton being cut down on all sides, and being left with only seven members, when the Government were increasing the representation all round in other districts. He did not care what the Northern members or anybody else said; he would rather see the North separated than give them an unfair amount of representation, at the same time he would not

consent to give way to the clamour of the Northern members. He did not suppose they would be satisfied if they got fifty members, but the North should be satisfied to have a fair share of representation as well as any other part of the colony.

Mr. MURPHY: The North will have to take what it can get.

Mr. SALKELD said it would have to take its fair share, and no more, and that was all he claimed for West Moreton. The Bill in its original form gave a very fair share of representation to the several groups, but after the changes that had been already made he could only hope that the Premier would recommit the Bill and revert to the old basis, merely altering some of the boundaries as suggested by several hon. members, so as not to separate communities whose interests were identical.

Mr. KELLETT said he could support the statement of the hon. member for Ipswich that there had been a very large increase in the population of many parts of West Moreton since the census was taken. As far as Bundanba was concerned, anyone travelling by railway could see scores of new houses going up every month, and it was the same in other parts, especially near the coal-mines. He contended that West Moreton had been very unfairly treated; it had been clipped all round merely to prevent it from having another member, to which it was entitled. The interests of a large portion of Stanley were with Ipswich, where their business was done; and now that the railway was made to Esk all their traffic went in that direction, and it was inflicting a great hardship upon the electors there to put them into a district with which they had no identity of interest. If only a small portion had been taken off the extreme end near Caboolture it might have been right enough, but it had been cut and carved all round, and the result was to take from them one member to which they were certainly entitled. He did not know whether that was the special intention, but to his mind—owing to his dulness—he could see no other reason for it. He did not know whether it was thought that the West Moreton bunch were too strong, and that it would be better to weaken their influence a little in the future; but whether that was the reason or not, certainly the effect was that they were deprived of a member to which they were clearly entitled. The interests of the people of the Upper Logan were in no way identical with Nerang or that part of the district. They belonged to Ipswich; that was where they did all their business. Whether that was a fair way to carve out the district, to give two members to Bundanba, was another question. He should certainly be sorry to see any more taken from Stanley to entitle Bundanba to another member. He thought Stanley had been pretty well hacked about already, more than any other electorate. It had been cut about in all corners, and he should be sorry to see any more taken from it. If increased representation was to be given to other places, as several hon. members had suggested, West Moreton was fairly entitled to another member, and he should be glad if the hon. the Premier would see his way to carve out another member for that district. The best way, in his opinion, was to leave Stanley as it was and give it three members, which they would be entitled to but for the cutting and carving about that had been carried on; and if other districts were to get additional representation, West Moreton would be still further entitled to it. He should be sorry to see the Bill much altered. Even without the additional member that had been given to the Downs, West Moreton was entitled to another member, and now they were so much

the more entitled to it. If the Bill had been carried through in something like its integrity so much would not have been said about it, but at the same time he contended that West Moreton was entitled to another member. He hoped the Premier would take the matter into consideration. He was sure that his common sense would show him that a great injustice was done to that district. He did not know whether the intention was to weaken the West Moreton influence, but that would be the effect of it.

The PREMIER said he was sure the hon. gentleman who had just spoken was not serious in what he said. He would point out that the portion of the electorate which the hon. gentleman wanted put back into Stanley had, at the time of the census, a population of 223, and an adult male population of 81. That portion had been placed in the electorate to which, from the physical nature of the country, it belonged, and the one with which it was at present connected for registration and local government purposes. Surely that did not indicate an endeavour to reduce the representation of the West Moreton group in Parliament. That was the principal part of the hon. member's complaint. His only other complaint was about the district at the head of the Logan, which had been joined to the district in which it was placed in order to entitle it to a member.

Mr. KELLETT said it was not so much a question of how many persons lived in the district referred to. If only ten or twenty persons lived there, why should they be taken out of a district to which they properly belonged, and with which their interests were identified, and be placed in another with which they were in no way identified?

The PREMIER said if a mistake of that kind had been made he should be prepared to correct it.

Mr. KELLETT said if the Premier gave back the piece he referred to, and also put back the district at the head of the Logan, which belonged to Ipswich, it would make West Moreton clearly entitled to another member. He was glad to hear that the Premier was amenable to reason, and hoped that he would give back the portions he (Mr. Kellett) had mentioned.

Mr. BULCOCK said that only last week he had been told by a gentleman who lived in the neighbourhood of Kilcoy, that that part of the country and around Durundur belonged to Brisbane and not to Ipswich, and that he was very glad to see it put into the Moreton electorate. He (Mr. Bulcock) thought from what they had seen so far that there was nothing to lead them to suppose for a moment that the divisions of the electorates had been intended to be political. It had been suggested by some hon. members that the Premier had divided the electorates in the way they were divided as a punishment, but there was no proof whatever of anything of the kind, so far as he was able to see. He was aware that there had been a very large amount of land taken up in West Moreton during the last fifteen months, which was something in favour of the Land Act which had been so much maligned. But the fact of a good deal of land having been taken up did not prove that additional people had gone there from other parts of the colony. They might have been already residents of West Moreton and taken up land, and unless it could be proved to be the opposite it would not be fair to take it for granted that they were additional population to West Moreton.

Mr. GROOM said that if the argument that population had increased since the census, was to be taken into consideration it should apply to

every electorate in the colony, and more particularly to those in the settled districts, because all hon. members who were at all acquainted with farmers—and there were some hon. members who knew something of them—would be aware that during the disastrous drought, which had fortunately now terminated, the bulk of the farmers had had to leave their homes and go to different places in order to earn bread for their families. In fact, it was very well known that on a large section of the railway between Glen Innes and Tenterfield, the contract for which amounted to £650,000, under the management of Cobb and Co., very nearly two-thirds of the men employed on that line belonged to Queensland. When the census was taken on the 1st of May, 1886, they were absent from the colony, but they had since returned; and he had no doubt that a great many of them had, as the hon. member for Ipswich had stated, invested their earnings upon the railway, in taking up land in West Moreton. Therefore, if they were going upon the principle that electorates had increased since the census returns, they must apply that principle in general terms to all the electorates of the colony more or less. They could not on that ground say that one electorate was entitled to increased representation more than another. He might say, while dealing with that question—and he hoped hon. members would pardon him for saying so—that it ought not to be discussed upon merely parochial ideas. In considering a Bill for the better representation of the people, he thought they should take certain well-defined principles. If they took the principle of population, they must accept that as a whole; if they went upon the principle of adult males, they must accept that as a whole. Any departure from that would greatly affect the principle of the Bill. The Premier, when introducing the Bill, and also subsequently when speaking in reply on the second reading, said that he intended to accept the population basis as the principle upon which the Bill was based; and he (Mr. Groom) thought if hon. members would take the tables that that hon. gentleman had compiled in connection with the Bill, they would find that no more equitable division of the representation of the people could be devised. In reply to what had fallen from the hon. the junior member for Cook with regard to Mr. Gladstone's observations in 1879 when he introduced the Redistribution Bill for the United Kingdom, he ventured to dissent from that hon. member in saying that the House of Commons accepted Mr. Gladstone's interpretation that distance from the capital and revenue were to be taken into consideration. That was no doubt the principle from his point of view, but the Conservative leaders, some of whom were quite as able as Mr. Gladstone, would not accept, and did not accept, that proposition from the same point of view. That was clearly illustrated in the metropolitan group. The population of London and its suburbs had increased to such a marvellous extent that, when considering the grouping of the electorates, Mr. Gladstone limited the representation of that group to fifty-two members. Any hon. member who looked through the redistribution of seats in the United Kingdom on that occasion would see that the House of Commons consisted of 670 members, fifty-two members representing the metropolitan group. He did not mean the city proper, but what was called the Metropolitan group. A great many persons in considering the question of redistribution confounded the city proper with the whole of the suburbs surrounding it. Hon. members would perhaps be surprised to hear that when the census was taken on the night of the 4th April, 1881, the population in the city of London was only 50,000, while the population of the

