

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 1887

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 11 October, 1887.

Motion for Adjournment—Advance of Rabbits into Queensland—Affairs in Samoa.—Question.—Electoral Districts Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

ADVANCE OF RABBITS INTO QUEENSLAND.—
AFFAIRS IN SAMOA.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise for the purpose of drawing the attention of the Government, and especially that of the Minister for Lands, to a paragraph which appeared in the *Queenslander* of a recent date; and, in order to put myself within the rules of the House, I shall conclude with the usual motion. The matter I wish to refer to is the incursion of rabbits into this colony. I see hon. members laughing; but it is a subject with which I have identified myself, and upon which I feel deeply. I feel, sir, that we are on the eve of an invasion by an enemy that, when once here and in possession of the colony, we shall find it almost impossible to get rid of. I do not wish to cast any reflection whatever upon the Minister for Lands in this matter, because I have had frequent conversations with him about it, and he thoroughly realises the imminence of the danger. However, the matter I wish more particularly to refer to now is the paragraph which appeared in the *Queenslander* of October 8, 1887, under the heading "Agricultural and Pastoral," and which I will read, as it is only a short one:—

"Finding that the reports as to the existence of rabbits within the Queensland border have been discredited in some quarters, we have obtained from a well-known resident in the suspected district, a report which we have every reason to believe is thoroughly reliable. Our informant is at a loss to understand how any doubt can be thrown on the matter, or why there should be any desire to keep the true state of affairs dark. He states his conviction that 'there are any quantity of rabbits in Queensland,' and refers to Mr. J. Patterson, Customs officer at Hungerford, who killed one within 100 yards of the Custom-house. Mr. Fowler of Currawinya Station, twelve miles from Hungerford, has men engaged rabbiting at the present time. Our informant himself saw a rabbit on the Paroo, on the Queensland side of the fence. Tracks about there are plentiful in all directions, and numbers have been killed at some distance inland from the boundary fence. Immediately on the New South Wales side of the fence they are very numerous. The blacks regularly supply the publican with rabbits, and rabbit-pie is now a common delicacy at Hungerford. Mr. Conway recently dug out three rabbits on his selection, Mungunya. Our correspondent states that unless some responsible person is placed in charge of the fence it will be totally useless as a barrier. At some places where it crosses gullies it has been washed away. This information, taken in connection with the official information as to the spread of rabbits between Erringonia and Burke, on the other side of the border, leaves no room to doubt that the rabbits have obtained a footing in Queensland, and unless strenuous efforts are made to stamp out the pest in its incipency, the expensive fence will have been so much money completely thrown away."

Now, sir, I think it is well worth the while of the Government to further inquire into this matter from the officers on the border, and find out whether or not this is an over-statement of the case. I myself do not believe it is. I know as a fact—and it is also within the knowledge of the Minister for Lands—that rabbits have been found at Eulo on the Paroo, which is sixty miles inside the border; and, knowing that, I am perfectly satisfied that the report in the *Queenslander* is well within the truth. I ask the Government whether it would not be advisable to take even more precautions than erecting

one single barrier against them—whether it would not be wise now, knowing that they have got a footing so far into Queensland—to erect a second barrier against them to stop any further increase of the pest. We shall have to fight them with the weapons at our disposal, and the only weapon we have is fencing. Any other means of destroying them has utterly failed in New South Wales. It is no use sending men to destroy them by any present known methods, because, unless they are previously fenced in, they only spread the pest more and more. The rabbits clear out from the district where the rabbiters are at work, and spread themselves, not gradually, but rapidly, over all the neighbouring country. I wish to impress upon the Government the necessity of taking still further action by erecting a second barrier against them, otherwise they will very soon inundate the whole country. If the Russians or any other foreign enemy were at our doors and trying to force a landing in this country, the Government would be quite justified, and the people and the Parliament would support them, in taking any action, even the most extreme action, in order to prevent the inroads of that enemy; but, sir, I consider this enemy now marching upon us is a far worse one than any foreign nation who may war upon us can possibly be. The latter would probably only exact blackmail from us; but the other will not only exact blackmail for a time, but will go on exacting it. Once they get foothold in the colony we shall never get them out. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the hon. member has previously referred to the necessity of having the fence extended beyond the point to which it is now erected. Of course that is necessary, and arrangements were in course of preparation at the time I left the office for getting caretakers' cottages put up at different intervals all along the line. That work has to be done before anything else can be attempted. In reference to rabbits having been found at Eulo, I have no distinct evidence of their having been found there.

MR. MURPHY: The Minister for Lands has.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then it is since I left the office. I did not know of it. There was a rumour of tracks or dung of rabbits being seen in the neighbourhood of Eulo, but nobody had seen the animal itself; nor have I heard up to the present time of any being seen there. As to putting a double line of fence, what security is there that that will shut them out any more than a single line? It must either be continued right across the continent or else it would have to start at our eastern seaboard and go to the extreme north-western point of the colony to make it absolutely secure. And unless the first barrier we are putting up on our border can be made to stop their progress into our territory, I think we may regard it as a hopeless job altogether, and one that must be dealt with in some other way, certainly not by the Government erecting barrier fences. But I do not look upon the question so hopelessly as the hon. member for Barcoo, from the fact that rabbits have been found inside our boundary and inside what is supposed to be a rabbit-proof fence, and have been got rid of. I believe that if sufficient diligence is used they may be got under; if they cannot it is a hopeless job. If one fence will not do, it will be for the lessees in the part of the country affected to say how they will deal with the matter, instead of the Government putting up a second fence from a point nobody can define to some other point nobody can define. I am one of those who really dread the thought of con-

structing a second fence as a necessity, because the cost would be enormous—almost as great as that of a railway—and the cost of maintenance would also be very great. There is no doubt that the part of the fence already erected requires to be looked after, because in some places the water washes the earth away from the fence and leaves openings which ought to be attended to immediately.

MR. ALLAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I have received a letter from Mr. Plunkett on this question, and also have other correspondence, urging that the Government should take steps against the inroad of the pest. I have seen the Minister for Lands on the matter, and I am aware that arrangements have been made for the Custom-house officers and stock inspectors along the border to report from time to time as to how far the pest is invading our borders, and also for the employment of blacks in their destruction.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) said: Mr. Speaker,—Immediately after the discussion on this question a few days ago I sent a telegram to the gentleman in charge of the fence requesting him to proceed at once with the continuation of the line to a point forty-four miles eastward of the point first determined upon as the point where our line should meet that of New South Wales. We have not yet received an answer, except that he was then some distance from the place where the telegram should have found him; but I may state that expedition will be used in the construction of the fence, and that no time has been lost. I requested Mr. Gordon, whose knowledge of the matter might enable him to give me some information as to the best means of coping with the difficulty, to give me any suggestions he could make, and he has given me some useful information. He said it might be desirable that Customs officers and inspectors of stock should patrol the border and send in monthly reports; and steps have been taken in that direction. He also thought it would be well to employ the blacks in the neighbourhood to follow up the tracks and destroy any rabbits they might come across, as the most practical and best way of coping with the difficulty. The hon. member for Barcoo told us a few days ago that he had heard that the rabbits were at Narrabri, near our border; but this appears to be a false alarm, and he need entertain no fears about them in that locality. I have just received a telegram from Sydney, in reply to an urgent telegram we sent, as to the price of netting which would be supplied by the only house in Australia who manufacture this kind of wire netting. We can obtain 1½-inch gauge, which is ¼-inch larger than that we have hitherto used, at a certain price, and I sent a telegram back to inquire the price they can deliver 1½-inch gauge, fearing 1½-inch gauge might be too large. I have ascertained, however, that 1½-inch gauge is what is used in New South Wales; and they can let us have ten tons of that within a week. That will carry us ten miles eastward towards the part named; and the whole can be delivered in monthly instalments so as to have it all delivered by February. By that time the posts will be nearly up for the continuation of the line forty-four miles, and we shall have the netting on the spot and be able to complete the whole in a very short space of time. Six sections out of the thirteen into which the 266 miles were divided have been completed, and I have reason to believe that the other seven sections are very nearly completed, though I have heard that part of the fence may have been damaged by flood; but only a very small part. The hon. member for Barcoo may rest assured that no stone will be left unturned to get the work completed with

the utmost despatch. We know now, from reports from our own inspectors and others, that the rabbits have been found in four or five places within our border—at one place about sixty miles north of the border, and at other places very near the border.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to assure hon. members, more especially members on this side of the House who have not studied the question thoroughly, that this is not an over-scare about the rabbit pest. Hon. members are in the habit of thinking that rabbits cannot be acclimatised here, because in a few instances in which persons have turned them out in this colony, with the object of acclimatising them, they have not succeeded. I can assure hon. members that they can be acclimatised in Queensland. In time past it was stated by some people that they would be confined to Victoria, and would never cross the Murray; that they could not burrow in the hard saltbush country of Riverina. But the rabbits did cross the Murray, and when they got into the hard ground they did not want to burrow but simply made their nests in the saltbush, and have since devastated the whole country, so that the lessees of some of the runs are anxious to throw up their runs altogether, as they have to spend far more money upon the reduction of rabbits than the general returns of their stations amount to. They would be glad to surrender their leases and go away if the Government would only allow them to do so, but the Government hold them to the terms of their contract. It was only recently that I was talking to a leaseholder in Queensland in a part where rabbits have already appeared, and he told me then that it was a question with him whether he should clear out his stock and get out of the road or spend the whole returns from his station in keeping down the rabbits, which he seemed to look upon as a hopeless task. I have myself prophesied before in this House that if the rabbits once thoroughly get a footing here, the colony will be monopolised by them and Chinamen; and there is a very good cartoon in the Melbourne *Punch* in which Chinamen and rabbits are represented as dividing Australia in the shape of a plum-pudding between them. It is all very well to say that this cry is got up for the sake of the pastoral tenants. It is nothing of the sort. Rabbits will oust selectors just as fast as they are able to oust pastoralists, and I have no doubt that when they come into immediate contact with the farming classes then the danger will be thoroughly realised, and we shall have the representatives of the farming classes putting their shoulders to the wheel with the representatives of the pastoralists. My electorate is further away than almost any other constituency of the colony, and therefore in the least immediate danger of suffering from the pest, but I have seen the evils that the rabbits can work, and I wish other members of the House could see for themselves the country that has been devastated by them, as they would then have a clearer apprehension of the danger. Talk about acclimatising rabbits! Climate has nothing to do with it. They can adapt themselves to any climate. I have seen them in New Zealand working their way up snow-clad mountains to the regions of perpetual snow. I know that they have thriven on the plains about Deniliquin, Bourke, and Wilcannia, where it is as hot, and hotter, than it is on the Darling Downs. If, then, rabbits have thriven in those places, they will also thrive on the Darling Downs when they get there. They acclimatise themselves as they go along. When they do come I really tremble for the future of the colony. If they are once allowed to get a big footing here there is no means that I know of that will check them from spreading. We all know that in

the interior of the colony the population is very sparse, and there the rabbits will be entirely unmolested; and they go along at such a pace, and get ahead so much through their abundant powers of breeding, that when they get into the settled districts, where the population is rather thicker, the people will be wholly unable to cope with them. The only thing that has been proved a success is the wire fencing. We see plenty of discoveries of remedies advertised by people in the hope of getting the Government reward, but nothing has come out of them that is at all likely to check the evil. The only safeguard I see is the fencing. I believe that two lines of fencing will be better than one. I think that the Government did the best thing they could do in proceeding with the erection of one line, and the only thing they could do at the time. I am sorry it has not progressed faster, but I fully recognise the difficulty of getting a fence of that kind constructed over such a tremendous mileage. But I really believe it would be a prudent course for the Government to put up a second fence, if only five miles from the other. The caretakers would then be able to destroy the rabbits when they passed the first fence before they got through the second—or at any rate would have an opportunity of doing so.

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—I cannot believe that the rabbits that have been found, as the Minister for Lands says, sixty miles to the north, have travelled there. When we find them in certain unexpected spots we may conclude that they must have been carried there and deposited there by someone. There can, I think, be no question about that, and steps ought to be taken to try to catch the parties who are doing these little tricks. The squatters and their stockmen ought to know pretty well who are likely to do such jobs. I think a reward would probably induce them to bowl out fellows likely to do tricks of that sort. There is no doubt that a reward would help to induce some of the stockmen to watch the offenders. I have no doubt that the rabbits in such cases have been carried, and the erection of a second fence will not prevent them being carried again. It seems quite unsatisfactory to devote the whole of our attention to the erection of a fence, and at the same time allow the parties whom we suspect of carrying the rabbits to go without any notice of their doings.

Mr. MURPHY, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Stanley, who has just sat down, is apparently under the impression that the rabbits referred to by the Minister for Lands have been brought to the spots in Queensland where they are now found. I can inform the hon. gentleman that the rabbits are continuous from that point to the seaboard of Victoria. From Warrnambool, in Victoria, to Eulo, on the Paroo, rabbits will now be found on every square mile of that country. An odd rabbit or two might be carried by men and put down at a place forty or fifty miles distant, but their natural enemies about that spot would very soon kill them, and that is the reason why people who have tried to acclimatise rabbits about their houses or properties have hitherto failed in their object. Therefore there is little or no danger from an odd rabbit or two being carried and put down in a particular spot for the purpose of spreading. They will not spread, because their natural enemies will kill them; but the rabbits I speak of are coming upon us now as a wave. They are marching steadily onward, and although at first checked, they gradually become too numerous for their natural enemies, and consequently spread from place to place. The hon. member

for Cook, Mr. Lumley Hill, spoke about the rabbits even ascending the snowy mountains of New Zealand, but the fecundity of the rabbit is not nearly so great there as it is here. They are much more easily kept down in cold climates; and in fact throughout Australia the history of the rabbit is that it keeps carefully away from cold countries and confines itself to the sweet-grass country or saltbush, the clover and rye-grass country, or where lucerne will grow; there the rabbit will grow, but he will not venture in the sour-grass country at all. Moreover, he increases very much more rapidly in the warmer climates than in the cold. Therefore we know from our experience that when once rabbits get a footing in Queensland the pest will be much greater than in any of the southern colonies. There is no part of Queensland in which they will not increase as rapidly as they have done on the Darling, in New South Wales, where they have so far increased much faster than anywhere else. The Minister for Works, I believe, said it would be necessary to put up cottages for the caretakers, but it is a rule in the bush to send out men first and put up cottages afterwards. Bushmen are not accustomed to cottages. They are perfectly satisfied if they get a good tent, and therefore I do not think that argument is of much value. Hon. members are apt to look at this from a pastoral tenant's point of view, but it is a question that affects the community as a whole. The pastoral tenants may be the first men to suffer, because the rabbits may happen to go their way first; but if they eat them out first they will eat out the farming community afterwards, and it is with a view of protecting the farmers that the pastoral tenants should be protected. Many pastoral tenants are in a position to fence in their runs, but how many farmers would be in a sufficiently good position to fence in their holdings, and how much selection shall we have in the colony if intending selectors know that the first thing they have to do is to fence in their holdings and make them rabbit-proof at a cost of £120 per mile? I think the question should be treated from a national point of view, and not from what the Minister for Works calls a squatter's point of view. It is not a question that concerns the squatter alone, but it concerns the whole community, and I am sorry to say that I know some newspapers that call it a squatter's question. I hope that the Minister for Works and the editors of those newspapers will look at it from a very much broader point of view, and see that the prosperity of the whole community is dependent upon our getting rid of this pest from among us.

AFFAIRS IN SAMOA.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I take advantage of the motion before the House to call the attention of the Chief Secretary or Minister for Foreign Affairs to a matter that concerns the whole of Australia—the little *coup d'état* which has taken place in the Samoan Islands, with the sanction, apparently, of the German authorities; and also to the extraordinary kidnapping case, which has been telegraphed from Cooktown, and which is connected with the same affair. There is no doubt that Malietoa, king of Samoa, together with his sons and chiefs, have been kidnapped; that they were brought from the islands by the “Adler,” transhipped into the “Albatross,” and that they have now gone towards Europe. That is as bad a kidnapping case as ever took place in connection with the Polynesian Islands labour traffic. I think it is time that some notice was taken of these continued annexations that are going on in the South Pacific, because if anything of the sort is to be done we ought to take part in it. These Samoan Islands

have been offered to Great Britain for many years. They have been offered for at least fifteen years, and within the last three years the Samoans have asked for a protectorate or annexation. But no notice has been taken of the request, and this is the result: that no legitimate trading is done with the islands, but a filibustering expedition starts out to establish a rifle and bayonet settlement. The Germans and French are no doubt very welcome settlers when they come to Australia, but I do not think it is to our interests or the interests of Australia, that these convict settlements and depôts for naval stores should be established amongst the islands. So far as settlement is concerned, we have only to look to New Caledonia to see what they call settlement there. As an aggravation of this business which is now going on, I may mention that the *Cologne Gazette*, in one of its issues, refers to what it calls the “unsettled tracts” in the northern part of Queensland, and states that they are available for German colonisation. They have an eye to business, and intend to come closer to us still. They are even coming to our mainland to annex part of our territory. The Germans are carrying things with a very high hand in Samoa. According to telegrams, they have burnt 150 houses and fields and destroyed the place, merely because the inhabitants would not acknowledge the king whom the German naval authorities set up. The whole matter is dealt with in such a high-handed manner that I think we ought to take some notice of it. At all events it is to the interests of the colonies to see that the trade of these islands is not entirely carried away from us. The New Zealand Government have even gone so far as to subsidise a steamer to carry on a monthly mail service, and visit the islands for the purposes of trade, so that that country may be kept in touch with the commerce and trade of the Samoan Islands. It is probable that the Victorian Government may also subsidise a steamer to carry on trade with the islands. We have a good example in the New Hebrides of the necessity which exists for some urgent protest being sent home in regard to the matter. It was only the other day that Sir James Fergusson, in reply to a question that was asked him in the House of Commons, said that the Government were still endeavouring to bring the French Government to make some final announcement as to their intention to evacuate the New Hebrides. It is now two or three years since the French first occupied these islands, and the British Government is still waiting for a final answer. No doubt the matter could be settled very quickly if they wished, but it is all part and parcel of the fast-and-loose game they are playing with us, and is similar to the New Guinea affair which has gone on for so long.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I am sorry I can throw only very little light on this matter. The Government are aware—that is to say, they have received information through the Press—that King Malietoa of Samoa has been deported from that country, and we have also received information from one of our own officers at Cooktown, who had seen Malietoa before, that he recognised the unfortunate king being transferred from the “Adler” to the “Albatross” at Cooktown, and taken away somewhere. The ship was last heard of at Thursday Island. We also know that a conference is sitting now at Washington, consisting of representatives of Great Britain, Germany, and the United States, who are now dealing with Samoan affairs; and will, no doubt, come to a satisfactory conclusion. In the meantime it would be utterly impossible for us to interfere. I do not see that

any remonstrance could properly be made under the circumstances, nor do I think it would be attended with any useful result.

