

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 27 OCTOBER 1887**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Thursday, 27 October, 1887.*

Motion for Adjournment.—The Government Electrician.  
—The Queensland Deposit Bank.—Formal Motions.  
—Electoral Districts Bill—third reading.—Purchase  
of Land at New Farm.—Messages from the Legis-  
lative Council—Lady Bowen Lying-in Hospital Land  
Sale Bill.—Local Government Act of 1878 Amend-  
ment Bill.—Distilleries Act Amendment Bill.—Nor-  
manton to Croydon Railway Bill.—Constitution Act  
Amendment Bill.—Adjournment.

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

## MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

THE GOVERNMENT ELECTRICIAN.—THE QUEENS-  
LAND DEPOSIT BANK.

Mr. MOREHEAD said : Mr. Speaker,—I rise  
to move the adjournment of the House for the  
purpose of dealing with two matters connected  
with the Colonial Secretary. Last Friday even-  
ing the Colonial Secretary, replying to a query  
of mine with regard to the work done by the  
Government Electrician, stated that—

“The statement of the hon. gentleman had come upon  
him as a surprise. He was not aware of anything of the  
kind, and it certainly should not be allowed. Did the  
hon. gentleman mean the new *Courier* building?”

“Mr. MOREHEAD : Yes.

"The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was not aware of it, and he should make inquiries. The Government Electrician had to go round and do all the work required at the railway station and other places belonging to the Government, and he thought that was quite enough to take up all that officer's time."

Now, I have made some inquiries about that. I thought it was rather peculiar at the time, and I find that the Government Electrician has never been round to the Railway Department to do work, but that that work is done by a different officer, a permanent officer of the staff. So much for that. Now, with regard to what fell from me the other night in respect to the Queensland Deposit Bank, I find I am reported to have said that the advertisement stated that the security offered was better than the Government Savings Bank. I have no doubt I said that, because I have every faith in the accuracy of the reporting. If I said so I said more than I should have said. The advertisement really reads, "The security offered is therefore equal to the Government Savings Bank." Now, I am making no mistake, as I have the advertisement in my hand. Since then I find that someone interested with the Queensland Deposit Bank has interviewed the editor of the *Courier*, which paper might be not inappropriately termed "The Family Herald," inasmuch as it is owned almost entirely by members of one family—I think indeed that that would be a very good name for it and much more appropriate than the one it at present assumes. I find there it is stated that I was in error, and that the advertisement set forth that the security offered was practically equal to the Government Savings Bank. Now, I hold in my hand a publication which has a pretty large circulation and in which the advertisement to which I allude appears in a very prominent way. It is printed on yellow paper and records the advertisement on a fly-leaf. I refer to the catalogue of the Brisbane School of Arts. In it the rates are set out 4 per cent. for three months, 5 per cent. for six months, and 7½ per cent. for twelve months; and it goes on to say that the security of deposits is therefore equal to the Government Savings Bank. Though that is a statement nominally fathered by the Colonial Secretary, I want to put myself right in so far as the use of the term "better than the Government Savings Bank" is concerned, because I take it that no security in any society in the world can be better than the security offered by the Queensland Government Savings Bank; and I do not think it is fitting or proper that an advertisement of this sort should be inserted in such a prominent position, stating what is not a fact. However strong a limited liability company may be, however secure its position may be, it cannot honestly be put forth that the security offered by it is equal to that of the Government Savings Bank of the colony, and it was that to which I took exception. I have now corrected myself, and shown that "The Family Herald," or "Journal," if it had gone a little further would also have discovered that it had been misled by the indiscreet enthusiasm of some person directly interested in the Queensland Deposit Bank. I move the adjournment of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall simply take notice of the hon. gentleman's remarks with reference to the Government Electrician. I may have been in error in saying that he attended to the Railway Department. I was at the time under the impression that he did, and still am under that impression; but I find that I was perfectly correct the other night in saying that the hon. gentleman's statement came upon me unawares. I then referred to the Government Printer, who was in the lobby at the time, and he informed

me that there had been instructions from the Colonial Secretary's Office allowing Mr. Barton, the electrician, to do certain work in the *Courier* building. I therefore came back to the Chamber and said I had made a mistake, and that it had completely escaped my memory that the permission had been given. I find now on further inquiry that the leave was granted to Mr. Barton while I was away from the Colonial Secretary's Office. That was why I did not know anything about it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The Colonial Secretary said that the statement made by the hon. the leader of the Opposition came upon him unawares the other night. Now, I do not think such a statement should come upon a Minister unawares. He holds a responsible position, and ought to be able to give any information required as to the working of his own department. I may say that this is not the only case in which questions have come upon the hon. gentleman unawares during the progress of his estimates. I asked him for a good deal of information which he was unable to give. Sometimes information has been given by gentlemen who sit behind him, and certainly they should not be in a position to give information which he himself cannot give. I may say further that the reason why the hon. gentleman's estimates have not gone through faster is because he cannot give information which Ministers should be prepared to give. As to the other matter about the Deposit Bank, what I have to say about that is this: Had the advertisement referred to appeared without the name of the Hon. B. B. Moreton at the head as chairman of the board of directors, I do not think anybody would have found fault with it, because I believe it would be generally looked upon as being but the usual mode of advertising, making more of their position than they were entitled to do.

Mr. NORTON: The same old lie!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I do not like to use those words with respect to it, but hon. members understand what I mean—there is an extravagant, exaggerated kind of advertising which people would naturally set that down to. But the Colonial Secretary being chairman of the directors of the institution, and the finances of the colony being in such disorder as they are at present, and also, as I have myself with others lately said, that it was probable that the Government would be obliged to use the deposits in the Savings Bank for current expenses, though I do not believe they have done so, or intend doing so, and could not do so very well, seeing that the greatest part of the securities are in debentures—it is all those things that make the matter important. People in the habit of putting money in the Savings Bank do not know all that, and there comes the rub. Ignorant but industrious people outside who save money and put it into the Government Savings Bank do not know what hon. members know of the matter, and we all know that people who are ignorant are apt to be subject to panics, and if they came across this advertisement with the Colonial Secretary's name at the head of it they might think there was some truth in it, and that the Government Savings Bank was really shaky. There might, in consequence, be a run on the bank, and if that occurred the Government could not meet it very easily, as they could not issue debentures to people who wanted their money back. We know that when there is a deficiency in the consolidated revenue the Government can draw upon the loan revenue, and do so, and not upon the Savings Bank. Ordinary people, however, do not know that, and I think it was very indiscreet—

to say the least of it—to allow such an advertisement to appear with the name of the Colonial Secretary at the head of it. It would be only a little worse if the name of the Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith appeared at the head of it as Colonial Treasurer. There might even be an inducement in the advertisement to depositors to withdraw deposits from the Government Savings Bank in order to secure the advanced rates of interest which the Deposit Bank advertises to pay upon security equally as good as that of the Queensland Government. I think the advertisement a mistake, and the hon. gentleman should either withdraw his name from it or have it altogether changed.

Mr. BAILEY said: Mr. Speaker,—Since this business cropped up, the Queensland Deposit Bank have issued a pamphlet opening up the nature of their business. That shows that the company is merely a land-speculating syndicate, and not a banking institution. They merely use the money entrusted to them by the public for speculation in land. The public know now exactly what the business of the institution is, and must know that it does not offer at all as good security as the Government Savings Bank. It is just a company or syndicate for the purchase of large portions of land, which are cut up into allotments and sold at a large profit, out of which the interest and moneys are paid to those who lend to the company. If they hope to get back again in this way the large interest they offer to depositors they must be very lucky people, much more lucky than many people who have invested in land speculations in the last few years.

Mr. MOREHEAD, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—Of course I have nothing to do, and never had anything to do, with the way in which the Queensland Deposit Bank people conduct their business, or the position which they are in, but it was my business and that of every member of this House to prevent any advertisement going forth with the name of the Colonial Secretary at the head of the board of directors, containing a statement eminently calculated to mislead. I would point out that that statement may, as suggested by the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, lead people—and perhaps has led them—to withdraw money from the Government Savings Bank, to get increased percentage offered by this company on security which they allege is equal to that offered by the Government. You, sir, and every member of this House will admit that if any serious diminution took place in the amount and the number of deposits in the Savings Bank, people would say: “Things must be going very badly in Queensland. The working classes must be suffering when we see such a diminution in the deposits of the Savings Bank.” It is, I think, admitted as one of the best indications of the prosperity of the country when we find the Savings Bank tolerably full of the people’s money. But if institutions of this kind are allowed to issue advertisements such as that to which I have drawn attention it may lead to a great deal of trouble. I should not be at all surprised—and I am not now speaking particularly of the Queensland Deposit Bank—if it led to a great disaster to depositors who might be misled by institutions similar in character, because land speculation—which is stated by the member for Wide Bay to be the backbone of this institution—has brought many individuals to grief of late years, and might bring companies also. I thought the Colonial Secretary would have seen his way either to withdraw from the board of directors of this company or, as chairman, would see that the advertisement was altered, and should contain no assertion eminently calculated to mislead. It might be as

well if before sitting down I suggested to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that instead of going on with his resolution for the purchase of the New Farm land by the Government, the owners would sell it to the Deposit Bank, as it would be much more in their line, according to the hon. member for Wide Bay.

Question for adjournment put and negated.

#### FORMAL MOTIONS.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—On behalf of the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, I beg to move—

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith): No.

Mr. PALMER: It is formal.

The PREMIER: It cannot be done without leave.

Mr. PALMER: The hon. member for Cook asked me to move it for him.

The PREMIER: If a member comes into the House and goes away again in two minutes—

Mr. PALMER: He was obliged to go. I ask your ruling on the subject, Mr. Speaker. I have been asked by the senior member for Cook to move this if he should not be back in time.

The SPEAKER: The rule that has always been observed in this House up to the present time is that when an hon. member has given notice of a motion of this kind, another hon. member may move it with his consent. If the hon. member assures the House that he has the consent of the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, to move this motion, the hon. member can move it.

Mr. PALMER (for Mr. Hamilton) moved—

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

1. The total number of Chinese, also Chinese adult males, in the respective census subdivisions of Somerset, Palmer, Cook, Cairns, Herberton, and Woothakata.
2. The total number of Polynesians, also Polynesian adult males, in the respective subdivisions of Somerset, Palmer, Cook, Cairns, Woothakata, and Herberton.
3. The total number of other alien races, also alien adult males, in said respective subdivisions.

Question put and passed.

By Mr. JESSOP—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the Licensing Act of 1885.

#### ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

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

#### PURCHASE OF LAND AT NEW FARM.

Mr. McMASTER, in moving—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider of an address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates a sum not exceeding £30,000, to defray the cost of purchasing land now offered for sale, at New Farm, near Brisbane, for the purpose of a public park and recreation ground—

said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no doubt that hon. members will think this is a very large sum to ask for the purpose of purchasing land for the use of the people as a park; but I think that hon. members who have seen Brisbane in the past, and have noticed its progress, will agree with me that it is desirable that sufficient land should be set apart for recreation grounds, and to provide lungs to enable the citizens to get fresh air. I

first came to Brisbane nearly thirty-three years ago, and it was then almost a park in itself, and I never expected then that parks would be required for recreation grounds. I well remember when the first house was built on Wickham terrace. It was built by the late Mr. McNab, and was a little brick cottage called "Athol Cottage"—and was known by the residents of South Brisbane as "John o' Groat's house." A number of people living in the lower portion of the city fully expected to hear of Mr. McNab being molested by the blacks, and he himself and his wife killed. That is very old history, but I think that when looking into the future we have to refer back to history, and then we can judge what the future will be like. To take a trip through Fortitude Valley would require some engineering at that time. I well remember a gentleman who kept a fruit-shop in Queen street telling me that he started for Bulimba between 8 and 9 o'clock one morning, and he got into this very place referred to in my motion, and before he got down to where Bulimba ferry is now it was 3 o'clock in the afternoon. He got bushed.

Mr. NORTON: Did he get bogged?

Mr. McMASTER: No; he got bushed.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It is a wonder he did not get drowned.

Mr. McMASTER: The only track through Fortitude Valley at that time was at the back of Wickham street. Ann street was just laid out, but not stumped; Wickham street was closed; Brunswick street was unknown; and the whole of that district between Kangaroo Point Ferry and Mr. Petrie's old residence was simply a close bush that you could scarcely ride through. I remember a hand-bridge being erected in Queen street by Mr. John Petrie, just opposite Mr. Shaw's little shop, near Shaw and Company's now. I have often thought, when I have heard of the Northern grievances on the other side of the House, that the people of Moreton Bay at that time had a real grievance, because they could not get as much out of the Government of New South Wales at that time as would build a bridge across that ditch in Queen street; and Mr. Petrie put a plank there with a handrail for the people to cross up and down Queen street. The block of land where Finney, Isles, and Co.'s establishment is I have seen in such a condition that it would float an ordinary cutter. Any hon. member who has seen Brisbane in the past—and there are many members present who have done so—will know that what I am stating is a fact. Albert street, then known as Frog's Hollow, was a celebrated pond for duck-shooting, and I have heard of gentlemen shooting ducks at the back of the Union Bank in the creek up near Albert street. Those of us who have seen Brisbane in that state and see it to-day must come to the conclusion that it has wonderfully grown. The progress the city has made during the last thirty years is astonishing, and I am quite certain that in twenty or thirty years hence it will be fivefold larger than it is at the present time. And when we see land being cut into small allotments of sixteen perches in the city and suburbs I think it is time that the Government and this House looked around, and, before it is too late, endeavoured to secure a few blocks of land as parks for the benefit of the people. I believe that when the city was laid out originally, the surveyors made the streets two chains wide. Had the surveyors of that day been enabled to carry out their idea Brisbane would now be one of the most beautiful cities in the Australian colonies. I believe that a roadway two chains wide was also reserved all along the river bank in Brisbane, and that there is a plan showing

that in the Surveyor-General's Office, that can be seen at this day, but it is not easily got at. Had Brisbane been allowed to remain in that way there would have been a beautiful drive round the Botanic Gardens, along Bowen terrace, down to New Farm, Breakfast Creek, and the Hamilton. That would have been one of the finest drives in any of the colonies. But before those plans were adopted they had to be submitted to the legislators of New South Wales, and they thought it was a waste of land to make the streets so wide. The Governor of the day, Governor Gipps, paid a visit to Moreton Bay, and when he found that the streets were two chains wide, he ridiculed the idea of having such wide streets in a place like Brisbane, and gave instructions that they should be reduced to one chain. If Queen street had been allowed to remain two chains wide, what a boon it would be to the citizens to-day. I believe the surveyor who received instructions to reduce the width of the streets waylaid the Governor, and showed him the difference between one chain and two chains, or a chain and a-half, but the Governor insisted that one chain was sufficient for streets in Brisbane. After the Governor had passed through, the surveyor made Queen street 20 links wider, so that it is 1 chain 20 links wide. It is very much to be regretted that in a climate such as ours the streets have not been made wider, and I am sure every member of this House regrets that the original survey was not adhered to. Brisbane might have been a very beautiful city had it been laid out properly; and my object in bringing forward this resolution is to secure what I look upon as the last spot that will be available for a recreation ground for the people. I am encouraged to make the proposal by the tone of the debate last year, when the vote for reserves was under consideration. From the character of the speeches then made on both sides of the House, I am encouraged to believe that hon. members will support the resolution. It was stated by nearly every member who spoke on that occasion that our recreation grounds and parks should, if possible, be extended. But whether I shall get sufficient support to carry this motion or not, I am perfectly satisfied that I have done the correct thing in bringing it before the House. If it is not passed, I am quite sure that those who come after us will regret that we have not taken advantage of this opportunity to obtain a desirable recreation reserve, quite as much as we now regret that those who laid out the city did not reserve larger areas in the city and suburbs than they did. Had that been done then, the cost would have been much less than must be incurred now to secure suitable areas, and it would have been a great benefit to the inhabitants. The speech made by the junior member for North Brisbane, Mr. W. Brookes, last year, on the vote for reserves, was so encouraging that I am sure unless he has changed his mind very much since then, he is bound to support this resolution. He made one of the ablest speeches I have ever heard him deliver, and that is saying a great deal. He spoke in this way:—

"Mr. W. BROOKES said he should like to say a word or two upon the subject of reserves, and he would begin by expressing his opinion that he did not approve of that spirit of economy with reference to those reserves which was shown in the Estimates. He thought that the importance of parks and reserves had not been sufficiently recognised by the Government.

"Mr. NORTON: Hear, hear!

"Mr. W. BROOKES said he always disliked to see economy exercised in such departments as the public reserves, or in anything that contributed to the moral and intellectual elevation of the people. He was pleased to know that they had reserves here, but they were capable of a good deal of improvement, nevertheless, in

the way of growth. In the matter of those reserves, he did not see on the part of the Government any recognition, or anything like a sufficient recognition, of their value to the community."

The hon. member then went on to tell us the areas of the various parks round about Melbourne, and said there were 5,000 acres there used as public parks or recreation reserves. I need not quote further from the hon. member's speech, as hon. members will see that the same tone is continued throughout it. He wished to impress upon the Committee the desirability of enlarging our reserves if possible. He has a good opportunity this afternoon of carrying out the spirit of the speech he made here last session. But he is not the only hon. member who spoke during that debate in favour of the creation and preservation of reserves. The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, said—

"He quite agreed with the junior member for North Brisbane that the importance of those reserves was not properly recognised, and he thought it a great pity that the amounts placed on the Estimates should have been docked as they were."

The hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, complimented the junior member for North Brisbane on the able speech he had made, and said he agreed with him in every word. So did the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Palmer, who spoke very strongly on the subject of reserves for South Brisbane, and was anxious that the Government should endeavour to get a reserve in the vicinity of the Thompson Estate. And I agree with him that it is extremely desirable to get additional land there; for South Brisbane, I think, has only twenty-one acres of reserve in the centre of South Brisbane proper. The hon. member for South Brisbane, the present Minister for Lands, also backed up the speech of the junior member for North Brisbane. In fact, the whole of the debate on that occasion went to show that it was necessary and desirable that parks and recreation grounds should not only be preserved, but increased. The hon. member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, said he was a great believer in those parks, and expressed a hope that the people of the colony would never allow any Minister to sell any of them, adding that there were some cases where the Government might very well buy up land for the purpose, even at the high price at which it then was. The longer we leave it the higher the price of land will become. I need not refer further to the speeches made during that debate last session. Hon. members must all agree with me that if we allow this portion of land now offered for sale to be sold, it will be regretted hereafter. There seems to be a difficulty in the way of some hon. members, because the land happens to be at a corner, and so far as the attitude of the Press is concerned, I will leave that to the hon. member for Burke and the hon. member for Cook to deal with. I was encouraged, I may say in passing, to table this resolution, after it had been taken notice of in another place, by seeing that the *Courier*—the leading paper of the colony—took up the subject, and thought it desirable that this very property should be secured. To my astonishment, a day or two afterwards, it turned round, and said it would be a villainous and almost a criminal thing to purchase this land at such a high figure. It is no use my attempting to deal with the Press; I leave it to abler hands. All I can say is that I was rather surprised to find the paper blowing hot and cold in so short a time. This is no new theory of mine. It is now three or four years since I commenced to endeavour to get the Government to acquire this land. Three years ago, when I held office in the municipal council, I frequently spoke to the Chief Secretary on the subject. Had the Government taken up the question then, and purchased the land from Mr. Russell straight,

it is very probable they could have acquired it, at all events, for a few thousand pounds less than it can be bought for now. But the Government did not see their way to do it then, and the city has grown very much since that period. I noticed a paragraph in a newspaper to the effect that this property was to be bought because all around it were the residences of the better class of citizens, who wanted to have it reserved as a kind of large park round their houses; and that no person had taken up the question in localities where the working classes were thickly settled in small tenements. I do not know, Mr. Speaker, of any place where there is a larger number of the working class settled than in Fortitude Valley, Stratton, and the Kingsholme and Teneriffe estates; and this park, if it is bought, will be the only place of public recreation they can have. With the exception of a few small blocks at Teneriffe and Kingsholme, all the land there is cut up into small portions, and those blocks will no doubt very soon be sold in small allotments, or fall into the hands of wealthy people. Stratton, Newstead, and all round that district, up to New Farm, are being very closely built upon by the working classes. For many years this particular piece of ground has been used for purposes of public recreation. On a Sunday afternoon you will see from 200 to 300 people strolling about on this ground. During the war scare, this was found to be the only place where the volunteers and the Defence Force could be brought together for review; they were to be seen there every Saturday afternoon. While I am not very anxious to increase our Defence Force—on the contrary, I should like to keep it down as much as possible—yet, so long as nations will fight, we shall have to keep up a force of some kind to help us to defend ourselves, and if we have to pay a large sum for the keeping and the drilling of that force, we must have a suitable place where the men can meet for the purpose of going through their military manœuvres. I would not, of course, buy this land for that purpose only, but it could be used for that purpose as well as a recreation ground for the people. And hon. members should remember that this is the last opportunity we shall have of securing it. Once the land is sold in small allotments and built upon, it is lost for ever so far as the public are concerned; no Government would ever go to the expense of recovering it. It is the only remaining open space in that part of the city that the people can resort to, and which is easy of access. As I said the other day, it is accessible by tram and by 'bus; probably within a very short time it will be accessible by two lines of tram, and, therefore, I think from that point of view, it is a most suitable place to secure for a park and recreation ground. I find, on looking over the whole of the reserves that we have within the municipality and its immediate neighbourhood, that they amount to only 400 acres. Now, in Melbourne, we are told—I take the word of the hon. junior member for North Brisbane for it—they have 5,000 acres set apart as reserves, and that £8,000 a year is appropriated for the purpose of keeping those grounds in order. We, sir, have only 400 acres, including Victoria Park, which is the largest block we have in the city. Now, I am quite sure that every hon. member will agree with me that in a hot climate like this it is desirable that we should have more breathing-places than we have in the city, and I am convinced, looking at the past and looking to the future for the next twenty years, that whoever lives to see it will regret it exceedingly, if we allow this portion of ground to be lost. I do not know that I need say anything more on the

subject just now, Mr. Speaker. The ground is well known to hon. members. A number of them have visited it and looked over it for themselves, and some have come back believing that it is subject to floods. Well, I admit that in times of heavy rains a portion of it is subject to surface-water, but many of our flat grounds are in the same position. I have seen the place at Eagle Farm, which was spoken of the other day, in such a state from water for months that you could scarcely walk over it. The water that lies on the low portion of this block could very easily be drained, inasmuch as the municipal council are negotiating with the Booroodabin Board to turn the drain the council have made to the city boundary into the river, on the road between the block of land and the Kingsholme Estate, and thereby drain the whole of the land effectively. There are one or two spots, I daresay, that would require filling up, but there is ample material to be found in the neighbourhood for that purpose that could be got without costing a great deal of money. I am sure that the ground could be made a beautiful park without laying out much money. At all events, I am anxious that the ground should be secured at present. The objection some hon. members took the other day was that we should beautify the parks we have, and that Victoria Park was a disgrace to us. I admit that Victoria Park ought to have been made more attractive, but I would remind hon. members that that park, or what is left of it, is still there, and when we are able to get the necessary funds there will be no difficulty in beautifying it. But let this land be sold in a few days, and we cannot get it to beautify. I am therefore extremely anxious that the land should be secured, and when it is secured we shall be enabled to beautify it, and lay it out for the use and healthful recreation of the people. I shall say no more at present, but hope that the motion will be received favourably by hon. members.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I feel bound to follow the hon. member, although I should have preferred that some members who take a different view from that which I take should have followed him. I believe myself, as I said on the previous occasion when this matter was before the House, that the investment of £30,000 to purchase the land in question would be a very profitable one for the health of the people of the metropolis. There is no open space within considerably more than a mile of that place. The neighbourhood is now thickly settled, and before long will be one of the most densely populated portions of the metropolis. There is, as I have said, no open space within more than a mile of it. It has been used for a great many years as a recreation ground; anyone going there on Saturday and Sunday will see it crowded with people. It has been for years the acknowledged recreation ground of the people who engage in out-of-door amusement in that part of the city, and if it is disposed of it will, no doubt, be a great deprivation to them. Nor do I know where they can go, there being, as I have said before, no other open space within a mile. And not only that, but it will be available for the rapidly increasing population across the river. No doubt a ferry will be established there before long, and its situation on the brink of the river makes it a particularly suitable and healthy place for a recreation ground. I have long been of opinion that something of the kind was wanted there, but for various reasons nothing was done in the matter. As a place of residence I do not consider it a good one. I believe it is so low. Of course the proprietors do not think so. They are going to sell it for residential purposes, but I believe that with the exception of the fringe along the river-bank it

will be very unhealthy, and an undesirable place to be thickly inhabited. We have seen a case of that kind lately in Launceston, where some Crown land was sold some time ago, and it became so unhealthy that the Government were seriously considering the necessity of buying it back again, pulling down the houses and preventing it from being inhabited. However, I do not want to depreciate the property. I believe it is admirably suited for a park and recreation ground—an excellent cricket ground—and it would undoubtedly be of the greatest benefit to the people. Of course this is one of those things upon which people must form their own opinions, and seeing is far better than hearing in such cases. I have seen the property often, as I happen to live near it, and I have seen it sometimes covered with water, which, however, would not make much difference with regard to its suitability as a park. I am sure that if the purchase is not made, twenty years hence the unanimous opinion of the people will be, "What a pity it was not secured." I have no doubt whatever of that. A suggestion was made a few days ago when the matter was first mooted, that the land might be bought, and part of the cost be recouped by selling portions of it for residence purposes. I do not think so. The only part the Government would be justified in selling if they had it, would be the narrow fringe along the river-bank, and if that were sold the convenience of the place as a recreation ground would be very greatly diminished. I only wish to add, Mr. Speaker, that I think the statements that have been made in some portions of the Press on this matter are very much to be deprecated. I have been accused myself of most unworthy motives. I do not know that it is worth while to take the trouble to contradict them.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

The PREMIER: It has been said that because I live near it I want the space kept open. But it will not make any difference to me whether it is kept open or not. I have plenty of land for myself. Then it has been said it is a political move to get the votes of the people for Fortitude Valley. These things I mention, but I do not propose to say any more about them. I think this is one of those matters that we might advocate in any part of the colony that was in the same position—which had no place for the recreation of its people. The population of Fortitude Valley at the present time is considerably over 12,000, the large majority of whom have no means of recreation but this. Why, sir, every town in the colony with 1,000 people is provided with a recreation ground, and if there were a town with a population of 10,000 which had no breathing-space for its inhabitants, what a tremendous outcry there would be! As it happens this particular locality is a most thickly populated part of the metropolis, so that I think it would be extremely desirable to get this land; whether we should spend £30,000 in the purchase is another matter. However, I think it very desirable to have it, and as to the price, I should be disposed to give as much as £30,000 for it, if we can get it for that. I should not be disposed to give more than that. I consider that is its full, its outside value. The proprietors were disposed to take £30,000, if they could get it. I have been in communication with them, and I told them that I would not be a party to giving a higher price. Since then I believe they want more, but, so far as I am concerned, I am not disposed to offer more. I think it would be an extremely valuable place, but notwithstanding that it would be an extremely valuable possession to the city of Brisbane, we ought not to be called upon to give an exorbitant price.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to oppose the resolution of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley for various reasons. With regard to what fell from the Premier respecting the remarks in the Press made against him, I do not think for one moment that he is in any way personally interested in the acquisition of this land through the fact of his residence being near it, although I have not the least doubt that if hon. gentlemen on that side had been in opposition, and this side in power, and anyone on this side had been similarly situated, those assertions would have been made and would have received great credence. However, I take higher ground. I do not for one moment suppose that the hon. gentleman is actuated by any motive other than the best in endeavouring to give Fortitude Valley a park; but at the same time it does appear strange that this desire of the Chief Secretary, which appears to have existed for so many years, should not have come to an issue until the present moment. It seems rather extraordinary that although the hon. gentleman has been in office for so long a period, and seen Sunday after Sunday and Saturday after Saturday this land occupied as a recreation ground, the idea of purchasing it should only come to a head on the eve of a general election, particularly when a member for the Valley—the constituency chiefly interested—brings the matter forward. Then we suddenly find that the Chief Secretary has long been of opinion that the land should be retained for the use of a particular portion of the public. Now, I think myself that a more opportune time than the present has existed for the acquisition of this land during the rule of the Chief Secretary. There was a time when it could have been acquired for much less money, and there was also a time in the administration of the hon. gentleman when the country could better afford it. But all those conditions are altered. The price now asked is to my mind most indecently high, and there are no funds available. We are in such a state of impecuniosity as we have never been in before. I give the hon. member for Fortitude Valley every credit for attempting by an adroit movement to curry favour with the people of the Valley.

Mr. McMASTER: He does not need that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I repeat, to curry favour with the people of the Valley on the eve of a general election; but I do not see why, to secure the seat of the hon. gentleman, the taxpayers of the colony should be called upon to pay this large sum of money. There are very many other towns besides Brisbane that require breathing-places or lungs; there are many places besides Fortitude Valley.

The PREMIER: They have all got them.

Mr. MOREHEAD: They have not, and the hon. gentleman knows it.

The PREMIER: Where do you refer to?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Take the case of South Brisbane. Take Enoggera, or go in any direction you like, where are the breathing-spaces? I would ask the hon. gentleman if this is to be an exceptional case, or whether, if other supporters of his bring down similar propositions, he will support them? Will the hon. gentleman say that, whenever a good case is made out for similar purchases, he will support them? I do not think the hon. gentleman will go as far as that. I do not think that he should, and I felt very much surprised when I found the hon. gentleman so readily assenting to the proposition made originally, not by the member for Fortitude Valley, but by a gentleman in another place. In fact, that hon. member only shines with a reflected glory coming from another place. Now, as to the character of the land itself, I suppose most of us have visited the site, which is beautifully watered by a swamp and a sewer.

Mr. McMASTER: No.

1887—4 I

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then the place must have changed since half-past 11 o'clock to-day. The whole features of the country must have been materially altered since then. I went there with several members, and we saw both the swamp and the sewer.

Mr. McMASTER: It is not a sewer.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Call it a drain then. An open stinking ditch; a work constructed with the great ability which characterises all work undertaken by the aldermen of Brisbane.

Mr. McMASTER: You went to the wrong land.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I took very good care to go to the right land, and there could be no mistake, as there were the flaring placards of the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson. I think that was an indication of its being the right ground. The hon. Premier has stated that the land is not in such a bad state; that there is a little of it that is flooded. I do not know whether you have seen it, Mr. Speaker, but by an expenditure of a couple of hundred pounds you could convert it into about as fine a lake as is to be found in the colony, and a permanent one, with a fringe of high land, which is gradually but surely being washed away. It must be evident to anyone that to get any permanent benefit out of this place as a public reserve, an enormous sum will have to be spent in erecting a retaining wall. Day by day that land is being washed away, and if it goes on much longer the river will be flowing into that beautiful depression which this stinking ditch leads into. Now, this is to be a recreation ground for the people; at least so we are told by the hon. member for the Valley. And I was rather surprised at the brazen-faced assurance that he showed when he referred to its being used by the Defence Force, because it is well known that the Defence vote had his opposition both inside and outside the House; it is well known that he expresses strong opposition to a Permanent Force, although when it came to a vote he came up to the whip of his master and voted straight. We are told that this land is to be utilised for drilling our soldiers, and as a sports ground. Well, we know this: that once you let these military men get a foothold anywhere they can never be got out, and once the military are allowed to get to that reserve they will never be ousted. I know what trouble we—I mean the trustees of the Victoria Park—had with them. We eventually vanquished them, although they had the assistance and sympathy of the Chief Secretary, and their rifle range had to go somewhere where it would not annoy the patients of the hospital.

Mr. McMASTER: I helped you.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Yes; I admit it, and I hope the hon. member will help to prevent this resolution from being passed. If the hon. gentleman is consistent he will do so. If this money is voted—and I am perfectly certain it will not be voted—I would ask, where, between the sports ground to be made and the space required for the military, the unfortunate civilians are to find a footing—those who are not sportsmen, and do not “dote on the military”? The children require most consideration by the State in connection with these reserves, and where are they to go? They cannot go on to a football or cricket field, or where military manoeuvres are going on. If this land is to be bought for the people there will be no room there for a sports ground, or for military manoeuvres either. It has also been suggested that by a judicious and not very extensive expenditure of money the place might at times be



used for naval manœuvres. They might have a floodgate there by which the river could be let into it, and then the "Gayundah" with her gallant captain might go steaming around the place for an hour or two, and fire her guns for the amusement of admiring nursemaids and children on the bank. Then the other volunteers might utilise what dry ground would remain, though I think it would be very little indeed. This matter, to speak seriously, has not, I think, received full consideration at the hands of the Government. Let us consider what might be done with the £30,000 we are asked to spend in this way. I read what took place during the previous debate upon this matter, and I cordially agree with the remarks which fell from the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, on that occasion. If we have £30,000 to spend—and we have not—and if it is to be spent in Brisbane, the best way in which to spend it will be to establish a public library for the benefit of every living soul in the colony and all who may visit Brisbane.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER : Or a university.

Mr. MOREHEAD : No ; a university would not be available to everybody. I am talking of a public library, which would be available to everyone. I say the first £30,000 we have to spend should be devoted to the establishment of a public library in this city. It is, to my mind, a disgrace to the colony that the only library we have of any value at all, except the Brisbane School of Arts library—which is only available to subscribers—should be the library of this House, and that is, as hon. members know, tabooed to the public. I hold very strong opinions with regard to that, believing that this library should be available to the public, and to those who have no other means of consulting works of reference. I object to this motion on the ground of the impropriety, in the present state of our finances, of expending such a sum of money for any such purpose. I object to it also, because I do not consider Fortitude Valley has any particular claims over the rest of the colony to such an expenditure. I will say further that the Premier in giving way like this has opened the gate to an influx of demands of a similar nature which he will not be able to meet. Every town in the colony and every large sub-centre of population around Brisbane will make similar demands on similar grounds. I do hope hon. members will not pass this resolution, notwithstanding the oration of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, and notwithstanding his allusion to Governor Gipps. He might as well have alluded to anyone else. I do not know what connection Governor Gipps can possibly have with this matter, except perhaps that, being a particularly pigheaded and obstinate Governor, he is probably looked upon—and naturally enough—as a representative man by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. Notwithstanding all this, and notwithstanding the fact that at the eleventh hour, after the hon. member has been all these years in the House, he has at last discovered that it is a vital necessity to the interests of the Valley that this land should be acquired by the State, I hope hon. members will not vote for the resolution to acquire it. I will go further, and refer to what fell from the Premier, to the effect that there is no other land within some miles available for the purposes to which it is intended this land should be devoted. But I can point out some. There is the land belonging to Miss O'Reilly on this side of it, and nearer still, the land belonging to the Hon. John Sargent Turner available for similar purposes. Those pieces of land are really better situated for the purposes, and I am perfectly certain that Mr. Turner's land might

be secured for the purpose at a very moderate price, as all who know that gentleman must admit.

Mr. McMASTER : For much more than this.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Has the hon. gentleman asked the question ? I believe it could be. At any rate, there are two pieces of land more suitable for the purpose than the land it is proposed should be purchased ; so that the Premier was in error in saying that there is no land available nearer than the particular piece of land referred to in the resolution. In conclusion, although it may be true, as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley believes, that the whole colony is centred in that locality, and although that locality has already been grossly and improperly bribed by the present Administration, in the shape of a railway which will be useless to everyone, and which will involve an enormous expenditure ; notwithstanding that, the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government is not content, and wants to induce the House to shove another plum down the throats of the electors of Fortitude Valley. The electors of Fortitude Valley are possessed of common sense, and they will not thank the hon. gentleman. They will not be gulled in that way. I will conclude by saying that, viewing the matter with the whole of the surrounding circumstances, I look upon it as an electioneering dodge.

Mr. KELLETT said : Mr. Speaker,—I give the hon. member for Fortitude Valley every credit for bringing this matter before the House, and I am certain in bringing it forward he was not thinking of how the electors of Fortitude Valley would treat him at the coming election. I think he, like myself, believes that we have too few parks and reserves about this city. In such a hot climate as this, it must be admitted that we are badly provided in this respect in Brisbane. When one goes to the southern colonies he sees that the people have taken time by the forelock there, and provided parks and gardens in all their cities. But here comes in another feature in this matter which is very difficult to deal with : If we, by a resolution of this House, agree to the purchase of this land as a park, we shall open the door to a great many applications of a similar character, and those applications will be justly made if this resolution is adopted. I should be very glad if this land could be secured for the city irrespective of a vote of this House, and as the people of Fortitude Valley would be specially benefited by the purchase of this land the local body controlling that place are the persons who should take this matter in hand. I would point out that some of this land on the bank of the river is already sold, and I hold in my hand a plan of the land, which shows that there is a Government road running down to the river through the centre of the land. It was made before any of the land was cut up, and consequently cannot be closed. The other road also cannot be closed, so that, even if this money were granted, the land could not be made anything like a park, because it is all intersected by roads.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER : They could be closed by Act of Parliament.

Mr. KELLETT : That would entail further expenditure. Just now when money is not very plentiful is a very bad time to buy this land, and it will also bring very great difficulty on the Government in future. It will be a precedent for application after application, and pressure of all kinds will be brought to bear which it will be very hard to resist. Those are the principal reasons I have for not supporting this vote. I yield to no man in my anxiety to see reserves all round Brisbane, and if I were the Government I would

not allow an acre or half-an-acre of any reserve to be sold. The deeds of all the reserves round Brisbane should be handed to trustees, so that the Government could not deal with them unless they were required for railways. I would advise the Government that any other lands in their hands at the present time in the city should be made reserves for the people in future. This is a different matter. I think it is worthy of the consideration of the local bodies whether they should not buy the land. They could borrow the money very cheaply from the Government, and the rating would be very light on the property holders, most of whom I believe would be satisfied to pay it. But I am informed that there is as good or better land adjoining this, with no roads through it, and that is another reason why it is not advisable to purchase this block. Even if it were advisable I do not think it is for us to deal with it, and even if we thought it came within our province, I do not think in the present state of the finances of the colony we should be entitled to vote this money.