whole of London was 4,500,000. In the daytime when the census was taken the population of the city was 270,000, so that hon. members could see the migration that took place in the daytime from the suburbs into the city. Now, in considering a question of this kind they should be guided by the general principles that were laid down. He did not think they should take into consideration whether an electorate was carved out in this way or that way. When Sir Arthur Palmer brought in his Redistribution Bill in 1872, the same arguments were made use of that were used now. It was then that that celebrated phrase was coined by Sir Charles Lilley that the hon. gentleman had been "gerrymandering" the country—that he had been cutting out the electorates to suit his own purpose. But it was impossible in this country, or any other country, in framing an Electoral Districts Bill, to carve out the electorates so as to suit party ends. He did not suppose for a moment that any Chief Secretary or Colonial Secretary in drafting a Bill would have such low ideas in his mind, but in any case it would be utterly impossible for him to do it. Sir Arthur Palmer's Bill of 1872 was founded on the single electorate system, but when he went to the general election he was defeated by a majority of two to one. When the Redistribution Bill passed in 1878 the same thing occurred; again the Ministry were defeated. It was impossible to forecast the result of the general election from the basis of the Redistribution Bill. As for the statement that any of the divisions had been made for party purposes, he thought they should be magnanimous enough to relieve the Premier from any imputation of that kind. He was sure that any hon. member who would carefully study the tables—as he had done to the best of his lights—would come to the conclusion that a more equitable distribution could not have been made. It was quite possible that some hon. members on the other side might say that the Northern districts were not fairly represented, but if they established the principle of representation upon a population basis, then the North was as equitably and as fairly represented as the Southern constituencies. If, however, they went on the adult male basis, of course the thing was different; but he took it that up to the present time, as far as the debate had gone, hon. members had accepted the principle laid down—that the total population should be the basis of representation.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : No.

Mr. GROOM said he knew some hon. members on the other side did not accept it, but he took it that hon. members on the Government side were in favour of that principle. The majority had to rule, and the majority of members of the Committee had accepted the principle that population should be the basis of representation. Now, the hon. junior member for Cook had contended that there was no community of interests between the Darling Downs electorates and the Southern pastoral group. He (Mr. Groom) dissented from that entirely, and maintained that there was a distinct community of interests. It was to the Southern pastoral group that the electorates of Darling Downs had to look for their markets; the consumption in the Western districts during the last two or three years of agricultural produce from the Darling Downs was something enormous. There was a distinct community of interests between the two groups, and he (Mr. Groom) was very much pleased the other day when, on the suggestion of the hon. member for Balonne, the Premier had consented to strike the quota on the two groups combined. As to the claims of West Moreton to an additional member, that was a question for the Premier

and hon. members themselves to decide. Upon the basis of population, as he had already said, the West Moreton group of electorates had equal representation with the rest.

Mr. FOOTE : No.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. member wished to take into account the increase of population since the census was taken; but if they went on that basis, what would be the result on that Bill? How many members would they give Croydon, for example, if they followed the suggestion of the hon. member for Bundamba? They could not apply the principle to one electorate only; they must apply it to the whole of them. After carefully considering the Bill, and listening to the discussion which had taken place on it, he had come to the conclusion that it was a fair and equitable one, and that it would give as fair representation as could possibly be devised under our present system.

The HON. G. THORN said the hon. member for Toowoomba had made a speech quite foreign to the question, and there were several of his statements which required correction. First of all the hon. member said that the city of London had a certain number of members. The city of London—that was, the city itself and the metropolitan group—had 62 members in all: 49 Conservatives, 2 Unionists, and 11 Liberals. Again, the hon. member was wrong with regard to his population. The population of the city of London, according to the last census returns, was about 120,000.

Mr. GROOM : You are quite wrong.

The HON. G. THORN said that boroughs not above 15,000 returned one member, between 50,000 and 165,000 two members—he was giving the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba the basis of representation in the whole country—and the city of London, according to the last census returns, had a population of about 120,000. He was merely pointing out to the hon. member the errors in his speech, which was quite foreign to the question—the hon. member had gone all round the compass.

Mr. FOOTE said that the hon. member for Balonne had pointed out that it would be very fair and equitable to restore the member who had been taken from the Darling Downs group. According to the Premier himself, as the arrangement was now made the group of the Downs was over-represented. The hon. member for Toowoomba had expressed himself as very favourable to the Bill, and had said that that side of the Committee acknowledged that the population basis was the proper basis to go on. That had not been carried out. The Premier himself admitted that the Darling Downs group was over-represented. Nor had it been carried out in regard to the Central districts, according to a return read by the Premier. The member that the Bill proposed to take away there had been restored. All the Bundamba electors asked for was their legitimate rights according to the increase in the district of West Moreton; not the increase in Bundamba only, but that in Stanley, in Rosewood, in Laidley, and in Fassifern. They were by no means fairly dealt with. Many hon. members of the Committee had complained about the metropolitan district being over-represented. Take, for instance, that part of the Moreton district which had been added to the electorate of Moreton. That electorate came down from somewhere beyond Kilcoy and went down to Humpybong. Where could any candidate come from to represent that electorate but from Brisbane? The interests of the southern end of that district would entirely overwhelm those of the other end, and a metropolitan member would be returned. The

same remarks applied to other districts, and especially to Bundanba. Whether intentionally or not, it could not have been done better; in fact, he had been informed that it had been done in that way in order that a certain representative might be returned—that it was possible that that person might not be able to find a constituency elsewhere, and consequently a nice little pocket-borough had been prepared.

The PREMIER: Where is that?

Mr. FOOTE said he was not going to give any names.

The PREMIER: What is the electorate?

Mr. FOOTE: Bundanba. He wished to say that if that had been the intention it could not have been better done. It might be denied, but actions spoke louder than words, as the Premier had said over and over again. The way in which that electorate was cut down was most unfair. The effect would be the disfranchisement of all interests except one, and that was the mining interest. The proposition that the electorate should be restored to its proper boundaries, and return two members, was very fair.

Mr. GROOM said he would like to put himself right with the hon. member for Fassifern, the Hon. Mr. Thorn. That hon. member was sometimes very wild in his assertions, and he frequently made statements which must have astonished even himself when he read them the next morning. He would now give the authority for the figures he quoted. In page 251 of the "Statesman's Year Book" for 1887—one of the standard authorities, and one which he did not think the hon. member would dispute—he found that the night population of the city of London on the 4th April, 1881, when the census was taken—they did not take it on the 1st of April—was 50,652; and the population at 12 o'clock in the daytime was 261,061. The "Parliamentary Companion," which, also, he did not suppose the hon. member would dispute, said that the two members who represented the night population of the city of London, numbering over 50,000, were the Right Hon. Sir R. N. Fowler and the Right Hon. J. G. Hubbard. The total representation of the metropolitan group of constituencies was 52, and not, as the hon. member had stated, 62.

Mr. FOOTE said he hoped the Premier would grant the concession he asked. Concessions had already been made in other cases, and he had no doubt that further ones would be made.