Mr. MURPHY : Mr. Speaker,—With the permission of the House, I will withdraw the motion.

Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn.

QUESTION.

Mr. BLACK asked the Colonial Treasurer—

What is the liability on account of uncompleted contracts to be met from balance of Loan Fund, as shown in Treasury return dated 30th September last—such balance amounting to £2,709,147?

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

The contracts being nearly all let at schedule prices it is impossible to give the exact amount. The approximate amount of liability under incomplete contracts is about £1,200,000.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS MAPS.

The PREMIER laid upon the table of the House maps showing the boundaries of the amended new electoral districts, under the Electoral Districts Bill.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read the House went into committee to further consider this Bill in detail.

Question—That the clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put.

Mr. BAILEY said that with regard to Wide Bay he should have preferred to see the boundaries of that district remain as they were. It was a large district, but, although a large district, the interests in it were not so conflicting as some people seemed to think. They had got fairly settled down, so that the interests in nearly every part of the district had become nearly identical. They were working very well, but the Government had been pleased to divide the district into two. He was afraid that under the proposed arrangement the town influence at either end might be too strong. It now formed one large country and mining district, and if altered as proposed the town at either end would have a very large influence in any elections. That was one thing he should like to have seen avoided, but it could not be helped now. He would like the old boundaries to have been stuck to as much as possible, and he certainly objected to the northern end of the electorate—the Isis Scrub—being taken away from what was now the Burrum district, and added to the Burnett. No doubt the transfer was made because, on the basis of the census, there was a deficiency of population in the Burnett district, while the Burrum had a large population. But, as they knew, since the census was taken, a large mining population had settled, and permanently settled, in the Burnett, and that a very large goldfield was now being developed there, which would bring a still larger accession to the population. The reason, therefore, for altering the boundary, and throwing a portion of what was now the Burrum district into the Burnett, no longer existed. He hoped that when they came to the schedules the old boundaries would be retained, and that the Isis Scrub would remain in the Burrum district, where the interests of the residents really were. He also objected somewhat to the division between the Wide Bay district and the Burnett district. Instead of taking the natural boundary from east to west, just about Tiaro—instead of taking the river, they had taken a road some distance from the river. He would have much preferred the natural boundary

of the river as it ran down and met Myrtle Creek. It would have been a far more appropriate boundary than the one described in the schedule, unless the boundary were made exactly east and west from Tiaro. If the boundary was to descend to Myrtle Creek, it would be better to descend by the river boundary than by a road at some distance from the river. Many settlers on the river had grazing lands at the back, and they would find themselves in two electorates instead of one. He was not in favour of men having votes in two or three electorates, and in that particular case they ought to be in one or other of the electorates. He wished to his heart that the Government had left his own district in the state in which it was before.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he wished to know whether the Premier intended to go on with the Northern group, and finish with them, or whether he intended to adhere to the alphabetical order as printed in the clause? The very last name was Woothakata, a Northern electorate, and he had an amendment to propose with regard to it.

The PREMIER : What is the amendment?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said his amendment was that Woothakata should have two members, and he meant to show very good reasons for it. If his amendment were carried it would lead to a re-arrangement of boundaries, and he would ask the hon. gentleman whether it would be more convenient to take it now than after all the other electorates had been disposed of?

The PREMIER said it would be quite impracticable to deal with an amendment of that kind now; Woothakata was the last line of the clause, and it would be more convenient to wait until they came to it. He was sorry that tables which had been prepared had not been distributed to hon. members. Owing to some mistake in the Printing Office, they had sent an entirely different set of papers to be distributed which had nothing whatever to do with the question—papers prepared for his own and his colleagues' use, relating to quite a different subject. But they might go on for the present without them, as they would not be wanted until they got a little further down the clause. He had laid on the table a map showing the alterations proposed to be made in the boundaries of the different electorates, so far as had been rendered necessary by the amendments made in committee. Those electorates were in the South-western pastoral district, the Central district, and the Northern district. In the South-western pastoral districts, the electorates were the district of Dalby—a new one—which was almost the same as the Chin-chilla proposed in the Bill; Murilla, which was composed of a part of the proposed district of Maranoa, a part of the Balonne, and a part of Chin-chilla. The district of Maranoa was considerably lessened. Balonne was shifted westward, taking in Cunnamulla. The district of Bulloo was also altered, decreasing the boundaries of the district of Warrego very considerably, but still leaving a very fair electorate. In the Central division, with regard to Blackall, he was not by any means sure that that was a good name for that electorate. It had a small area, and was liable to be confused with the township of Blackall in the Barcoo district. It was a difficult thing to find an appropriate name. He had thought of "Gracemere," as the parish of Gracemere was about half the whole area of the electorate, the other half being the parish of Calliungal. Calliungal itself would not be a bad name. The district of Port Curtis was proposed to be altered, as suggested by the hon. member for Port Curtis, so as to go west as far as the Dawson, taking in the

country between the Dawson and the range. In the Northern division the district of Carpentaria was proposed to take in all the country on the shores of the Gulf, including Normanton and the portion of the Gulf district immediately trading with Normanton, and also those portions in the west which traded with Burketown. The district of Flinders would take in all the heads of the Flinders and its tributaries, including Cloncurry and Hughenden. In consequence of the large number of people taken out of the proposed district of Woothakata by including the Etheridge in the new district of Burke, it was proposed to re-arrange that part of the colony; Cairns no longer including Port Douglas, but including the agricultural tableland on the top of the range, and Woothakata including Port Douglas and the mining country of the Hodgkinson and Herberton. It was also proposed to readjust the boundaries of Barcoo and Mitchell, following the run boundaries on the north side of the Barcoo River instead of the river, which would be a better boundary. In regard to the matter mentioned by the hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Bailey, he (the Premier) had been under the impression until the present that everybody in that district agreed that Wide Bay was a great deal too large for one electorate, and that it was absolutely necessary to divide it. He had never heard any suggestion of disapproval of that course until the present time. Being divided, then the question arose which were the best boundaries. The hon. member had suggested two modifications of the boundaries, one to adopt the Mary River as a particular part of the boundary instead of a road which ran parallel with the river distant about half-a-mile. He agreed with the hon. member that the Mary River would be a much better boundary than the road, and was prepared to alter the boundary accordingly. The other point was a more important one—whether the Isis Scrub should be included in the Burnett district or in the Burrum district, which was part of Wide Bay, of which it now formed part. The only reason for including the Isis Scrub in the Burnett district was that the population of that electorate was so small, even after the increased area proposed to be given to it. But no doubt the Burnett district had increased greatly since the census was taken, in consequence of mining discoveries, and from the best information he could get that increase was likely to be permanent, and to be considerably larger; and he therefore felt justified, under the circumstances, in returning to the old boundaries between the Burnett and Burrum, which were certainly more convenient, and would leave the population of the two electorates probably more homogeneous than they would otherwise be. The large map that had been laid on the table showed no changes in the boundaries except in the cases of those electorates that had been dealt with by the Committee, and one or two other trifling matters. So far as the Burnett and Burrum electorates were concerned, he should be prepared to accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Wide Bay, not because that hon. member had mentioned the matter that evening, but because it had been carefully considered by the Government during the past fortnight, and they had come to the conclusion that probably it would be better, under the altered circumstances, to adopt the old boundary between the two electorates. The only other alteration shown on the map that he thought it necessary to mention was the change in the boundary between Bowen and Musgrave. Owing entirely to an accident in preparing the first maps, Bowen was made to take in Ravenswood Junction, and it was proposed to alter the boundaries so as to leave Ravenswood Junction where it ought to be—in the mining electorate

of Kennedy. In connection with the Darling Downs group, if there was any objection to the electorate of Cunningham it would be convenient to raise it at that stage.

Mr. ALLAN said the proposed new electorates of Cunningham and Cambooya were both in his electorate, and after making every inquiry he possibly could among his constituents to find out their opinions and wishes with regard to the way in which the electorates had been divided, and the rearrangement thereof, he must say that the general feeling was very much against the proposed readjustment into the electorates of Cambooya and Cunningham. He had had a great many letters from different parts of his constituency, the present electorate of Darling Downs; and while many of them were against the proposed readjustment he had not received one in favour of it. He might also say that several meetings had been held in that part of the country, and he would take that opportunity of reading one or two of the resolutions that had been adopted. He would first read a telegram he had received from Warwick, which was the principal polling-place for the Darling Downs electorate, sent by the returning officer, who was also chairman of the progress committee, and also by Mr. Grayson, the acting mayor. It was to this effect:—

"Meeting representatives electors urge that Darling Downs electorates be so adjusted as to return two members for this section of the Darling Downs. Can you suggest anything we can do whereby your hands may be strengthened?"

The words "for this section" meant the present Darling Downs electorate, as against Northern Downs and the other part of the district. He had also received a letter from Mr. Thomas Kennedy, mayor of Allora, in which he said:—

"Herewith I enclose you copies of resolutions passed unanimously at a large and representative meeting held in the town hall last night, some of the electors coming long distances to take part in it. I trust the Premier will see his way clear to alter the boundaries as suggested in the resolutions, and give us two members as before. If not, an injustice will be done to one of the richest agricultural districts in Queensland."

The resolutions were short, and he should read them also:—

"Resolution 1st.—'That in the redistribution of electorates the name "Darling Downs" be retained for this electorate, and the boundary line extended so as to retain Cambooya, Greenmount, Back Plains, Leyburn and district, and extend toward Goondiwindi, to make up for the portion cut off and thrown into the Warwick electorate, so as to entitle it to return two members as formerly, and that Allora be the place of nomination as before.' Carried unanimously."

"THOMAS KENNEDY,

"Chairman."

"Resolution 2nd.—'That the chairman forward a copy of these resolutions to the members for Darling Downs, Messrs. Kates and Allan, and request them to use their best endeavours to have the electorate amended as proposed.' Carried unanimously."

"THOMAS KENNEDY,

"Chairman."

He had received other communications on the subject, but he would not trouble the Committee with them. Some related to the proposed change of name from "Darling Downs" into "Cambooya" and "Cunningham." A good many of the people there were rather proud of "The Darling Downs," and very justly so. It had often been spoken of as the "Garden of Queensland," and although it was only a matter of sentiment, still they should endeavour to meet the views of the people as far as possible in such matters. He would point out that in the proposed electorate of Cambooya there was a great diversity of interests. The north-west part—the old Darling Downs part—had interests identical with those of Toowoomba, while the southern part, which ran down below Warwick, had interests identical

with those of that district. The mails came from Warwick, the coaches ran to Warwick, all the trade was done with Warwick, and the proposed railway, which he hoped would run from Thane's Creek to Warwick, ran through the middle of that part of the electorate. He did not see how one member for Cambooya could possibly represent the north and south of that electorate. Their interests, if not antagonistic, were at all events somewhat conflicting, and one member could not be in sympathy and touch with both the north and south of the electorate as at present proposed. He did not wish to raise objections without making suggestions by which the difficulty could be overcome; so he would suggest that Cunningham should stand as it was, adding thereto on the east side of the main line of railway and north of the northern boundary of Cunningham the parishes of Haldon, Ramsay, and Cambooya, taking in the towns of Cambooya and Greenmount; from Greenmount going west slightly south and taking in the parishes of Hodgson, Stevens, Tooth, Felton, Ellangowan, Talgai, Leyburn, Hammer, Tummaville, Gore, and Donville. It should be further extended, as the Premier had suggested, to Western Creek, and, if possible, beyond that, in order to make up the population. No doubt that would reduce the population of Cambooya somewhat below the average of the group, unless it were taken a good deal further west; but that would be a very small matter in comparison with having two parts of the electorate in antagonism. It would be better to have 800 in one electorate and 1,200 in another, than to have 1,000 in each with antagonistic interests. He had made up roughly from the census tables—he had not been able to do it accurately—the population under the scheme he proposed. He found that in the proposed electorate of Cambooya there were 900 odd electors, and by cutting off the part he proposed it would reduce that number by about 300; then by the addition of Western Creek, and somewhat west of that, the average would again be raised, to what extent he could not tell. He was pretty certain that, although his colleague (Mr. Kates) and the hon. member for Warwick sat on the other side, they would be of the same way of thinking in this matter as himself; and if anybody suffered it would be they. They would have double as much work, but they would be quite willing to undertake it rather than not be in touch with their constituents. If that arrangement could not be made, then the boundary line should be struck out and the two electorates made into one.

The PREMIER said that, by extending the electorate of Cunningham so far north as the hon. member proposed, about 900 electors would be left out. What did the hon. member propose to do with them?

Mr. ALLAN: Only 300.

The PREMIER: A good many more than that. The constituency would be very small indeed for two members; so that they would either have to disfranchise those people or add them on another electorate.

Mr. ALLAN said it only left 300 out. He had the numbers there as far as he could make them out from the census table. Darling Downs East, Nos. 1 and 2, population 518, adult males 177; Darling Downs Central, No. 4, population 512, adult males 128; No. 5, taking one-half, population 571, adult males 152; No. 3, taking one-fourth, population 420, adult males 92; and No. 2—he had taken one-third of that, he could not do otherwise—population 284, adult males 80. That gave between 600 and 700 adults, and there were between 900 and 1,000 already, so the difference was 300, and the Western Creek and other parts had to go against that.

Mr. GROOM said the proposed electorate of Cambooya had given almost universal satisfaction to the residents in that electorate. At the present time they were virtually disfranchised, and had been so for some considerable time past, because, owing to the way the electorate was divided, the Warwick end completely swamped the Cambooya end. The proportion was something like 800 to 1,000 electors at one end to 460 at the other. There was Cambooya at one end, and at the other the Leyburn and Allora divisions, with a very considerable proportion of what was called the Back Plains district and a portion of Clifton. The proof that the proposed electorate had given satisfaction was that no complaints whatever had been made against it; the complaints were always on the other side—that the Warwick end completely swamped the Cambooya end—so that at the present time they were virtually unrepresented. They were entirely opposed to their present representatives on the *via recta* and St. George Railway, and there was no possibility under the present arrangements of sympathy of interests. He had in his hand a letter which he had received from a resident, which he had been requested to read to the Committee. An attempt had been made to get up meetings on the Darling Downs adverse to the Premier's division of that electorate, but those meetings had not been successful. The letter was as follows:—

"Allora, 19th September, 1887.

"DEAR SIR,

"A meeting was held here to-night, called by the mayor on requisition of a few people in the town, to consider Darling Downs electorate *re* Redistribution Bill. I do not think there were more than twenty persons in the hall, but there might be twenty-five, all, with two exceptions, Allora men, and the exceptions reside within three and a-half miles; a few, however, of these left the hall before the resolutions were put. Letters were read from Messrs. Kates and Allan. Mr. Kates's letter was rather non-committal, but he advised that the electorate should still retain"—

He asked the Committee to particularly bear these words in mind—

"should still retain Greenmount, Cambooya, and Back Plains, and leave out Beauaraba."

Now, Beauaraba was a very populous settlement. It had grown into importance through the land having been taken up by a considerable number of selectors. According to the census returns the population was between 800 and 1,000, and it would be seen from the roll that there were a large number of electors there, in the part asked to be left out:—

"He certainly was decided about that, and so was Mr. Allan. Mr. Allan went further: he advised the retention of these places, and Leyburn (leaving out Beauaraba), and the inclusion of as much country further west as would allow the electorate to still return two members. A resolution on the lines of Mr. Allan's letter was written out, and carried. I pointed out that the whole thing was Warwick from beginning to end, and that before twenty or thirty people ventured to dispose of the Back Plains, Greenmount, and Cambooya in that way, it would be just as well to inquire what the people living there thought about the matter."

He had found out that the opinions of all the influential residents of Greenmount and those places were that they should remain as was proposed in the Bill, and that they should return a member themselves. There was scarcely a dissentient voice, so far as he knew, in the whole place mentioned by the writer of the letter; they were all totally in favour of it.

"The resolution was simply an attempt to create a double electorate in the interests of Warwick by including a minority which would be entirely over-weighted."

That was exactly how the Cambooya end of the electorate was at present. It was overweighted by the preponderance of voters at the Warwick end, and a division of the electorate was certainly the proper course for the Ministry to take.

"It was very evident that they (Allan and Kates) were afraid of Beauraraba. The minority might become too big, so that was left out. If the Bill was to be altered, I pointed out, we should endeavour to get it altered so as to make an electorate distinct from both Warwick and Toowoomba, with Allora as its centre. Between them, as it has often been said, we are between the 'devil and the deep sea,' and can get nothing. But I moved no motion; the meeting was small, perhaps half packed; and whether Messrs. Allan and Kates had any hand in getting it up I cannot say, but the resolution was avowedly framed upon the recommendation of those gentlemen, particularly of the former. The motion was carried, although the voting seemed very half-hearted. As no doubt some use is intended to be made of this resolution, I thought you should be made acquainted with its bearings, and of the character of what will probably be represented to be the most unanimously attended and most enthusiastic political meeting ever held in Allora!