MR. ADAMS said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very sorry this motion has been brought forward at all. I do not wish to depreciate the value of any man's property, but I think those interested in the land under discussion would have been wiser if they had never allowed it to come before the House. There is an open sewer running into the land, and I agree with the Chief Secretary that it would be a very unhealthy spot. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley said it was advisable to get land for the recreation of the people, so that they might breathe pure air, but I would like to know if the people would get pure air there when the corporation have a stone sewer 5 or 6 feet wide and 3 or 4 feet deep draining right down to the very property, and more than that, they have a drain right through the property. The hon. member may say that I saw the wrong block, but I with other hon. members tried to walk across it, and we could not; we could not take our trap across, and had to walk round a considerable distance to a sort of bridge. I do not think it would be right for us to purchase a piece of land like that, with the whole of the effluvia of the surrounding country draining into it, in order that we might send our wives and families down to breathe most impure air from what has been stigmatised by the leader of the Opposition as a stinking ditch. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley has said that a cutter could be floated once in Queen street; but then the whole of Queen street could be thoroughly drained, while in the property we are considering the drain that is there does not drain the property, and if it were taken considerably deeper the high tide would float up and make it a continuous bog. The hon. member spoke of a gentleman some years ago getting bushed there on his way to Bulimba, but very possibly he got bogged and could not get out. If there were a dense scrub there now and anyone got in it, it would take him all his time to get out again. I think it would be unjust to the people of the colony to purchase that piece of land which even the Chief Secretary himself says is very unhealthy. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley does not deny that the corporation has to drain it, but he denies that there is a sewer. Now, I believe it would be far preferable to have a sewer of those dimensions than to have an open drain. With reference to the local bodies, if they borrowed the money to purchase this land, I would like to know how much more would have to be spent on it before it could be utilised by the general public. I am satisfied that if it were bought for £30,000 it would cost more than another £30,000 to make it available.

MR. McMASTER: Nonsense!

MR. ADAMS: I see in the *Observer* of to-day's date a letter in reference to that land. It says:—

"In reference to Mr. McMaster's motion in the Assembly this afternoon, I have a suggestion to make. Instead of negotiating with the strong syndicate that is exploiting the Russell Estate of the New Farm Race-course, leave it free to sell its swamp land, and let the proprietress of the area from the creek boundary southwards to the New Farm road, or the proprietors of the elevated area on the other side of the road, next to Kinellan—or both of these owners—be applied to for the terms upon which they would sell their land for public purposes. Both the areas mentioned are in all respects superior to the syndicate's estate. Its speculative sale would be enhanced by the reservation of either Miss O'Reilly's or the Hon. J. S. Turner's area for a park. The member for the Valley might as well know that there is no reason for playing into the hands of the syndicate, and the fact that these alternatives to give effect to the principle of his motion may have some influence upon the consideration it will receive from the House."

The land on both sides is drained into the land which it is proposed to purchase. When I was down there with other hon. members I saw a magnificent growth of weeds and rank grass on one portion of the place, and I am fully convinced that if drains are cut sufficiently deep on the land to carry off the water, they will be deep enough to admit the water from the river. There are some spots on the bank of the river where trees can be seen lying on the ground, and they have not been very long uprooted. The bank has been washed away and the trees are lying alongside. If the river continues to wash away the bank as it has done it will certainly take away the only part of the land that is now fit for recreation purposes—that is, the strip on the river-bank. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley smiled when I stated that it would cost £30,000 to make the land available as a park, but I am sure that a considerable sum of money will have to be expended there in the erection of a retaining wall, otherwise the land will be in the river. It is not a place to which I would send my wife and family, and, for the reasons I have given, I shall certainly vote against the motion.

MR. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not wish to enter into the merits or demerits of this particular piece of land for recreation purposes. I was one of those members who went yesterday morning to look at it, and I must say that the land I saw did not strike me as being very suitable for a reserve. We have been told this afternoon that the land owned by Miss O'Reilly is very much preferable to the piece that is under offer to the Government. If such be the case, all I can say is that it must be a very wretched piece of land indeed, because the piece that I looked at with other hon. members was certainly in a very swampy watery state. I object to the purchase of this land by the Government, but not because I do not think a Government should not entertain proposals of this kind. I think that, all things being equal, and the circumstances of the colony warranting it, there are times when the Government might go out of the ordinary course and enter into ventures of this nature for the general benefit of the people. But there are also times when the Government has to hold its hand in the matter of expenditure. I certainly think that the present is such a time; and I am very much surprised indeed that the Premier should have for one moment so far given his countenance to this matter—and I do not think I am going too far in saying it—that he should have induced the hon. member for Fortitude Valley to bring forward a motion of this character before the House. It is not very long ago since the Premier, as Colonial Treasurer, almost implored the House to be very careful in its

demands upon the Treasury. We have his own statement of ways and means, in which it is shown that he anticipates a further deficiency of something like £50,000 at the end of the year. I hope he will be disappointed in that matter; I hope that the result will be very much better than his estimate; but I think that after bringing down ways and means like that, and imploring, as he did, hon. members to be very careful in their demands upon the Treasury and not ask the Government to go on with railway works unnecessarily, the hon. gentleman should have thought twice before he gave his assent to a proposition of this kind. And seeing that the Government have been obliged to reduce the votes to schools of arts and the different agricultural and horticultural societies and other kindred institutions this year, I think this is a sad commentary on their action. But I may go further than that, and adduce a stronger reason for this opinion. We know that under certain regulations in the Railway Department a number of the railway employes are led to expect certain increases every year in their pay, and what has been the case? On account of the low state of the finances these increases have been denied the employes, and they have been told that they must not expect the rises; yet in the face of that we have the Government—or rather the Premier, for I do not think the Government are with him in this matter, at any rate I sincerely hope they are not—giving his sanction to a proposal to go in for the purchase of a piece of land, the interest on the cost of which will be something like £1,700 or £1,800 per annum, which is considerably more than those increases in the Railway Department would amount to. I think that in a time like this it is unwise to entertain a proposal such as the one before us with any degree of seriousness. I am quite sure the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is serious in bringing forward the motion, and I am also sure that a majority of the House will be more serious still in rejecting it.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—When this matter was brought up on a former occasion in a different form, I expressed my objection to it, and I made a suggestion which has been repeated here to-day, to the effect that if this piece of land is necessary for a park in the vicinity of New Farm it should be purchased by the local authority with money which they could obtain from the Government by means of a law which is now in force. Under that law a local authority could borrow the money from the Government for a period of years, and repay it and the interest by annual instalments; but what local authority is there that could buy the land? It happens to be in the Booroodabin Division, and from a return laid on the table of the House I see that that division is indebted to one of the local banks to the extent of £10,000 for overdraft; and that is the only local authority that could buy the land, unless one is specially created for the purpose. The municipality could not buy it, because it is outside their boundary. But supposing the Booroodabin Division bought the land and borrowed £30,000 from the Government to pay for it, there is at once £1,500 a year for interest, and to that would have to be added a proportionate instalment of repayments of the principal. In addition to that we have the land described to us as being of such a character that it will require to be reclaimed. How much do hon. members think it would take to reclaim it, and make it fit for a public park? Possibly some hundreds of pounds per annum, and that is leaving out of the question the inevitable necessity of erecting a retaining wall along the river-bank. Hon. members who have been there, as I have many times, will have seen that the shores are

washed away to a great extent. In some places many feet have gone, and the soil is so very soft that every flood and every strong tide washes a small portion of it away. Whoever buys it will have eventually—perhaps very soon—to put up a retaining-wall, which is a very expensive thing to do. Without going at all into the question whether this is a nice piece of ground or not, hon. members will see at once the expense which the local authority would be put to if they bought the land. In addition, we are told that there are roads through it now which would affect its suitability as a reserve—a Government road running through the middle of it; and that two pieces of land on the river frontage have been sold. Those pieces of land would have to be purchased, and the road closed by the authority of Parliament, possibly to the injury of some persons who would have a claim for compensation in respect of that road, and whose claim would have to be considered. The next question of course is, are we justified, in the present state of the finances of the colony, in sanctioning the taking of this money out of the revenue? For there is no other way, I believe, in which it can be done. It is said that if the Government purchased it they would give debentures—but “debentures” is only another name for Treasury bills which are redeemable at a certain time, and will have to be paid out of revenue—or some special authority will have to be given by the House for taking the money out of some other fund. If the Valley Railway contract had not been let, we might have fallen back upon the money voted for that purpose for the purchase of this park; but that is now too late, and there is no other fund upon which we can draw, except the revenue; and, as was very pertinently pointed out by the last speaker, the revenue is already in a very bad state, while a still larger deficit is expected at the end of the year. While fully recognising the fact that parks are desirable things for large cities, I cannot see my way to support the motion. There is one thing the hon. member for Fortitude Valley said which I think is open to contradiction—namely, that the city wants lungs. I know of no city in Australia which has better lungs than Brisbane. You have the Brisbane River winding round the whole city like a snake. The river is one vast lung, and the configuration of the surrounding hills is such that the city can never be shut out from the currents of sea-breeze blowing up the river; it is bound to have plenty of fresh sea-air. Therefore, what this ground is really wanted for, is for purposes of recreation or games, where people can meet and picnic, and so on—not as a lung for the city of Brisbane, because there is the river alongside it. As I said before, I am sorry I cannot see my way to support the motion, and shall be obliged to oppose it.

Mr. DICKSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not desire that this motion should be put without my giving some expression of opinion concerning it, because my silence might be open to misconstruction. It might be supposed by some that I refrained from expressing an opinion upon it in the House because I happened to be a member of the firm to whom has been entrusted the negotiation for the sale of this property. I trust, however, that as a member of the House I shall never feel that I have a divided duty to perform; and I therefore give expression to what I conceive to be the true interests of the public in relation to it. I am not going to enter into the merits or demerits of the land, for that is entirely beside the question. I may briefly say, however, that I agree with everything the hon. member for Fortitude Valley has stated with regard to it, and I consider it a property perfectly unique in its character. Nor am I going to contrast or compare it with

adjoining properties, beyond saying that it has the great advantage of a large river frontage, and other advantages which may be lacking in some of the other properties. All that is a matter of detail. I do not, however, think that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley can expect the State at the present time, or even if the Treasury were fuller, to enter into the purchase of this land. There is a great principle involved, and we ought to consider that what we would be prepared to do for Brisbane, however eligible this particular property may be that is offered now, we ought to be prepared to do for other towns and districts in the colony. To accept the principle of buying back land from private owners in order to make reserves, is to open up a very much wider question than any which the hon. member for Fortitude Valley has referred to. When the scheme was first propounded—this is by no means the first time it has been brought under my notice—I was opposed to it; and there was then also an objection in the fact of one member of the Cabinet being a partner in the land. But I was opposed to it then on principle, and I am so still. I do not see how we can satisfactorily accept the position of purchasing a large area of land for the benefit exclusively of one particular district of the colony, from money collected from the general taxpayers of the colony. I admit that as an appanage to the city of Brisbane, as a park or reserve, it would undoubtedly be a great acquisition, particularly to those residing at New Farm and in the Valley generally. But, with every wish to give them the great and inestimable boon of the acquisition of a valuable piece of land, as the New Farm Estate undoubtedly is, I think it would be departing from a very sound principle, and laying the Government of the day open to applications from all other districts of the colony in a similar position. I therefore cannot conscientiously support the resolution as the hon. member has placed it before the House. But believing, as I do, that the possession of the land would be a great acquisition to the city of Brisbane, I shall be prepared to support the resolution in an amended form. I think the Government might very fairly concur with the local authorities in the purchase of the land. If the local authorities are inclined to provide a moiety of the purchase money, the Government might very fairly provide the other moiety. If the property be sold it will acquire undoubtedly a very large rateable value. The property is at present valued at from £30,000 to £35,000, and I have no doubt that the improvements which will be put upon the property, if sold, will represent a rateable value of £100,000, which means a very large annual endowment accruing from the State. If it is a question of financial economy, whether it would not be wiser for the Government to commute this perpetual annual endowment by a payment of £1 for £1 to the local authorities for the purchase of the land, I answer, that I believe it would; and further, that as a financial measure it would then receive the fullest investigation. At the same time it would not lay the Government open to application from other communities unless their local authorities were prepared to exhibit their *bona fides* in like manner. The motion, in the form in which it is tabled, I shall certainly oppose, in the interests of the Treasury. But if it had been submitted in the form I suggest, and the local authorities, wishing to make the purchase, had applied to the Government for £1 for £1 towards the purchase money it would have met with my support, especially as it would have been a financial relief to the Treasury by relieving it of the annual endowment which will have to be paid on the rateable value of the land when it becomes improved and liable to rates. The hon. member in charge of the

motion has given us a very interesting speech, and has recalled reminiscences of Brisbane in the olden time which many of us remember. I certainly feel with him that it is very desirable to increase our open spaces and reserves in this fast-growing metropolis, but I do not think he has made out a case why we should at the present time make a fresh departure of this kind. When the Treasury is so empty and the revenue is coming in so tardily, I really do not see how he can expect that the Treasurer can provide £30,000 for the purchase of a property which will be chiefly in the interest of one portion of the colony.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall support this motion brought forward by my hon. colleague, because I think in so doing I shall be helping in what is a right and reasonable thing. We have been working together in this matter for nearly two years. It is no new thing that has sprung up just now. My hon. colleague has had it in his mind for a long time, and it is one of the matters to which I made special reference when I was before the constituents of Fortitude Valley nearly two years ago. It is one of the things which I assured them I had a very earnest desire to secure for Fortitude Valley; so that, as I have said, it is no new thing. Some hon. members have more than insinuated that the motive with which it has been brought in is a mere political move—a political dodge; that we members of Fortitude Valley are doing this in order to make our re-election sure. I do not know that I need use any argument with regard to that. No argument would be sufficient for those who entertain that belief—hon. members who are persuaded in their own minds that those are our reasons. But I can assure hon. members that that did not operate with us. We have long had the desire that this piece of land should be secured for the recreation of the people of not only Fortitude Valley but of Brisbane, and this is simply the culmination of it. That it has come up just now is an accident. Do hon. members imagine that the members for Fortitude Valley have been in communication with the members of the syndicate who own this land; that they have been interviewing them and inducing them to hold this land back until near the end of this session, so that we should be near the general election, and that we might by that means be able to make a stroke? I do not think any hon. member of this House will imagine that for one moment. There is no political motive in the matter—not at all. I do not imagine that the success or failure of this motion will have any appreciable effect upon the general election now near at hand. I do not think it will enter into the calculations of our constituents. It has been made much of during this debate, that if a sum of money be granted for purchasing this piece of land, the inhabitants of other townships will also lay claim to the expenditure of money for a like purpose. I do not think it is fair to urge that. I think it is reasonable for us to assume that in these days, and for a long time past, all the townships of the colony have been laid out and are being laid out in accordance with right principles—that provision is being made for reserves and breathing-places in all townships now being laid out in the colony. I do not suppose any township is being laid out in Australia or has been laid out for a good many years past in which provision—ample provision—has not been made for all the possible needs of that township.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Laid out by one Government and sold by the next.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS: The hon. member for Townsville says "laid out by one Government and sold by the next." That is a very unfortunate

thing. I do not see any force in that argument at all. Every application that is made in a case of this kind will, I assume, be dealt with on its merits, and any township that can make out a good case for the expenditure of money to provide breathing places for its inhabitants will, I think, receive generous treatment at the hands of this House at any time. We are all agreed, I think, in this House as to the necessity for these open spaces in large cities. We are also agreed on this: that Brisbane has not sufficient of these breathing-places—that it has not sufficient for its present population of between 30,000 and 40,000. I think we are also all agreed in our regret that those who plotted the city in the beginning did not make more provision in this respect for the possible population of the city. Here now is a chance of trying to remedy this defect. It is a defect—we are all agreed upon that point; and if we allow this chance to slip by of providing this additional breathing-space for the very thickly populated part of the city known as Fortitude Valley, I think after years will show that we have been guilty of great default, and those who come after us will blame us for—what shall I call it?—our want of foresight, and little-heartedness—that we had not pluck enough, even in the face of difficulties, to make some earnest endeavour to supply this lack of open space and recreation grounds for the people. It is not difficult to imagine, after what we have heard with regard to what Brisbane was only a quarter of a century ago, that in another quarter of a century it will be immensely increased, and be probably four or five times larger than it is now. The provision that has been made in respect to reserves in the other colonies has been referred to by my hon. colleague in quoting the speech which I well remember the hon. junior member for North Brisbane made last year, showing what had been done; and the provision that had been made in Melbourne was particularly noted. Any hon. member turning up the pages of Hayter's Victorian Year-book will find all those things particularised there. They have made abundant provision for the inhabitants of that city which will be sufficient for years to come. We, however, in a hotter climate, with a greater need for open spaces, are very much worse off than they are, and I think it is a very reasonable thing that is now sought at the hands of the House—that we shall endeavour, even to this small extent of a paltry fifty acres, to make up the deficiency which we all acknowledge. There seems to be no difference of opinion upon that. As to paying for it, I do not think we need trouble our heads very much about that; that is a mere trifle. We can get it on the time-payment system. It does not mean that we are to go to the Treasurer and say, "Mr. Treasurer, we want £30,000 from you"; we do not want that. The vendors are prepared, I believe, to make an arrangement for the gradual payment of this sum. It is not a great present demand upon the Treasury, fortunately. We can meet it by a moderate demand now, and moderate demands for years to come. That will meet the whole case. As to the character of the land, I think we may let that alone. Some hon. members seem to have an idea that it is entirely unfitted for the purpose of a park. I will remind such hon. members that one of the best and most useful parks in Sydney is laid out upon land reclaimed from the head of Darling Harbour, and called Wentworth Park. It cost a lot of money, and is an exceedingly valuable reserve, made out of land reclaimed from part of Darling Harbour, which was a great source of disease and the centre of all manner of evil. That is now one of the most valuable breathing-places, around which there is

a very dense population. I venture to hope, Mr. Speaker, that as hon. members are agreed upon so many points in connection with this matter they will carry their agreement a little further than some of them seem disposed to do at present, and agree with my hon. colleague and myself by voting for this resolution.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I am rather amused at the light and airy way in which the hon. member who has just sat down treats the matter of the payment of this money—as a matter of no consideration at all, or at any rate of no very serious consideration. I think, sir, that is the chief matter of consideration at the present time. No doubt the hon. gentleman and others on the opposite side who support the expenditure of this money consider it perfectly legitimate to get the Government to sanction this expenditure, leaving it to the next Government to find out the way of obtaining the money. The Premier seemed to glide very lightly over the money question. He said it would be desirable to acquire a recreation ground, but the hon. gentleman did not enter into the financial question at all. Now, the ex-Treasurer, the member for Enoggera, did dwell upon that point, and I am glad to concur with him in a great deal of what he says. That hon. gentleman knows the exact financial position of the colony, and knows the impropriety of, at the present time, adding to the taxation of the colony. There was one thing I was rather struck with, and that was the hon. gentleman referring to the land as being of a unique character. Well, I daresay it is; but I think the hon. gentleman's proposal in connection with it was about as unique a proposition as I have heard. Briefly, the hon. gentleman said this: that the land, if not bought by the Government, would be improved in value to the extent of £100,000 capital value, and the division would be entitled to endowment to the extent of £2 to £1. Well, the annual value at 8 per cent. upon £100,000 is £8,500. A shilling rate upon that would give an annual rate of £425, upon which the Government endowment of £2 to £1 would be only £850 a year. But we must bear this in mind: that it was proposed early in the session not only to reduce the endowment to divisional boards, but possibly reduce it lower than £1, and even go down as low as 5s. in the £1, as is done in South Australia. Now, what would become of the Government endowment? The hon. member based his calculations on the endowment of £2 for £1 being continued. Now, there is nothing more certain than that that part of Brisbane will, before very long, be a municipality, and its endowment will be reduced to £1 for £1. Assuming that it becomes a shire or municipality, the Government endowment would be only £425. The ex-Treasurer says the Government might give £15,000 cash, and I think that is a very unique proposal indeed. That is about thirty years' purchase. The hon. gentleman, if he follows me, will see that I am right. Besides, this £30,000 will be only the first payment. It is only the beginning. That land will have to be improved. A retaining wall will have to be erected. Now, unless I am very much mistaken, you cannot put up a retaining wall for very much less than £3 a foot. Then there will be fencing. There will be the converting of a swamp into a healthy place, and I venture to say that, instead of £30,000 being the purchase money required, it will run into £50,000, and where is the additional money to come from? In addition to the £30,000 required for the preliminary purchase, there are two freeholders on that land who undoubtedly will have to be bought out in order to give the land that value which it would acquire as a park. I am not prepared to say what that will cost, but I can safely say that if the gross value of the land is assumed to be