The PREMIER said he had endeavoured to explain the position he had taken up, and if hon. members would not see it he could not help it. He had pointed out the special reasons—there was no use repeating them—for conceding an additional member to the Darling Downs group, and hon. members knew them as well as he did. He did not see any justification for giving West Moreton an additional member. The number could not be increased without increasing that for every group in the colony, especially the Metropolitan group, which would be entitled to two or three more members. That was a serious business and a very difficult one, and he hoped hon. members would address themselves to the question, dismissing from their minds any notion that there was any advantage to be gained for one part of the colony or another. The hon. member for Bundanba said that everybody but those engaged in the mining industry would be disfranchised. The Bundanba and Rosewood electorates taken together were entitled to two members. The proposed division would make the populations almost equal. The interests of Rosewood, at any rate, would be perfectly homogeneous, while Bundanba, for the most

part, would be a mining district. He had pointed that out, and could do nothing further. He should be glad to accede to the wishes of the hon. member for Bundanba; but he could not do so in justice to the community at large, and he hoped that the hon. member would approach the subject from the same point of view.

Mr. FOOTE said if the hon. Premier would not accede to the request, perhaps he would put Rosewood and Bundanba together, and allow them to return two members. That would be just the same number as he proposed to give, and would not alter the boundaries in the slightest degree, because they joined one another.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he agreed with the Premier that they were discussing a very serious business; but he took it that every member who had yet spoken had treated it in a serious manner. Though he would not say that Bundanba by itself was entitled to another member, yet, if it could be shown by figures that the West Moreton group was under-represented, more especially since additions had been made in the clause, it would be entitled to another member. The Darling Downs group had a smaller gross population and a smaller adult male population than the West Moreton group.

The PREMIER: No. You are looking at the wrong table. Darling Downs will have 4,000 more.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was taking the average per member. The average for the Darling Downs was 4,295 gross population, and 1,063 adult males; the average for the West Moreton group was 4,385 gross population, and 1,128 adult males. Since the Bill was introduced the Darling Downs group had been given another member, who had been put in to increase the representation of the Southern pastoral group; and taking those two groups together the average per member was 3,730 population, and 1,123 adult males. So that in the West Moreton group, compared with the Southern pastoral and Darling Downs groups combined, the gross population per member was 600 more, and the adult male population about the same. He thought the hon. member for Toowoomba was wrong in stating that a majority of hon. members had agreed to take the hard-and-fast line of gross population as the basis, putting out of view the adult male population, and other items which ought to be considered. But he would not discuss that till he came to speak about an increase in the number of Northern members. It appeared to him that there might be some ground for the contention of the hon. member for Bundanba that another member should be added to the group, though he did not say that Bundanba should have another member.

The PREMIER said he would go a little further than the hon. member had gone. The hon. member had only made half his speech and he (the Premier) would give the other half. Taking the West Moreton group, with a total adult population of 7,899—in round numbers 8,000—that gave the group eight members, one for every 1,000, according to the proper basis of representation. Then, applying that to the Northern division, with 19,589 persons, that group was entitled to nineteen members. That was the other half of the hon. member's speech, which was coming afterwards. What was proposed to be done in reference to the Darling Downs group was to take out of it a large portion of the electoral district of Chinchilla, and treat that as a part of the Southern pastoral group, and the total population taken out would not be more than about 1,000—perhaps 1,200—including about 400 adult males; so that the proportion per member

would be very little different in the Darling Downs group from what it was as at first proposed. The hon. member for Bundamba suggested that Bundamba and Rosewood might be thrown together, and allowed to return two members; but that was very difficult matter on which to express an opinion. The members for the electorates concerned were best qualified to express an opinion on that point. For his own part he preferred single electorates so far as could be arranged.

Mr. FOOTE said it would be a very fair plan to unite the two electorates, and let the united electorate return two members. There would then be a possibility of all the interests of the community being represented, but as the matter now stood only one interest would be represented, and all the others disfranchised. If the Premier would not give the group the concession of an additional member to which it was entitled he might make the concession just proposed.

Mr. ISAMBERT said a redistribution scheme was one of the most serious and difficult things a Government could undertake, and almost every Government that had yet attempted it had come to grief. When he first saw the tables he thought them remarkably fair, and felt inclined to vote for the Bill as it stood, but since additional members had been given to other districts he thought West Moreton was not fairly treated. If the Darling Downs group returned nine members, West Moreton ought to have eight members. He strongly objected to joining the Rosewood electorate to Bundamba, and making the two into one double electorate. Rosewood was a purely agricultural district and ought not to be annexed to a mining district like Bundamba. Under the circumstances he thought the West Moreton group ought to have another member.

Mr. ALAND said he did not think the West Moreton group was entitled to another member. According to the tables the West Moreton group had seven members, and an average general population to each of 4,385, while the average number of adult males was 1,128. If it received another member the average general population would be 3,833, and that of adult males 987. That was altogether too low, and would not compare fairly with the Darling Downs and Southern pastoral groups.

Mr. FOOTE said he could quite understand the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, and others, agreeing with the Bill so far as it went. They had got an additional member to which they were not entitled for Darling Downs. All the fish came to their net; it was the same ever and anon. Any member who had any experience in that Committee during past years knew that Darling Downs was a very favoured locality with every Ministry, and that the members for that district were safe and at the beck of any Ministry. If the Darling Downs had been treated the same as the West Moreton group, and its electorates had been lopped off all round, with what a dignified air its representatives would get up and say they were entitled to another member, and quote the figures set down in those tables! The Bill had not been carried out in its integrity with reference to the Darling Downs group and the Central district; but it must be carried out in its integrity with regard to the West Moreton group. What did that show? Simply that the Premier was determined to do an act of injustice to West Moreton. The hon. gentleman would find out, if he did not know now, that the districts to which he had given an additional member had never returned a supporter of the Liberal party.

The PREMIER: I am perfectly well aware of that.

Mr. FOOTE: If the hon. gentleman was aware of that, that should be another reason why he should give West Moreton its proper rights.

Mr. McMASTER: That is log-rolling.

Mr. FOOTE: No; it was not log-rolling. It was log-rolling when they passed the Valley railway. He maintained that their district was entitled to another member. It had grown in population, and country that properly belonged to it had been lopped off by the Bill.

Mr. ALAND said he would just correct one remark of the hon. member who had just sat down. The hon. member never got up to speak but he was sure to have a peg at the Darling Downs district and say it got all that it wanted and more than it deserved. Well, all he (Mr. Aland) could say was that it was a good job they were a little favoured, for in times past they were altogether neglected. Ipswich used to be the favoured place; Ipswich claims were always attended to, to the detriment, he was sorry to say, of other parts of the colony. The hon. member said that the members for Darling Downs always supported the Ministry in power. What were the members doing today? Some of them were sitting on one side of the Committee and some on the other, and the same thing occurred in the last Parliament; so that the hon. member should not make such wild statements as that, but should consider what he was saying. The hon. member was no doubt thinking of Ipswich. They knew that in days gone by, and it was pretty much the same now, the Ipswich members stuck very close to the Government, and they stuck to them for some purpose. The Government, as far as Ipswich was concerned, had always been very squeezable.

Mr. WHITE said they could not wonder at Darling Downs being favoured, as the squatters and landowners had a community of interests, and insisted on all occasions on being a privileged class. It was to the interest of the country, and for their own good, that the Committee should keep them in check when they could. Therefore he thought that they ought to insist on having equal privileges with them. He would advise the Government to have the Bill recommitted and the electorates restored to the form in which they originally appeared. There would be no end of increase in the number of members if they broke into the Bill in the way they had done. There was no improvement made in it by so doing, and it was clearly an advantage gained by a class—by landowners and squatters.

Mr. KATES said a good deal had been said that evening about the Darling Downs being favoured. He maintained that the Darling Downs had not been favoured. That group had formerly eight members, which number was reduced by the Bill to seven, and had since been restored to eight. But what happened in connection with that? The Darling Downs had been extended a good deal to the westward—right to Chinchilla, Yeulba, and Roma. Darling Downs proper had not been favoured in the least. On the contrary, the people there had a good deal to complain of; they had no community of interest with Chinchilla, Yeulba, and Roma. When the consideration of that electorate came before the Committee he would have something to say on the subject. He was sure the people were not satisfied with the way in which the electorate had been cut up. It had two members before and now it had only one, and a part of the best agricultural district had been taken away and joined to another electorate with which they had no identity of interest.