"Yours faithfully,

W. DEACON."

He knew Mr. Deacon very well. He was a very respectable man, and he was sure no hon. member would say one word against either his character or his integrity. Mr. Deacon was certainly of opinion that the electorate, as divided in the Bill, was a very fair one. That was his opinion, and it was, further, the opinion of a great many people living in Allora. He knew a great many of them personally. A great many of them has resided in the neighbourhood of Toowoomba, with ten or twelve acres of land, which they had disposed of and gone out further, and settled again on 320-acre or 640-acre selections, and were as well-to-do as any men they could find. He did not hear the first portion of the remarks of the junior member for Darling Downs, but from what he gathered that gentleman stated that there was no community of interests between the northern part of the electorate of Cambooya and the southern part; but he (Mr. Groom) should like to know where the divergence of interests came in. They were all selectors there. He did not know one electorate under the present Bill where the interests of the electors were so much in common as in Cambooya. There were certainly one or two large stations—Yandilla and others; but they were converted into freeholds now, and the word "squatter" was out of date, as men like the Messrs. Gore had gone in for farming. They had 300 or 400 acres under cultivation, and would be large supporters of the Beauraraba line in sending their produce to Brisbane. Of course, he wished it clearly understood, although he had given that letter the publicity which the writer had desired, that he had nothing to do with the sentiments contained in it whatever, as to the attempt on the part of some persons to increase the ascendancy of Warwick. The present Darling Downs electorate ought to be divided, and the Premier could divide it in any way he pleased; but there was no doubt that the Cambooya end at present was entirely unrepresented in the House on a particular question, and it was entirely over-weighted. If the Redistribution Bill did not pass, and the election for Darling Downs took place upon the present electoral roll, no matter what two gentlemen were nominated at the Warwick end of the electorate they were sure to be returned. At the present time the majority were there, and the Cambooya end would be thoroughly unrepresented. According to the population returns there was a population of 4,000 there, and the electoral roll contained 960 names. Surely those electors were entitled to be represented in the House, and to give an opinion upon questions which were likely to come under their attention, more especially one in which they took a very great interest, and in regard to which their voice would not be heard. Upon that point there was not the shadow of a doubt. He had endeavoured to make himself

acquainted with the wishes of the people in that electorate, and had consulted some of the leading gentlemen, some of whom had large freeholds, and others small freeholds in various parts of Back Plains, Clifton, and Umbiram, and beyond Beauraraba, and other rising places in the northern part of the electorate; and he could hardly think the hon. member had made himself familiar with the people when he said they had no community of interests, because the community of interests was undoubted. He (Mr. Groom) had made it his business to make himself acquainted with the wishes of those people as to whether they would like one electorate returning two members, or have it divided as proposed by the Premier, and the opinion was that the Premier had done a wise thing in dividing the electorate, and the Committee would do wisely if they let well alone as far as the matter was concerned. The letter he had read indicated the feeling there was in regard to it. Allora, of course, was not a very large place; but still it would not be difficult, supposing the people were energetic in the matter, to get a much larger attendance than was mentioned in the letter. Allora was situated between two large towns, and, as the writer of the letter said, it was between the "devil and the deep sea," and under the system of "pull devil, pull baker" between Warwick and Toowoomba its own interests were neglected. The division proposed by the Premier was certainly a very good one, and one which could not be bettered, as the community of interests in the different parts of the proposed electorate was undoubted. As he said before, in no other electorate was the community of interest so great; and even those who owned very large freeholds, like Mr. Gore, lived on the very best of terms with their neighbours, many of whom they employed from time to time.

Mr. ALLAN said he regretted the hon. member was not present to hear the earlier portion of his remarks, because if he had been he would have heard him say that part of the electorate of Darling Downs was not properly represented. He wished to correct one part of the letter from Mr. Deacon, which suggested that he and his colleague, Mr. Kates, had something to do with getting up the meeting at Allora. His colleague could speak for himself, but he might say that he had nothing whatever to do with it. He had a letter from the mayor of Allora, Mr. Kennedy, asking him to attend a meeting to be held for the purpose of taking into consideration the Redistribution Bill on the same day as the opening of the Beauraraba Railway. He had arranged to go to the opening of the railway, and he went; and as he could not be in two places at once, he could not be at Allora. The hon. member had spoken about the community of interest in the proposed Cambooya electorate; but the fact was that it was impossible that one member could be in touch with the northern and southern portion. About one-third of them—the people in the north—were connected with Toowoomba interests—their great idea was to further extend the Beauraraba line; but with those in the south the Thane's Creek line was the burning question as against the Beauraraba line. If that was not a case of conflicting interests—he would not say antagonistic interests—he did not know what were conflicting interests. He should very much like to see the northern part taken off and the southern extended west, to make up the required population; and have either one or two electorates so arranged that the members could do justice to each part.

Mr. GROOM said that now he understood the hon. member, he would repeat more strongly that the community of interest was undoubted,

and that not twenty people in the whole of the electorate of Cambooya, as originally proposed in the present Redistribution Bill, were in favour of what the hon. member had suggested.

Mr. MORGAN: You know nothing about it.

Mr. GROOM said there might be some in Allora, but that was in the proposed electorate of Cunningham.

Mr. ALLAN: What about Leyburn?

Mr. GROOM said that some of the most influential residents of Leyburn protested against the Thane's Creek railway as perfectly unnecessary; and, even supposing they were in favour of it, that part of the district was very small compared with the other part in which the people opposed the line.

Mr. ALLAN: The whole of the people of Toolburra, Talgai, and Canal Creek have to be taken into account.

Mr. GROOM said the population there was very small compared with that of Spring Creek, King's Creek, Back Plains, and Beauaraba, where the people were all identified with the agricultural interest. In fact the proposed Cambooya constituency was essentially an agricultural one, where selectors with 320 acres, 640 acres, and 1,280 acres, combined grazing with agriculture, and made it pay; and the community of interests, he repeated, was undoubted. The preponderance of population was on the Cambooya side, and that should receive some consideration at the hands of the Committee.

Mr. KATES said the whole bone of contention was the railway. The people of Darling Downs were well satisfied with the electorate as at present constituted, and he had heard no complaint whatever from north, south, east, or west. With regard to Mr. Deacon's letter, he might say that he had nothing to do with the advertisement, but he received notice by letter that a meeting would take place. The advertisement appeared in the Warwick paper, but the people of Spring Creek and Greenmount could not have read it, or they would have been on the spot to enter their protest. His contention was that the bulk of the electorate as at present constituted was in favour of two members representing the Darling Downs, without any division into Cunningham and Cambooya. The people of Clifton Back Plains objected to being cut away from Darling Downs and incorporated with Cambooya; and they were about 200. Then there were the people of Greenmount who, he thought, did not object to the old electorate. In fact, if a poll of the electorate were taken tomorrow, it would be found that three-fourths of the electors were in favour of the old boundaries of Darling Downs. He had received letters from Clifton Back Plains, where the bulk of the population of the new electorate of Cambooya resided, but he had heard no complaints from them as to the old boundaries.

Mr. GROOM: Cambooya is not the place. Beauaraba and Back Plains are the places.

Mr. KATES said he had no complaints from Greenmount or Leyburn. He wished to see the boundaries of the old electorate restored, and have two members representing the farming constituency of Darling Downs. He had heard no complaints of his not having represented any of those places, except in regard to the Beauaraba line, and he had fulfilled his promise on that matter. Four years ago, when the late Minister for Works promised the line to Beauaraba, he (Mr. Kates) told the people at the banquet given to him and his colleague at the time, that he would do all in his power to secure the fulfilment of that promise, and he did so, and got

the line to Beauaraba. The people, therefore, had no reason to complain about that. At the same time he promised to advocate the construction of the line westward from Warwick, and he was trying to fulfil that promise as well. He was sure that the people of Darling Downs, the small selectors and graziers, would be pleased to have the old boundaries retained, and to have two members working together for their interests. The meeting at Allora might not have been a large one, but according to the mayor, Mr. Kennedy, it was unanimous, the resolutions being carried without opposition. It was advertised for a week, and there was therefore an opportunity for anybody to attend and speak against the motions or propose an amendment.

Mr. GROOM: It was never advertised in Toowoomba.

Mr. KATES said that was a mistake; it should have been advertised in Toowoomba. He had received letters from Greenmount, and he knew the people there were well satisfied with the old boundaries. The railway dispute would not last for ever. It would be settled one way or the other, and then the electorate would have two farming representatives. He was not afraid to go to Beauaraba or to any other part of the electorate and explain his ideas to the electors. He hoped the electorate would not be divided, but that it would be allowed to remain as it was. They did not ask for an additional member; all they desired was the amalgamation of Cambooya and Cunningham, with two members for the combined electorate.

The Hon. G. THORN said that, from his long experience in the colony, he knew a little about that electorate, and he had come to the conclusion, from information received, that the bulk of the people living in the electorate of Cambooya were anxious to remain as they were as part and parcel of Darling Downs. With regard to the letter from Mr. Deacon, in which the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, said it was stated that the Darling Downs was represented by Warwick people, he would point out that one of the present members for Darling Downs was a resident of Allora, and that his late colleague was a resident of Toowoomba. That was a complete answer to the statement of the hon. member for Toowoomba. He (Mr. Thorn) did not, however, look at the matter in that light. The people of Darling Downs were not so narrow-minded in their views; it was well known that they would return a man who would make a good representative, irrespective of the locality in which he resided. With respect to that portion of the electorate to be called Cambooya, he knew that Leyburn was intimately connected with Warwick, and that there was a coach running between the two places. The people of Back Plains went to Clifton railway station, which was in the proposed electorate of Cunningham. He could tell the hon. member for Toowoomba that he had several friends about there, and also about Greenmount, which was a little nearer to Toowoomba, and was acquainted with many residents at the latter place who had formerly lived in Fassifern, and he knew that the people at those places were anxious to remain, as at present, a part of Darling Downs. He did not see how it was possible to cut the electorate into two, and properly allocate the names of the electors, unless they had a number of experts on the bench who really knew where the electors of the two proposed districts resided. He thought it was an utter impossibility. He therefore hoped the Government would allow the electorate to remain as it was originally, and continue it under the old name of Darling Downs.

The PREMIER said that in that case, as in all others, the Government had endeavoured to disregard, as far as possible, all purely temporary or momentary differences of opinion. For a great many years the members for the Darling Downs had been tolerably united, but at present they were divided, and in his opinion the division was a very foolish one, and there was no necessity to perpetuate it. Certainly that ought not to be taken into consideration in dealing with the question of the boundaries of that electorate. The simple question, as it appeared to the Government, was whether the present electoral district was too large a district for the same members to represent. In no other part of the colony had they proposed a country district anything like as large as it was, with two members. The nearest approach to it was Mackay, but it was not so large a district, and it was not divided because it was found impracticable to make a suitable division and form a town and a country constituency. That was the only exception. There was another exception made now in the case of the Burke, which was a great mining district, and they could not, of course, divide that. That was a special case. In every other case where they had found a large electorate they had divided it, as in the case of Stanley and Wide Bay, and so on; wherever they could divide districts like that the Government had done so; it seemed to him fairer that they should form two electorates of such districts instead of one. They did not, as he had said before, pay the slightest regard to any temporary differences of opinion. The question was, what was the fairest thing to do; whether the electorate should be in one or divided into two? He did not care whether it affected the seat of the hon. member, Mr. Allan, or whether it secured or deprived him of the seat; that was a matter of perfect indifference. Even if they were to attempt to frame a redistribution scheme now to secure the seats of existing members, in six months' time the things which would secure the seat of a member at the present time might be entirely altered.

Mr. MORGAN said he had, only an hour ago, been casting his memory back over the records of Parliament during the last eight or ten years, and, strange to say, he came upon a speech that had been delivered by one of the then Ministers, who was a Minister to-day, in which he commented, in very strong terms, on the knack the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, had acquired of getting up in the House on every conceivable occasion, and during the discussion of every conceivable subject, and producing at the very moment a letter from somebody affected by the proposed change, and reading it as evidence in support of the line of argument he adopted. He believed that Minister was the present Chief Secretary. He was not quite positive, but he thought he could quote from *Hansard*. It was during the debate on the Redistribution Bill of 1878.

Mr. GROOM: I am positive the Chief Secretary never said such a thing.

Mr. MORGAN said he might turn up the extract and read it by-and-by, but he thought the Chief Secretary was the man. Now, with regard to that letter which the hon. member for Toowoomba had produced—

Mr. GROOM: I read it at the request of the writer.

Mr. MORGAN said he had no doubt of that, but he would tell the Committee who Mr. Deacon was. He was a resident of Allora; he was a gentleman with a strong moral twist. He was a man whose hand was lifted against the

majority of his fellow-townsmen, and against whom the majority of his fellow-townsmen's hands were lifted. He was at cross purposes with his neighbours, and because he could not play first fiddle in getting up that meeting he had found it essential, in order to give himself notoriety, to dissent from the resolutions come to; and in order to gain fame he had conceived the notion of writing a letter to the hon. member, Mr. Groom, and requesting him to read it in that Chamber, knowing that it would get into *Hansard*, and there obtain a much larger audience than could otherwise be got to listen to Mr. William Deacon. That gentleman was a disappointed aspirant for parliamentary honours, and he had a serious grievance against the mayor of Allora. That was the explanation of the letter, and it was quite sufficient to show that very little weight should be attached to the document. Now, what the members for Darling Downs were contending for was that the present state of things should be allowed to continue, and he was inclined to agree with them. He did not allow the paltry railway question to come into consideration. He believed with the Premier that the dispute, which was due entirely to the conduct of the representatives of Toowoomba, should not be considered. He believed the line would pass before many years, and he was certain that Darling Downs would have matters much more important to deal with than the mere question of which route a railway should take. He advocated the Darling Downs returning as at present two members, because he believed it could be justified by common sense and justified on the ground of community of interest. The member for Toowoomba, speaking a fortnight ago on the Bill, used similar language to that he had used that afternoon, in which he said that the proposed electorate of Cambooya would be one of the most compact electorates in the colony. Now, that was not the case. The proposed new electorate of Cambooya adjoined the north-west portion of Darling Downs, divided from Cunningham by a line running from north-east to south-west. That line would pass at its south-western extremity within twenty miles of Warwick, and it would cut off from Warwick and Cunningham population and a district that had neither sympathy nor interests with Toowoomba, to whom it would be handed over body and soul. The hon. member for Toowoomba said a moment ago that there were very few people there, and he (Mr. Morgan) interjected that he knew nothing about it. That perhaps was not the most polite, but it was the shortest, way of putting it. He believed the hon. member spoke in ignorance. There was a very considerable population there.

Mr. GROOM: No; look at the census returns.

Mr. MORGAN said he asserted it. He spoke from personal knowledge, which he would back against the census returns. He had been in the district and among the people. He knew there were men engaged in agriculture, men engaged in squatting, and men engaged in mining, in the south-western extremity of the line dividing Cambooya from Cunningham, and down about Canal Creek and Thane's Creek, and the trade all came to Warwick. The gold raised there came to the banks at Warwick; the wool was sent to the Warwick railway station, and the agricultural produce was sold in Warwick. The people of that district were all associated, as he had said before, by sympathy and interest, with the Warwick end of the electorate. Now, if the proposed dividing line was assented to, they would hand over those people, body and soul, to Toowoomba. The Toowoomba end of the Darling Downs

electorate, without those people to whom he had alluded, was not sufficiently strong to claim a member, and those people were to be sacrificed in order that the power and strength wielded by the Toowoomba members in the House should be strengthened. Now, that was a view which neither the Ministry nor the Committee could expect the representatives of the Southern Downs to assent to, and he did not propose to assent to it. With regard to the alternative proposal of the members for Darling Downs, Mr. Allan and Mr. Kates, he was not prepared to advocate any hard-and-fast line of boundary for the proposed new electorate; but he certainly should support the proposal that the electorate should be allowed to remain with the proposed external boundaries, that it should be called Darling Downs, and that it should have two members. The figures were—Cambooya, total population 4,006, adult male population 975. He thought that was one of the smallest electorates in the whole colony. Cunningham, total population 4,554, and adult male population 1,104. Add those together, and take away the dividing line, and they would have for the proposed new electorate of Darling Downs a gross population of 8,660, and 2,079 adult males. Now, the hon. member for Toowoomba argued that if the boundary line was taken away and the electorate of Darling Downs remained *in statu quo*, that in the general election things would be very much as they were in the past—that was, that the Warwick end of the electorate would exercise a predominating influence in the choice of members, and he seemed to think that two Warwick men would be elected.

Mr. GROOM: I did not say so.

Mr. MORGAN said he drew that inference from what the hon. member said, but, as the hon. member for Fassifern had pointed out, the present member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, was not a Warwick man, neither was Mr. Allan. He (Mr. Morgan) would go further and say that he could not call to mind any Warwick man who had represented Darling Downs. The late Minister for Works (Hon. W. Miles) was indeed a Toowoomba man. What more could the Toowoomba people want? Did they want the two members—to have a mortgage on both? The late Minister for Works was a resident of Toowoomba, and was for the purposes of the present argument a Toowoomba man. Suppose that what the hon. member for Toowoomba apprehended was realised, what would it prove? It would simply prove that the great voting power was centred round, and in sympathy with, Warwick. No matter how the dividing line was drawn the people who had the voting power would return the members for the district. There must be minorities in every district, and he dared say that even in Toowoomba there was a considerable minority who did not approve of the hon. member Mr. Groom or his colleague Mr. Aland. The fact that the new members for Darling Downs would find the greater number of votes at the Warwick end of the electorate was, therefore, no argument against leaving things as they were. They were fairly entitled to have the claim they had set up recognised. If there were a sufficient number of adult males, or of the gross population at the northern end of what was now the Darling Downs electorate, to entitle them to a member, they could not reasonably object to it; but as there was not sufficient population there they distinctly objected to handing over to their friends of Toowoomba any of the population who were associated with Warwick by sympathy and interest. There was no use disguising the fact that their interests were just at present opposed by the members for Toowoomba. Anyone who had

watched the course of events in that House during the last twelve months would admit that a corpse on a dissecting-table could not be more bereft of hope than Warwick would be if placed at the mercy of Toowoomba. That was the experience of the past twelve months, and that was why they strenuously objected to hand over even a moiety of the population of Darling Downs to Toowoomba, as their interests had nothing in common. Let Toowoomba obtain all the representation to which it was entitled from its actual population, but it must not trespass upon the population which belonged of right to the southern end of the Darling Downs electorate.