£600 an acre, we may consider that those who are already in possession of some of the best sites will ask not less than £1,500 an acre. They have to be bought out, the land has to be fenced in, and improvements of various kinds have to be made, and there is no possibility of any revenue being derived from the land. The consequence will be that the representatives of that part of Brisbane will be compelled to come constantly to this House for further sums of money for improvements to the park, and, as I have said, it will cost at least £50,000 before it is in proper condition. I see no reason why, if this is to be a public park, some means should not be devised by which the divisional boards and municipalities might combine. It has been explained that the Booroodabin Divisional Board is not financially in a position even to borrow the money necessary for making the purchase; but assuming that the members for the Valley are right in referring to this as a matter of almost national importance, the different boards and municipalities might combine to carry out such an absolutely necessary undertaking. But I doubt very much if the divisional boards would be prepared to put their hands in their own pockets and join together for the purpose. I think it very unlikely that they would do anything of the sort. I shall oppose this vote; not that I disapprove of anything for the benefit of the mass of the people in Brisbane, but I do not consider that the Government are justified at the present time in spending the money required for the purchase of this land, especially when, as has been pointed out, they are economising in all directions. When endowments to schools of arts are being reduced, and when votes for other reserves and parks have been cut down in order to make both ends meet, I cannot conceive how the Government can support such a motion, involving as it does a preliminary expenditure of £30,000. It is a matter of indifference how the money is paid. It is an addition to our present liabilities of £30,000 and a contingent liability of £20,000.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I desire to say a few words on this very interesting subject, and as my hon. friend the member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. McMaster, has given a brief history of the early days of Brisbane, I will give my experience of a few years earlier. I remember very well when Sir George Gipps left Sydney in the "Shamrock" steamer to open up Moreton Bay as a place of settlement, and no doubt it was then he had a conversation with some one in Queen street about the width of the street. I was very sorry indeed to hear Sir George Gipps mentioned as a pig-headed, obstinate man, because the history of New South Wales will prove that a more intelligent, a more comprehensive, a more sincere, or a better Governor never came to Australia. He really, I may say, preserved the independence of the people of New South Wales in those days. However, that has nothing to do with the question at issue. I remember very well that the land in question was then really the recreation ground of Brisbane. It was there the races were held, and it was the resort of the people for pleasure or amusement. It was a famous place for sportsmen, and was literally the public recreation ground of Brisbane.

Mr. MURPHY: There are plenty of snipe there now.

Mr. SHERIDAN: Brisbane then was not a very large city. I remember well when gum-trees grew where Finney, Isles, and Co.'s establishment is now, and when the celebrated bridge alluded to by the hon. member, Mr. McMaster, was put up by Mr. Pettigrew. Fortitude Valley then contained about half-a-dozen houses, and

further down there was "York's Hollow" extending on to Stratton and over to New Farm, and the only man who lived there at the time was Mr. Richard Jones, of Baramba, who was member for Brisbane for several years. At Kangaroo Point there were only five or six houses, and at "Frog's Hollow," where Edward street and Albert street now are, there were no houses at all. I mention these facts to show how easy it would have been in those days to have secured land at a very little cost which would now be of very great value to the people. I shall support this motion because, although it is late to secure this land, it is better to do it late than never. I feel regret that so much money should have to be expended while poor fellows who have been led to expect that their services would be required are to get nothing, but as this land can be obtained now, and is one of the lungs of Brisbane, it would be wisdom on the part of the Government to secure it, and I hope they will secure it.

Mr. ALLAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Maryborough has spoken of this place as a fine sporting ground. I can quite believe that, because I went down there to-day with some other gentlemen, members of the House, and I saw numbers of sea-birds there—snipe, sandpipers, and other good shooting.

Mr. MURPHY: Dead dogs?

Mr. SHERIDAN: You never saw any sandpipers there; they were snipe.

Mr. ALLAN: I saw ten sandpipers there in a large swamp in the middle of the land. A few days ago I was interviewed by some gentlemen, who said they hoped I would assist in getting this motion passed. I asked one young gentleman what he knew about it, and his answer was, "I used to shoot snipe there." I went down, as I say, to see this land to-day, and though I would like to see land secured as lungs in the vicinity of Brisbane, I would like to see such places secured as would be of use for recreation purposes. There is nothing at this place but a swamp with a fringe of land around it. We got out of a buggy to walk over the land, and we came to a drain too wide to jump, and about five feet deep, and we had to go back to the road and round to a bridge to cross it. At this bridge there was a large drain full of dirty water, and this drain was continued as a ditch right through the property into a swamp, which covered most of the land. Though I would be glad to assist the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, and though it would be of benefit to myself to do so in this case, as I am the owner with others of a considerable amount of land there, which would be increased in value if this land was retained as a park, I do not think we are justified in asking the Government to buy land in this way, unless it is exceptionally good; and the land which it is proposed by this resolution to purchase is exceptionally bad. We travelled to-day over the whole of this property, along the river-bank, and examined it thoroughly. We could only go to within about five feet of the bank, as along the whole length of it it is so much undermined by the wash of the river that it might have dropped in with us, and there is twelve feet of a drop there. This, it must be remembered, is the best part of the land, the ridge running along the river-bank, and before it can be made any use of, the bank all along the property would have to be battered down to prevent its being continually washed away by the river. We had with us a famous cricketer, who managed to make a fine score last week, and he looked over the land carefully, and came to the conclusion that there was not a single atom of ground in the property that could be made into a cricket ground. As I am not a

cricketer myself, I took that gentleman's word for it. I know a little about artillery, however, and I am certain that if an artillery company were down there once they would never go again that is, if they were ever fortunate enough to get out of it again. We had to go a round of nearly half-a-mile to get to the place we wanted to get to without being bogged. The whole thing is absurd, and I trust the hon. member for Fortitude Valley will withdraw this motion.

Mr. NORTON said : Mr. Speaker,—I do not wish to detain the House, but I think it necessary to say that I cannot, in justice to my constituents, vote for any motion of this character. Last night we passed votes on the Estimates for different purposes, and among them votes for the relief of distressed people. When any case of that kind occurs in my district people have to put their hands into their pockets and provide the whole of the funds required for the purpose themselves. In a few days more in another vote we shall be asked to vote large sums of money for reserves. My district is one of the few which are not included in those benefitting by that vote, and in which not a single shilling is devoted to purposes of that kind. Even the small pittance we were accustomed to receive for our school of arts is cut done by one-half. How can I, under the circumstances, with any conscience at all, vote for such a motion as this, which will have the effect of imposing greater burdens upon my own constituents? Because it must be remembered that the whole colony will have to bear this burden, if the motion is adopted. I have seen the land referred to in this motion, and have been over it repeatedly. It would be another amount added to that large amount already voted—"Aid towards reserves"—and a very considerable amount it would be, with the probability that in addition to the annual vote there would be a special vote to protect the banks from the incursions of the river. Now, knowing all this, apart from all other considerations, I base my opposition on this ground: that in justice to my constituents I could not under any circumstances consent to be a contributor to the passing of a vote of this kind.

Mr. McMASTER, in reply, said : Mr. Speaker,—I cannot allow some remarks that have been made, more particularly by the leader of the Opposition, to go unanswered. He tells us that there is a sewer going through this land. Now, I explained when moving the resolution that there was a drain that led to the boundary of the municipality that was going to be diverted into the road between this property and the Kingsholme Estate—that the municipality and the Booroodabin Board are at present negotiating for this drain to be carried into the river between Kingsholme and this estate. Some hon. members have endeavoured to show that the property is really not the property it has been represented to be. This property is a king to what Queen street or any other property round the city was years ago; and I venture to say that £200 or £300 will drain it efficiently for any recreation purposes. The imputations made by the other side that I am bringing this motion forward for electioneering purposes is worthy to come from that side. I was agitating for this before I ever thought of coming into the House, so it is no new scheme just brought forward on the eve of a general election. I have no occasion to make electioneering speeches; I leave that to the other side, who are constantly talking to their constituents through *Hansard*. The hon. the leader of the Opposition stated that the people of Fortitude Valley have common sense; he found out years ago when he contested that electorate that the people had common sense, for they rejected him.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Six hundred and ninety-six of them had.

Mr. McMASTER : A good deal has been said by the ex-Treasurer upon the payment of this money; and I believe that the vendors would take debentures for it, so that there would be no immediate call upon the Treasury. As I wish this debate to finish to-night, I would simply say with regard to the suggestion that the local authorities should purchase the land, that I have no doubt the local authorities would assist, if not purchase it altogether. It is too late now for the local authorities to secure the property, but if the Government would secure it, then if they did not see their way to retain it, the local authorities would. It would take some time to put the machinery of the local authorities in motion, and by that time it would be too late. It has been said that the adjoining property would be better for recreation purposes, but I do not think it would. If you build upon the river frontage of this block it depreciates the other property as a recreation ground.

Question put, and the House divided :—

AYES, 9.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Sheridan, Buckland, Grimes, Wakefield, McMaster, Bailey, S. W. Brooks, and Bulcock.

NOES, 33.

Messrs. W. Brookes, Morehead, Norton, Dickson, Chubb, Hamilton, Rutledge, Aland, Macrossan, Black, Jessop, Isambert, Adams, Campbell, Kellett, Nelson, Foote, Lalor, Salkeld, Scott, Mellor, Foxton, Lissner, Ferguson, Fraser, Donaldson, Moreton, Thorn, Morgan, Smyth, Aland, Higson, and Murphy.

Question resolved in the negative.

At 7 o'clock,

The SPEAKER said : In accordance with the Sessional Order, the business under discussion at 6 o'clock now stands adjourned till after the discussion of Government business.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

##### LADY BOWEN LYING-IN HOSPITAL LAND SALE BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning this Bill without amendment.

##### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1878 AMENDMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating, in reply to a message from the Legislative Assembly, that they did not insist on their amendment in this Bill.

#### DISTILLERIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The PREMIER moved that the Speaker leave the chair, and the House go into Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend an Act of the Governor and Legislative Council of New South Wales, passed in the thirteenth year of Her Majesty's reign, and numbered 27.

Question put and passed.

##### COMMITTEE.

The PREMIER, in moving that it is desirable to introduce a Bill to amend an Act of the Governor and Legislative Council of New South Wales, passed in the thirteenth year of Her Majesty's reign, and numbered 27, said he might as well explain at once the object of the Bill, which was a very simple matter. It was a Bill to amend what was commonly called the Distilleries Act, but which had a very long title of five lines and no short



title. It provided, amongst many extremely complicated and elaborate provisions, that no distillery should be carried on without a license, while clause 5 provided :—

"And be it enacted that no license shall be granted in respect of any distillery not licensed previously to the passing of this Act, unless the wash still or stills shall be capable of containing double the contents of the low wine or spirit still or stills erected therein; and that no wash still shall be capable of containing less than one thousand gallons, and no low wine or spirit still less than five hundred gallons."

The wash still was that part of the apparatus in which the material was placed after fermentation, and to which heat was applied so that the spirit was carried over and condensed. The low wine still was the one in which it was then received, and from which it was again distilled. So far as he could ascertain, that kind of still was not in use at all anywhere—certainly not in use in the colony. By subsequent Acts it had been provided in the case of distillation from sugar, which was almost the only kind of distillation carried on in the colony, that licenses should be granted although the stills did not conform to those requirements. The effect of that clause was that a license could not be granted to a distillery at all at the present time except for distilling from sugar. There was an Act passed later on which enabled a very small still to be kept by the owners of vineyards for making brandies from their own grapes. That was passed in 1866. But a license for distillation generally was practically prohibited except from sugar by the existence of the clause of the Distilleries Act which required a still to be of dimensions that were not in use anywhere. An application had lately been made to the Treasury for a license for a distillery, but it was impossible to grant it without defying or evading the law. He was told that in one instance a license was granted in defiance of the Act; but he did not see his way to do that. He did not see why distillation should not go on from wine as well as from sugar, and he thought the entirely arbitrary prohibition in that clause should be removed. The object of the Bill was simply to repeal that prohibitory clause. He moved the resolution.

Mr. DICKSON said the small Bill which it was proposed to introduce would be an immediate advantage, and it was desirable that it should be passed, but had the session any probability of a longer life he thought they should go a great deal further with the Distilleries Act than that partial amendment. The whole distillery laws wanted revision and consolidation, and he hoped the Premier would take that matter in hand early. There were a great number of discrepancies and several matters which required attention. He would particularly remind them that under the present Distilleries Act there was no power to frame regulations imposing overtime fees.

The PREMIER: We have got over that.

Mr. DICKSON said there were several other matters which were brought before him while he was in the Treasury, and it was his intention, had he remained in office, to have invited the attention of the Cabinet to the necessity of amending the distillation law of the colony. It was impossible, owing to the lateness of the session, to do that now. There could be no objection to amending the Act in the manner proposed, as it was simply meeting a special case of special difficulty; but at the same time he hoped that arrangements would be made to deal with the larger question next session.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution.

#### FIRST READING.

The PREMIER presented the Bill and moved that it be now read a first time.

Question put and passed; and the second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### NORMANTON TO CROYDON RAILWAY BILL.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to authorise the appropriation, towards the construction of a line of railway from Normanton to the Croydon Gold Fields, of a sufficient part of the sum of £500,000 authorised by the Government Loan Act of 1884 to be raised for the construction of a line of railway from Cloncurry to the Gulf of Carpentaria. I have it in command, sir, from the Governor to inform the House that His Excellency, having been made acquainted with the provisions of the proposed Bill, recommends the necessary appropriation to give effect to it.

Question put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE.

The PREMIER moved—

That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to authorise the appropriation, towards the construction of a line of railway from Normanton to the Croydon Gold Fields, of a sufficient part of the sum of £500,000 authorised by the Government Loan Act of 1884 to be raised for the construction of a line of railway from Cloncurry to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Mr. DICKSON said that although at that stage of a Bill it was not desirable to raise any long discussion, still he must enter his protest against the diversion of a large amount of money which had been appropriated by Parliament, after serious and mature deliberation, for the construction of another line of railway which, he contended, was second in importance to none yet constructed in the colony. It was introducing a most vicious precedent that they should, at the end of a session of Parliament, which was admittedly at that stage that it should not undertake any serious legislation, be called upon to alter an appropriation made by Parliament upon the mature deliberation and recommendation of the Government when they took charge of the administration of the affairs of the colony. It was in view of the consequences of such a step that he, at the present time, without wishing unduly to occupy the attention of the Committee, entered his protest against what he might call the sudden deviation of that money from its legitimate object, simply on a surprise motion, made one night during that session, concerning the construction of a railway from Normanton to Croydon. The line from Normanton to Croydon he did not at all object to; he wished that to be understood. He did not desire to raise any objection to the construction of that line if it could be proved that its construction was immediately necessary. But it could be proceeded with by other means than by diverting to that object money which had been appropriated by Parliament for the construction of one of their main lines of railway. That was the ground he took. It was the sudden and abrupt deviation of money from its legitimate destination that he objected to, not to the construction of a line of railway to Croydon, if, in the opinion of Parliament, it was deemed desirable to proceed with it during the present session. He repeated that they were making a very dangerous precedent. A parliamentary appropriation had been obtained for a line of railway which they might call one of the backbone lines of the colony, and it had not been in any way shown



that there had been an over-appropriation of money for the construction of it; and yet they were now called upon to interfere with that appropriation out of which that line was to be constructed—a line which, he might say, before being submitted to Parliament, received very grave consideration by the Government, and was unanimously held by the members of the Government as being one of the most important lines of railway in the colony. If it was deemed desirable to proceed with the construction of the Normanton to Croydon line, he maintained that funds could be provided for that purpose without diverting any portion of the money from the legitimate object for which it was voted. Holding that view, he felt bound, even at that stage of the Bill, to enter his protest against it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he quite understood, and he believed the Committee thoroughly understood, the grounds of the hon. member's objection to the action of the Government; and he agreed with him, to a very large extent, that it was unwise to interfere with an appropriation which had been authorised by Parliament, unless a case of urgency arose. But a case of urgency had arisen, which justified the Government in asking that a portion of the money voted in 1884 for the construction of the Cloncurry railway should be appropriated for the construction of a railway to Croydon, both starting from the same point—Normanton. Then they had a case of emergency. The hon. member called it a surprise motion. It was not a surprise motion, certainly. It had been before the House for some time, and when the hon. member for Burke gave notice of his motion, it was on the paper for some time before it came on for discussion. But Croydon itself was a surprise to the public. There was no expectation of any Croydon in 1884 when the money was voted for the Cloncurry railway, nor for two years afterwards. Since that money was voted it had been lying idle, like the unproductive talent of Scripture; and they were going to apply a portion of it to a purpose which would make it very reproductive indeed. The hon. gentleman had not shown in what way the construction of the Croydon railway would interfere with the construction of the Cloncurry railway, nor that it would even delay it for a single day, or any section of it. If the hon. gentleman could show that it would do so he would be very chary in acceding to the proposition. But it had not been attempted to be shown, nor did he think it could be. He would never have assisted the hon. member for Burke to get that appropriation diverted if he had thought for a single moment that he was injuring the prospects of the making of that railway, and he was certain that that was the feeling of the majority of the members of the House when they came to the conclusion that the Croydon railway should be made, and that it should be made from a portion of the money voted for the Cloncurry railway. The hon. gentleman said that some other legitimate means might be found for providing the money, but he did not point them out. A railway could not be made without money, and from what other source were they to get the money for the construction of the Croydon railway? Go in for a fresh loan before the £10,000,000 loan had been expended? Surely the hon. member did not mean that! He was certain he did not mean it. If the Government were to act upon that advice, or upon the fears of the hon. gentleman, there would be no railway to Croydon for the next four or five years. They had precedents to guide them, though not to the same extent as far as money was concerned, for appropriating

money for one purpose which had been voted for another. Before going in for another loan they would have to wait until the £10,000,000 loan was entirely borrowed, and the greater part of it spent. And if Croydon had to wait for its railway until then, it would not get it constructed within four years of the present time. What might not happen at Croydon within four years? It was a thing they should not contemplate—that the Government should leave an important goldfield so long without means of communication. In fact, the very existence of the goldfield might depend upon reliable means of communication being established. He was sure that the hon. gentleman meant no harm to Croydon, but his action would not benefit Cloncurry, because the wish was to make the line to Croydon at the same time that the line to Cloncurry was being made.