Mr. McMASTER said it was very difficult to understand the argument of the hon. member for Bundanba. First he told them that the West Moreton group was entitled to a second member because Bundanba had so much increased in population. But having let the cat out of the bag, the hon. member turned round and faced them in another form. When he saw that his argument was not likely to go down with the Committee, he told them straight that that small electorate of Bundanba was made for the purpose of allowing someone else to come into the House. Evidently the whole secret was that the hon. member was afraid of his own seat. Finding that that argument had not the desired effect he asked that Rosewood might be joined to Bundanba, in order that, in his (Mr. McMaster's) opinion, the vote of the people in that district might nullify the votes of the Bundanba electorate. He was astonished to hear such arguments from an old veteran like the hon. member for Bundanba. If the hon. member had quarrelled with his constituents he would have to put up with the inconvenience, but the Committee was not likely to give Bundanba an additional member, nor were they going to join it on to Rosewood.

Mr. ANNEAR said he was sorry to see that hon. members were inclined to quarrel over the passing of that measure. He had read the tables very carefully, and from the first he considered they had been fairly drawn out with one exception.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Maryborough?

Mr. ANNEAR said Maryborough and Wide Bay members, as a rule, would rather put up with an inconvenience than indulge in such small squabbles as the Ipswich bunch went in for. The exception he referred to was the North. He firmly believed that the Premier approached the matter in a non-political way, but he thought the North required some consideration, and that it might justly be granted one or two members in excess of the fourteen who were provided. Now, what had the West Moreton or Darling Downs groups got to complain of? On the Darling Downs there was a general population of 4,205, with an adult male population of 1,063, yet the Premier, he believed, had consented to give that group an additional member.

The PREMIER: It does not make any difference practically.

Mr. ANNEAR said he was sorry to see the departure from the principle of the Bill. The West Moreton group had an adult population of 1,123, whereas the Wide Bay and Burnett group had an adult male population of 1,202, and a total population of 4,226. Every hon. member could use the same arguments as the hon. member for Bundanba. He spoke of the large increase in population since the census was taken, but he (Mr. Annear) could point to other districts where a proportionate increase had taken place. They had coal in the Maryborough district; new mines were being opened up every day, and the coal was of such a superior character that he had no doubt that that would be the coalfield of the colony. But the members for Wide Bay and Burnett were going to raise no such argument. They were satisfied, and he trusted the Premier would adhere to the tables.

The Hon. G. THORN said he was sorry the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba was not in his place, as he wished to correct him. It would be in the recollection of hon. members that he (Mr. Thorn) made a statement that the city of London and suburbs returned 62 members. He stated also that they were divided into so many Conservatives, so many Unionist Liberals, and so many Gladstonian Liberals, and his statement was borne out by the "Parliamentary Companion for 1887." He found there were

49 Conservatives, 2 Liberal Unionists, and 11 Home Rulers—or in all 62 members. Now, who was right and who was wrong? Was the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba right, or was he (Mr. Thorn) right? He had in his possession copies of the London *Times*, published at the last general election and recording all the elections in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and he found by the *Times* that the city of London proper contained a population of 120,000 with an electoral roll of 30,000; it returned two members, though if it had a population of 165,000 it would be entitled to three members. He hoped when next the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba attempted to correct him he would bring forward better facts than he had done that evening. Now, with regard to the question before the Committee, there was no doubt the electoral district of Drayton and Toowoomba was over-represented. It had filched land from other districts in order to keep up its population, and he thought he could trace the hand of the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, in the carving out of the Cambooya electorate. The hon. member had had a hand in that, and he had done his work very cleverly. He had carved out the population to his liking, in order to give Toowoomba a greater preponderance.

Mr. FOOTE said the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had accused him of having some personal motive in endeavouring to obtain an additional member for West Moreton. That was not the case. He did not care whether he came back again, and it was not a fact that he had quarrelled with his electors. He had not fallen out with them, nor had they fallen out with him, and he was quite prepared to meet all comers. He thought the hon. member had better look after his own electorate. Possibly he might not come back again himself. He would do well to mind his p's and q's, and not try to find out his (Mr. Foote's) basis for opposing the Bill. He was not asking for two members for Bundanba, but for an additional member for West Moreton. He did not ask for two members for Bundanba as it now stood, but he said that by its original boundary it was as much entitled to two members as Ipswich or Toowoomba. That was the basis of his argument, and he was sure hon. members must see the justice of it. He was sure of this: that when the Premier had passed West Moreton every constituency that asked for an additional member would get one. He understood that the North was going to ask for four, and he had not the slightest doubt that it would get them. He was fully satisfied that the only group of electorates that would be treated unjustly by that Committee would be the West Moreton electorates. The North and the other divisions of the colony would all get what they wanted. They would see, as the Bill went through committee, that his words would come true. It was a great injustice to deprive West Moreton of the additional member to which it was entitled.

Mr. ISAMBERT said, from the way the debate was developing, he could see they would never get to a division.

Mr. FOOTE: We do not intend to.

Mr. ISAMBERT said it appeared that on every new electorate they were to have a long discussion on the whole of the electorates of the colony. To get on at all the colony should have been divided into groups, and they should then have decided the number of members which should be given to each group, and afterwards take the single electorates into consideration. The Bill should be recommitted, and the discussion started on a different basis altogether.



Mr. FOOTE said he could not let the question go to the vote yet, as it had not been as fully discussed as it ought to be. The matter of additional representation for that vast group of electorates, with its increasing wealth, population, and enterprise, required further consideration. He was not going to make a personal stand, and if other hon. members interested in the matter as well as himself did not choose to take as strong an interest in it as he did, it must go. But if they chose to take part in the discussion and keep it going, he would take good care the clause would not go through that night. He would not do that of himself, because if he did so he would consider he was going against the wishes of other hon. members who had reason to be as much interested in the welfare and progress of West Moreton as he was himself. Seeing, however, that a departure had been made from the scheme of the Bill as at first introduced, and that they had shown good reasons why they were entitled to an additional member, he would do his best to bring that about.

Mr. KELLETT said it was rather unfair for the hon. member for Bundamba to say he was left entirely to himself. It was not the intention of the other West Moreton members to leave him to fight the battle, because they reckoned they were asking for nothing that was not fair and reasonable. The moment that hon. members opposite hinted that they wanted an additional member they got what they wanted. They thought there should be an additional member for the Downs, and the Premier did not see much objection to it, and it was settled in a very short time. In the present case they could show much better reasons for an additional member, and the Premier made no sign, and would not say he saw the justice of their arguments. He would like to hear from the Premier what he intended to do. All members of the Committee who took an impartial view of the matter must admit they were being unfairly treated. Additional members were already granted, others were proposed to be granted, and yet West Moreton was left in the lurch. He could not see how they could be asked to grant several additional members for the North if they were themselves to be left out in the cold. So far as he could see, the West Moreton group was better entitled to an additional member than any other group of electorates in the colony.