Mr. GROOM said he thought hon. members lost sight of the immense extent of the present Darling Downs electorate. It extended back to the New South Wales border on one side, and in another direction went within a very short distance of Dalby, taking in Kurrowah and Cecil Plains. The hon. members for Northern Downs and Dalby could bear him out in that statement. The Committee would therefore understand the unwieldy nature of that enormous electorate where at the present time different parts had not the slightest community of interest. The hon. member for Fassifern that afternoon, as usual, told the Committee that he knew all about the Darling Downs, but the hon. member did not know any more of the Downs than the Chairman, if so much. He would guarantee there were parts of that electorate which the hon. member knew nothing at all about. A new generation had arisen there "who knew not Joseph." It was no use for the hon. member to say he knew everything, and that nobody else knew anything; and if he would confine his attention to his own district, of which, no doubt, he knew a good deal, it would be better for him. He should let those who did know the district in question discuss the matter for themselves. The hon. member for Warwick had fallen into a serious mistake. The hon. member had said that he (Mr. Groom) assumed that the voting power of the Warwick end of the electorate would elect two gentlemen from Warwick. He had not said or assumed anything of the kind. Taking the electoral rolls as they stood now, the preponderance of electors was at the Warwick end; and if the Warwick electors nominated two gentlemen they would be returned and the Cambooya end of the electorate would be entirely disfranchised. The hon. member appeared to think that Cambooya would in some remote way become an appanage of Toowoomba, but that was not the case, as he did not think there were half-a-dozen people in Toowoomba who had votes for Cambooya. Anyone who could have seen the large concourse of people who met there to the number of 500 or 600 would know what their desires and wishes were. There were all classes of men there, men holding 30,000 acres, men with 1,230 acres, and men with 320 acres; and yet the hon. member advocated the revision of the electorate. If the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, had been there he would have been asked by a deputation from his constituents to advocate the course he (Mr. Groom) was advocating. The hon. member Mr. Allan, he was glad to say, was there, and it showed manliness on his part to be there, as he was quite sure the hon. member was not in accord with the constituents in that part of the electorate on the *via recta* question. As far as that electorate was concerned, he desired the Committee to understand that it had no connection with Toowoomba whatever, nor did he believe a Toowoomba man had the remotest chance of being elected for that district. It was just as well it should be known now that the people there were determined to get a farmer to represent them.

They thought the farming interest was not represented in that House as effectively as it ought to be, and even now they were making arrangements to return one of their own number, a farmer, to represent them, and not a Toowoomba man. Toowoomba would have nothing to do with it. As the electorate was at present it was about the most unwieldy one could think of, extending as it did on one side to the border of New South Wales, and on the other to within two miles of Dalby. For a long time it had been found to be unwieldy, and the Government had decided upon a wise course in dividing it, as that was the correct course to pursue, and was in accord with the views of the majority of those who resided in that electorate.

The HON. G. THORN said he would suggest to the hon. member for Darling Downs the desirability of moving an amendment that Darling Downs be retained, and have two members, to bring the matter to an issue.

Mr. ALLAN said he would move the omission of the words "Cunningham, one member," with a view of subsequently moving the insertion of the words "Darling Downs, two members."

The PREMIER said he trusted the question would be fully considered by hon. members on both sides, and disposed of on its merits. It seemed to him very unfair that the electors in the north-western part of the Darling Downs should actually have no voice in an election because there was a larger number in the south-eastern corner. The late Mr. Miles had often told him that the electorate in its present form was an impossible one, on account of conflicting interests and the large distances between the centres of population. If the amendment was carried, it would be the only instance in the whole system of a great country electorate with two members. The matter should be considered entirely apart from any personal interests, or feelings, or desires of any individual members of the Committee; and putting it in that way there could not be two answers to the question, what was the right thing to do? The right thing to do was what the Government proposed to do, to divide the Darling Downs into two electorates. The hon. members for Darling Downs and Warwick would like to see it remain as it was; and that was about the only argument that could be used. He could understand that a good many of the southern people would like to see the amendment carried, because, if they could get them, two members were better than one. He did not care a straw on which side of the House the two members might sit. The Committee ought only to do what was a fair thing. He had thought that the arrangement proposed would have satisfied hon. members. Two objections were made to it. It was said, with regard to Cambooya, that the people at Canal Creek and Leyburn would be swamped by the people at the northern end. The alternative proposed was that all the people of Cambooya should be swamped by the people at the Warwick end of the electorate, while the people at Canal Creek and Leyburn district, going right up to within a short distance of Toowoomba, who might be swamped—the whole lot—only numbered 470, with an adult male population of 130. King's Creek was proposed as the dividing line because it was the natural boundary. Then it was said that the people at Clifton Back Plains would suffer particular hardship. The total population of a very large district, of which Clifton Back Plains formed not more than one-fourth, was 512, with an adult male population of 138. As to Greenmount, it was quite close to Toowoomba. The question was simply, what was the fairest thing to do under the circumstances? And that question should be decided,

not by the members for the district, but by the Committee independently. He looked at the question from an entirely impartial point of view, and he thought it was fairer to divide so large a district than to leave it one.

Mr. KATES said the Premier had not answered the statement that out of over 2,000 voters in the electorate 1,600 of them wished the electorate to remain as it was. It was only the north-western corner, Beauraba and North Branch, who wished to separate, and Beauraba would have been quite willing to remain with them if it had not got its railway, and Greenmount had never objected. West Talgai, Leyburn, Ellangowan, Felton, and other places about there never wished to be separated from them. Two farming members would be able to look well after the interests of the Darling Downs. Of course, without the support of the Government it was not likely the amendment would be carried; but he hoped the Government would support it. In that case the whole of the dispute with regard to the railway would be smoothed down in a year or two, and North and South Darling Downs would work together as they had hitherto done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there could be no question whatever that large country districts with two members ought to be divided and given one member each, as constituencies of that kind could be more fairly represented by one member than by two. The representation of the majority was the principle on which they acted, and it might often happen that in large country constituencies the majority at either end might have totally different interests to represent. The only justification for two members representing one constituency was where large numbers of people were collected on very small areas, as in towns. In country districts, where the population was spread over large areas, there was no such justification, and with two members one large portion of the constituency would be left entirely without representation, as what would be a majority in one part would be a minority in another. The proposition to give single electorates in country districts was a sound one. With a double electorate the members would be able to control the electorate from their own end of it, and their own end of it would be that part in which they happened to reside. The object of a Redistribution Bill, or of those who had the drafting of it, was to see that the interests of every district were fairly and properly represented; and that would be effected by the provisions of the Bill. The mere fact that there was a small part of the population in the neighbourhood of Leyburn, whose interests were not so thoroughly identified with the eastern portion as with the western portion of the Darling Downs, was one of those things that could not be got over; but if substantial justice was done to a district it was as much as could possibly be achieved; and that, he maintained, would be effected by the proposal in the Bill. He trusted the Committee would give the preference to single electorates in every case where they could be fairly carried out.

Mr. FOOTE said he did not agree with the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, that each electorate should be represented by one member. How were minorities to be represented under such a system; were they to have no representation? He thought the proper way was to arrange the electorates in groups as far as possible, and to let them return three members. Wherever it could be done the electorates should be made larger and have two members each given to them. That would be far better, in his estimation, than each electorate returning one candidate, and in that case minorities would have some representation. For instance,

in the cases mentioned by the hon. members for Warwick and Darling Downs, one section of the electorate had no community of interest with the other section of it, and the one that predominated would return the member; whereas if the electorate had two members very possibly one party would return one and the other party the other, so that both would be represented. He was aware that that Redistribution Bill was going to disfranchise very many electors, not from any design to do so, but from the fact that only one member was given to one electorate in many parts of the colony. But there were wheels within wheels, and some districts were very fortunate whilst others were very unfortunate. Those that were fortunate were lucky in being so, and those that were unfortunate would have to put up with the discomfort and the loss and the chagrin they might happen to feel. He maintained that Toowoomba, as provided for under that Bill, was very fortunate, exceedingly fortunate. It was so situated that somehow all the apples blown from the trees fell to that electorate. It did not matter whence the wind blew, because Toowoomba was always the favoured electorate. What was the meaning of that Cambooya electorate? It meant neither more nor less than an additional member for Toowoomba. The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, of course, knew everything in connection with the electorates of that district, and his imagination was most prolific in supplying anything that might be required. The hon. member knew the state of every man's mind and the feeling of almost every elector in the district, and he did not fail to bring his abilities to bear upon a question of that sort. He (Mr. Foote) maintained that the position taken up by the hon. member for Warwick and the hon. member for Darling Downs was a very good and tenable one. They were not asking for an additional member, but simply that the electorate should remain as it was and return two members, thus placing them in the position they were in before. That was a very simple request, and one that could be easily acceded to.

Mr. WHITE said he thought the time had gone by when a member would only visit his constituents when a general election was coming on. In country districts it was most essential for a member to keep "in touch" with his constituents, and how could he do so unless he visited them at moderately short intervals? And why should a member have to travel over a wide extent of country—double the extent there was any occasion for—to see his constituents? It weakened the connection between members and their constituents to have double electorates. The hon. member for Ipswich talked about treble electorates, but that would weaken the connection still more, and a member who went into the House under those circumstances would simply represent himself. If a member was not in close connection with his constituents at short intervals, he would represent himself in that House, and his constituents would be obliged to put up with him, because probably they could get no other. He thought the time was gone by for that altogether. In the case of a single electorate the member had some chance of doing his duty, some chance of clearing his conscience—of getting amongst his constituents and knowing their minds, and then he could go into the House with the consciousness that he was not representing himself, but that he was representing them. That could not be done where there were double electorates. It was impossible, because members never went round amongst all their constituents. Under the old system that had been followed they went to a few places and held meetings, and half the electors could never see their members, because the distance was too

great. The electors ought to be placed within reach of their members, so that they would be able to attend their meetings without having to go away from their homes a couple of days in order to do so. Therefore, he thought those hon. members who were proposing to put the Darling Downs electorate back into a double electorate were astray in their judgment, or they had some scheme that ought not to be carried out by that Committee.

The HON. G. THORN said he had not got the figures before him showing the population of the part of the district under discussion; but his opinion, with all due deference to the Premier, was that there was a large population residing to the west of King's Creek, about Leyburn and Thane's Creek. He could also tell the Premier that the population given in the census as being in the neighbourhood of Beauraba was to a large extent migratory, having gone there during the construction of the railway by Mr. Garget.

MR. GROOM: No, no!

The HON. G. THORN said he was well acquainted with that district—better than the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom; and he contended that the population of the proposed new electorate of Cambooya had interests in common with Warwick and Allora, and none in common with Toowoomba. If the Premier would look at his figures, he would find that there was very little population in the proposed electorate near Toowoomba—where the country was nearly all occupied in big estates—unless it was composed of navvies who had been employed in making the Beauraba branch railway.

MR. GROOM: The contract was not taken at that time.

The HON. G. THORN said he was aware that there was a population of nearly 3,000 in the districts he had mentioned to the west of Warwick and around Clifton and Allora. The south-eastern part of Cambooya did business with Warwick, and the bulk of the population in the electorate was not connected with Toowoomba. He might also point out that another part of that electorate had nothing to do with Toowoomba, but did business with Jondaryan, Cecil Plains Station, and the neighbouring selectors. They did not go to Toowoomba except to pass through it on their way to Brisbane, and he was much astonished at the figures quoted by the Premier to show that that part of the Darling Downs had very few people. Why, the great bulk of the selectors resided there, while the great landholders lived on the other side towards Cambooya. Of course figures might be made to prove anything, but he should like to see the figures of that census district, and find out how the Premier had arrived at the determination to carve out the electorate in the way he had done. As he had said before, there ought to be some identity of interests, and he maintained that that particular electorate was without any identity of interests whatever, and it would be preferable to have one electorate returning two members, to be called the Darling Downs district as at present.

MR. ALLAN said the Premier must have been under some misapprehension in saying that there were only 200 or 300 people in that part of the proposed electorate of Cambooya which he (Mr. Allan) proposed to add to the proposed electorate of Cunningham.

THE PREMIER: I did not say so; I said at Canal Creek and Thane's Creek.

MR. ALLAN said that as far as he could judge with the census tables and the map before him, Leyburn and Canal Creek would be Nos. 1 and 2 of the Darling Downs area. The whole of that was part of the portion of Cambooya that he

proposed to add to Cunningham, and taking that as one lot, there was a population of 518, and an adult population of 177. No. 4, containing the parish of Hodgson and the parish of Stephens, was another part of what he had proposed to deal with, and that contained a population of 512, and 128 adult males. No. 5 was divided between the electorates of Cambooya and Cunningham, leaving only about half of it, which he proposed to take from Cambooya and add on to Cunningham, so he estimated the population at 571 with the adult male population of 152. Of No. 3 there was only about a fourth, and that fourth came to 420, with 92 adult males. In No. 2 there was rather more than a third, which gave 234 of a population, and 80 of an adult male population. He was referring now only to the proposed electorate of Cambooya, and in that part which he had spoken of there was a population of 2,305, and an adult male population of 629. According to the list which had been circulated as the corrected census, in the whole of the proposed electorate of Cambooya there were 953 adult males, and taking off 629 left 324 adult males in the Cambooya electorate. Now, he and his colleague would not be so foolish as to propose to alter a Bill upon which so much care had been expended, if they did not know that the majority of their constituents wished it. They had the whole of the proposed electorate of Cunningham with them, and two-thirds of the proposed electorate of Cambooya, so they thought they were fully justified in asking what they did—that one electorate should be made out of those two. Then when they came to the schedules, he hoped some arrangement might be made by which the 300 electors in the northern part of Cambooya, who were not in thorough touch with those in the south, might be joined to those further north, and possibly extend west. Even if that could not be done, he contended that it was of very much more consequence that even with a smaller population a member should be in touch with the whole of his electorate, and that that electorate should be in sympathy one part with another, than that they should be guided by a hard-and-fast line of numbers alone.

Mr. KATES said he thought the Government should listen to the local members, who ought to know something about the wants of their own electorates. Not only did they, the members, suggest that, but they were backed up by the bulk of the electors of the Darling Downs. Were the Government going to ignore the suggestions of the members for the district? He wished to point out to the Committee that seven-eighths of the property in Cambooya belonged to five large landholders. They had Eton Vale with 105,000 acres in the Cambooya electorate, Clifton 40,000 acres, Felton 30,000 acres, Westbrook 60,000 acres, Ellangowan 20,000 acres: total 255,000 acres in Cambooya electorate.

Mr. NELSON said there was no doubt that the local representatives deserved every consideration. At the same time he was pretty well acquainted with the northern end of that electorate which it was proposed to make into a separate electorate to be called Cambooya. He did not know why the local members should be so very anxious to retain the double electorate. On general principles he was very much in favour of single electorates, and he thought it would be very advantageous to divide the electorate of Darling Downs into two. Moreover, he knew that if all the people in the northern end of the electorate were retained in the present large electorate, returning two members, they would be very dissatisfied. They considered themselves simply disfranchised, because the population at the lower end of the electorate had

no identity of interests with them, and in some respects their interests were antagonistic. He did not give very much weight to the actual figures. As he had said before, there could be no doubt that the people around Beauraraba were to a man, he believed, in favour of being disunited from Warwick. It suited the hon. member, Mr. Kates, at the present time to make out that there were only a few land-owners in the whole district, but he would remind that hon. member of what he said when the railway to that place was being discussed. He told them then a very different tale indeed, and he (Mr. Nelson) would quote one sentence of a speech the hon. member made upon that occasion, which showed that his figures and statements were simply made to suit the case he had in hand for the time being. The hon. member said:—

“The population around Beauraraba, Umbiram, and Southbrook was increasing daily. . . . If the hon. member would look at the petition which he (Mr. Kates) presented to the House, he would see that the proprietors of St. Helen's, Pine Creek, Western Creek, and Yandilla were all prepared to send their produce by the proposed line. There were over 600 settlers in that district, and not the few that had been stated by the hon. member for Northern Downs.”

The hon. member went on with a great many other statements in regard to the large population there. What had become of the 600 settlers? And that was only a small portion of the electorate of Cambooya. If there was any means of altering the line which was to divide the two electorates, so as to meet the views of the hon. members representing Darling Downs, he would see no objection. But it was essential, absolutely necessary, that the electorate should be cut into two and each return one member.

Mr. KATES said there were a good many settlers at Beauraraba; but Beauraraba did not form the whole of that district. As he had pointed out, there was the Back Plains, which did not wish to go with Cambooya; and there were people at Clifton, Leyburn, and Tummalville. He did not deny that there were 600 settlers there; but 600 settlers only represented about 120 voters out of 2,000. There were 2,061 adult males, and 1,700 of them preferred to remain as they were now, with the electorate of Darling Downs and two members.

Mr. NELSON said, in reply to the hon. member, that at the time the Beauraraba railway was under discussion the hon. member agreed that the interests of all the settlers of Back Plains, Tummalville, and Leyburn were identical. Of course it then suited the hon. member to make out that the population was very large, and that the railway was necessary for their benefit, and he brought forward statistics to support his case. But now it seemed that the tables were turned, and it was necessary for him to prove that there was no population there at all and their interests were not identical. The hon. members said the people of Tummalville and Back Plains were all directly interested in that line, and would all use it in sending produce to market, and upon those representations the House approved of it. It had altered since that. But the population instead of having decreased had increased, and he (Mr. Nelson) was quite sure there were more settlers now than there were then. What interest could they have with the population residing in the southern part? There was no community of interest whatever; and the hon. member could not contradict his statement. He did not believe there was a single elector residing in the northern end of that electorate who was not in favour of its being severed from the southern portion, and of having two electorates formed as was proposed. He did not know where the dividing line was to be, but he was simply arguing in favour of having two electorates instead of one.