The HON. G. THORN said he looked upon that proposal as a very serious one. In that he agreed with the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson. He thought it was a matter that might be left to the new Parliament to decide. If they passed the Bill that session it would not forward the Croydon line one day, because it was not possible for the Premier to lay the plans upon the table that session or during that Parliament. That being the case, he thought the matter might very well be left over until they had a new Parliament. They should be very cautious in making lines of railway too quickly through mineral country. They had had proof of that in the colony already. He did not wish to say one word against Croydon, but at the same time they ought to pause before they committed themselves to that appropriation of money from the vote for the Cloncurry railway—a railway which was passed unanimously in that Chamber, and the money for which was voted three years ago. The mineral line he was now going to refer to was a line through country containing only base metals; he alluded to the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line. The making of that line had often been thrown in his teeth, but he could tell the Committee that he had very good reason for making it at the time it was projected. Copper was then about £90 a ton, and there was an offer made to the then Government by Mr. Vickery to construct that line, and the Government, seeing that, thought they would make it themselves. Shortly after the line was made, copper, instead of remaining at from £80 to £90 per ton, went down to about £40, and stood at about that price now, the result being that it would not pay to work the Mount Perry mines. There was no great demand for copper now in the old country. Besides that, at the time that line was projected, there was a population of between 3,000 and 4,000 people at Mount Perry and Fife-Barnett, and now the population was not as many hundreds. There were two large schools there at that time, whereas now they found one closed and the other only half filled. Such facts as those ought to cause hon. members to pause before making a line too quickly through mineral country. With regard to Croydon, from what he had heard a good many of the reefs there were not unlike those at the Hodgkinson and Kingsborough. They knew that when the Hodgkinson broke out there were excellent shows in the reefs, some of which went 10 oz. to the ton, but they disappeared very quickly, being merely what were called "horizontal reefs." Many of the reefs turned out like that, and it was the same at Thornborough. He did not say there was not a lot of gold there, but they should have to get improved machinery to develop those fields. Instead of there being thousands of people on the Hodgkinson now, he did not believe there

were more than 200 adults there at that moment. Those were reasons why the Committee should pause before they agreed to the appropriation of a portion of a sum of money voted for the Cloncurry railway line, which was not only a mineral line but also a line to open up a large pastoral and agricultural district in the Gulf country. That, he believed, was the reason why that line was passed. He should say no more at present, but would merely enter his protest against the motion. He repeated that he did not think they would be facilitating the making of the line to Croydon one day sooner, if they passed the Bill that night.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought great consideration should be shown to what had fallen from the hon. member for Enoggera. In the measure now before them it was proposed to deal with a sum of money that had been voted, not for a tentative line—not merely for a line that might in its construction lead to considerable development of the country—but which was one of the main trunk lines of the colony. It was on that ground, he believed, that the House had voted that sum of money, but, at the same time, he admitted that the necessity seemed to have arisen for constructing a line to Croydon. The hon. member for Enoggera had stated that the money for that line could be provided from some other source than the £500,000 voted for the construction of the railway towards Cloncurry from Normanton, but the hon. gentleman had not stated to the Committee how that money was to be provided, and he thought they should get some information from him on that point. He must admit that he leaned very much towards the position taken up by that hon. gentleman; at the same time he also leaned towards the construction of a railway to Croydon, and would do all he could to assist such a railway being made; and if it could be done, as the hon. member for Enoggera had stated, without entrenching or taking away from the amount voted for the railway to Cloncurry, he should be all the better pleased. It was a very serious matter to consider whether they should take away a portion of the money voted for one of the main trunk lines of the colony to make a line towards a goldfield, no matter how good that goldfield might be, and more especially, as the hon. member for Enoggera had stated, when the money might be obtained in another way.

Mr. PALMER said the hon. member for Enoggera had stated that there were ways and means for carrying out that railway without the necessity for that motion, but he had not indicated in what way it could be carried out. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman wanted to receive any more of those very laudatory telegrams he had received, he himself standing like Leonidas in the breach, and objecting to that proposed diversion of the loan money; but considering that he (Mr. Dickson) was a member of the Government who, as it were, strained the Constitution in passing the Loan Act of 1884, and giving five years' supply to the Government of the day, he did not think the hon. member was in such a strong position as he imagined he was in now objecting to that line. Besides that, he had not indicated in what way the line could be constructed. The original motion respecting the construction of the line was not for the appropriation of a portion of the sum in question. He (Mr. Palmer) desired the Government to indicate in what way the line could be carried out, and they thought the only feasible plan was to appropriate a certain amount from the Cloncurry vote. It was under almost the promise of the Government that the time would not be delayed in any way whatever that he consented to the

alteration in his motion. If he thought for a moment that by diverting a portion of that money to the Croydon line it would in any way prevent the railway going to Cloncurry, he would not be justified in being a party to it. He considered that the two railways might be built simultaneously. At any rate the Cloncurry line might be built without any delay, and the line to Croydon, which was a matter of necessity, should be carried out in the meantime. He might mention that the district surveyor stated that the distance from the Norman crossing to the Croydon was only sixty-five miles, thus making the distance from Normanton to Croydon only eighty miles, and that over level country; so that the line would not cost nearly the sum of money the Premier imagined when the resolution was previously before hon. members.

Mr. DICKSON said he had been asked to point out how the money could be provided in another way. Hon. members were aware that the loan funds at the present time were overdrawn on account of certain services, and that parliamentary sanction had been obtained for the issue of Treasury bills covering that expenditure in anticipation of the next loan. He should much prefer seeing a loan estimate of a similar character brought in to provide for the construction of the Croydon railway, temporarily covered by Treasury bills, rather than interfere with a parliamentary appropriation already sanctioned. He was jealous of any interference with parliamentary appropriations, and he thought it would be far better to obtain parliamentary sanction to a loan estimate covered by Treasury bills, using the available money for the construction of the line, to be replenished hereafter by legitimate loan negotiations in England. It would be far more satisfactory to provide the money by a distinct parliamentary appropriation than to interfere with a vote which had received the due consideration and sanction of Parliament. The hon. member for Townsville remarked that he had not pointed out how the diversion would interfere with the construction of the Cloncurry line; but it was only necessary to say that the £500,000 already voted was not sufficient for that railway, and that if part of the money were diverted it must directly interfere with the construction of the line.

Mr. HAMILTON said he hoped the objections to the diversion of part of the money voted for the Cloncurry line would not be considered of sufficient weight to prevent the resolution from passing. The line to Croydon could be constructed at a small cost, and it would not prevent the construction of the Cloncurry line from going on at the same time. Railways to the goldfields had hitherto proved to be the best paying lines in the colony, and there was every probability of Croydon being an exceptionally rich goldfield; therefore he thought the line would prove one of the best paying lines in Queensland. And the cost of construction would be very small, especially if it were constructed with Phillips's sleepers. The fact that the railway would pay was a matter of some importance, but that it would develop a very important goldfield was a matter of still more importance. The hon. member for Fassifern just now compared the reefs at Croydon with those at Thornborough, saying that the reefs at Thornborough were horizontal and soon ran out. He never saw any horizontal reefs at Thornborough, and he did not recollect any reefs on that field which were proved payable to the depth they had been proved payable at Croydon. The only thing he was afraid of was that even if the resolution were passed, the construction of the railway would not commence until after next session. He had heard it stated

that two companies were ready to construct the line by private enterprise, and if he thought that could be done, and the Government would encourage such a proposition, he would be in favour of it, because he objected to the snail-like pace at which railways were constructed by the Government. He thought it would be well to take a leaf out of the Americans' book. In that country railways were constructed over the prairies sometimes at the rate of twelve or thirteen miles a day, and where the country was level and railways were constructed according to those principles, instead of having a railway to Croydon in one or two years, they might have it in as many months. He hoped the resolution would pass, and that the construction of the line would be gone on with as soon as possible.

Mr. NORTON said that when the matter was under discussion some time ago he felt that they were incurring a serious responsibility in consenting to divert a portion of the money voted for another purpose a few years since; and he still largely sympathised with the hon. member for Enoggera in the protest he had made. He thought, however, that if the hon. member's proposition were carried out, and the money were provided by a process already adopted in connection with expenditure on other matters, the result would not be at all beneficial to the colony. Having passed a £10,000,000 loan providing for a large number of railways, he thought it was rather a dangerous step to go beyond that, and deliberately anticipate the next loan by providing by Treasury bills for the expenditure of a large sum of money not included in that loan. He objected to the diversion of the money voted for the Cloncurry railway, but he objected more strongly still to the proposition of the hon. member for Enoggera; and if they adopted the course he proposed, the effect would be that when the next portion of the £10,000,000 loan came to be floated the value of the debentures would be considerably reduced. That was a possible consequence, and it was one that should be by all means avoided. He did not intend to oppose the resolution, but he felt that in diverting money from the Cloncurry line to the Croydon they would probably be delaying the construction of the Cloncurry line for a considerable time longer than would be the case otherwise. There was a justification for the construction of that line to Croydon, which was an entirely exceptional circumstance, and had arisen quite suddenly and unexpectedly. Sufficient had been said in justification of the expenditure of a sum of money to make a line between Normanton and Croydon as speedily as possible. He was afraid that the interests of the people of Cloncurry were not being fully studied. He confessed he was guided in his assent to the matter very largely by what fell from the hon. member who represented the district in Parliament. That hon. member and all members representing the northern part of the colony were in favour of the diversion, and, that being the case, it was very natural that the bulk of members who were not particularly interested in the matter were inclined to support them in the action they proposed to take. They all knew pretty well that unless a railway were constructed to Cloncurry the copper-mines there would not be worked. From all they heard of the copper-mines there they were equal to almost any copper-mines in the world. He supposed Lake Superior might be considered better than the Cloncurry mines; but excepting those, the Cloncurry mines were as good as any in the world, and the copper was as rich. During the last twelve or fifteen months the value of copper had risen very considerably, and there was a prospect of the mines at Cloncurry being worked if there was railway connection with a port. Of course while there was no

communication of that kind, the mines must remain closed. Either some means must be provided for taking fuel to the mines to smelt the copper, and then take the copper to the seaboard, or some means must be provided for taking the ore to the seaboard and smelting it there. The value of copper had increased to a considerable extent, and he saw in the last quotations in the *Economist* that the price was from £45 to £46 per ton, which was not an excessive price. Chilian copper was about at £40, and it was always quoted in the market lower than Australian copper. Not only that, but the visible supply in England and on the Continent was smaller than it had been for a considerable time. He made that statement on an authority which he could not just then call to mind, but he thought it was so stated in the *Economist*, which he believed was as reliable a paper as there was on matters of that kind. At any rate the visible supply was moderate, and the price was considerably higher than it was some time ago. Those were matters which they ought not to overlook, and in consenting to the diversion of the money which had been proposed they ought to insist that that action should not in any way interfere with the commencement of the Cloncurry line at as early a date as possible. It ought not to interfere with that line being commenced at the time it would have been under ordinary circumstances, and he could not help feeling that there was great force in what was said by the hon. member for Enoggera, that the line to Cloncurry was considered to be a trunk line of the colony which was to connect the North and the South. Undoubtedly that was so, and to interfere in a case of that kind was an interference of a very dangerous nature. For that reason they ought to extract a promise from the Government, especially after what fell from the Minister for Works the other day, that the diversion of that sum for the construction of the Croydon line should not interfere with the commencement of the line to Cloncurry.

Mr. CHUBB said the hon. member was of the same opinion as he was, that the passing of that motion would interfere with the commencement of the Cloncurry line. If they received an assurance from the Government to the effect that it would not do so, hon. members would be relieved.

The PREMIER said the motion was merely for leave to introduce a Bill, when they did not want many long speeches. On the second reading he would make an explanation.

Mr. CHUBB said if the line from Croydon to Normanton was going to be undertaken in the same manner as the line from Bowen northwards, he could not congratulate the Croydon people upon the speedy completion of the proposed line.

The PREMIER: Do you want to block your own line?

Mr. CHUBB said he did not. Hon. members would remember that the diversion of the Bowen line was proposed in 1885, and to that moment it had not been commenced.

The PREMIER said the line was not proposed in 1885; it was in 1886.

Mr. CHUBB said the plans were passed in 1886, but to the present day the work had not been commenced, although other works included in the £10,000,000 loan were under way. He hoped the people interested in the Croydon line would be more fortunate than the persons he had referred to. He was not going to oppose the motion; but he hoped that they would have a statement by-and-by that the Cloncurry line would not be affected by the construction of the Croydon line.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had no doubt that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government would be able to tell them when the plans of that line would be brought down to be approved of by Parliament, or whether he would adopt some system by which the line could be commenced during the recess without the formal approval of the plans by the House. He was rather surprised at the indignation of the hon. gentleman when he asked the hon. member for Bowen whether he wanted to block his own line. Was that meant as a threat or punishment that the people of Bowen were to be kept out of their line because the member for Bowen spoke his mind freely? He hoped the hon. gentleman never intended it in that light; but it struck him and other hon. members also that that was the light in which it was intended. How could the speech of the hon. member for Bowen block his own line? The permanent survey was supposed to be going on at the present time, and how in the name of goodness could the speech made by the hon. member for Bowen that evening block the making of those surveys, unless it was to punish the people of Bowen? He hoped the hon. gentleman did not mean anything of the sort, and he should be sorry if the head of the Government allowed himself to be carried away by passion and prejudice to such an extent. The proposition made by the hon. member for Enoggera, the ex-Colonial Treasurer, was rather a startling one; but he expected something of that kind when he asked him to point out where the funds were to be obtained to make the line if they did not divert a certain amount of the sum appropriated for the Cloncurry line. The hon. gentleman did not show where the money was to come from. He had simply told them of a plan by which they could mortgage the next loan which the Government intended to put upon the market after the £10,000,000 loan was spent. Getting parliamentary authority for Treasury bills and keeping them in the Treasury did not find the money. The money for the making of that line would have to be taken from somewhere else, even if they had the Treasury bills lying in the Treasury. They were supposed to have now £123,000 worth of Treasury bills in the Treasury, but the money voted upon the line which caused those Treasury bills to be authorised had been spent, and it would have to be raised out of another loan. Now, according to the report of the Auditor-General, the next loan was already mortgaged to the amount of £563,000. The hon. member at the head of the Government shook his head, but that was a fact. He would read from the report, so that there might be no mistake. At page 10 of the Auditor-General's Report it would be found that there was: "Loan expenditure in anticipation of legislative enactment, £313,465; loss on sale of inscribed stock not yet provided for, £128,393; overdraft on Brisbane Drainage Act Fund, £9,712;" and £123,000 worth of Treasury bills which were now in the Treasury; making nearly £565,000 now mortgaged of the loan that would have to be floated after the £10,000,000 loan was exhausted. So that if the hon. gentleman proposed to carry out a line to Croydon costing £350,000 when completely equipped, they would then have the next loan mortgaged to the amount of £900,000. And how much more would the hon. gentleman have to go on with for the first year after the £10,000,000 loan had been expended? Taking the lines that would yet have to be provided for, there would be another half-million of the first loan mortgaged through the deficiency which had taken place. So that he did not think that the House was at all likely to agree to the proposition until the £10,000,000 loan was exhausted.

THE PREMIER said he could not understand members who professed to be in favour of the introduction of the Bill taking so much trouble to delay its introduction. He supposed there were sound reasons for doing so, although they were not apparent on the surface to casual observers. Some things which had been said he must refer to. First, as to what would be done as to the construction of the line. The Bill he proposed to introduce would provide for the construction of the line without the formal approval of the plans by Parliament. That would be left to the Governor in Council in the first instance, and was necessary under the exceptional circumstances. The second point he had to refer to was in reference to what the hon. member for Townsville had said as to his interjection about the Bowen railway. The hon. member for Bowen knew that in him the people of Bowen had always had a sincere friend so far as the construction of their railway was concerned, and he had to protest against the hon. member continually getting up and accusing him of insincerity. He was of a very patient disposition, but he did object to be continually accused of insincerity by a member who knew that the accusation was unfounded.

MR. CHUBB: I charged the Government.

THE PREMIER said he could assure the hon. member that that was not the sort of thing which would induce him to exert himself in favour of the people who made those accusations; and although he did not allow those things to interfere much with his actions, yet there was a limit to his patience. The other matter he would refer to was a statement made by the hon. member for Townsville as to the state of the Loan Fund; but that was not the time to go into the question. He would give the House full information on that subject at a convenient opportunity; but the greater portion of the money referred to by the hon. member was a purely paper charge—a charge properly upon other items of the loan vote, and which was now in course of being distributed amongst them.

MR. MOREHEAD said he really did not see why the Premier should have shown so much temper. The hon. gentleman seemed to consider that that was not the time to consider the position of the Loan Fund. He (Mr. Morehead) thought it was a very good time. He thought that when they had to consider the expenditure of a large sum of public money—more especially when it was proposed to divert money already voted for another purpose—it was a proper time to consider the state of the Loan Fund, and the hon. gentleman did not better matters by making such interjections as he had made when the hon. member for Bowen was speaking. The hon. gentleman ought to know better; he had been in the House long enough to know that interjections of that kind and loss of temper did not improve matters or help on business. Now, with regard to that particular matter, he spoke on the last occasion when it was before the House with a great measure of reserve as to what course he might take with regard to it, and he looked with very considerable suspicion, or rather "doubt" would be a better word, upon the proposal to alter the allocation of a vote that was deliberately arrived at by the House. The House three years ago deliberately came to the conclusion that the sum of £500,000 should be devoted to a certain railway. That line was passed unanimously by the House, and it was admitted to be one of the trunk lines of the colony, and now they were asked to take away from that £500,000, which was intended to be devoted to the construction of a line from Normanton to Cloncurry, a certain sum sufficient to make a railway from Normanton to Croydon. He thought they ought to have more

explanation than they had had from the Premier as to the necessity of making another vote suffer. He thought they were entitled to some definite expression of opinion upon that point. Was there no other way in which they could get the money? Why not take it from the Southern lines? Why not take it from the *via recta*? They all admitted—it was generally admitted by the Committee and the House—that the necessity had arisen for a railway from Normanton to Croydon. On the other hand, it had not been proved that the necessity which existed three years ago for a railway from Normanton to Cloncurry did not exist at the present day. But now it was proposed to lop from one of the Northern lines a sum sufficient to construct a railway from Normanton to Croydon. Why should the North suffer? At any rate, why should it suffer altogether? Why not take a portion of the money voted for the Cloncurry line and another portion voted for some other line? Let the *via recta*, which was a perfect farce and a purely political railway—let it be trimmed. Let it be whittled away to nothing, as there was no necessity for it. The need for it might at some day exist, but it did not exist at present. Let some of the Southern extensions—the spasmodic political railways—suffer, and not a line which would be one of the main trunk lines of the colony, and one which would do as much as any other line to develop the prosperity of the colony. Let them pare off a portion of the votes for some of those wretched lines projected in the Loan Bill, or have them left out altogether. What reason had the Government given for fixing upon that line from Normanton to Cloncurry to be the line to suffer? The southern portion of the colony was benefiting as much from the discovery and development of Croydon as the northern portion, and, holding that view, he did not see why the vote for the Cloncurry railway should suffer, except in proportion with the votes for other lines.