Mr. SALKELD said the hon. member for Bundamba was quite mistaken if he thought the other members for West Moreton would not assist him in that matter. It had been forced upon him that any request from the Opposition side would be acceded to, and that members on the Government side were not to get what they asked. The Bill, on the whole, was very fairly made out, though there might be room for some improvement in the adjustment of the boundaries, and he believed the West Moreton members would have been satisfied to stand aside if the Bill was to be carried in its entirety, and on the basis at first laid down. That, however, had been departed from, and the Premier had gone outside the census returns; and if there was to be an alteration in one case why not along the whole line? The best thing that could be done was to recommit the Bill and let it go through on the basis on which it was brought in. No doubt the Premier had listened to the arguments of hon. gentlemen opposite, and when he did not find many members getting up and objecting he gave way. He (Mr. Salkeld) however, would rather take the deliberate intention of the Government in framing that Bill than their action on the spur of the moment in that Committee as the better and safer basis to go upon. The Government were going to put on the brake there, but he could see it would be taken off as

soon as they got over that question. He would strongly urge the Government to recommit the Bill and go through with it as it stood at first. They could never get through a Redistribution Bill in that House unless it was dealt with as a whole from beginning to end and adhered to.

The PREMIER said the hon. member for Ipswich had no right to say that if any person wanted to get a concession in the Bill he must belong to the Opposition side of the House. There was no foundation for such a statement. He had already stated at considerable length, and on several occasions, the reasons why he acceded to the arguments that were adduced the other night. They were arguments which he could not satisfactorily answer, and therefore he yielded to them. He should have listened to arguments from that side of the Committee with a great deal more attention, but he had heard no arguments from that side, that evening, to justify him in acceding to the demand that had been made.

Mr. FOOTE said he should like to know what the Premier called argument. Hon. members had pointed out the way in which the district had been cut up and subdivided to give representation to other electorates. What was that but an argument? What belonged to them had been taken away from them, and they were told they were to have no additional representation. They had been deprived of what belonged to them to make up the deficiencies of other electorates, and they asked to have that restored to them which had been taken from them, and to be represented on the basis of their population. Surely that was a very reasonable argument. The request was a reasonable one, and one which they were fairly entitled to urge. The hon. member, Mr. Salkeld, had said that if the Bill had been carried through in its original shape there would have been no cause of complaint. Neither would there; if there had been no giving way before, they could have had no cause of complaint. It was quite clear that the Premier did not intend to give way now. "You shall not have it" was the stand he had evidently taken in reference to their appeal for an additional member. They had been alluded to as a "bunch," but they were not a bunch in any sense of the term. That term was applied to the old political party many years ago, but the party as a bunch had long since ceased to exist. The members for that district voted sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other—very rarely together—as would be seen if the records of the House for the past two or three years were examined. They only voted together when they wanted to reduce the Estimates, as was the case last week when the Defence vote was before the Committee. It was a great pity indeed that they did not work more together, like the metropolitan members, for instance. That section of the party were known to be sometimes convinced by the arguments of the Opposition and cross-bench members, but the Premier generally succeeded in convincing one or two of them before the close of the debate, so that they should vote on the right side. He did not remember that when any member of the West Moreton party had made a speech stating on which side he was going to vote, that even the Premier or any other member had been able to convince him that he was wrong and ought to vote on the same side as himself. They could not be accused of being a bunch, nor could they be accused of not having the best interests of the country at heart on all occasions. All they asked for was fair play. They wanted to have granted to them what had been granted to other groups. What they said was that they were entitled to have another member for the West Moreton group, and that they ought to have it.



The PREMIER said he had pointed out many times that, practically, Ipswich, or West Moreton, did get another member. It got all the heads of the Logan, formerly included in the electorate of Fassifern, which did not belong to it, and to which a new member had been given. It had been put back to the district to which it belonged. Thus practically they got a new member, and what was left of West Moreton was not entitled to more members than were proposed to be given to it on any basis that could be suggested. That being so, the Government could not accede to the demand.

Mr. SALKELD said there was no community of interests between that part of the Fassifern electorate known as the Logan and Southport and Nerang, and he could not understand why it was put with a part of the colony with which it had no community of interests. Now that the Fassifern Railway was completed to Dugandan, a great deal of the trade there would go round by Ipswich. He could not see the force of the Premier's contention that it had been put back to the district to which it belonged. It was a district of itself; any community of interests it had was rather with the Fassifern electorate than with any other to which it might be attached.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the Premier's argument that West Moreton, with its new boundaries, was not entitled to more than seven members was perfectly correct. It would have been equally as correct to say that if its boundaries had been cut down a little more it would have been entitled to only six, or even three. But their contention was that it was unnecessary to alter the boundaries when those boundaries entitled the district to an additional member. No one had been able to upset the argument that, with its former boundary, West Moreton was entitled to an additional member. It was not well to interfere with boundaries if it could be avoided, as he contended it could be in that case; and if a group was entitled to an additional member it ought to have it. It was very easy to lop off a part here and a part there, and then say they were not entitled to an additional member; and that was what the Government had done in West Moreton.

The PREMIER said he would like to add that in the early part of the debate hon. members said they were quite satisfied with the arrangement of the West Moreton group, and approved of it. If they approved of it then, why did they not approve of it now?

Mr. FOOTE: Because it has not been carried out.

The PREMIER: They said the re-arrangement of the West Moreton group was perfectly fair—that they had not the slightest objection to it; and now, because an alteration had been made in connection with the Darling Downs and Western pastoral groups, therefore the re-arrangement became entirely wrong. That was the kind of argument they had been listening to.

Mr. KELLETT said he was not aware that any hon. member on that side of the Committee had said anything of the sort—that they were perfectly satisfied with the Bill, and the proposed re-arrangement. He had said that they might have been satisfied with it to a certain degree if it had been kept in its integrity, but at the very first instance when a member on the opposite side got up and said he wanted a member he got it. The Premier had said just now that he did not understand their arguments—that they were no good; but he understood the arguments on the other side. He did not confute them at all.

The PREMIER: I got no one to help me to answer them.

Mr. KELLETT said, of course, the arguments on the other side were good. But none of the members on that side of the Committee could see where the goodness came in. Dalby, which had got a member, had, he found, 543 adults, and they took a slice off some other place to give it a member. Then the Darling Downs, with its nine members, would have 917 adult males as against West Moreton, which with eight members would have 1,077 adult males. And at the same time the hon. gentleman thought the arguments on the other side so good that he gave a member to Dalby, which at one time was entitled to a member, but had gone back. There were very few people living there now, and no likelihood of the population increasing in the future; and still the Premier saw good arguments for giving it another member. The hon. gentlemen now seemed a bit angry because the hon. member for Ipswich had stated that anything the Opposition asked for was sure to be granted, and he (Mr. Kellett) could assure him that if hon. members had not said it before, they had often thought it. It had been said to him (Mr. Kellett) scores of times outside that the only place to sit was on the other side if he wanted to get anything. The Ipswich members were never able to get anything either privately or in that House, and as the Premier would have it, he (Mr. Kellett) could tell him that it was commonly said outside the House, "Why don't you go and sit on the other side? You will then be in a position to get what you want." There, amongst his friends, the Premier seemed to hit at them more than at the members of the Opposition, and gave them less. He did not think that was fair at all. No arguments had been used on his own side that the hon. gentleman could understand at all. He had told them that he could not understand their arguments; they were not intelligible enough to understand.

The PREMIER: I said I had heard no arguments to justify the concession.

Mr. KELLETT said it was bad enough to be a fool, but it was a great deal worse to be told it. That was the way he looked at it. He did not mind it when hon. members on the other side tackled him in that way. He thought that was only fair play, as he could give it to them in return; but to be abused in that manner by their own side was very hard. As far as he could see, he had heard very much better arguments in support of the contention of the Ipswich members than ever he had heard in favour of the member for Dalby; but it seemed the Premier had no intention of taking notice of what his own party said at all. He (Mr. Kellett) thought it would have been well in the past if the Premier had taken more notice of what he had been told by the members of his party during the time he had been in office. He supposed that the hon. gentleman had found that out himself by this time, but he seemed to be going to finish in the same way, and would take no notice of them at all.