Mr. KATES said he must contradict the hon. member for Northern Downs. The bulk of the people of Back Plains were not in favour of the Cambooya electorate.

The PREMIER said there could not be very many people at Back Plains. The whole district of subdivision 4, Darling Downs Central division, included Back Plains, and he did not think the population of Clifton and Back Plains were together more than one-fourth of the district. He supposed the population of Clifton and Back Plains was about 30, or possibly 35, adult males, and about 120 total population; and if they did disapprove of the division, was that a sufficient reason for altering what was otherwise a fair division?

Mr. KATES said if the hon. gentleman would look at the returns of the last election he would see there were sixty-six voters in one part of Back Plains, so that there must be more than twenty or thirty people there.

The HON. G. THORN said that to his knowledge there were seven-ninths of the population in the Cambooya electorate in the south-western part of it, and they were opposed to the division. When he was talking about the navvies on the Beauraraba railway the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, had walked out of the Chamber; but besides those navvies he did not know of any population there, except a few settlers at Beauraraba. As he had pointed out already, they were nearly all large landed proprietors there, and the hon. member for Darling Downs had borne him out. The hon. member for Darling Downs had also shown conclusively that two-thirds of the electors residing in the south-western corner were opposed to the division. Hon. members seemed to be under the impression that he did not know anything about that electorate, but he had been a good deal amongst the electors in that part of the colony.

The PREMIER said the hon. member made a bold statement, and said that to his knowledge seven-ninths of the population in that electorate were in the south-western corner. At the time the census was taken the proportion there was about one-tenth, and where the hon. member got his knowledge from he (the Premier) did not know. When he contradicted facts of that kind he should do something more than make a statement that to his certain knowledge things were so.

The HON. G. THORN said that the two members for Darling Downs had proved his statement. He did not know there was any population there except navvies, when the line was being made.

Mr. ALAND said he did not believe the hon. member for Fassifern knew anything about the district of Beauraraba, or he would know that the selectors were not confined to the township, but were to be found in all the district round about. As to the navvies on the railway line, the hon. member had been told—and he ought to have accepted the assurance—that the tender for the Beauraraba line was not accepted when the census was taken, and consequently the navvies could not have been there.

Mr. MORGAN said the hon. member for Northern Downs claimed that under the existing system the electors at the northern end of the electorate did not elect the members, and therefore they should be cut off from the southern end; but that argument cut both ways. Under the proposed division a large number of the electors at the Warwick end would be placed in precisely the position now occupied by the electors whom the hon. member wished to protect. If the hon. member showed that the electors to whom he referred were entitled to emancipation,

his argument simply proved the force of the argument that the men at the Warwick end should not be placed in the position from which he sought to emancipate others. The people at the Warwick end did not want to take any advantage of the people at Beauraraba or Westbrook, or any other part of Darling Downs; but there were not sufficient electors at the Beauraraba end to form a distinct electorate, and they had no right to poach on the population settled round Warwick, who had nothing in common with them. They being in the minority must suffer, unless the Premier could amalgamate them with Aubigny, Northern Downs, or anywhere else where their interests were more in common. But because there was a nest of selectors round Beauraraba, was no reason why injustice should be done to Warwick; and he held that the members for Darling Downs, and himself as member for Warwick, were simply doing their duty in protesting against the contemplated injustice to people who had no interest in common with the people round Aubigny or Toowoomba. It was not a purely local question, and they had no desire to treat it as such. They had endeavoured to have the electorate so arranged that there should be community of interests, and that could be done better by allowing the boundaries to remain as they were. According to the Premier's own showing the population around Leyburn, Canal Creek, and Back Plains amounted to about 1,000, and there were 250 adult males. Those people had no sympathy with the Toowoomba end of the electorate, it was all with the southern end; and if 250 were taken from the adult male population of 900, in the proposed Cambooya electorate, what would be left? Not sufficient to form an electorate, and so it was proposed to take from Warwick sufficient to make up the required number. As to the number round Pittsworth and Westbrook, he was not in a position to show that the number of people mentioned were not there. He knew, however, that the returns from the polling-places in that part of the district were hardly large enough to be taken into serious consideration in forecasting the result of an election. There had been a score or two at some places, six or seven at others, and two at one. He admitted that there were conflicting interests in the electorate, one end abutting on Toowoomba and the other on Warwick, but it would be better to give two members to the whole electorate than to make a division. It was not true that the Darling Downs had always been represented by men from the Warwick end, because on one occasion Mr. William Graham defeated a gentleman who had held office as Premier on two or three occasions, and he was very much more a Toowoomba man than a Warwick man. If ever a man came from the Toowoomba end he would have a fair show, provided he was a man of education and imbued with the spirit of fair play. If Toowoomba could produce such a man he had no doubt he would have a fair chance of being elected.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said it was rather amusing to see how the Darling Downs doctors differed on the question. He was not intimately acquainted with the district, but he had been through it; and after looking at the map he should say that the division was nearly as fair as possible. In his opinion any electorate containing twenty-eight polling-places should be divided, and instead of returning two members jointly should return two members separately, because twenty-eight polling-places were too many for any candidate or pair of candidates to look after properly. He could understand that as the electorate was at present constituted with the bulk of the population about Warwick, the people round Beauraraba would not think it worth while to go to

the poll, because whoever the people of Warwick chose to return would be returned. He spoke feelingly as to the number of polling-places. He had thirty-one polling-places to look after in his electorate, one of which was California Gully, and he thought that twenty-eight polling-places were too many for one electorate.

Mr. ALAND said he thought that too much of the local parochial style had been introduced into the question, and instead of regarding it as a question whether the interests of Toowoomba or those of Warwick were going to suffer by the proposed division, they should look at it in a broader light. Looking at the old electorate of Darling Downs, anyone could see that if a fair division could be made it ought to be made. He knew that the late member for Darling Downs, Mr. Miles, frequently told him that he thought his electorate should be divided, and that it was impossible for a member representing it to do perfect justice to every part of the electorate, as it comprised such a large area of country and had so many centres of population. He (Mr. Aland) thought that anyone looking at the division which had been proposed by the Premier could not but see that if the electorate was to be divided the division was certainly a fair one. There was one portion of the electorate whose interests were more identified with Toowoomba than with Warwick. That fact could not be gainsaid or overlooked. But, on the other hand, there was a large portion whose interests were identical with those of Warwick. If it was possible to keep those interests intact, they should do so, of course. He thought it was to be regretted that so many smart things had been said over the matter. The hon. member for Warwick insinuated just now, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" But as far as intelligence, respectability, and competency were concerned, he (Mr. Aland) thought Toowoomba could produce as many representative men as the place from which the hon. member hailed. He was not aware that Toowoomba would endeavour to bring out a man for that portion of the Darling Downs electorate—he did not think they would—but at all events the hon. member could depend upon it that there were plenty of men in the neighbourhood who were equal to the majority of the people living in the district which the hon. member so ably represented.

Mr. ALLAN said he was very glad to see that the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, did not agree with his colleague, in that he could see that the electorate of Cambooya was not homogeneous, and that he admitted directly and straightforwardly that the interests of the northern and southern parts of the electorate were not in common. That was the position he (Mr. Allan) had taken up, and he thought that part of the electorate—whose interests were identified with the Toowoomba district—might be tacked on, if possible, to some electorate at the Toowoomba end with which it would have interests in common. With reference to the population of the electorate, he would point out that the total population of Cambooya was 8,583, adult males 2,057; and out of that number there were in favour of the proposal of the Government 1,624 of the gross population, or 324 adult males.

Mr. MORGAN said he would like to impress upon the Premier very strongly that they looked on the proposed division as a very grave injustice to the southern part of the electorate. There was no doubt that there was a lot in what the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, stated—that there were a number of electors about Cambooya who were intimately associated with Toowoomba. They were quite prepared to concede that, but on the other hand

they objected, as he said before, and regretted to have to repeat, to Cambooya being stretched down south to within twenty miles of Warwick, and embracing a population which had no sympathy with the northern end of the electorate. If Cambooya could command representation by reason of its population, whether gross or male adult, there could be no objection to its having a member, but it was in that unhappy position that it had not sufficient population to entitle it to one representative. They surely were not to be made to suffer for that state of things, and he thought that if the Premier would put his mind to it he might dispose of the Toowoomba end of the electorate by tacking it on to Aubigny or Northern Downs, and allowing Darling Downs to retain its two members. Neither he nor the members for Darling Downs wished to take advantage of the people at the other end of the electorate, but they objected to the Toowoomba end encroaching on Warwick.

The PREMIER said he could assure the hon. member that he had given the matter a very great deal of consideration. He had had the advantage of consulting all the members for Darling Downs as to what would be a proper division and everything else before the Bill was brought in. When he said the members for Darling Downs he included the hon. member for Warwick, Mr. Morgan. As far as he could understand, King's Creek was the proper line of division. It seemed to him, from the speeches of the hon. member who had just sat down and some others, that the alternatives from their point of view, were either to disfranchise 300 or 400 people, or about 100 adults, in the southern part of Cambooya, or to disfranchise all the remaining population of Cambooya, which was about 3,500, the number of adult males being nearly 900. That was practically what their proposal amounted to. If he could see that it was the right thing to do he would certainly vote for the amendment; but as far as he could see it seemed a much fairer thing to divide that enormous electorate.

Mr. KELLETT said he thought most members recognised the difficulty there was in framing a Redistribution Bill, but he thought that any member who had heard the speeches of the members for the district of Darling Downs must come to the conclusion that the Cambooya electorate as it now stood would not be a fair and equitable division. He knew that part of the district as well as most people, and he certainly was of opinion that the Beauraraba portion might very well be attached to the Toowoomba end; but he was certain that the other part of the electorate did not belong to it. He had no interest in Warwick, but he knew that what the hon. member for Warwick and the hon. member for Darling Downs said was quite correct—namely, the people in all the other parts of the electorate did their business with Warwick. That was a proof of where their interest lay, and he was satisfied that it would be a great injustice to the majority of the people of the electorate if the proposed division were carried out, and that they would be in a better position if the present boundaries were retained.

Mr. BULCOCK said it struck him that the discussion so far, especially on the part of the members for the district, had been of a very parochial character. He could conceive of circumstances when Toowoomba and Warwick would have no differences of interest. As had been said that evening, when the vexed railway question was settled they would probably be united on nearly every point. The argument used by several hon. members seemed to be that there should be a kind of plebiscite taken; that the electors should be asked

how the electorates should be divided. One of the greatest objections to retaining the electorate of Darling Downs was that the number of polling-places—namely, twenty-eight—was altogether too great. Besides that, the present boundaries were not fair. It was quite possible that the interests of the majority in one part of the electorate might completely swamp the voice of another portion of the electorate. If the electorate was divided as proposed, a more correct record of the voice of the majority of the people would be obtained than if the present large electorate were retained. He hoped the Premier would not consent to the electorate remaining as at present and returning two members, as there could be no doubt that single electorates were in every respect more convenient.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 25.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Rutledge, Jordan, Dutton, Moreton, Morehead, Dickson, Sheridan, Jessop, Bailey, Adams, Lumley Hill, McMaster, S. W. Brooks, Norton, Wakfield, Bulcock, Buckland, Lalor, White, Isambert, W. Brookes, Aland, Nelson, and Groom.

NOES, 17.

Messrs. Hamilton, Foxton, Morgan, Foote, Kellett, Chubb, Pattison, Donaldson, Ferguson, Philp, Salkeld, Palmer, Thorn, Macfarlane, Allan, Murphy, and Kates.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The PREMIER said if there were no other amendments, or if there was no amendment to be proposed before line 43, he would move that the words "Murilla, one member" be inserted.

Mr. MORGAN said the fact that they had been defeated did not alter his opinion about the injustice of the division in the least. He believed that a very large section of the community at the Warwick end of the Cambooya electorate would be most unjustly treated if the electorate was allowed to pass as mapped out, and for his part he felt disposed to fight the battle a great deal longer on the Cunningham electorate to come on hereafter. There was no use repeating what he had already said. They did not want to do injustice to the electors at the Toowoomba end, but he, for one, had strong objection to allowing any portion of the population who did business with and had interests in common with Warwick to be handed over to the Cambooya people simply to enable them to keep enough population to entitle them to one member. That was his feeling in the matter, and if the members for Darling Downs would make up their minds to fight it out he would go with them very heartily.

Mr. GROOM said hon. members should bear in mind—and it was a fact which had not yet been mentioned, but which should be mentioned—that it was owing to the decrease in the population of Warwick that there was any change in the Darling Downs electorates at all, and even the Northern Downs electorate was wiped out in order that the representation of Warwick might be maintained. It was not owing to any decrease in the population of Toowoomba that that had to be done, or in Northern Downs, but because the population of Warwick had decreased by over 500. In order to deal with that a large slice was taken out of Darling Downs, to retain for Warwick the representation it had now. So far, therefore, from any injustice being done to Warwick, the Premier had shown every desire to give that end of the district its proper share of representation. As a matter of fact, it was suggested that they should unite a portion of Darling Downs and Warwick into one district and give it two members. A considerable number of the people on the Downs thought that would be

fairer than to wipe out Northern Downs, in order that representation should be given to the southern end of the district. There was this further to be said: The late member for Darling Downs had stated over and over again to members of that House that as the Darling Downs electorate was at present arranged he did not care to have to contest it; and the last time that gentleman contested it it cost him £800—a very nice sum for a man to have to pay to get into that House. They could hardly wonder at it when they considered the extent of that electorate. When the junior member for Darling Downs, Mr. Allan, first contested that electorate the amount of expenses that gentleman was said to have incurred was something enormous. He was only giving the rumour, but when hon. members considered that there were no less than twenty-eight polling-places in that enormous electorate and that there had to be a scrutineer at every place, with poll-clerks and other expenses, they would see that there must be an enormous expenditure in contesting that electorate. So that even in justice to the men who desired to obtain a seat in that House, the division of the Darling Downs electorate was fair and equitable under the circumstances. He thought it should be known that it was the decrease in population in Warwick which caused the alteration of the various electorates of the Downs and the ultimate wiping out of the Northern Downs electorate, and under the circumstances the Premier, so far from being guilty of unfairness to Warwick, had shown every disposition to be fair and equitable in apportioning the representation.

The HON. G. THORN said he knew something about the expenses of elections for Darling Downs, and he could tell the Committee that all the expense was at the Toowoomba end. So far as the size of the electorate was concerned the proposed electorate of Cambooya was almost as large as the old electorate of Darling Downs, and he did not see how they could have less than twenty polling-places in it.

Mr. MORGAN said with regard to what the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, had said about the decrease of population in Warwick, it was more apparent than real, and to say that that had given rise to the necessity for the alterations of boundaries was nothing better than a fiction. He would point out that the electorate of Warwick as it stood had a larger population than about a dozen of proposed new electorates under the Bill. That was a fact that could be ascertained by looking at the figures. The hon. gentleman could not, of course, lose the opportunity of having a cut at Warwick, a town whose doom that hon. gentleman had predicted many years ago in that House. It still survived, however, notwithstanding that prediction. They were not fighting the question as one between Warwick and Toowoomba. He had repudiated that at the outset, and he did so again. What he did object to was that the population at the southern end should be handed over to make a sufficient total population to justify Cambooya being made an electorate by itself. They were to be made to suffer because Pittsworth, Westbrook, and the places around Cambooya had not sufficient population to entitle them to a member of their own. That was the injustice he complained of, and the Premier was not justified in handing over the people of Canal Creek, Thame's Creek, and Back Plains to Cambooya. The hon. member for Toowoomba said it was suggested that Warwick and a portion of Darling Downs should be combined, but he would ask who made the suggestion? He objected to anything of the kind being done. They were entitled to two members distinctly, and nobody could deny them that;

but what they wanted was to wipe out the proposed central line and retain the Darling Downs with two members, and that the population, wherever it might be, should return the representatives. He was prepared to give Toowoomba all the population it was entitled to at the Toowoomba end, but they should not deprive the people of the Warwick end of population in sympathy with Warwick.

Mr. ALLAN said there was one remark made by the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, concerning the expense of the election which he (Mr. Allan) had contested, and the hon. member very kindly advocated their cause in that way by saying it was absurd that they should be put to so much expense, and that for that reason, if for no other, the division should be made. He thought they were themselves the best judges of that. If he and his colleague in the representation of the Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) chose to run for the electorate and go to that enormous expense, it showed they were prepared to sacrifice something for the constituency. They had undertaken double the work and double the expense, in order to study as far as they could the interests of the constituency. The Committee must understand that in the present arrangement five-sixths of the Cambooya and Cunningham electorates was handed over to one-sixth. In doing that he believed the Government were making a mistake, which they would one day have to regret. The Committee should also recollect that that was not done on account of a part being taken from the Darling Downs, but on account of a part being added to it. Westbrook and Jondaryan added to Cambooya was the one-sixth added to make up the electorate, and the other five-sixths of the electorate was handed over to it.

Mr. MORGAN said that if area was a sufficient basis for division, why did they not put a dividing line through the Burke electorate? Where was the sympathy of the member for Toowoomba when that electorate was under discussion? Why was no such claim put in for consideration in that case? It was evidently not thought necessary, but the Darling Downs was being divided and it would thus give Toowoomba another member. That was the plain English of the thing. It would swell Toowoomba influence in that Chamber, and he contended Toowoomba influence was already too strong there. That was his opinion and the opinion of a very large portion of the people of the Darling Downs. It was clear, therefore, that area was not a sufficient justification for the division.

Mr. ALAND said he was not aware that the members for Toowoomba exercised so much influence in that Chamber. In fact, he was beginning to feel that it was rather the other way about. He could tell the hon. member for Warwick, however, that any influence they had they tried to exert for the public good.