Mr. KATES said he could only admire the cool impudence of the hon. member for Balonne.

The PREMIER: Do not be drawn. They are only stonewalling, do you not see?

Mr. MOREHEAD: I ask you, as a point of order, Mr. Fraser, if the hon. member for Darling Downs has any right to allude to any remarks of mine as "cool impudence"; are those words parliamentary?

The CHAIRMAN: They are not parliamentary.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then they must be withdrawn.

Question put.

Mr. MURPHY: Mr. Fraser, I thought there was a point of order raised.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Yes; I stated that certain words were used by the hon. member for Darling Downs, which you, sir, at once admitted were out of order. I think you should ask that those words be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member used the words attributed to him they are certainly unparliamentary.

Mr. KATES: They may not be parliamentary, but they are nevertheless—

Mr. MOREHEAD said that was an equivocation worthy of the hon. gentleman, but was not likely to be accepted by the Committee.

Mr. KATES said he would change the words and say that he admired the audacity of the hon. member for Balonne. The hon. gentleman stated that the money voted for the *via recta* should be withdrawn and devoted to the construction of the line from Normanton to Croydon.

The suggestion was absurd on the face of it. The *via recta* was proposed to shorten the distance between Brisbane, Warwick, and Sydney, and at the same time open up a large area of good agricultural land with the view of settling a lot of people upon those lands. The line for which the hon. member suggested the vote for that line should be diverted, was from Normanton to a fever-stricken place like Croydon—an unknown place which might or might not turn out a good goldfield. The *via recta* would settle a lot of people on the land—farmers with their wives and families; and the line to Croydon might turn out a success or might not. Why the hon. gentleman should suggest that the money should be taken from the vote for the *via recta* he could not understand.

The PREMIER: Just to draw you out and lead you to make a speech in order to waste a little more time.

Mr. KATES said he could not allow the hon. member's remarks to go without comment. He would now confine himself to the question, and, so far as he could see, it implied the construction of two lines of railway—one from Normanton to Croydon, and the other from Normanton to Cloncurry. The hon. members for Bowen and Port Curtis had said that those lines should be started simultaneously. If that were done they could not stop half-way; they must carry the lines to a termination, and that implied the expenditure of another £500,000 to that already appropriated. He asked members of that Committee whether they were prepared to spend a million of money on those two lines to unknown places. It was possible that the Croydon Gold Field would turn out a permanent field, but they had the experience of the Hodgkinson and other fields, which did not prove permanent. He hoped the Croydon Gold Field would be permanent, but he wished to draw the attention of the Premier to the fact that the motion involved the expenditure of £1,000,000 upon those two lines.

Mr. ALLAN said he did not at all like the idea of the Bill.

The PREMIER: You have not seen it yet. Wait till we get to the second reading.

Mr. ALLAN said the hon. gentleman had mentioned what was the object of the Bill, and he understood it to be a Bill to authorise the appropriation towards the construction of the line of railway from Normanton to Croydon of a sufficient part of the vote passed by that House for a railway from Normanton to Cloncurry. It would be nothing less than repudiation if any part of that vote was applied to the construction of the line to Croydon, or to any purpose other than that for which it was voted. It was quite probable that Croydon would turn out a good goldfield, but there was no instance in their history where they had pushed on in such haste with a railway to a new goldfield. It was quite on the cards that money would be taken away from the vote for the *via recta*, as suggested by the leader of the Opposition, or from the St. George or some other line; and if votes of that House were to be turned round in that way there would be no finality in any vote come to by the House. He should oppose, as far as he could, the taking of any part of the vote for the Cloncurry line for any purpose other than that for which it had been voted, and he would object to the diversion of moneys voted for any other line in the same way.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was really a matter for regret that one could not allude in that House to the *via recta* without getting at least two members representing Darling Downs into a

terrible rage. One member—Mr. Kates—had abused him for it in almost unmeasured language. It seemed to him that if they lost their temper on matters of that sort they must have a very bad case. He ventured to suggest that, if the allocations under the Loan Bill were to be tampered with, they should be tampered with all round. If the Croydon line was as necessary as the Premier thought—and he (Mr. Morehead) believed it was—let them cut something off other lines besides the Cloncurry line. It was evident from the attitude of the Premier that he was very sore over the non-purchase of that land at New Farm; but the hon. gentleman had the satisfaction of feeling, though all his Ministers went on the other side and he had voted alone, that he had done his duty to his country, and to Fortitude Valley especially. He (Mr. Morehead) did not intend to let the matter before them rest until he had an explanation from the Premier as to why the Government had cut the money off the Normanton-Cloncurry railway. It had been admitted by the Premier that both railways ought to be made, and he (Mr. Morehead) was sure that if the money were once taken away it would not be got back for the Cloncurry line—at least for many years to come. When the Premier had got over his disappointment about the “Dismal Swamp,” perhaps he would tell the Committee the reason that had induced the Government to make the diversion from that vote.

Mr. MURPHY said he had once already recorded his vote against the proposal before them, and he would do so again, for the reason that he thought it would be a very dangerous precedent to divert funds already voted for one line to make another line in a totally different direction. He would warn all members having an interest in the £10,000,000 loan to beware lest money was taken away from their lines to make other lines in the colony. What was happening now was exactly what was prophesied by members of the Opposition when the £10,000,000 loan was introduced. It showed the unwise step the Government took when they committed the country to the schedule to the Ten-million Loan Bill. He agreed with the leader of the Opposition that there was no reason why the money should not be taken just as well from the *via recta* or any other uncommenced line in some other part of the colony to make this line. It might be taken from some line that would not be so useful as the line from Normanton to Cloncurry, which was universally acknowledged to be one of the trunk lines of the country, and which had received the unanimous approval of the House when it was introduced. They had the statement of the Minister for Works that the two lines could not go on simultaneously—that if any money were taken from the Normanton-Cloncurry line and applied to make a line to Croydon, the Cloncurry line would not be gone on with until the Croydon line was finished. In view of that, if they agreed to the diversion they would be doing a gross injustice to the people who expected that railway to be made from Normanton to Cloncurry, and also to the whole colony, because that was one of the most important lines they had yet to make. It was very much more important than a line to a gold-field which might be gone to-morrow. When it could be shown that it was a permanent gold-field, then would be the time to make a railway to it. It was all very fine for hon. members to say the Croydon Gold Field could not pay without the railway. The people were there now, and people had been willing to go very much further afield than that without a railway.

Mr. SMYTH: It goes towards the Etheridge too.

Mr. MURPHY said he had no doubt hon. members opposite would divert the whole of the money directly. As soon as they got the first portion diverted they wanted to divert the rest to make a line towards the Etheridge. The interjection of the hon. member for Gympie showed it was only the thin end of the wedge, and that they meant to drive it home. He should not be surprised if they wanted soon to divert money from the Central line to make the South Brisbane extension.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It would be just as reasonable.

Mr. MURPHY said he did not like supporting a precedent of that kind, and he was satisfied that it was breaking faith with the Cloncurry people. Even supposing it was the intention of the Government to make the two lines concurrently, he knew that the sleepers now being made for the Cloncurry line would be taken to make the Croydon line.

Mr. ANNEAR: And a good job too.

Mr. MURPHY said he did not think it would be a good job. It would be a very bad job for the colony generally. The Cloncurry line would develop a large amount of mineral country—quite as good, in all probability, as that at Croydon—and it would also open up a large extent of pastoral territory for sheep and cattle grazing. Besides that, it would be part of the transcontinental system; and, taking all things into consideration, he should vote against the proposal.

Mr. MOREHEAD said a feather sometimes showed how the tide set. An interjection made by an hon. member on the other side showed conclusively that the present motion was an insidious attempt on the part of the Government to do away with the railway to Cloncurry. When that danger was suggested by the hon. member for Barcoo, an hon. member opposite said, “A good job too.”

Mr. ANNEAR: I said the sleepers only.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member for Maryborough seemed to have a mania about sleepers. He wished the hon. member would become a sleeper himself.

The PREMIER: We all wish you would.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had no doubt the Premier was anxious that he should become a sleeper, but he assured the hon. gentleman he intended to keep especially wide awake that night. It was evident from the interjection made by a supporter of the Premier that it was the insidious intention of the Government to destroy, if possible, the railway from Normanton to Cloncurry, under the pretext, which he believed was possibly only a pretext, of making a railway to Croydon. The hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Smyth, also interjected that that railway would ultimately be extended to the Etheridge. He (Mr. Morehead) sincerely hoped that might be so. He believed that the projection of that railway to the Etheridge would be a very good thing for the whole of Queensland, and it would have his hearty support. So would the railway to Croydon have his hearty support; but his protest against the resolution was that, as it stood, it cut off from a particular vote arrived at by the Committee a large sum of money, whereas other votes were left intact. On the face of it, that was unfair. To show that he was not taking up any different position from that which he took up when the matter was before the House on the previous occasion, he would quote from what he said then, from which it would be seen that the same doubts ruled his mind then as ruled it at the present time. He then said:—

“I would not for one moment, nor do I intend to, oppose the resolution as it stands, because a Bill must be introduced to give effect to this resolution, and the

thing will then be brought to an issue; but in the meantime I hope that those who advocate so strenuously the construction of this Croydon line, and the Government, who appear to be in favour of it, will put such information before the House as will warrant the expenditure that is sought."

He still adhered to that opinion. They had had no fresh information from the Government or those members who advocated that line. He believed himself, from what he had heard outside, that it was one that might be constructed, but he thought the Government should give sound reasons for taking the money required to make it from a vote for another railway. He was very glad that the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, voted against the proposal in the first instance. Probably the hon. member did so, feeling that the same evil might come upon himself with regard to the *via recta*. He thought the hon. member should now give his reasons for the course he took.

Mr. KATES: I did.

Mr. ANNEAR said he held the opinion, as he had done all along, that with the good timber they had in the colony there was no need for the introduction of sleepers either of iron or steel.

The PREMIER said he would ask whether the hon. member was in order in discussing wood or steel sleepers. The question was that leave be given to introduce a Bill for the construction of a railway from Normanton to Croydon. Of course hon. members opposite were trying to lead members into obstruction on all sorts of points. He asked the Chairman to keep members to the question.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not know that the hon. member for Maryborough was out of order, and would ask the Chairman's ruling on the point.

The CHAIRMAN said he did not know what use the hon. member for Maryborough was going to make of his remarks, but certainly, so far as he could see, they did not deal with the question before the Committee.

Mr. ANNEAR said he would say no more about sleepers, but he could not help noticing that the Chairman always allowed some hon. members to proceed on a certain line, and when objection was taken, ruled others who went on the same line out of order, especially himself (Mr. Annear). He thoroughly agreed with the remarks made by the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, when that matter was previously discussed in the House. The proposal was a departure from anything the Assembly had ever done before. Certain money was appropriated from the £10,000,000 loan for a particular line of railway, and it was now proposed to divert a portion of that money to the construction of a line from Normanton to Croydon. That ought not to be done; the railway should be made by special loan vote. He did not think they should be confined strictly to the £10,000,000 loan. Other places requiring railway communication would crop up from time to time, and they should devote their attention to providing money for carrying out those railways. Several hon. members who opposed the proposed line said when the money was voted for the construction of a railway to a goldfield in his district containing a larger permanent population than there was now at Croydon, that the railway should be blown up with gunpowder—that it would not pay for the grease on the wheels. That was what was said, when the railway he referred to was completed, by hon. members who now took that tack, and said that the proposed line to Croydon would be one of the best paying lines in the colony. What was the result? He would not say that the line to the goldfield in his

district was the best paying line in the colony, but it was a very good paying line, and he was sure that no hon. member who had voted for it would regret the vote he had given. He was somewhat in favour of the proposal of the hon. member for Burke the other day, when the hon. member almost led them to believe that the railway from Normanton to Croydon was part of the railway from Normanton to Cloncurry. The hon. member did not then insist that both lines of railway should go on together, but what did he do that evening? He said he did not for one moment think that there should be any delay in the construction of the railway from Normanton to Cloncurry. He (Mr. Annear) could assure hon. members who had voted for the proposal the other day that if the railway from Normanton to Croydon were constructed, the line from Normanton to Cloncurry would not be made for many years to come. Taking a part of the money voted for the Normanton-Cloncurry railway was merely a diversion of the money from the purpose for which it was voted by Parliament. It was a diversion which should not take place. He had not voted on the question before, but he would vote that evening, and he would oppose the money being diverted from the purpose for which it was intended. The *via recta* had been mentioned very prominently in that debate. He was sure no hon. member who supported that line would agree to diverting one penny of the money to the construction of any other railway, and he was equally sure that the hon. member for Darling Downs would live long enough to ride on the first engine that started from Brisbane to Warwick. There should be a special loan vote, as there were several lines of railway in the colony that ought to be constructed at the present time which were of far more importance than some of the lines which had been passed by the Committee. One of those was the line from Townsville to Ingham.

The PREMIER: Are you going to join in the stonewalling?

Mr. ANNEAR said he had no intention of joining in the stonewalling, but he hoped the Government would see the importance of bringing in a special loan proposal for the construction of the railway from Normanton to Croydon. There was the line, as he said, from Townsville to Ingham, and there was another line from Maryborough to Pialba. The latter was very much required, and would be the paying line of the colony. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, from whose sound judgment the colony had largely benefited for many years, that they should not divert money from the Normanton-Cloncurry railway for the construction of a line to Croydon. He was of that opinion after hearing the hon. gentleman the other night; and having had time to consider that most important question, he was more fully convinced that to adopt the present proposal would be to introduce a great innovation into the legislation of the colony. He should like to have voted with the hon. member for Burke, and if that hon. member had been satisfied with one railway he would have done so; but as he would not be content unless he got two, he (Mr. Annear) felt bound to vote against him.

Mr. HAMILTON said that some of the objections to the motion were based on sentimental grounds; hon. members did not like the diversion of the money, although they had voted for similar diversions on previous occasions. Another objection was that the railway to Cloncurry would open up a vast amount of country that would be very favourable for sheep. Surely it was much more desirable to give miners a show than to give sheep a show, especially when they recollected the large amount of country which had been opened up for



the benefit of sheep and cattle compared with that which had been opened up for the development of the mining interests of the colony. Some hon. members had stated that there was no certainty that Croydon was a permanent field. That, at any rate, seemed to be the opinion of some of those authorities on sheep. But in the opinion of those who had some knowledge of mining it was now actually a proved field. To those who objected to the diversion of the money from the Cloncurry railway for the purpose of constructing the Croydon railway, he would suggest another plan which would doubtless be gladly accepted as an alternative. There was one line now before the House which was almost unanimously objected to, the *via recta*. Instead of diverting the money from the Cloncurry railway, let it be diverted from that line of railway, which it was a foregone conclusion would not be passed by the House—namely, the *via recta*.

Mr. FOOTE said that as the question before the Committee was simply as to the desirability of introducing a Bill for a certain purpose, it was hardly the time to discuss the question of the railway or where the money was to come from. If hon. members really wanted the Croydon line they should accept the position. But if they sought to get their line made at the expense of other lines in the South they would find they were making a mistake. Those hon. members might stonewall now, but there were others who might stonewall on a future occasion. The time of the Committee had been very uselessly taken up in discussing matters which were not relevant to the question at issue. If the Committee were of opinion that the Bill should be introduced let them say so, and leave the discussion of the subject until a future occasion when the Bill was before them.

Mr. NORTON said the Committee ought to have some assurance from the Government that the construction of the Croydon line would not interfere with the construction of the line to Cloncurry.

The PREMIER: This is not the time to give that assurance.

Mr. NORTON said he thought it was. On the previous occasion, while the hon. member for Burke was speaking, the Minister for Works interjected that he would not get the two lines constructed at the same time. It was, therefore, the duty of the Premier to give the Committee some sort of assurance that the claims of the people of Cloncurry should be considered just as much as the claims of the people of Croydon. It should not be forgotten that they were taking away from the people of Cloncurry what had been granted to them by Act of Parliament, and that therefore their rights ought to be carefully guarded. Cloncurry was not only a copper-bearing country, but possessed numerous large and rich auriferous reefs which, when properly opened up, would contribute very materially to the prosperity of the colony. The working of those reefs would lead to a very large expenditure of money, because the gold was so mixed up with pyrites that it could only be extracted by the chlorination process. He should like to have an assurance from the Premier that the commencement of the first section of the Cloncurry line would not be delayed in consequence of the diversion of a part of the vote for the line to Croydon.

The PREMIER said he was now asking for leave to introduce a Bill, so that the matter might be fairly discussed by the House when the Bill was introduced. The Government would then be prepared to state exactly what they proposed to do. He did not propose to anticipate the second-reading debate on the motion now before the Committee.

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Mr. NORTON said it was necessary to know now whether the interests of Cloncurry would be protected.

The PREMIER: Wait and see what the proposition is.

Mr. NORTON said that but for the interjection of the Minister for Works the other day the question would not have been raised.

The PREMIER: But I followed him, and spoke at length.

Mr. NORTON: But the hon. gentleman's speech did not remove the impression made by the Minister for Works.

The PREMIER: If you want to stop the railway do so by all means, and take the responsibility.

Mr. NORTON said it was all very well for the Premier to talk in that way. But let him look to his own side. There were no dumb dogs on that side now. They were fighting dogs, and would rather fight the Premier himself than anyone else. The hon. gentleman was put out because his own supporters insisted upon speaking in spite of his efforts to stop them.

Mr. SMYTH: We are men, not dogs.

Mr. NORTON said he quite agreed with the hon. member. The phrase was a very inadvisable one, but it had got into common use, and was an almost meaningless expression. He would be very sorry to hurt the feelings of the hon. member for Gympie, and he hoped that he and other hon. members would accept his explanation when he said that in using that term he had no desire to hurt their feelings in any way. If he had done so he would certainly withdraw it.