Mr. WHITE said he believed there was no favouritism shown by the Government in regard to the Bill; but the difficulty arose from the tenacity of members on the other side, as against the softness of members on the Government side. Hon. members opposite would insist on having their own wants supplied, and their own schemes carried out, but hon. members on the Government side of the Committee had no chance whatever—they were altogether too soft to stand against them. The consequence was that the old thing was repeated over and over again, and would be repeated to the end

of the chapter. Those hon. members insisted on having privileges that the rest of the community could not get, and, of course, they succeeded in getting them, and would continue to succeed in doing so. He believed two hon. members on the opposite side of the Committee were worth four members on the Government side, as regarded tenacity and determination of purpose.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Why don't you come across?

Mr. WHITE said he was very dissatisfied with the comparison between the Darling Downs electorates and the West Moreton group. The Darling Downs group would be favoured to a large extent, but they would not improve their cause in any way by getting a community of interest with the squatters in the Southern pastoral group, because, if they did gain in adult population, they would lose greatly in total population. In some instances hon. members had been going upon total population, and in other instances they had been taking adult male population; and, in regard to the groups which had got extra members, they had been losing sight of the proportion of population altogether. When they considered that the increase of population would go on very much more rapidly in West Moreton than on the Darling Downs and the Southern pastoral group—he was quite sure that for three in West Moreton there would be only one for the Darling Downs and Southern pastoral group—taking that into consideration, and also that the Darling Downs had got an additional member, it looked very unfair indeed if West Moreton did not get an increase in its representation. It would show that an unreasonable amount of wrong had been done, and it would do no good for the land monopolists, who only wished to gain their purposes. They would not be a bit happier; it would only lead them to do wrong, therefore it was the duty of the Committee to put a check upon them, and stop them in every way they could from gaining their purpose. They should not be favoured more than the rest of the population by any means.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said some hon. members, in discussing the question, had argued that the Bill was framed upon the basis of total population, but that was not the case. They had heard it argued that it ought to be the case, but the Premier had yielded to the arguments that had been used some years ago before that Parliament, and total population had not been taken as the sole basis upon which the lines of that measure had been framed. Other circumstances had been fairly taken into account. It had been contended by the hon. members who represented the West Moreton group, who had occupied nearly the whole evening, that they had not been fairly dealt with because the Darling Downs and the Southern pastoral districts had been put together, and had together an additional member, which did not make any material difference in the population basis. It was contended that there should be eight members for the West Moreton group; but if there were, it would give an average of 3,836 total population to each member, which would not be a fair arrangement. It had been complained that the boundaries had been altered, but the Premier had pointed out that even if the boundaries had not been altered, they would not have been entitled to another member on the population basis.

Mr. FOOTE rose to correct the hon. gentleman. The Premier had admitted that had the boundaries remained as they were previously they would have been entitled to an additional member.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had understood the Premier to say that if the boundaries remained as they were before they would not have been entitled to an additional member. If, on the other hand, the boundaries remained as they were now proposed to be, the number of persons—taking the whole population—for each member, would only be 3,836. Then in the East Moreton group the number was 5,204. Where would be the fairness of that arrangement? Then the Metropolitan group would have 7,077 persons to each member. Where was the fairness of that? If they acceded to the claims of the representatives of the West Moreton group, then they would have to grant two or three additional members to the Metropolitan group, and two additional members to East Moreton, and then there would be a demand for four or five members for the North, and the Bill would never get through. He thought all members of the Committee were satisfied that there was a disposition on the part of the Premier to act fairly to all the constituencies, and he was satisfied that fairness ran throughout the Bill. It was a most difficult question, and no argument had been adduced for the alteration demanded by the members representing the West Moreton group, except that an additional member had been given to the Darling Downs and Southern pastoral groups together; although that did not alter the population basis except very slightly. That was the only contention he had heard, and they had spent the whole evening contending that because, for very good reasons, an additional member had been given to those two districts together, therefore they must give an additional member to the West Moreton group, disturbing the whole arrangement of the Bill, and leading to irregularities which would make it impossible to adapt the measure at all to the requirements of the colony.

Mr. SALKELD said he did not know what sort of arithmetic the hon. member was accustomed to, if he could make out that to give two groups thirteen instead of twelve members would not alter the population basis. The hon. member had said that they were satisfied with the Bill on the second reading, and asked what had occurred to alter his opinion. Well, he (Mr. Salkeld) had said that it was a fair attempt at redistribution as far as the groups were concerned, though he thought their group ought to have kept its original boundaries, and then they would have been under-represented. But since then another member had been given—not to Darling Downs, but to the Dalby end of Darling Downs—and another member to the Central district. He believed that was given to Mount Morgan, and while the Mount Morgan interest was undoubtedly very strong, the Government, in that case, had gone behind the census altogether. That was two members additional, and there might be half-a-dozen yet; and the proportion of seven in a House of sixty-eight was a very different thing from a proportion of seven in a House of nearly eighty. That was what they complained of. They would prefer to take the deliberate plan of the Government rather than that haphazard manner of conceding a member here and a member there. The only chance of getting a measure through was that it should be carefully prepared beforehand, and that no alterations should be made except in matters of detail in the boundaries.

The HON. G. THORN said he was afraid the Bill would be shelved, and he would not be annoyed if it were shelved. It would be just as well if the Premier would move the Chairman out of the chair, and promise four or five or even six additional members to the North. That would

be more satisfactory to the Committee and to the country too. The Premier claimed that the Bill provided for identity of interests within the electorates. What identity of interest had Mount Perry with Nanango, or Nanango with Isis Scrub, or the Upper Brisbane or the Burnett Range about Kilcoy with Humpybong? It was a wonder that the hon. member for Moreton had not told the Committee yet what his constituency thought of the boundary proposed by the Premier, extending from the main Burnett Range on the one side to the sea on the other. He was afraid the people of Humpybong and the Pine River did not wish to be connected with the Upper Brisbane. Then there was part of the Stanley River in the Stanley electorate, and part of it went with Humpybong. The hon. member for Moreton had not said a word yet as to how the bulk of his constituents would like to be sent in with the people living on the Upper Brisbane. That hon. member sat there quietly, and he supposed he would vote quietly for the Government in favour of the measure as it stood. If the Bill had been passed as it went into committee he should not have objected to it so much; but seeing that concessions had been made to the goldfields in the North, and rightly so, unless the Government made other concessions there would be a general howl and chorus, something like a chorus of dingoes, against the Bill. He believed Croydon wanted two or three more members. Normanton wanted another member, and Port Douglas another. The end would be that the Bill would not be passed. The Government should have simply given additional members to the North and not altered the boundaries at all. He did not believe in disturbing boundaries, because there would be no way for the electors to get on the right rolls, unless a very long time was allowed for transferring the names from one to another. There would be a lot of electors disfranchised by being on one roll when they ought to be on another. The hon. member for Moreton represented nearly 1,500 adults, and he should like to hear his opinions.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he did not at all agree with the hon. member for Fassifern in regard to throwing out the Bill. He should be sorry indeed to see it thrown out; they wanted redistribution, and if the Premier had been content to go upon the lines at first laid down there would not have been so much objection. The opposition had entirely arisen from the fact that he and other members did not think themselves justly dealt with, seeing that additional representation had been given in other districts. However, if the Premier had made up his mind, and would not accede to their request, he did not see why they should go on contending. He would rather go to a vote on the matter, and if they were defeated, let them accept the defeat and be done with it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was most anxious to see the Redistribution Bill go through, but he had hoped that proper consideration would have been given to the Northern and Central districts of the colony, whose opportunities for representing themselves were so deficient as compared with those in the immediate vicinity.