Mr. KATES said the members for Toowoomba not only had undue influence in that Chamber but also in the other. Something had been said about the decrease of population in Warwick. There had been some decrease there certainly; but where had the people gone to? They had simply gone a few miles out of Warwick to settle upon the land. To his knowledge forty or fifty people had gone from Warwick to settle on the Allora exchanged lands, so that they were still on the Darling Downs. He must protest against the action of the Government in that matter. There was no doubt that injustice had been done to the people of the Darling Downs by the Government allowing the amendment to be defeated. He would not have supported the amendment had he not known that out of 2,060

electors on the Darling Downs 1,650 of them were in favour of the retention of the old boundaries, and that had been frustrated by the action of the Government.

Question—That the clause as amended stand part of the Bill—put.

Mr. DICKSON said it was proposed to divide the Enoggera electorate into four constituencies. He understood that some further alteration of boundaries was contemplated, and before proceeding further he would ask the Premier what was proposed to be done in that direction. He understood that it was intended to extend the boundary of Fortitude Valley to Breakfast Creek, but it would, as a matter of course, involve alterations in other portions of the proposed new electorates. He wished to know if it was the Premier's intention to extend the boundary of Fortitude Valley to Breakfast Creek, and if so, what portion of the west would be added to Toombul in order to bring it up to the population standard?

The PREMIER said it had been suggested to him that Breakfast Creek would be a more convenient boundary for the Valley, and so, no doubt, it would. It would increase the population of the Valley by 1,500 people, and 388 male adults, increasing the total population of the electorate from 13,395, with an adult male population of 3,512, to a total population of 14,900, with an adult male population of 3,900. The decrease in the population in Toombul would be, of course, exactly the same amount; its population would then be 4,900, with an adult male population of rather less than 1,000, which was too small for a constituency in the immediate neighbourhood of the metropolis. That could be remedied conveniently, so far as boundaries were concerned, by extending the western boundary of Toombul westward from the Bowen Bridge road, which was the boundary proposed in the Bill, to the western boundary of the shire of Windsor—the road from Kelvin Grove northward. That would make up the population of Toombul to the requisite number; but it would reduce the population of Enoggera by about 1,400, and 350 adult males—he was citing the numbers from memory—leaving it with a population of 4,900, and an adult male population of 1,250. It had been suggested that a line should be taken between the Bowen Bridge road and the great Northern, or Samford, road. There was another road between the two, which might, perhaps, still more conveniently divide the people who came into town by the Bowen Bridge road from those who came into town by the Samford road. That would make the population rather less than he had stated, and the population of Enoggera rather more. In both cases it would be a little over 5,000. Of course, the extension of Fortitude Valley to Breakfast Creek was the key to the whole, for if that was done the other alterations would have to be made.

Mr. McMASTER said that Breakfast Creek would make a very much more natural and definite boundary to Fortitude Valley than the present boundary. The present boundary was an extremely awkward one, cutting across the centre of Bowen Hills and going in a circle round the streets in that locality. That would lead to a great deal of difficulty through persons not knowing which electorate they were residing in. Some would believe they were in Toombul while they were really in Fortitude Valley, and *vice versa*. As to Toombul, he believed that if the census were taken there now it would be found that there had been a very large increase in the population. There had been a marvellous increase around the Albion and out towards the racecourse within the last twelve months,

houses having sprung up there in all directions. With regard to extending the electorate further, he did not know how the representatives of Enoggera would feel on that point; but he should be very much inclined to extend the boundary of the electorate to Breakfast Creek, as being a boundary easily understood.

Mr. DICKSON said that, while he had always regarded that portion of the electorate between Stratton and Breakfast Creek as being part of Enoggera, with which it had been connected ever since Enoggera had been formed, he did not rise to make any objection to the extension of the Valley electorate to Breakfast Creek if it were more convenient. He did not think there was very much community of interest between the Valley and the neighbourhood of Newstead and Breakfast Creek; but at the same time, as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had pointed out, there was some danger of electors becoming confused through not knowing which electorate they were in, and on which rolls they should be enrolled. As he had said, he did not press any objection to the extension to Breakfast Creek.

The Hon. G. THORN said, looking through the tables, he found that the West Moreton group of electorates had a population at the time of the last census of 8,617, while Bundanba and Fassifern had 3,200, almost sufficient to give three members to those two electorates. Since then Bundanba and his electorate, he pointed out the other day, had increased by 50 per cent., but he had had occasion since to alter his opinion with regard to Bundanba. He was now fully satisfied that the increase in that electorate had been 75 per cent. If a census were taken to-morrow he believed it would be found that the number of adult males would be about 2,700 or 2,800. Within the last four months between 600 and 700 names had been put on the roll of that electorate. Last quarter there were 300; this quarter there were about 350 put on at Ipswich and Goodna; about 100 at Ipswich, and over 200 at Goodna—about 330 altogether. At the present time that roll was, he believed, larger than the Ipswich roll, and yet the district returned only one member. He would therefore suggest to the Premier the propriety of giving those two electorates—Bundanba and Fassifern—three members, which they were quite entitled to even after cutting off the portion on the other side of the Logan, which properly belonged to East Moreton. He would point out to the Premier that there had been a great increase of population in those districts, and that the mining population of Bundanba was likely to be permanent. They were not people who were here to-day and gone to-morrow, as had been said of the population of some of their goldfields. He would also point out to the Premier that he had given a member to Mount Morgan and two to Croydon, although at the time the census was taken there was very little population at either of those places, but they had increased very much since then. Seeing that the hon. gentleman was liberal to the Central and Northern divisions of the colony, he thought the least he could do was to give the electorates of Bundanba and Fassifern, which was also a rapidly increasing electorate, three members. At the time the census was taken they had a population of 1,607 and 1,601 respectively—or about 3,200 together; so that even on the present basis they were more entitled to three members than the Darling Downs group. They had a higher average percentage of adults than the electorates of the Toowoomba group, and he hoped the Premier would see his way to adopt his suggestion. He was sure it would be pleasing to

the people of West Moreton, who were rather dissatisfied at not getting any increase to their representation. Seeing that the Premier had been good all round, he thought the least he could do was to give those two electorates another member.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman's statement that the population of Bundanba had increased by 75 per cent. since the taking of the census might or might not be true; he would proceed to examine the hon. gentleman's reason for making the statement. The hon. gentleman said 800 or 900 names had been put on the roll lately. As a matter of fact, there were 343 names added in the July quarter, and about 300 during the present quarter. That did amount to 75 per cent. of the names on the roll, but it did not prove that the population had increased by 75 per cent.; because, out of the 1,607 male adults in Bundanba at the time of the census, only 782 had their names on the roll. He supposed the additional names were those of voters who had not their names on the roll at that time. Even if all the names put in up to the present time were added to the roll, they would come to less than 1,450 out of an adult male population of 1,600, as shown by the census. That, too, was the population of the present electorate of Bundanba, which it was proposed to very materially reduce by the Bill. The hon. gentleman said the West Moreton group was entitled to an additional member. Now, the West Moreton group, of course, consisted of several constituencies. The constituency of Ipswich had boundaries which had been fixed for a long time, and which it was not proposed to alter. If they were altered it must be for the purpose of taking in some of the surrounding country. The boundaries now were convenient, though certainly the population was rather small—a total population of 8,974, and an adult male population of 2,192. It was one of the smallest double constituencies in the colony, and they could not claim three members for that. Then the constituency of Stanley had natural boundaries. It had a population of 8,685, with 2,318 adult males, and that was not more than enough to entitle it to two members. Where was the additional member to come in? Those were the constituencies that stood by themselves. Stanley could not well be added to either on the east or west; it was bounded on the west by the Main Range, and on the east by the Little Liverpool Range. It could not be joined to anything else, nor could anything else be joined to it. The population of Rosewood was too small. They were reduced, therefore, to the two constituencies, Bundanba and Fassifern. The present combined population of those electorates was 11,500 nearly, and the adult male population 3,200. That was not enough for three members. The additional population the hon. gentleman spoke of was in the mining district about Bundanba. No doubt there had been a considerable increase there, but not a greater increase, he thought, than had taken place in many parts of the colony—certainly not enough to entitle it to another member. The place which had become too large was Fassifern, where the population had become 5,811, and the adult male population 1,601, but that, as he had previously pointed out, was in consequence of the inclusion in Fassifern of a district that did not properly belong to it, but was added to it at the last redistribution in order to entitle it to a member, which it would not otherwise have been entitled to receive. What was proposed was to restore, as nearly as existing circumstances would allow, the natural boundary between the Fassifern district and the Logan. The fact was that an additional member was given to the south-eastern portion of the colony,

which was composed of part of the electorate of Logan and part of the electorate of Fassifern, the greater part belonging to the electorate of Fassifern; so that the additional member for the Logan was practically an additional member for Fassifern—they were getting about two-thirds of the member. Those things could not be arranged mathematically, but the Government had made the best division they could.

The HON. G. THORN said he was satisfied that if the boundaries were rearranged in that way it would be very difficult to get the names on the proper rolls. It would require experts, who knew the position of every man's selection, and so on, to put them on the proper rolls. He wished to facilitate matters so that the election might take place quickly; that was why he had not wished the boundaries meddled with. A great increase of population had taken place in the Stanley district: about eighty-six fresh names had been put on the roll the other morning. Now, he thought that a district might be carved out away from metropolitan influence in the upper part of Moreton, taking in part of Burnett and the Nanango Gold Field. That, he believed, would be a good goldfield. There was machinery on the way now from Melbourne, a battery of twenty stampers. In that district, under wise administration by the Minister for Lands, he believed that 1,000 people might be settled within the next twelve months. If a new electorate were formed there he believed it would be satisfactory to all parties. He saw the leader of the Opposition smiling, but he thought that hon. member would be satisfied to see a new electorate away from Brisbane and Ipswich influence. He (Mr. Thorn) did not care about the influence of those places.

Mr. ANNEAR said he hoped the Premier was not going to fall in with the argument of the hon. member. He thought it most unreasonable. The members for Wide Bay had a far stronger case than the members for West Moreton had. He presumed they had nothing to do with the electoral rolls. It was well known that one-third of the electors of the colony were not on the rolls at all until the local revision court, which was held on the 4th of the present month. Wide Bay and Burnett group had a total population of 38,032, and an adult male population of 1,202 for each member, and under the Bill they had nine members; West Moreton had a population of 30,695, and an adult male population of 1,128 for each member. If the Premier were going to give way to the hon. member for Fassifern, he was sure that the Wide Bay bunch would go in for another member, as well as the Ipswich bunch. He considered that West Moreton was over-represented. Every day the members who represented West Moreton could jump into the train at Ipswich and be in Brisbane in an hour, while the members for Wide Bay could not get to Brisbane under a couple of days. The West Moreton people were very well treated, and had no reason to be dissatisfied. He trusted that the Premier would adhere to the lines he had laid down, so far as regarded the West Moreton group.

The HON. G. THORN said he would point out to the hon. member for Maryborough that, according to the census, the population of Wide Bay was 38,000, and that of West Moreton 34,000. Wide Bay had nine members; West Moreton seven.

Mr. ANNEAR said he might raise the argument that the Burrum Coal Fields were increasing in population in just as large a proportion as any part of West Moreton. If hon. members would only look at the papers in the library they would see that at the last revision court there were 500

or 600 men around Maryborough who had sent in their names to be placed on the rolls who were not on before. The figures he had quoted were those given in the last census returns, and he thought he could read correctly. The population of West Moreton was 30,695, and that of Wide Bay 38,243.

Mr. KELLETT said he was sorry to have to correct the hon. member who said that the population of West Moreton district, according to the last census, was 30,000, as, in fact, it was 33,140, as against 38,000 in Wide Bay. West Moreton had only seven members as against nine members, and, of course, Wide Bay was satisfied; but the West Moreton people were not satisfied. He had only to look at two electorates on the list, Fassifern and Bundamba. By the last census returns the male adult population of those two electorates was 3,200, without taking into account the large increase they knew there had been there lately. That number, divided into three, would give 1,067 male adults for each member, without including the large number that had gone there since. The Premier himself acknowledged that there had been an increase; but the population was increasing rapidly, and more so than the hon. gentleman thought. If he visited that district and compared the number of houses there were with what there were when he was there last time—which was when he was on his way to England—he would hardly know the place. He could not see why the Government would not grant them another member. He did not think there was any district in the colony so much under-represented. There were 1,600 male adults in Bundamba and 1,600 in Fassifern, and he was sure that if three members were granted, when the elections came on, instead of there being 1,067 votes in each district, there would be some 1,200 or 1,300. In spite of all the clipping that had been done, he was quite sure that the next time the census was taken it would be found that the population of the West Moreton group had very largely increased; and he should recommend the Premier to divide the Fassifern and Bundamba electorates, so that they would return three members instead of two. So far as Stanley was concerned, part had been clipped off, and he thought, as had been suggested, that Nanango might be added to it. He had no objection to part of the Stanley electorate, as far as Crow's Nest, being added to Aubigny, as it did business with Toowoomba; but he thought they went a little too far when they included the district around Emu Creek. When Kilcoy and Byron were added to East Moreton, they took another piece that belonged to the West Moreton district, and each of those places had a population of eighty or ninety adult males; but those small numbers all counted up. Even now, he was sure the Premier would see they were entitled to another member. Then they would find that another piece was taken off Fassifern and added to the Logan. The Premier said that was really giving another member to Fassifern; but he thought it was another member for the East Moreton and not for the West Moreton group. It was only giving strength to another metropolitan constituency. He thought the metropolis was too well represented altogether, and for those reasons he could not see how the Premier in fairness could disallow their request. The simplest way would be, as he had said before, to give Bundamba and Fassifern three members. The second section of the Fassifern railway had been opened to Dugandan, and hon. members must see that the population there would increase very fast. There were large quantities of rich agricultural land there which had been uncultivated simply on account of its distance from a railway station. Agricultural produce had been bringing very low prices lately, he regretted to

say, and the farmers could not afford to carry it very far. Now that they had a railway, the population would increase, and it would be proved at the election time that they were asking for no more than they were entitled to.

Mr. BULCOCK said he was somewhat amused at the immense increase in the population of the colony since the census was taken. According to the statement he had heard in reference to the increase of population in certain electorates, there must be at least 600,000 people in the colony—the population had increased so amazingly! The population of Bundamba, for instance, had increased 100 per cent. He thought those who had spoken lately had scarcely acted fairly in taking the old schedule instead of the schedule as now proposed. According to the schedule now proposed, the total population of the Wide Bay and Burnett group was 38,032, the adult male population 10,822; the average per member being, general population 4,226, adult male population 1,202. It was proposed to give seven members to the West Moreton group, with a general population of 30,695 and an adult male population of 7,899; the average being, general population 4,385, as against 4,226 in the Wide Bay and Burnett; and adult male population 1,128, as against 1,202 in the Wide Bay and Burnett; so that what the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, said was quite correct—there was a difference of 8,000, not a difference of 5,000. As the proposed distribution was now before the Committee that should in all fairness be taken, and not the old distribution. He thought the representatives of West Moreton were very unreasonable. They were not very far from the metropolis; some portions of East Moreton were a good deal farther. East Moreton stretched 100 miles from Brisbane in one direction and 60 miles in another. The hon. member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, spoke about Nerang being one of the Metropolitan group—fifty miles away from Brisbane—and Ipswich—twenty-four miles away—not being one of the Metropolitan group! The combined population of the East Moreton and Metropolitan groups was 96,373, and if that general population was represented at the same rate as West Moreton was proposed to be represented—namely, one member for every 4,385—those two groups combined would have twenty-two members; and if the adult male population were represented at the same rate they would have twenty-three and a-half members. Instead of that it was proposed to give them sixteen members; yet the West Moreton members complained that their district was under-represented, and that the Metropolitan and East Moreton groups were over-represented. He would give another example, comparing the West Moreton group with the Southern pastoral and Darling Downs groups combined, which were far enough away from the metropolis, if distance had anything to do with the matter. The general population of Darling Downs was 34,364, and that of the Southern pastoral group 14,086, making a total of 48,450. It was proposed to give thirteen members to the two groups, the average being one for every 3,727 of general population and for every 1,122 of adult male population. The West Moreton group gave an average of one member for every 4,385 general population and every 1,128 adult male population, so that there was a difference of 658 in the general population, and a difference of six in the adult male population. Where was the cause of complaint? Why was there all that talking, blocking, and haggling over another member? Why should the West Moreton group of all others have an additional member? Surely they had received their share of the plums so far; and he did not see why they should cry out about their boundaries being altered. It was impossible to have a redistribution without an alteration of

boundaries, and he thought it was, not to say ungenerous but exceedingly unwise, to waste the time of the country in asking for something everybody could see they were not justly entitled to receive.

Mr. MACFARLANE said it was astonishing what figures could be made to show. The hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Bulcock, had presented some figures as the numbers would stand according to the altered boundary, but by altering the boundary they could get what figures they liked. The hon. member said the West Moreton members were asking something very unreasonable, and thought they had received their share of the plums in the past; but it would be found, on examining the records, that West Moreton had not received more than its share of the plums since separation. The hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, had fallen into the same mistake of arguing from the amended boundaries, whereas the contention of the West Moreton representatives was that, being entitled to an additional member under the old boundary, that boundary should not be interfered with. To enable the Toowoomba group to get an additional member, part of the West Moreton group was taken away; to improve the Logan, part of Fassifern was taken away, and to improve East Moreton part of Stanley was taken. Taking the proper basis—the old boundary—he would ask, was it reasonable that any group in the colony, he did not care which, entitled under the old division to an additional member should be interfered with in order that additional members might be given to other groups? It was not reasonable or fair that a district returning seven members should be reduced so as to improve the position of other districts. It had been said that the members for West Moreton were asking for something unfair; but they could not see, and could not be made to see that, because taking the altered boundaries altered the circumstances, and they were put into the position of demanding more than was fair, right and just. It had been forgotten that the West Moreton group was a progressive group. It was not like the Maryborough and other districts. There was more ground taken up in West Moreton by agriculturists than in half-a-dozen other groups put together. As to mining, the coal of the Burrum would never compete with the Ipswich coal, and the mines there would never employ one man for every ten employed at Bundamba. Bundamba was coming to the front at such a rate that he believed if the residents were counted it would be found that the number had doubled during the last five years. Houses were going up by the half-dozen. Even if they took Ipswich itself they would find that it also was progressing very fast. He could guarantee that during the last three years 300 cottages had gone up in Ipswich. There were no houses empty, and that might be taken as a good sign of progress. Looking at the whole of the circumstances, he thought they had made out a very good case for an additional member for West Moreton. They had coal-mining at Bundamba, agriculture all over the district, and gold-mining at Nanango. He had heard something the last day or two about the mining at Nanango which would astonish hon. members; the place was promising well and would be almost a second Mount Morgan. Since the census had been taken the population of the West Moreton district had greatly increased, and it was now entitled to more than one additional member—to one and a-half. Under the circumstances he thought they were not making an unreasonable demand, and he hoped the Premier would see his way to put them in the position they were in before the introduction of that Bill.