Mr. ANNEAR said he, as one of the free lances on that side of the House, was sure that the hon. member for Port Curtis had no desire to hurt anyone's feelings. No one was more courteous in that House than that hon. member. The hon. member for Bowen used the same term the other night in a far more forcible way than that hon. gentleman had done. With regard to the remark made by the hon. member for Port Curtis, he was sure the Premier did not find that his supporters were fighting him. Since he (Mr. Annear) had been a member of that House he had not been under the orders of the Premier or any other hon. member. No orders had been given. He had been and was perfectly free. He believed that every member on that side used his own independent judgment upon every occasion. He had always done so, and should continue to do so, however long or short he might be a member of that House.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was sure hon. members would be glad to hear of the independence possessed by hon. members on the other side. He believed that the hon. member who had just spoken did not act under orders, and that he would not if he got them. Like himself, he believed that hon. member would be inclined to kick against any attempt at coercion. He should like to hear from the Government the full scope of the proposed measure. The Committee were entitled to know it; in fact, he did not think they should have gone as far as they had gone without getting that information from the Government. He thought the Premier treated a serious matter of that sort with too much indifference. He (Mr. Morehead) had, from the very initiation of the project, expressed his doubt as to whether it was expedient or otherwise that that railway should be constructed, but he said when he spoke last upon the subject that his course of action would be regulated a great deal by the information he received from the Government and those who were suggesting the construction of the line. He



did not think when a large sum of public money was to be dealt with that the Premier should be silent on the subject. The matter was quite serious and important enough to warrant them in getting some statement from the Premier, first as to why that railway should be constructed, and secondly, if the money was required, why it should be taken from a sum already voted by the House for another and a specific purpose.

Mr. MURPHY said when he was speaking before on that question the Committee seemed to have some doubt as to what his real opinion was with regard to the proposed line. He was in favour of the making of the line; it was only the way in which it was proposed to be made that he objected to.

The PREMIER: You are in favour of the line, but object to the only possible way of making it.

Mr. MURPHY said he did not object to a possible way. He thought a very possible and feasible way had been pointed out by his hon. friend the member for Enoggera, and one that he very much preferred to that proposed by the Government.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Like Micawber's way of paying his debts.

Mr. MURPHY said he thought the line to Croydon should certainly be made, but it should not be at the expense of the other line. He thought the money might very well be taken from one of the useless lines proposed, such as the *via recta*. They knew that there could be no worse line proposed in the country than the *via recta*, because the whole distance was through the very rottenest possible country they were possessed of. It would not develop any new country and would never pay for the grease on the wheels, a remark which the hon. member for Gympie stated had been applied to another line. He (Mr. Murphy) was sure that no man who had studied the *via recta* could for a moment believe that it would ever pay for the grease for the wheels; and he thought they would be perfectly justified in taking the money from that line and applying it to the construction of the line from Normanton to Croydon. The *via recta* would cost something like £2,000,000 or £3,000,000.

The Hon. G. THORN: Nonsense!

Mr. MURPHY said the hon. member for Fassifern said "Nonsense"; but they knew very well that the sum already voted—£500,000—would only go a very short way towards making that line. He believed it would not even make one of the tunnels on the Main Range, and yet the Government proposed to take away the money from a really valuable line, which would develop a large area of mining country, to make a fresh line which was never mentioned in the schedule of the Loan Bill at all. He thought a new departure in that way was a very dangerous one, and that the Committee should be very cautious indeed in even giving permission to introduce a Bill for the purpose of doing anything of the kind. He thought that even passing a motion giving permission for the Bill to be introduced showed that they were taking one step at all events in a very wrong direction.

Mr. FOOTE said he thought it was clear that hon. members opposite did not want to get the line from Normanton to Croydon, and he would suggest that the Premier should move that the Chairman leave the chair and report no progress.

The Hon. G. THORN said he did not wish to prolong the discussion, but he must answer the hon. member for Barcoo. He could tell that hon.

member that he could get a contractor—one of the best in the colony—to make the line to Warwick, over the Range, for £5,000 per mile.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution, and the report was adopted.

#### FIRST READING.

The PREMIER presented the Bill, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, for the purpose of considering this Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I sincerely trust that the Premier does not intend to insist upon attempting to pass this Bill this session. I think, having regard to the attitude taken up by the Opposition all through the session, which has been one of great forbearance—forbearance probably unexampled in any record of previous parliaments in this colony—that he would do well to pause before he forces that Opposition into a position they would only take up on strong constitutional grounds. Look at the position of affairs to-night. I do not think there are at the present moment thirty members in the Chamber, and I doubt whether in the precincts of the whole building there are forty members; in fact, I think if I said there were only thirty-six I should be within the mark. Yet we are asked to go into committee to discuss an alteration in our Constitution; and, not only that, but we are asked to do it when we are in such a position that we do not represent our constituencies—that is to say, by the passing of the Redistribution Bill the boundaries of a large number of the electorates have been so altered that a large number of those present cannot be said to represent those who returned them to this House. I maintain that the duty of this Parliament has been almost completed—its functions may be said to be almost completed—having passed a Redistribution Bill, which has been passed mainly by the conduct of the Opposition, who did not offer any factious opposition to the measure, but endeavoured to get as fair a share of justice to all parts of the colony as the Government with their majority would agree to give. Having passed that Redistribution Bill through this House—I take it that the measure will be passed elsewhere, this House being to a great extent the ruler in this matter—in fact, its voice in this particular direction should be paramount—the only remaining duty devolving upon this House is to vote Supply and go to the constituencies, and let them return members to deal with the future legislation of this colony. It is an admitted fact, which cannot be denied, that the introduction and passing of a Redistribution Bill is at once an admission that we are not the representative body we were before the Bill was passed by this House.

The PREMIER: Who admits that? No constitutional authority in the world.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I think everyone will admit—everyone with a grain of common sense—that we have by our own action indicated that the colony is not represented to the extent it should be, and therefore, the colony being insufficiently represented, it is not so represented as to admit the propriety of the present Parliament altering our Constitution. An alteration

in the Constitution is a matter which should on every occasion be relegated to the constituencies before being passed. If that be so, how much stronger is our position when, by the passing of a Redistribution Bill, we have admitted that the country is not properly represented in the councils held within these walls! Holding these views—also having regard to the fact that there are so few members present, and only two members of the Ministry—it appears to me absurd, Mr. Speaker, that you should be asked to leave the chair, and that we should be asked to go into committee to consider a matter of such great moment as the proposed alteration in our Constitution. I hope the Premier will not, as I said at the commencement, press this matter, and I tell him fairly and frankly that if it is pressed as far as committee—I speak now as leader of the Opposition—we shall do all we can to prevent the Bill becoming law, on the broad constitutional lines I have laid down. I am not going to discuss now, or even when we get into committee, the advisability of Parliament existing three, four, or five years, but I intend to oppose the passage of the measure on the grounds I have laid down: that it is utterly unconstitutional that a Parliament which is practically dead, and a Government which is admittedly defeated, should create a precedent enabling them or any succeeding Government or Parliament in their position to alter our Constitution. It is on those broad lines, and on those broad lines only, that I would resort to any action which might be designated by the Premier as stonewalling; but it is a good line to take up. It is a line the Opposition have never taken up during the present session, and if it is taken up now it will only be on account of the dire necessities of the situation. The Opposition have no desire for it, they do not seek it; but they have an important part to play in the conduct of the affairs of this colony, as well as the Government. They have the rights and privileges of this House to defend, as well as the members of the Government have, and so long as we sit on this side of the House we will defend them. Therefore, I would have the House clearly to understand that any action taken by the Opposition in this matter will be no factious opposition. Our conduct through the whole of this Parliament has shown that our opposition has never been factious opposition, but fair and considerate opposition—in some instances, I believe, we have shown too much consideration and too much forbearance. We are fighting now for a constitutional principle. It is not a matter that concerns any individual member of this House. What is it to any member on this side whether Parliament exists for three, four, or five years? That is a matter of indifference to me and to every other member on this side. But we are fighting on the broad constitutional grounds that this House, in its present condition, and this Ministry, in its present condition, more especially when a Redistribution Bill has been passed, indicating—in fact, declaring, as it does—that we do not fully represent the people of this colony, have no right to deal with a question which should only be dealt with by a Parliament that does not represent the people of this colony. It has been said that a succeeding Parliament would not pass a measure that would shorten its own existence, but that is a matter quite beside the question; it does not concern us; it only concerns them. We are done; we are finished. We have done our duty, and have done what we believed to be best in the interests of the electors of the colony, in passing the Redistribution Bill, and I believe we have done it fairly well. Let the people then send in whom they like, as they have a perfect right to do, and as they will do. Let them do that, and then let them limit, or other-

wise, the period of the duration of parliaments. If members so choose, let it be a matter to be brought before the electors in the elections which are not now very far distant. But, sir, do not let us, by any action of ours, hamper those whose right it is to speak and not ours. We have no right to do so. A moribund Parliament has no right to limit the duration of the Parliament coming after them. I sincerely trust, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier will not take the extreme step of pushing on this measure. As I say, the Opposition have no desire to do anything to prevent this Parliament coming to an end in a decent manner, and the sooner it does come to an end the better. It is practically dead now; let it die decently. We are prepared to give the Government Supply, after, of course, due consideration of the Estimates brought before us, and that being done, I think the Parliament will have done its duty. Let the new constituencies return their members and let them decide on the duration of that Parliament, and of parliaments under the new system of redistribution. I trust the Premier will not put the Opposition into the very invidious position of doing what they do not wish to do, but what they will be forced to do if the Premier insists upon going on with the Bill.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I must confess that I was not prepared to find that the Premier intended to go on with this Bill. I was unfortunate in not being present at the time the hon. gentleman made his speech in moving the second reading of this Bill. That I regret; but I have endeavoured to make up for that by reading his remarks on the subject. Now, I quite agree with what has fallen from the hon. leader of the Opposition, that this House is not in a fit state, at the end of its existence, to pass a measure of this nature. I do not think that a Parliament, which it is admitted on all sides is about to expire, should attempt to pass a measure altering the Constitution Act of the colony. There are at this present time fifty-nine members of Parliament, and we have just passed a Bill and have sent it to another place, expressing our distinct and deliberate opinion that the fifty-nine members who now hold places in this Parliament do not represent the opinion of the country. We have not only done that, but we have mapped out another lot of electorates; we have increased the number of members, that is, so far as our present Bill has gone towards increasing it; we have expressed our deliberate opinion in our acts, as well as in our words, that the number of members should be increased, in the Parliament which is to express the opinion of the country, to seventy-two. That gives us an additional thirteen members, a very considerable addition to a House which now consists of only fifty-nine members. Having admitted that we do not represent the colony, and that it is also essential that so many more members should be added to the number we now have, and also that we have altered almost every electorate in the colony by adding territory to some and taking it away from others—having admitted all that, we have no right to accept this Bill. Having passed that Bill through this House, and sent it to another place for confirmation, I do not think, sir, that the Premier is entitled to come down with a measure of this kind, and ask us to give our assent to it. Over and over again it has been represented—and the hon. gentleman himself has stated it—that the sooner we get through the necessary business of Parliament and go to the country the better. Having taken up that position, what justification has he for the new attitude he has assumed? If the hon. gentleman felt bound, as he said yesterday, by a promise to bring forward a measure of this

kind, why did he not go on with it in 1884? We know that the hon. gentleman himself is aware that he has not the confidence of his supporters now as he had it then. He has brought forward a most important measure which has been practically rejected, as he met with so much opposition from his own side of the House that he was forced to abandon it; and he has not been able to secure the confirmation of his proposals to rescue the country from its financial difficulties. That surely is a most important question—as important as any which can be submitted to Parliament. Two of the hon. gentleman's own colleagues have deserted him on one of the most important questions he has brought forward at any time since he has been the leader of this House, and a number of his followers have deserted him on a question almost equally important; and I ask it is a fair thing for him to come to this House, having advanced the Redistribution Bill so far, and ask hon. gentlemen to give their assent to the passage of a Bill which will interfere with the free action of the new Parliament when it has been called together? Does it not seem ludicrous that the Premier, having admitted that the present House, consisting of fifty-nine members, is insufficient to represent the country, and having decided that seventy-two members is the proper number to represent the country, should come down now and say, "We are the people to decide what the term of all future Parliaments shall be"? I say it is an indefensible position to take up. The hon. gentleman pointed out yesterday that he had given a promise some time ago that he would endeavour to pass a Bill of this character during this session. Well, sir, he brought in the Bill he promised in 1884, which was similar to this Bill, but not quite the same; and why did not he then, with all his supporters prepared to endorse his action in every important measure, force that Bill through the House, when it could reasonably be supposed that Parliament did represent the country? Why did he not then force it through, and settle the whole question at once by the votes of members who represented the country so immediately after the last general election? We know he carried the second reading of that Bill by two to one—by a majority of twenty-six to thirteen. That surely was an expression of opinion of the country at that time; but although he got the second reading passed, although the measure passed into committee, the hon. gentleman abandoned it after receiving a little opposition. He threw up the sponge at once, but not because of the opposition of those who sat opposite to him.

The PREMIER: Nonsense!

Mr. NORTON: It is not nonsense.

The PREMIER: Have you forgotten altogether?

Mr. NORTON: No, I have not.

The PREMIER: Then you are very far out in your facts.

Mr. NORTON: The Bill went into committee and was opposed by hon. members on this side of the House on the ground that the hon. gentleman had no right to ask that it should apply only to future parliaments. The hon. gentleman wished to insure himself, so far as he could, a lengthened term of office. He would not shorten the duration of the present Parliament, because it might interfere with that term; but anticipating that his opponents would come in at the next general election, he wished to limit the period of the next Parliament to three years. Now, we opposed it very strongly on those grounds. We insisted that what was fair for one side was fair for the other, and the hon. gentlemen's own supporters expressed

similar views. Four or five of them said distinctly that they considered that our arguments were equitable, and then the hon. gentleman easily abandoned the position, and allowed the Bill to stand over.

Mr. HAMILTON called attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. NORTON: I am sorry there is a quorum, because it would be a very good thing if the measure could be settled to-night. However, I do not wish to delay hon. gentlemen longer than I can help. I have pointed out that it was not the action of this side of the House that interfered with the passing of the Bill in 1884.

Mr. SMYTH called attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. NORTON: It was the expression of opinion on the part of the hon. gentleman's own supporters that induced him to abandon the Bill. Now, if that was not the case he has had ample opportunity since 1884 of fulfilling the promise which he says he made at one time of passing such a measure. There is another point to be considered. The hon. gentleman introduced the Bill in the beginning of September, I think, and if he had intended to pass it during this session, he might have brought it on sooner instead of waiting until a number of members had left Brisbane and gone to their constituencies or some other colony. If he had gone on with it after introducing it, it would have been some indication that he desired an expression of opinion from members present; but instead of doing that, he has allowed the measure to stand over until the end of the session, when most hon. members thought it had been abandoned. I did, at all events. Instead of proceeding with the measure, he waits for a thin House, and tries to sneak it through in a manner which, I think, is very discreditable to himself. I can only say that, so far as I have heard the arguments used by the hon. gentleman and those who support him, I do not think there is sufficient reason to warrant us in passing the Bill. I regret that the hon. gentleman should have thought it desirable to go on with the measure. I give him credit for having done a large amount of very good work during the time he has held office, and a very large amount of good work within the present session, especially in regard to the Redistribution Bill, and I may say with perfect freedom that he has bestowed great care and attention upon that measure and has successfully met a great deal of opposition which was scarcely justifiable, and I regret now that he should have introduced this measure with a view of taking an improper advantage of the Opposition, because, as I said yesterday, the Bill is aimed distinctly at the hon. gentleman's opponents.

The PREMIER: Nonsense!

Mr. NORTON: I still think so, because, as I said yesterday, if he wished to shorten the duration of Parliament he has had plenty of opportunities of doing so, and the hon. gentleman, I think, must admit that he can, at the present time, shorten this Parliament by bringing about a dissolution immediately after the session closes, but this Bill does not propose to do that. It proposes to allow the present Parliament to exist for its five years. Why should that be? It is generally understood that it is to be dissolved immediately after the Redistribution Bill is passed and the Estimates have been passed, but instead of making the Bill apply to the present Parliament it is made to apply to the next Parliament. Well, I confess I see no reason in that, nor why the hon. gentleman should have changed his views.

The PREMIER: The four years are up already.

Mr. NORTON: I am perfectly well aware of that. I have not forgotten how long the hon. gentleman has sat on that side; but I do not think that that is any reason for his change of views.

The PREMIER: How can the Bill be made applicable to this Parliament? The four years are up already.

Mr. NORTON: The Bill can be made applicable after the termination of the present session.

The PREMIER: Propose an amendment in committee.

Mr. NORTON: Probably I shall if the Bill ever gets so far, but I hope the hon. gentleman will allow it to drop, and take up the Estimates and put them through without loss of time. So far as my personal opinion goes, I must say that I never have believed in triennial parliaments. I certainly do not believe in quadrennial parliaments, but there is a great deal in the argument used yesterday that, now that we have passed a measure for the payment of members, the duration of parliaments should be shortened. I admit that, so far as to say that if at the next general election my constituents return me after expressing a desire that the duration of Parliament should be shortened, I would be willing to support it then. The time to bring forward a Bill of this kind is when the Parliament is admitted to represent the people, and not at a time when Parliament does not do so. The hon. gentleman has held various views on the matter. He was once inclined to believe that the duration of parliament should be limited to one year, only that would be impracticable. I know that since 1882 he has argued in favour of triennial parliaments, and now he comes down with a Bill to fix the duration of Parliament at four years. He simply tells the House that he thinks that perhaps three years might be too short. No good reason has been assigned for the change. The hon. gentleman is evidently not decided in his views, and it is therefore undesirable that he should attempt to press them upon the House. He should leave it to the next Parliament to decide what the term should be. The hon. gentleman has in many important respects found reason from time to time to change his views, and he may possibly later on see reason to change his views on this subject, and either go back to the view he held as to the duration being three years or possibly the present period, five years. I can only again say that I regret the hon. gentleman should have taken this action at a time when he may lead the public to suppose, and when he has led the members on this side to suppose, that by endeavouring to pass this Bill he is trying to sneak it through the House when a number of members have departed from Brisbane, by a sort of shuffle of the cards.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I hardly think this is the time to pass a Bill of this nature, at the end of a session, in a thin House, and a dead Parliament condemned to death by itself. It must be admitted that by passing the Redistribution Bill we have ourselves admitted that we, as a Parliament, do not represent the country, and therefore this is no time to pass a law of so great importance as a measure to determine the life of future Parliaments. The Premier stated, in support of his action, that he made a promise on the subject and intended to keep it. If he wished to do so he had a good opportunity, and we on this side offered to assist him to keep that promise if he would take his own medicine,

Mr. MOREHEAD: I regret very much, Mr. Speaker, to have to call your attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. HAMILTON: Directly we made the proposal that he should take his own medicine he dropped the subject like a hot potato. He now brings it up again when his own existence is determined.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I beg again to call attention to the state of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Quorum formed.