The PREMIER: Do not say that so often.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he knew he had said it before, and he would say it again.

The PREMIER: Another voice crying in the wilderness.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the Premier had said the members on his own side of the Committee could not argue at all, as compared with members on the Opposition side.

The PREMIER: You only talk nonsense.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said it was all very well to say it was nonsense. If the Premier conceded only to his opponents and passed over his supporters, and told them that they could not argue, all he could say was that the hon. gentleman was very foolish to continue to hold office. He merely suggested that, in order to remove from the Premier any imputation about holding office by means of the silent votes of his supporters. He would show the hon. gentleman that, at any rate, he could argue.

The PREMIER: I wish you would begin.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the whole question could have been met by granting additional members to the Northern and Central divisions of the colony to restore the balance of the voting power, and everybody would have been perfectly happy. Now the hon. gentleman had sown seeds of dissension amongst his most faithful followers. He had never heard the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. White, so obstreperous in all his life. That hon. member had testified to his dissatisfaction with the Government in a way he had never heard him before, or even had dreamed he was capable of doing. He had hitherto been, and literally, he might say, a bald-headed supporter of the Government, and had never expressed an opinion against them. If they were going to have the same trouble over the rest of the Bill as they had had hitherto, the sooner it was taken out of committee and referred to a select committee, or withdrawn, the better. He did not see how the part of the colony that he represented would benefit in the slightest degree, so far as he could judge at present, in regard to the balance of voting power. Hon. members opposite, he noticed, had preserved an ominous silence; but he fancied they would open their mouths when they came to the Burke district. The Premier's only chance was to have passed the Bill through committee as it was, and he believed he would have succeeded in doing so. But he commenced by inserting a member for Dalby, where it certainly was not justified in any way, and then he reinstated the Central division. The Central division had not received an additional member; it had merely been put back as it was; but the Southern division had received an additional member, which was most unjustifiable. When it came to carrying on business in that way the whole Bill had better be withdrawn and either recommitted or submitted to a select committee.

Mr. GRIMES said he regretted that the Chief Secretary had not adhered to the Bill as it originally stood. It had certainly not been improved, but a way had been opened up for a large amount of discussion, the members of every other group claiming increased representation as had been given to the Darling Downs. If the Premier had taken a stand against any amendment he would have been supported, and a great deal of discussion would have been saved; but if they went on at the present rate it would be a long time before they finished with the Bill. He rose to call attention to the inaccuracy of some of the maps on the wall. The boundaries of the electorates of Logan and Bulimba, as shown in the map on his left, did not tally with the boundaries of those electorates as described in the schedule to the Bill, and he warned hon. members not to be misled by any inaccuracy there might be in the boundaries as laid down on the maps.

Mr. HIGSON said he had had no intention of rising but for the persistent manner in which the member for Fassifern and the members for Ipswich and other portions of the West Moreton group had repeated the assertion that the Central district had received an additional member. It had received nothing of the kind; it had only been given the same number it had before—

namely, eleven members; and he objected to hon. members bringing forward the Central district as having received another member in trying to further their own interests. Another thing to be considered was that the electorates of the West Moreton group were close to Brisbane, and their representatives could travel by rail and be in Brisbane at any time, whereas the representatives of the Central electorates had to spend two or three weeks in getting to Brisbane to look after the interests of their constituents.

The HON. G. THORN said he had spoken in favour of the Central division getting its original number; but so far as distance from the metropolis was concerned, when railway communication with that part of the colony was completed it would be no further than Mitchell Downs from Brisbane, and members would be able to reach the metropolis in fifteen or sixteen hours.

Mr. BULCOCK said the Premier had thought, after hearing the arguments in favour of the proposal, that he ought to give the Darling Downs group another member, and he would have taken the same course if he had been in the same position. The total general population of the Southern pastoral and Darling Downs groups was 48,450, and the total adult male population 14,594; so that the average for each of the thirteen members was a general population of 3,927, and an adult male population of 1,122. The average per member in the West Moreton group, as proposed, was 4,385 general population, and 1,128 adult male population; so that there was not much reason to complain. If the East Moreton and Metropolitan groups were combined, and allowed representation in the same ratio as that now claimed for the West Moreton group by the hon. member for Bundamba, they would have twenty-five members. It was proposed to give them sixteen. And if they compared the West Moreton group with the East Moreton group, where the average general population per member was 5,204, and the average adult male population 1,361, and again, if they compared it with the Metropolitan group, where the average general population was 7,077, and the average adult male population 2,060, it would be seen that West Moreton had still less reason to complain. They could not get a basis that could be applied to all parts of the colony alike. The relative distance from the metropolis appeared to be regarded by most hon. members as a reason why there should not be an equality of representation on the population basis. The West Moreton group was nearer to the metropolis than the Darling Downs and the Southern pastoral groups. Taking all things into account he (Mr. Bulcock) thought that the only thing to do was to have a mixed basis that would give fair and equitable representation. If there was to be redistribution there must be a rearrangement of boundaries. It was impossible to please everyone, and they must do the best they could under the circumstances.

Mr. FOOTE said that was what they were trying to do—the best they could. It was possible that it would be eight or nine years before another redistribution took place, and unless an additional member was granted, West Moreton would be labouring under the disadvantage of the lack of another member all that time, because if they did not get an additional member now they would never get one, on account of the prejudice that existed against the group. The hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Bulcock, regretted, or made a statement which almost amounted to a regret, that the Premier had given way in reference to an additional member for

Darling Downs. The Premier himself admitted that that district was somewhat over-represented. West Moreton was under-represented—that was, if it had its rights; and what they contended for was that the district should be left as it was—that they should have additional representation, and that that additional representation should not be given to another district. It did not take much persuasion to get the hon. gentleman to comply with the request of the hon. members for Dalby and Northern Downs to restore Dalby as an electorate; but they could not convince or persuade him that he was doing an injustice to West Moreton. The hon. gentleman soon took members opposite into his arms, gave them what they wanted, and then patted them on the back. He would find out by-and-by that they would not pat him on the back.

The PREMIER: I expect no friendship from them.

Mr. FOOTE said he was satisfied the hon. gentleman did not, and also that he would like fair play. He (Mr. Foote) was sorry that there had been any departure from the Bill as it originally stood. If the Government had stuck to it in its original form he would not have held up his finger against it whatever the consequences might be. But now that there had been a departure from it they asked to share in the plunder. Hon. members laughed. He maintained it was not plunder or anything of the sort.

Mr. CHUBB: Blunder!

Mr. FOOTE said he was happy to be corrected by the hon. member for Bowen. It was certainly a very great blunder. What they wanted was an additional member for the West Moreton group.

Mr. ISAMBERT said the Premier ought to see by that time that it was impossible to carry the Bill through committee in that haphazard way. The electorates of the Northern, Central, and Southern districts were all mixed up.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. ISAMBERT said similar discussions would take place in the other electorates. He believed it would be better to recommit the Bill, and take it in a systematic way. First, they should define the boundaries of each group of electorates, and then decide how many members there should be to each group, and how many electors to each member. He had been prepared to support the Bill in its original form. Now, however, that had been departed from, and there was no telling where it would end.

Mr. BULCOCK said it appeared to him that the argument of the hon. member for Bundamba amounted to this, that because the Premier had made one mistake he ought to make another.

Mr. KELLETT said that was the most unsatisfactory evening he had had in the House for a long time. He thought the tables which had been placed in their hands were very inaccurate. He had in his hand a "table showing the population in each of the existing electorates in the colony of Queensland, according to the census of 1886." At the head of the second page of that document was the Darling Downs group of electorates, about which they had been so much exercised. The Premier had tried to persuade them that he only did what was right in giving that group another member. The average adult male population to each member in those electorates was as follows:—Aubigny, 1,044; Carnarvon, 881; Dalby, 543; Darling Downs, 1,106; Drayton and Toowoomba, 969; Northern Downs, 907;

and Warwick, 740. Only two of those electorates had 1,000 male adults for each member returned. Dalby, which had got one member, had 460 less than 1,000.