The PREMIER said hon. members complained without any reason. If they chose to put their fingers in their ears and not listen to arguments, of course they could say that they heard none given. He had pointed out several times where the increase of population had occurred. He had pointed out that the electorate of Stanley was entitled to two members and no more, and that the boundaries of the electorate could not be extended either east or west; that the electorate of Ipswich was entitled to two members—certainly no more; that Rosewood and Bundamba between them were entitled to two members; and that the increase had occurred entirely in the electorate of Fassifern. The fact was that the electorates of Fassifern and Logan were entitled to three members between them. If hon. members chose to say that giving one member to Fassifern proper, and two members to the remainder of Fassifern and the Logan was robbing the Ipswich district he could not help it; that was all. That was where the increase came in, and where the increased representation was proposed to be given. No hon. member had attempted to controvert his arguments or show that the Stanley electorate could be altered as to its boundaries, so as to be entitled to more representation, or that the boundaries of Ipswich could be so altered as to entitle it to more representation. The arguments he had used remained unanswered; they were not touched—no hon. member had addressed himself to them. The additional representation, as he had said before, was attributable to the increase of population in Fassifern. But that increase was not sufficient to entitle it to a member, though it and the Logan together were entitled to three, which it was proposed to give them. He had thought that the old rivalry between the metropolis and Ipswich was dead, as it ought to be. There was a time when there was a feud between the two places; but he had hoped it had become a matter of ancient history. But really from what had been said by some hon. members that evening it appeared likely to be again a matter of modern history. If hon. members could point out how a different arrangement could be made so as to give the three members to the two districts of Logan and Fassifern, which were entitled to three, he would have no objection to it. Reference had been made to Nanango, but it was not a matter of much consequence whether the 200 or 300 people at that place should be added to Stanley or not. Stanley at the present time was a very small electorate, and would bear adding to. As to the parish of Kilcoy, that also could be added without Stanley being entitled to increased representation.

Mr. SALKELD said the Premier had stated that nothing had been said to show how the boundaries of the West Moreton group could be altered so as to entitle the district to an additional member. He would endeavour to show the hon. gentleman that there was a way by which that could be accomplished. The hon. gentleman had stated also that the boundaries of the Stanley electorate could not be altered in any way whatever. That was a very strong remark to make with regard to that electorate. He further stated that the increase of population had occurred in the Fassifern electorate; if he would look at the tables he would see that Bundamba and Rosewood had nearly 10,000 inhabitants. The suggestion he (Mr. Salkeld) would make was that the boundaries should be left as they were, with the exception of the part about Crow's Nest, which properly belonged to Toowoomba. He understood that the people of Nanango would like that part of the district to be thrown into Stanley. That might be done,

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and the Stanley electorate extended further up the Brisbane. Rosewood should take in the part west of the Back Plains, whose interests were identical with the interests of Rosewood. That electorate might extend across to the Pine Mountain, leaving the Bundamba electorate as it was proposed in the Bill. The West Moreton electorate had been cut and carved east, west, north, and south, to make up the population in other electorates. Hon. members for West Moreton did not see why that should be done, and thought that they were consulting the wishes of their constituents by asking the Government to leave the boundaries as they were, and give them an additional member. The Premier had referred to the old feud between Ipswich and Brisbane, and said he had thought it was at an end, but he (Mr. Salkeld) believed the remarks of the member for Enoggera, Mr. Bulcock, would have the effect of reviving that feud, or would go a long way towards reviving it. He had been told, and it was common rumour, that the hon. member for Enoggera had had a very considerable hand in suggesting those cuttings and carvings, and the deep interest the hon. member took in the matter pointed in that direction, and raised a suspicion in his mind that really the hon. member had had something to do with the Bill. He knew the hon. member for Enoggera wanted to bluff the members representing West Moreton, but he would not find it so easy to bluff them as he thought. They had no intention of allowing anything of that kind. They had considered the matter very carefully, and it was the deliberate opinion of the members for the district—and they believed they represented the feelings of their constituents—that an additional member should be granted. The Government had departed from the original scheme. That was the ground he and other members took. They would have been quite willing to let the claims of West Moreton pass if the Bill had been taken as a whole, and been agreed to with minor alterations only, but the Government had departed from the scheme by granting an additional member here and another there. He would, therefore, suggest that the best thing the Premier could do would be to withdraw the Bill, and let hon. members go before their constituents as soon as possible. That was the conclusion he had arrived at, and he thought it was the best thing to be done in the interests of the country, the Government, and the party.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) said that since last week he had communicated with some of his constituents at Nanango, and had replies by wire from them. Their idea was that if they could have an electorate comprising the valley of Baramba, making Nanango the chief centre, and also taking in a portion of Stanley, they would like it; but if another fresh electorate was to be carved out of the West Moreton group, they did not wish to be in the Stanley electorate. They preferred to be in the Burnett if the Isis Scrub was to be taken out of the Burnett. So that they would sooner remain in the Burnett electorate with the boundaries now proposed.

The Hon. G. THORN said that was the very suggestion that he had made—that a new electorate be carved out, reaching about fifty miles in a northern direction towards Baramba.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member did not know what he was talking about. Baramba came much nearer to Nanango than he thought.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, had compared the Ipswich with the Maryborough district, but the

hon. member's argument was not based on any sound principles. Now, the population of Maryborough was 10,405, with an adult male population of 2,411, and returned two members to Parliament; the population of Ipswich and district was 8,974, with an adult male population of 2,191, and returned two members to Parliament. It would be seen, therefore, that as far as representation was concerned Ipswich was much stronger than Maryborough, Ipswich being but a suburb of Brisbane. It was comeatable within an hour, whereas it took two days to reach the metropolis from the Wide Bay district. As to the various products of the two places, he was sure that the Wide Bay district could compare most favourably with Ipswich. As far as representation was concerned, he thought that Ipswich and the West Moreton districts had made out no case for an additional member.

The HON. G. THORN said he had suggested that a new electorate be carved out away from metropolitan influence and Ipswich influence, and the hon. member for Burnett backed up his opinion. The hon. gentleman said his constituents wished it, and would accept it. The matter of boundaries could be settled afterwards. He thought himself that a new electorate might be carved out. It had been suggested that Baramba might be the boundary. That was a very good boundary, and would include Esk, Kilcoy, and Durundur. It would make a nice little electorate, the population in which was increasing very rapidly. It would have nearly as many adult males as the new electorate of Cambooya. What he suggested, the hon. member for Burnett had approved of, and he believed that would settle the matter. If they could get the Government to carve out that electorate it would be immaterial to him how the boundaries went, so long as no Brisbane and no Ipswich influence was exercised in the electorate.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said it appeared to him the arguments of the hon. members for Ipswich amounted to this: that had the West Moreton group been reduced to Ipswich they would still be entitled to the seven members. If the West Moreton group received another member the same privilege should not be refused to the East Moreton group, because in the matter of population the East Moreton group had 900 more general population and 230 more adult males per member than the West Moreton group. The hon. member for Fassifern had complained several times about a portion of the Stanley electorate being taken from West Moreton and added to East Moreton. The residents of Kilcoy and Durundur and that district had identity of interests with Brisbane. They did their business with Brisbane, but they had to go to Ipswich to transact their land business, and that was too hard upon them. He was willing to agree to a compromise of this kind—to have a new electorate carved out with Kilcoy and Durundur and let a new member be given to East and West Moreton combined.

Mr. ANNEAR said they had heard a great deal of an increase of population that had taken place in the Fassifern electorate since the census was taken; but he could show that a great decrease had taken place in the adult male population of that district, and it was a very fortunate thing for that electorate that the census was taken when it was. There was one railway contract in that district on which some 300 men were employed, but it had since been completed and the men removed to another part of the colony. There was another contract there on which 300 or 400 men were employed when the census was taken, but on which there were

only about 100 employed at present. The hon. member for Fassifern was so good a general in electioneering that he took good care to get the names of all those men put upon the roll. So that there were 500 or 600 adult males less in that electorate than there were when the census was taken. The hon. members for West Moreton wanted to appear brave and to be able to go back to the electors and say, "Look what we did for you!" But it was too late—it was the last dying kick at the end of the session. The hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, said that they got no sops in Ipswich, but there was no other place in the colony so much nursed. Since the present Government came into power, they had only to go up and see the amount of money, some £20,000 or £25,000, that was being spent there in buildings, and in removing good hardwood bridges and substituting iron bridges for them. It was a very paradise for employment in the Government service. They would find three to one more men employed by two private firms in Maryborough than the whole of the Ipswich firms employed in contract work. They were employed in Maryborough in work for the whole of the colony. The firms there were making four or five quartz crushing machines for the Croydon Gold Field. They made machinery there for the Gympie Gold Field, and for all parts of the colony, and they even sent some home to London. When they talked about Ipswich, therefore Ipswich was a mere baby to Maryborough in her manufacturing. What he felt most proud of in connection with the electorate, was the large number of men employed by private firms and not by the Government.

Mr. MACFARLANE: They are doing Government work.

Mr. ANNEAR said they were doing Government work because they were the lowest tenderers for it. The hon. members for West Moreton had nothing to complain of, and if they insisted upon having another member, the members representing the Wide Bay district would also insist upon having a couple of more members. They had a population in the Wide Bay district of 38,032, whilst the West Moreton district had only 30,695 when the last census was taken, and he was sure if the census was taken that day the hon. member for Fassifern would find that there were 500 less adult males that day in that electorate than there were when the census was taken.

Mr. FOOTE said he had listened with some degree of interest to the bombastic speech they had heard from the hon. member who had just sat down. The hon. member was very loud in speaking and very tall in his expressions, and he always said, "I am sure." He (Mr. Foote) thought oftentimes the hon. member was not so very sure. The hon. member had made some very ludicrous references to Ipswich and the iron bridges that were being built over the railway. The Ipswich people got nothing more out of them than they would out of a bridge built at Roma or any other place. One thing he might mention was that no member representing a portion of the West Moreton group had ever interviewed the Government as to the kind of bridge that should be erected in the district; and what was more, a great many of them looked upon the money spent upon those bridges as wasteful expenditure which might easily have been avoided. The whole of the bridges, he supposed, were made in England and brought out here, and their mere erection in the district was the only advantage Ipswich got out of them. The hon. member appeared to be a very clever man, and appeared to be in the eminently satisfactory position that he was perfectly satisfied with the electorate which he represented, and that its

inhabitants were most peaceful and prosperous people. He (Mr. Foote) hoped they were, and would continue to be so. The hon. member alluded to Maryborough in contrast with Ipswich, and with a view to depreciate Ipswich. But he had heard no one compare Ipswich to Maryborough, or express the slightest desire to do so. He was himself very glad to hear of the enterprise in Maryborough in the iron trade, and he hoped it would continue to be successful; but he would tell them that the Government could not go on borrowing at the rate they had been borrowing for a long time, and their prosperity greatly depended upon the money borrowed by the Government, some of which was being spent in the manufacture of hopper barges, for which the Maryborough firms were the contractors. He was glad that the money was not going out of the country, and that the Maryborough firms did get the contract for these barges. At the same time he thought the hon. member might exercise a little common sense and not be bawling out in that House every time he got on his legs about Maryborough and what Maryborough was doing. Even if the hon. member never went back there again, or was never returned again for Maryborough—although he was, doubtless, a very important member of society—the people there would possibly not miss him for a very great length of time. Reverting to the subject under discussion, it was really of no use quoting figures. Every member who quoted figures made them prove whatever he wanted them to prove. He did not want to stir up the Premier's anger, but hoped the hon. gentleman would view the question in a plain common-sense light, so that justice might be done to the very large and important interest which they were advocating. The Premier admitted the other night that had the boundaries remained as they were, the West Moreton group would have been entitled to another member.

The PREMIER : No.

Mr. FOOTE said that was what he understood the hon. gentleman to say. He had not seen it in *Hansard*, but he dared say he could lay his finger upon it at a later hour of the evening. However, the Premier said that West Moreton had an additional member which he had given to Logan.

The PREMIER : It is given to Fassifern and Logan together.

Mr. FOOTE said he must have misunderstood the hon. gentleman. He understood the hon. gentleman to say that the Fassifern electorate was divided at a certain point so as to serve the interests of both sides; and that, in order to make up the population of Fassifern, a portion of the Bundamba electorate was tacked on to it. The hon. gentleman also said a few minutes ago, whether Logan and Fassifern were bunched together and returned two members, or whether they got one each separately, it was a matter of perfect indifference to him.

The PREMIER : Somebody else must have said that; I did not.

Mr. FOOTE said that was what he understood the hon. gentleman to have said. No doubt the East Moreton members were perfectly satisfied; they had got two additional members. The West Moreton members would be satisfied with one, and they felt it their duty to argue the point out. There had, no doubt, been a large increase in the population of West Moreton, and that ought to be taken into consideration. He need only refer hon. members to the Mount Morgan electorate and to the Croydon electorate, to which additional members had been given. If the basis of the census returns had been strictly adhered to with reference to those places, they would never have

received additional representation. In order to maintain the equilibrium of representation, therefore it was only fair that an additional member should be granted to West Moreton. He had no wish to take up the time of the Committee by going over the old arguments again, and he hoped they should not be compelled to do so. They thought it was a point that ought to be conceded, and he trusted the Premier would do so gracefully in the interests of the West Moreton group.

The PREMIER said it would be much more convenient if the hon. member would make some definite proposition, such as that Fassifern should have two members, or something of that kind. They could then dispose of it; at present they were simply talking at large. If the hon. member could show how Fassifern could make up its necessary population the Government might yield; but as it was, they could do nothing.

Mr. BULCOCK said the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Salkeld, had made a statement which surprised him. That hon. member said it was reported in Ipswich that he (Mr. Bulcock) had had something to do with carving out the electorates. He might say at once that he never knew anything at all about it; that he was never asked for any suggestions, and never volunteered any. It was not until last week that he knew that the West Moreton group had been carved in any way. That hon. gentleman told him, when the Bill came before the House, that he considered it a very fair and equitable measure. As to the particular question before the Committee he felt satisfied that the West Moreton members had no reason to complain of what was proposed in the Bill.

The HON. G. THORN asked how the Premier proposed to carve out a part of Fassifern on the other side of the Logan?

The PREMIER said he could not make any proposition. He had made the best proposition he could, and the hon. member had not suggested any improvement.

The HON. G. THORN asked if the Premier intended to run the dividing line north and south, or east and west, as proposed by the Bill? From what he had heard from his constituents he gathered that a north and south line would be more acceptable to the people living in the Logan district. There was a good range—the Darlington Range—which went down as far as Yatala, which would form a good natural boundary. Did the Premier propose to adopt that line, or did he intend to stick to the east-and-west line, as scheduled in the Bill?

The PREMIER said he did not intend to propose any alteration in the boundaries. He had received information from various parts of the electorate, and from the best information he could get the boundaries as proposed in the Bill were most satisfactory.

The HON. G. THORN said he could tell the hon. gentleman that rather than that part of the district should be added on to Southport the people would prefer to remain as they were, and he should move as an amendment that Fassifern should return two members instead of one. He would point out that the proposed line of demarcation was a most absurd one. People living within ten miles of Ipswich, and at Undulla, were to be put with the people of Southport, and to get to Southport they would have to go through another electorate, the Logan. They had no interests in common with Southport, and instead of being tacked on to there, they would prefer to remain in Fassifern. It was not many miles over the small range from Veresdale to Dugandan, only fourteen or fifteen, but to Southport it was fifty or sixty, and

they preferred the present boundary to that proposed by the Premier. He would also point out that in the Logan part of Fassifern there was a great deal of unalienated land; there was a fair amount on the other side also, and no doubt when the railway got to Beaudesert the country would be rapidly settled. It was magnificent land, and there could be little doubt that it would sustain a prosperous population, not merely a population living from hand to mouth, but a thriving population that would make a large use of the Logan railway. In fact, a large amount of settlement would have taken place there before now had not the Logan bridge been washed away. At Beaudesert settlement was taking place rapidly, and he was sure that where there was one person in the district now, before twelve months were over there would be two. Beaudesert was already a very handsome, thriving township. Between 400 and 500 people were in the town. It had two splendid hotels, quite equal to any in Brisbane, at least they were superior to any outside Brisbane. He did not know that there were any in Brisbane that were better, or better kept, than those at Beaudesert. Houses were going up in all directions; it had some of the finest land in Queensland, and the population was likely to go on increasing. He hoped the Premier would meet their views by granting an additional member for Fassifern, allowing its boundaries to remain as at present. He thought that would meet the views of the members representing the West Moreton group, although he had not consulted with them on that matter. He did not care very much how the boundaries were arranged so long as they got an additional member. He simply suggested that way out of the difficulty, and if the Premier would accept the compromise they would get on rapidly. He moved that Fassifern, "one member" be omitted, with the view of inserting "two members."