The PREMIER: No, it has not; you know that very well.

Mr. KELLETT said he knew that a piece of another district had been tacked on to it, but that did not make such a great difference. As the hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. Salkeld) had very properly pointed out, the railway was opened the other day twenty-two miles beyond Harrisville, and the whole of the trade of that district would come down through West Moreton to Ipswich as a centre. The Premier appeared to have forgotten that fact in framing the Bill. The Fassifern district was growing rapidly, and the opening of the railway would cause more of the rich scrub lands there to be put under cultivation; and there was at the present time a large prosperous farming population. The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, used to say that the Darling Downs was the hub of the colony as far as agriculture was concerned, but West Moreton knocked it into a cocked hat. And the mining industry was also going ahead. No doubt, now that they had found coal almost equal to Newcastle coal, the mining would increase very much. If they only had an easier way of getting hold of the land, which he hoped they would have before very long, settlement would increase very fast. Those were arguments which must be given, because, up to the present time, the Premier had said that no good arguments had been brought forward. The hon. gentleman listened to hon. members opposite, but when his own side spoke he turned his back upon his supporters as much as to say, "I will have nothing to say to you."

Mr. MURPHY: It is nonsense.

Mr. KELLETT said it might be nonsense, but he flattered himself he talked as much sense as the hon. member for Barcoo. He did not make use of personal remarks or he might tell the hon. member for Barcoo how many hours he had wasted in useless speeches.

Mr. MURPHY: I was quoting the Premier's opinion of you.

Mr. KELLETT said he was trying to show the Premier some good arguments for granting the request that had been made. The hon. gentleman must be impressed with the arguments used, but would not acknowledge it. He was sure any impartial person who compared West Moreton with Darling Downs would say that it was disgraceful that Darling Downs should get another member, and that the West Moreton group should stand out in the cold. The Premier told them that they had agreed to the Bill on its second reading, but when he spoke on the second reading he felt dissatisfied and thought that West Moreton was entitled to another member, but the members for West Moreton did not care to be the first to ask for an addition. When they found, however, that other places got additional members without any trouble whatever, they thought it was nearly time to speak. They thought that their constituents might readily tell them that they were very little good; that they got nothing for the district; that members of the Opposition got all they asked for, but that the Premier could do what he liked with them. That was what their constituents would tell them—and very fairly too. But now they were doing their best, and if they did not succeed it would not be their fault. They wanted a little fair play, and simply asked the hon. gentleman to give his own side a turn for once. Let him do that, and he would see

how well-behaved they would be and how faithfully they would serve him in other ways. He (Mr. Kellett), together with the other members for West Moreton, was simply putting forward the just claims of his district. If they did not fight for what they wanted they would be asked why they did not take their blankets, as their predecessors had done, and camp in the House; they would be told if they did not do so that they were degenerating and wanted to get home to their comfortable beds. He hoped the Premier would think better of what he had said. Let him consider the question well and give West Moreton fair play. The members representing that district would be satisfied with a fair thing, but they were not going to be snuffed out altogether. They were not insisting on two members for Bundamba, but another member for the group, and he ventured to say that if it was granted the Premier would find within twelve months that the increased population would justify his action.

Mr. KATES said it appeared to him that some hon. members were going in for stonewalling, but he would point out that it was considerably past the usual time for adjourning. He rose to say that some hon. gentlemen, and especially the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, insisted upon telling the Committee that the Darling Downs had got an additional member. It had no such thing. There was a combination between the Southern pastoral group and the Darling Downs group, but they had nothing whatever in common. Cunningham and Cambooya had no additional representation, but if there were any places that had, they were Northern Downs, Chinchilla, Yeulba, Balonne, and Bulloo. The hon. gentleman was altogether astray when he said the Darling Downs had got additional representation. As a matter of fact, his (Mr. Kates's) constituents were complaining that they had been cut short of a representative. They had two members in the House now; they were only in future to have one. As far as he was concerned, as a representative of the Darling Downs, he said that so far they had not in any way been favoured.

Mr. FOOTE said he regretted to have to retract the debate. He was very sorry, but he could not help it. The importance of the subject did not allow hon. members representing West Moreton to let the matter go lightly. He was sorry to think that he should have to resort to tactics to keep hon. members very much longer than they had usually been in the habit of attending, and although the Premier had the notion of snuffing them out he was not going to be snuffed out so easily. He would, therefore, suggest that the Premier move the Chairman out of the chair, with the view of renewing the discussion to-morrow. Perhaps the hon. gentleman would then be prepared with some scheme which would be both satisfactory to the West Moreton group and to himself. He could quite believe that the hon. gentleman did not intend to do an injustice, but at the same time he must say that he was very hard. He (Mr. Foote) could not see why such a great injustice should be done to the West Moreton group. He could assure hon. gentlemen that he did not intend to let the matter drop. He could not say how long it would be kept up. For his own part he felt very fresh and lively, and was likely to continue so for a considerable time. They had pretty well thrashed the matter out and used up all the arguments they could bring to bear. The Premier said they used no arguments at all, or not such as he could listen to. Time was said to cure all things, and if the Premier moved the Chairman out of the chair they might come better prepared to-morrow and with

more convincing arguments to adduce in support of their request. The hon. member for Stanley had alluded to the great settlement that was taking place in the district, but the hon. member forgot to mention that a sum of £160,000 voted for the extension of the Esk line was transferred to the other end of the line. That was another point upon which the electors of Stanley and West Moreton would no doubt bring them to book. They did not know of the change until it had taken place, and until a deputation had waited upon the late Minister for Works in reference to the matter, and they were all surprised to find that that sum which was intended to extend the line in the direction for which it had been voted, was taken to the other end of the line and expended there. They found to their dismay that no further sum was left to carry out the extension of the line from Esk into the interior from this end. Another point he must refer to was the very important coal industry in the Bundanba district. It was growing every day, and was the cause of a great increase in the population. When he spoke of the population in that district he did not mean adult male population. There might be 500 adult males there, and that meant a population of something like 1,500 or 1,600, all consumers of dutiable goods. One of the chief arguments used in support of the adult male population of the North was that they were consumers of dutiable goods; and he believed the number of persons who were consumers of dutiable goods in the Bundanba district should rightly be considered in connection with the matter. As far as the population was concerned they were fairly entitled to the additional member they asked for. The growing importance of the district was amazing, as anyone travelling over it would find. Another matter to be considered was in connection with the shipping of coal. He knew he was diverting somewhat from the Bill, but he was only waiting until the Premier had made up his mind on the subject.

The PREMIER: I suppose you intend to wait all night?

Mr. FOOTE said he was quite prepared to sit up all night; that was what he intended to do.

The PREMIER: You might give me a chance.

Mr. FOOTE said if the hon. member wished to speak he was ready to sit down.

The PREMIER said he was not prepared to sit there all night, as the state of his health would not permit of it. At the same time he was not prepared to reconsider the matter, although he was prepared to give the hon. member an opportunity of reconsidering the position he had taken up. The hon. member must see—as he was sure every member of the Committee saw—that if the Government were to concede what he asked, they would simply be turning the whole scheme into a burlesque. Of course any number of members might take up that position if they liked, but it was quite impossible that the Government should take up that position. He moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed; the House resumed and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. We shall resume the consideration of the Electoral Districts Bill in committee to-morrow.

Question put and passed, and the House adjourned at ten minutes to 11 o'clock.