The PREMIER said that no reason whatever, that he could see, had been given why Fassifern should have two members, except that some people at Undulla did not feel themselves properly connected with Nerang. Well, if they did not feel themselves properly attached to that electorate, there would be no objection to add them on to Fassifern. The total population of Undulla, and that neighbourhood, which was not a very rapidly increasing place—the whole population of the parishes of Undulla, Maclean, and Teviot, at the time the census was taken, was 273, and the total adult male population was 62. Taking a fair proportion of the population for Undulla—those people who had been so unjustly treated by being connected with Southport—they would amount to about fifteen adults, and those fifteen men might very well be added on to Fassifern, and then they ought to be satisfied. It would not make any appreciable difference in the population of Fassifern, and even taking the whole of the population of the parish, which would be somewhere about fifty, it would not make very much difference. The alteration in the boundaries could be very easily adjusted, but it would certainly not entitle Fassifern to another member. He hoped that the hon. members for the West Moreton district generally, who were usually characterised by a great amount of common sense, would not allow themselves to be led away by the hon. member for Fassifern, who had distinguished himself, ever since he had come back to that House, as the Lord of Misrule, trying simply to make mischief; never serious apparently, for it was difficult to suppose that he was serious in either the statements he uttered or the proposals he made in that Chamber. It would be a slander upon him to suppose that he was serious in the statements he made. And as for the proposals he made,

if they were followed out they would simply turn the whole art of government into a burlesque. He hoped the hon. member would remain as he had been for a great many years, the leader of a party of one. That, he thought, he would; and he sincerely trusted that hon. members who had, up to the present time, maintained a reputation for consistency and sound sense, would not allow themselves to be led astray by following such an *ignis fatuus*.

Mr. FOOTE said he must do the hon. member for Fassifern justice. He certainly thought the remarks of the Premier were uncalled for.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Quite true.

Mr. FOOTE said they were not quite true; he begged to differ from the hon. gentleman in that respect. They had heard remarks from the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, which might be characterised as very eccentric; there was something very peculiar attached to them, and they were of such an exaggerated character that many hon. members could hardly believe they were true. Whether those remarks applied to the hon. member for Fassifern he was not prepared to state, but if the hon. the Premier was accusing him of leading any of the West Moreton party in that matter concerning the West Moreton group, he (Mr. Foote) wished to undeceive him. He did not think there was a more earnest member in that Committee upon that question than himself. In fact, every one of the West Moreton members were in unison upon that point. He would say that they intended to defend their rights, and they hoped to be able to do so without any of those very severe remarks from the Premier. The Premier might think he was going to vanquish the hon. member for Fassifern, but it would take more than words to do that, or at any rate it would take a great many words. The hon. member for Fassifern might not have played an important part in politics for some considerable time past, but there was no reason why he should not do so in the future. He had shown in days past that he had the ability to do so, and he might do so again. The severe strictures upon him by the Premier were utterly uncalled for.

The HON. G. THORN said he was very much surprised at the Premier talking about him in the way he had. He (Mr. Thorn) had made it a rule, if he could not say anything good of the Premier never to say anything bad of him. The Premier was the last person he should have expected to say a word against him, seeing that whatever politics the hon. gentleman knew he (Mr. Thorn) had taught him. The hon. gentleman had not been a very apt pupil, and he had had very great difficulty in keeping him up to the mark. He was a good parliamentary draftsman, but a statesman he never could be. In fact, if there was one member of the House more than another who was unfitted for a statesman it was the Premier. Every act of the hon. gentleman, since he came into the House as Premier, had been a failure; every law of importance that he had placed upon the Statute-book had been a failure, and the next Parliament would probably have to repeal the lot. That was his (Mr. Thorn's) honest opinion, and that was the opinion of people outside the House. Of course it might be said that the House was the country, but the country would have to be appealed to in a very short time, and he was quite satisfied that the country would give a verdict adverse to the Premier. The Premier, since he had gone to England, seemed to be an altered person. He was a regular jumped-up autocrat, and would not receive a suggestion from any hon. member since he had shaken hands and rubbed noses with dukes and other aristocrats. He considered himself so much superior to any other member of the

House since he got the tinsel and lace of the K.C.M.G., that it was beneath his dignity to go near any other hon. member, or receive a suggestion of any kind. The hon. member kept his position from being a great parliamentary draftsman. In that respect he was no doubt superior to him (Mr. Thorn), and, perhaps, superior to every member of the House. He (Mr. Thorn) remembered when the list of handles came out—last Queen's Birthday twelve months, he thought—and when the Premier saw that he did not get one of them he cried and blubbered for two or three months. Then a certain person went to the old country, and the first act of that person was to get the Premier a K.C.M.G. After that the hon. member went to the Conference in London, but he only went in order that he might get something higher—a G.C.M.G. or a P.C., the same as Mr. Dalley. The hon. member should never aspire to any more than he had at present. He ought never to have aspired to any of those handles; he was not fitted for any handles; he was merely a parliamentary draftsman, and he had kept his position by dangling railways before his friends and supporters, and giving railways to those who would have opposed him. The hon. gentleman knew that was all true. Not a single thing had he asked the Premier or any of his officers for, not a single proposition had he made, but he had received a rebuke at once. He was the last who ought to receive discourtesy at the hands of the Premier. With regard to the question before the Committee, on the second reading the hon. member had said he would try and see his way to make a north-and-south line instead of an east-and-west line, and now he told them he did not intend to give a north-and-south line. The Premier had spoken of the population of the parish of McLean; that was not what he (Mr. Thorn) had asked him about. The parish of McLean was close to Brisbane—quite close to the Logan railway.

The PREMIER: It adjoins the parish of Undulla.

The Hon. G. THORN said there was very little population there. What he had asked the Premier about was the population of Veresdale; it was that which was increasing, not the population of McLean. In addition to that, the electorate of Fassifern would receive an increase from the Bundamba electorate of at least 400 or 500 people, which would bring the population up to 2,000 adults. Fassifern, as it stood with the part taken out of Bundamba, was entitled to two members. He really believed that there were 2,000 adults there at the present time, and if he did not believe it he would not have asked for an additional member. The boundary now went within about eight miles of Ipswich. Originally it was beyond Harrisville, and Bundamba contained all the Harrisville district, and all the Mount Flinders district, and three or four sawmills; and the population at those sawmills, and the settlers about Harrisville and Mount Flinders, would bring up the population to 2,000 adults, and those 2,000 were entitled to an additional member, with the increase that had taken place in the district since the census.

The PREMIER rose to say, with regard to the statement made by the hon. member just now respecting himself (the Premier), and the honour her Majesty had been pleased to confer on him last year, that it was absolutely and entirely false and without foundation.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he did not know that he had ever passed a more tiresome and tedious night in the Assembly than that night. There seemed to have been a little plot

got up by about six members in defence of the West Moreton people, but they had played their cards uncommonly badly. He would like to ask any disinterested, cool, dispassionate gentleman who had been sitting, say, in the gallery, what his opinion had been of the talk that night. He was sure it would be that the debate was hardly worthy the name, and that it had been small talk of the most frivolous description. Now, with reference to the speech of the hon. member for Fassifern, that hon. gentleman did not know how great a temptation he had placed in the way of those who might wish to speak depreciatingly of him, by the remarks he had just made. He did not know that he ought to say all that he thought; but in what he said he certainly should not speak uncharitably of him, excepting as to what he had heard of him and known of him in his political character. He did remember that by some extraordinary accident, such as might only be supposed to happen in Turkey, the hon. member was Premier for about six months. It would be recorded by the future historian of Queensland that there were six months during which a gentleman entirely unfitted for the office was Premier of the colony. But that was only an accident, and he did not blame the hon. member for the accident. He would say that since that took place he had kept a kind of observing notice upon the hon. member, who that evening had given the crowning evidence of the fact that that six months had ruined him politically. The speech he had delivered seemed to him (Mr. Brookes) to have been devoid of ordinary political common sense, and the whole of his remarks during the debate had been of that frivolous character that he did not wonder that hon. members—amongst them himself—were sometimes in doubt as to whether he knew what he was saying or knew what he meant. Otherwise he regarded it as rather personal. All he wished to do was to apply to that gentleman's stomach a wholesome blister. They were discussing a very important Bill—a Redistribution Bill—which might very materially alter the prospects and progress of the colony for the next five or six years or more, and he would ask if it was worthy on the part of five or six hon. members to endeavour to lift up the interests of West Moreton in the way that had been attempted? One would suppose that all the rest of the members of the Legislative Assembly were in solemn league and covenant to injure West Moreton. Now, that was not the intention. It might very likely be the opinion of vulgar people and the opinion of short-sighted people who thought more of themselves than they ought to think. He endeavoured to look at the matter in this light: that the question was, how should they best forward the interests of their great and growing colony? It had been admitted, and it was a matter of just complaint, that that Legislature did not fairly represent the people of the colony. That was admitted, and the Premier introduced a Redistribution Bill, in which it was proposed to remedy those defects, and so far they had got on very well. He was inclined to think, and he believed he carried some of the most mature judgment on the Opposition side with him, that it would have been better if the Bill had been passed as it was introduced by the Premier. But inasmuch as that had not been done, they fell at once into an entanglement of debate. He did not blame the Northern members. If he had been in the position of the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, he should certainly have presented his brief, and done his best for what he thought would have been most conducive to the interests of the North. That might seem

an extraordinary view of the case; but it was not, from the point of view from which he was then regarding it. Neither flint nor steel contained the elements of light; but bring them together, and a spark was the result. He believed it was Macaulay who said a certain amount of exaggeration was necessary in the presentation of every case. There were persons who were—he would not say so stupid—so dull and opaque and obtuse that unless a case was presented with some distortion it was impossible to make them understand it; so he did not blame hon. members who were plotting for the North. Notwithstanding anything that had been said, he sympathised with the North; he did not sympathise with the sugar-planters. He did not quite understand the members for West Moreton. He did not believe he should ever get through their hides—their pachyderm was beyond his powers of penetration. In reference to Croydon, he did certainly think that that might be an important goldfield, and if he lived in that part of the colony he should plead for some additional measure of representation to be included for it in this Bill. The Premier had brought forward a Bill which was in the main a just and equitable Bill, and what almost distressed him was that some five or six members of the southern part of the colony, where all the advantages of representation might fairly be considered to be safely secured, were talking all kinds of nonsense, like the hon. member for Fassifern, in favour of some alteration which they thought essential to the political security of the district of West Moreton. Now, he could sum up all he had to say in one short sentence. It was a pure waste of time on the part of those six foolish members, who reminded him of the six foolish virgins, and he believed he could count ten foolish members—he was not quite certain of his Biblical knowledge. The time had been entirely wasted in an irrelevant discussion. According to the best of his judgment the proposition of the Premier in reference to West Moreton was just and equitable, and those members who had joined themselves together in a ridiculous phalanx were acting contrary to the interests of the colony. The Committee had been kept by them till ten minutes past 10, and they had not advanced in common sense five minutes since 7 o'clock.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the debate during the last hour had not added much to the dignity of the Committee, and certainly not to the dignity of those on the Treasury benches, in spite of all that had been said by the hon. member who had just sat down. He might just tell that hon. member that his sympathy for the North was valueless unless he gave his vote with it. That he did not seem inclined to do at any time; and he could keep his sympathy for the North as long as he kept his vote for the Premier. It was not a dignified position for the Premier to take up, even if a proposition made by an hon. member were absurd, to abuse him as he had abused the hon. member for Fassifern. He had observed the hon. member for Fassifern since he came back as a member, but he did not see one bit of difference between him now and the time he sat at the head of the Treasury benches. He was just the same Hon. George Thorn, not one bit better or one bit worse; and if the Premier thought he was so bad as he had described him to be, he had described one who was his own superior for at least six months. And if he was as bad then as now the hon. member should have been ashamed to sit under him and own him as a superior. He would say nothing as to the question raised by the hon. member for Fassifern—the members for West Moreton might fight their battle for themselves against

the gentlemen whom they had supported through thick and thin, and whether right or wrong—but he would say that it would be more to the credit of Parliament if the Premier would, in future, abstain from abusing people, and if he could not answer them, keep silent. Abuse was not argument, and would not be taken as argument by any Parliament.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. W. Brookes, had delivered a nice little lecture; but his reference to the virgins scarcely applied, because there were five wise and five foolish virgins. The Premier had complained that the members representing the West Moreton group had not proposed how the electorates should be arranged so as to give the group an additional member—that they had proposed no particular plan. He had stated before—and no one had answered his argument—that if they as a group were entitled to eight members according to the population, nothing could alter the argument that they should have that number. No one could argue otherwise without saying that the boundaries should be altered, and no one had met his argument.

The PREMIER said he had dealt with it twice at length, but he would repeat once more what he had said twice before, and he hoped hon. members would pay him the compliment of listening. He had pointed out that under the old boundaries Stanley was entitled to two members and no more, and it was proposed to take off the northern end two small portions, one to be added to Aubigny, and one to Moreton, for reasons fully described; but it was of no consequence, so far as representation of the district was concerned, whether they were taken off or left in. He pointed out also that the electorate could not be extended either east or west, because it was hemmed in by high ranges on both sides. He also pointed out that the electoral district of Ipswich was small in itself, barely entitled to two members, and that the boundaries could not be conveniently extended without seriously interfering with the surrounding districts; otherwise from the smallness of its population it ought to be extended. He also pointed out that the two electorates of Rosewood and Bundamba taken together were just entitled to two members and no more. That made up six members. He then pointed out that the apparent excess of population was entirely in the electorate of Fassifern, which of itself was not entitled to two members, but when it was taken with the adjoining electorate of Logan, to which a great part of it was formerly joined, the whole was entitled to three members, which it was proposed to give. He had now said that three times, and he did not propose to say it any more. Nobody had attempted to answer those facts, which were the plain facts of the case, and if hon. members would not listen, but get up after he had said a thing two or three times, and say he had not given the information, he could not help that.

Mr. KELLETT said it was not fair for the Premier to say that hon. members had not been listening to him. They had heard what the Premier had said two or three times. They always listened carefully to him on his side, whatever hon. members on the other side might do. It was no use for the Premier to say that members put their fingers into their ears and did not listen. What they claimed was that, taken collectively, the whole of West Moreton was entitled to another member. The Premier said that Stanley could not be extended to the east or to the west, but they did not want another member for Stanley. They said that the clippings taken away from other districts to help to make up that nice little amalgamation

he had arranged, cut out the additional member to which West Moreton was entitled. The Premier said that Rosewood and Bundanba together contained only about enough population for two members. He put in Rosewood with Bundanba to try to cut off the argument that Bundanba and Fassifern together were entitled to three members. Then he tacked a large number on to the Logan instead of leaving them in the West Moreton group. Had the hon. member got his fingers in his ears and would not hear? Even if he had not, he would not take any notice. He never told the hon. gentleman that he had his fingers in his ears, although he often read the papers and turned his back on hon. members when they were speaking. They never told him that he put his fingers in his ears and did not listen, because they had some respect for him, which the hon. gentleman did not seem to have for hon. members. What did he do when the hon. member for Fassifern defended the case he had submitted to the Committee? The hon. gentleman used very bad language indeed towards that hon. member, such language as any member of that Committee ought to be ashamed of. And what did his colleague, who sat behind him, the junior member for North Brisbane, do? That attenuated old gentleman, who only spoke on sufferance, attacked some hon. members and abused them, knowing that nobody would take any notice of him because he was an old gentleman; but he did not say one word about the Bill. A gentleman who had lived as long as the hon. member ought to know better, but instead of that he abused hon. members, knowing that no one would knock him down because he was an old man. The Chairman was getting into the "sere and yellow leaf," but he (Mr. Kellett) was sure he would not fight in that way; no decent old gentleman would fight in such a way. As to the Premier abusing the hon. member for Fassifern, it had been well said that the hon. gentleman had been six months under the member for Fassifern, and if the latter were such a disreputable character as the hon. gentleman made him out to be, he should be ashamed to mention it now. He (Mr. Kellett) was perfectly satisfied that the member for Fassifern did teach the Premier a good many wrinkles, not legal but political wrinkles, and could teach him a good many things still that would be of advantage to him in his parliamentary life. There were members on both sides of the Committee who could teach the hon. gentleman a good many things, but he did not believe they could teach him anything on any subject. He (Mr. Kellett) really believed that the hon. gentleman thought that if he started to work in a shop in Queen street he could make a watch in a week as well as anyone. He (Mr. Kellett) believed in a man having a good opinion of himself, but he could go too far in that way. The hon. gentleman told them they were deaf and got up and repeated the same words he had used before, which they considered were no argument at all. They maintained that they asked for nothing more than the district was entitled to—nothing more than its just rights. The members for those electorates had been very quiet in the past, but he was very glad to see that they were now finding out the error of their ways. Possibly it was because the general election was approaching, but it was better late than never. As an hon. member said, necessity now compelled them. They were not treated so badly at first, and they were quiet, but he thought they would have been treated a great deal better if they had not been so quiet and taken things so easily. It was nearly time now that they made a stand when they saw additional members being given to other electorates north, south, and east, and everywhere. He believed they had been

too good to the hon. gentleman, who he thought might be a little better to them now. Something like thirteen members had been given to electorates in different parts of the colony, but they found that the Premier took no notice of them when they asked for another member for West Moreton, to which it was justly entitled. When they made their request the hon. gentleman simply abused them. He (Mr. Kellett) was very glad to hear the junior member for Enoggera speak that evening, and he would be pleased to hear him speak again and go more into the particulars of the Bill. There were a good many things the hon. member knew about the electorates around Brisbane, and he might enlighten the Committee in regard to them, but he did not think the hon. member could enlighten them very much about West Moreton. The hon. member for Ipswich could give them far more information upon that subject than the junior member for Enoggera. He (Mr. Kellett) thought they had shown that Bundanba and Fassifern together were entitled to three members. They did not want the Premier to explain anything about the Stanley electorate; they did not want to have a piece taken from East Moreton and joined on to the Logan. The greater part of the trade in that district came to Ipswich now that the railway had been constructed to Dugandan. For that reason they claimed to have the boundaries altered, so as to leave the population as it was under the old arrangement. They did not propose new boundaries, because if they did the hon. gentleman would not accept them, but they left it to him in his great wisdom to fix those boundaries, and he could easily do it in such a way as to give three members to those two districts. If that were done it would be found when the election took place that a great many more votes would be polled there than in many other districts of the colony.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. The railway motions will stand at the top of the paper for to-morrow.

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