Mr. HAMILTON: The fact that this discussion has lasted now for only three-quarters of an hour, and that within that time you, sir, have ordered the bell to be rung five times to form a quorum of only sixteen members, shows the absurdity of introducing a Bill of such importance as this at such a time. The Premier's statement that this Bill is introduced in order to keep a promise he made is incorrect, because the promise he made was that he would shorten parliament from five years to three years' duration, and this Bill proposes that the duration of parliament shall be four years. I am certain that the Bill would never have been introduced if the hon. gentleman imagined that by its introduction he would shorten the life of the present Parliament. The hon. gentleman is evidently himself no believer in this measure, but simply wishes to save himself when going to the country, as he will have to do in a very short time, so that he may be able to say, "Well, I attempted to introduce this Bill." It is not a Bill to shorten the life of Parliament, but the term of office of his successors. He has no fixed opinion upon it himself. He has practically expressed himself in favour of quinquennial parliaments by sitting as a member of a Ministry in a quinquennial parliament, and by sitting also in this Parliament, which will have lived about four and a-half years. The hon. gentleman has at various times expressed various opinions on the subject in this House. He thought at one time that possibly annual parliaments might be desirable, and, if he really desired that, it was in his power to have passed such a Bill. He next spoke in favour of triennial parliaments, and he could have passed a Bill providing for triennial parliaments if he really was in favour of them; and only last night he expressed the opinion that perhaps, after all, quadrennial parliaments may be desirable. It is quite possible, judging from the various opinions he has held during successive sessions, that next year he will be in favour of quinquennial parliaments. I am, however, more inclined to believe that he will be in favour of annual parliaments next year, though he will not be in a position to carry such a measure.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the present appearance of this House is a sufficient demonstration to any man of common sense that this is not a time to go on with any amendment in the Constitution Act. The Government find a difficulty in getting a quorum present to hear arguments for or against this measure. I believe that at the present time if the members in the precincts of the House were counted they would be found to be not more than thirty. A few minutes ago there were only thirty-four, and I ask is that a sufficient number, and at a time when we have decided by our own act—the deliberate act of the Government and the House—that we do not represent this country as the country ought to be represented? Even with the diminished representation which the fifty-nine members of this House give to the country, only about half the number are present here to-night. Many of them have gone away entirely for this session and for this Parliament. I could count half-a-dozen who

certainly will not be back here. There is another point to be taken into consideration. There are many parliaments in the world that guard their constitutions so sacredly that a bare majority is not enough to alter the Constitution Act. It is so in several of the British colonies, it is so in several of the States of Europe, and more particularly it is so in the United States of America. Even the Congress itself is not able to make an alteration in the Constitution of that country—a country which, I may say now, the old country, from which we and they have sprung, is beginning to look to for lessons in the art of government. When an alteration is to be made in the Constitution there, it has to be passed by a three-fourths majority in Congress, and then it does not become law, so carefully do they guard their Constitution. It has then to be remitted to the several States for consideration, and three-fourths of the States are required to pass an affirmative resolution before that alteration takes place in the Constitution. Here the Premier regards the Constitution of this colony so lightly that he begins to alter it at the end of a Parliament which does not represent the country. Now, sir, I think if he were a statesman in any true sense of the word he would remit this question to the constituencies. That is the real constitutional and the real democratic method. There are many members on this side of the House, and I believe there are some on that, who do not believe either in a three years' or a four years' duration of parliaments. There are some who believe in a five years' duration of parliaments; that is the Constitution as it exists at present. Well, sir, I think that the same diversity of opinion very likely exists amongst the people outside.

Mr. HAMILTON drew attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: There is a considerable diversity in the duration of parliaments, even in the Australian colonies. Of course we know there is a great diversity elsewhere, but take our neighbours in whom we are most interested. Some of them have a parliament of three years' duration, some have a parliament of five years' duration—I am talking now of popular Assemblies—

The PREMIER: Who have five years?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: We have a Parliament of five years' duration.

The PREMIER: Are we our own neighbours?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The hon. member wants to make it four years, but he would still be out of touch with several of the Australian colonies. The constitutions of the Upper Chambers in the different colonies are nearly all different from each other, so that there is really no standing rule by which such matters are governed. In South Australia the Upper House sits for only three years—the same as the Assembly—and it is elective; in Victoria they sit for six years, and the Lower Chamber for three years, and both are elective; in Tasmania the Upper Chamber sits for six years and the Assembly for five years, and both are elective; in New Zealand there is a nominated Upper Chamber and a three years' Assembly; in Queensland there is a nominated Upper Chamber and a five years' Assembly; in New South Wales there is a nominated Upper Chamber and a three years' Assembly;—all differing from each other, so that there really is no standing rule. Now, I consider that under the circumstances this is a matter that should be remitted to the constituencies outside. Any man imbued with the spirit of democracy would not try a question of this kind, or, in fact, any important question altering the Constitution, without having first

ascertained the opinion of the constituencies. Now, I say the opinion of the constituencies on this question has never been ascertained. I know it never was a question at any election I contested.

Mr. KATES: Oh, yes, it was!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: When?

The PREMIER: The last one. It has often been discussed in this House.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Perhaps the hon. member for Darling Downs and the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government know better than I do what took place at my election. I said it was never a question at any election I contested. The hon. gentleman should listen attentively before he dares to interrupt and contradict. I have heard the matter mentioned ever since I entered the House, but it was simply as a tentative measure; it was never brought within the range of practical politics since I have been in the House. Let the people decide the matter, and when the representatives come back here fresh from the people—delegates, as I may almost say—with a mandate from the people, they can pass a measure of that kind for three or four years, whatever mandate they may receive. I am quite certain that in the beginning of a new parliament, if a measure of that kind was made applicable to the then existing Parliament, no minority of this House, whatever opinions they might have as to the duration of parliaments, would oppose the wishes of the majority. If the Premier had brought in a Bill in the beginning of the present Parliament to apply to this Parliament, he would never have been opposed as he was; but he has never been consistent upon this measure. He had a notice on the paper for several weeks during the second or third year of the last Parliament—namely, in 1881—for shortening the duration of parliaments to three years, and he was twitted time after time to bring his motion on for discussion, and when he did bring it on it was one fortnight before Parliament rose.

The PREMIER: I brought it on as soon as I could.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The hon. gentleman did not bring it on as soon as he could, but as soon as it suited his own convenience.

The PREMIER: As soon as I could.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: As soon as it suited the convenience of the hon. gentleman. On the 29th September he brought his motion forward, and on the 13th of the following month Parliament was prorogued.

The PREMIER: The reasons were given at the time.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The only reason the hon. gentleman gave at the time was—"I thought that would have been said." When the hon. gentleman introduced that Bill he wished it to apply to the then existing Parliament. But he was very careful when he came into office and introduced a similar measure, that it should not apply to the Parliament over which he presided. Oh, no! And now, at the end of a Parliament that is dead, and almost buried—it will soon be buried—he brings forward another Bill. It is not the same Bill at all; it is certainly one to shorten the duration of parliaments, but only by one year, and it is to apply to the next parliament. Of course it cannot be applied to this because it has already lived four years. Instead of trying to act up to his opinion, if he has a confirmed opinion upon the subject, he has been wavering and wobbling about from one side to the other; and now, when probably he may suspect

that he is not going to rule the next parliament, as he has ruled this, he wants to pass a measure and apply it to his opponents. I make bold to say that if the hon. gentleman was sure of having his lease of office renewed this measure would not have seen daylight this session.

The PREMIER: If I am here next session I will bring it in.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: If you are in opposition?

The PREMIER: If I am in the Government I will bring it in.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Bring in what?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: This four-years parliaments Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then take it out now.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The Premier says he would bring it in next parliament. I suppose by that he means this four-years Bill. I can understand nothing else. If that is correct the hon. gentleman has altered his mind about triennial parliaments. I enter my protest against this measure being debated and decided by a House that is unfit to decide it. I enter my protest, and demand that it be left to the people to decide for themselves; and I say, as a democrat, that every member of this House should make the same demand. It is by the people of the colony that any alteration in the Constitution should be made; not by themselves individually, but by their demand made at the poll in the election of their representatives. If their representatives come here fresh, as I believe they will next April, or at the furthest next May, we can then have a measure for three or four years' parliaments, according as the constituencies decide. But till then we should not tamper with the Constitution in any way whatever. I shall certainly do my utmost to have the question remitted to the constituencies, and although I believe in five years' parliaments, still if the people wish to have three years' parliaments I will most readily acquiesce in their wishes.

Mr. ADAMS said: Mr. Speaker,—I think we should be acting very unwisely indeed in going on with this measure at the present time. Though I was not in the House at the time, I have read in the reports that in 1884 a Bill was brought in providing for triennial parliaments. That Bill, although introduced by the Government of the day, was rejected. Three years have elapsed since then, and the Premier has altered his opinion. He finds out now that triennial parliaments are not sufficiently long. He has admitted that for the first year of a parliament new members especially have to be worked up so as to be able to perform their duties properly. Taking into consideration, therefore, that three years lapsed since the Triennial Parliaments Bill was entertained, and that the hon. gentleman has altered his opinions during that time, and now wishes to make it four years, I think that it is just possible that if he came back to the House with a majority, and took another three years to consider the matter, he would come to the conclusion that five years is short enough. When I was before my constituents the first question that was put to me was whether I was in favour of triennial parliaments; my invariable answer was that I thought triennial parliaments were quite long enough if we had a spendthrift or bad Ministry, but that if we had a good Ministry I considered that five years was not too long. I know from my experience since I have been in the House that it is impossible for any Government, be they ever so willing, to initiate a real good policy during the first year, and it would take some time afterwards to mature that

policy; they could not do that in one or two years. It has been admitted that very little work is done during the last year of a parliament. Therefore I think it would be wise, as I have stated in the House before, now that we have passed the Redistribution Bill, to go on with Supply, and when Supply is granted, for each and every member to go before his constituents. I hardly know where my constituents are. A few days ago I was supposed to represent Mulgrave; at the present time it is Musgrave.

The PREMIER: If you do not know whom you represent you ought to go away.

Mr. ADAMS: Perhaps the hon. gentleman is getting tired of me. It is just possible that he himself ought to have gone away before this. I think, if the constitutional question is taken into consideration, he ought, by rights, to have gone away before now, and yet he is actually trying to force measures on a struggling, dying Parliament. I am one of the youngest members in the House, but I believe we ought really to go before our constituents, wherever they may be. I may or may not come back again. I do not know whether I shall be here next year or not, or whether I am uttering the wishes of my constituents. I hardly know where my constituents are at the present time. One part of my constituency is in Bundaberg, another part in Musgrave, and another part in the Burnett. Therefore I hardly know whom I am representing, and it is only right that we should ascertain the views of our constituents before we are asked to settle this question. We shall then know what to do. It is unwise and impolitic in every way to be compelled to sit here and discuss measures which ought not to be passed by this Parliament.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to say a word in reply to the hon. member for Townsville. That hon. member is not, perhaps, aware that in the bulk of the constituencies at the last general election, and also at the general election of 1878, the cry was for triennial parliaments. You yourself, Mr. Speaker, will bear me out when I say that it was the general wish of the electors that the duration of parliament should be shortened to three years. The reason urged was that if they returned a good member they would have an opportunity of returning him again, while if they returned a bad or undeserving member they would soon have an opportunity of turning him out. I do not know whether it was the case at Townsville, but in the bulk of the electorates the cry was for triennial parliaments, and if an amendment to that effect is introduced in committee I shall certainly support it.

Mr. DICKSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think there is a great deal of force in the remarks of the hon. member for Mulgrave. The question of the duration of parliaments has received the consideration of the Government and of this side of the House for several years, but up to the present session it has always received consideration in the form of triennial parliaments. I for one frankly admit, as I said yesterday, that upon full consideration of the matter I have become somewhat adverse to triennial parliaments. I think the term would be too limited to be beneficial to the State; for this reason that the first year, as I said then, would be mainly occupied by many new members in acquiring a knowledge of their parliamentary duties and settling down to their legislative work; while the last year would be taken up with electioneering speeches and tactics, leaving only one year for the solid work of legislation. Besides, it would greatly unsettle the functions of government; the interval between parliaments

would be too short to enable them to do anything in the shape of solid or sound legislation. But the complexion of the question is now somewhat altered. Up to the present year the policy of the Government and the party was for triennial parliaments. Some of us have now changed our views on the subject, and, seeing that the Redistribution Bill has been passed, which has altered the character of the electorates entirely—the electorate I have the honour to represent, for instance, having been cut up into four sections—it seems to me that this question as to the duration of future parliaments ought to be referred to the electors for their opinion. They have not been consulted as to this new term of four years. Some have expressed an opinion in favour of triennial parliaments, but it is just possible that since that time many of them may have changed their minds on the subject, as in my own case. It is also threatened that in committee an amendment will be moved making the term three years, which I shall certainly oppose, as I have no doubt many other hon. members will. Considering all these things, and also that there have already been very forcible arguments urged against it, I think the Premier might see his way to withdraw the question for the present, and let the new parliament decide upon it.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Enoggera has just admitted that he has changed his mind on this question, and I have no doubt, from what we have heard before in this Chamber in previous sessions, that the Premier himself has also changed his mind upon it. I do not know what questions are to be relegated to the constituencies, but no better question could be chosen than the one now under consideration—namely, whether the duration of Parliament shall be three years, four years, or five years. I do not suppose it matters a great deal, but the question is one for the country to decide. When we see a leading member like the hon. member for Enoggera—who has filled the position of Colonial Treasurer with credit to himself and honour to the country—change his mind, I do not see why other hon. members should not change their minds also. No doubt, if the Premier spoke his mind candidly, we should find the same thing. We know that first of all he was in favour of triennial parliaments, saying at the same time that he was not averse to annual parliaments, which were the natural outcome of representative government by the people. But now we have a quadrennial Bill before the House, and that this House is fit to consider a vital question of that sort I scarcely think the Premier himself, if he spoke candidly, would allow. I contend that this House, which is now in its fourth year, is not fit to consider and discuss, and decide upon such a question as that, especially after the Redistribution Bill has been passed, and in the face of the fact that we have nearly the whole of the Estimates to pass. The Railway and Works Estimates will, I am certain, take a great deal of consideration; they have not been touched yet and are a long way off. Besides that there are the Supplementary Estimates to be disposed of, and it seems to me that we have still a month's work before us.

The PREMIER: Three months' at the present rate of progress.

Mr. PALMER: Very likely. Then why introduce a question of this sort, that has been discussed before, and which the hon. gentleman himself has withdrawn almost from the first year of the present Parliament? I can hardly reconcile that with the idea that the Premier is quite sincere in this question. From what I have heard him say and from the manner in which he brought the Bill in pre-

viously, I do not believe that he is as sincere as he wishes us to believe; and from the admission of the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, I am sure other members have had occasion to change their minds. I have not changed mine. I believe that a new member of this House feels himself utterly useless the first year he is in it, and if he wishes to become useful by studying the forms and the reports that come before the House, it will take him the first year, if not two years, to acquire the necessary information that will give him proper judgment on matters concerning the government of the country; so that in a four-years parliament he would have at most only two sessions in which he would find himself of any great service. I do not think the Bill will meet with favour in the House or out of it.

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—I am pledged to my constituents to endeavour to shorten the duration of parliaments; therefore I am prepared to sit up all night, or any number of nights, in order to do so.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I think I must say a few words upon this question, although the hon. the Premier is very anxious to get into committee. My hon. friend, the member for Enoggera, has just said, in regard to triennial parliaments, that the first year is wasted because members are not up to their work, the next year they may be able to do a little work, and the last year they do none at all because they are talking all the time to their constituents. It is a wonderful thing, sir, that in countries where they have triennial parliaments they do any business at all. How are those countries governed that have triennial parliaments? How are the neighbouring colonies governed? Some of them may be governed badly; I know one of them that is; but I do not think that is the fault of triennial parliaments, because we know another colony that has triennial parliaments that is very well governed—a model colony so far as government is concerned. So that I do not see that that argument applies at all. To use an argument like that as against triennial parliaments is a very weak one. I am thoroughly in favour of triennial parliaments, and shall, if no more influential member than myself does so, move an amendment to that effect; but still I agree with the leader of the Opposition that in a moribund parliament such a measure as this should not have been brought in. I think the Government are acting unfairly to this House and unfairly to the country in forcing this measure at this late hour in the life of this Parliament, and also probably in what is a late hour of their own life. I have no more to say at present, Mr. Speaker, but rose simply for the purpose of expressing my views so far.

Question put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE.

On the preamble—

The PREMIER said, in moving that the preamble be postponed, he should take that opportunity of answering some of the speeches that had been made that evening. He should have been very glad to have done so earlier if he had had an opportunity. Of course they all knew that the Bill had been the subject of discussion since 7 o'clock—at least the object of discussion.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is not the case.

The PREMIER said he thought so.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. member may think what he likes, but it is not a fact.

The PREMIER said everybody else in the Committee thought so. However, that was not a matter of any great importance. But a number of things had been said about the Bill which



called for an immediate answer. The memories of some hon. members seemed to be extremely defective—that was the most charitable construction that one could put upon it. One or two members had expressed surprise and astonishment that the Government should have brought on a Bill of that kind at that period and said they never had the slightest idea that anything of the kind was intended until it was brought on the day before yesterday. Now, when he announced on the 30th August last what business the Government proposed to go on with during the session, he mentioned that as one of the important Bills the Government intended to go on with.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Before you were defeated.

The PREMIER said that was on the 30th of August, after the resolution in the Committee of Ways and Means was disposed of. He then stated the business that the Government proposed to proceed with during the session, and that was one of the important matters mentioned, and it had stood next to the Electoral Districts Bill on the paper ever since. It was distinctly stated that the Government intended to go on with that Bill, and that when it was introduced it would be in the form in which it was.

Mr. NORTON: Was it?

The PREMIER said the hon. member had now got up and said that he never had the slightest idea that the Government ever contemplated anything of the kind, although he (the Premier) took that formal opportunity of stating what the intentions of the Government were, and that that was one of the Bills they intended to proceed with. The hon. member's memory must be very defective; he supposed that must be the case. Then the hon. member repeated again the statement that the Government could have passed the Bill in 1884. When the Bill was brought in in 1884, the second reading was carried by a majority of two to one, and he believed the actual majority in the House in favour of it was greater, but the hon. members on the other side proceeded to stonewall it on the ground—the ostensible ground—that it must apply to the present Parliament. At that time it was understood that there was to be a redistribution of the electorates at the earliest possible moment. The census was going to be taken in 1886, and they had no materials for the redistribution until the census was taken. They also knew that the result of the census would not be known until the year 1887; so that if the Bill had been passed and made applicable to the present Parliament, Parliament would have had to be dissolved last November, and the new Parliament would certainly not have devoted its first session to a Redistribution Bill. The result would have been to have put off the election, under the new electorates, for at least two years later than it would be at the present time. That would have been the certain result, and that was pointed out. The ostensible reason for opposing the Bill was as he had stated, but hon. members opposite stonewalled it really because they did not like it. They seemed to have some extraordinary idea that that was a sort of measure only brought in to deal with one's opponents. He could not himself sympathise with arguments of that kind. The hon. member made very sure that the other side were coming in with the next parliament, but he (the Premier) was sure that hon. members who now sat on the other side would not lead any party in the next parliament. He was quite sure that unless they made some new arrangement, and found some new leader, the present party in power were likely to return much stronger.

Mr. MURPHY: That is only a prophecy.

The PREMIER said he had just as much right to prophesy as hon. members on the other side, who were so fond of counting their chickens before they were hatched, and he was just as likely to prove a good prophet as they were. To him it was a matter of perfect indifference on which side he sat in the next parliament. He had, to a certain extent, a predilection for the other side.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You have never shown it.

The PREMIER said he had given the reason why the Government did not go on with the Bill in 1884; but now the Opposition intended to stonewall it on the ground that it was too late to deal with the measure, and that the present Parliament was not competent to deal with any business. He had often accused them of taking up some parrot cry, and repeating it till they thought it was true, but now they had taken the statement of some ill-informed writer in the Press, who, ignorant of constitutional practice and precedent, thought that by making the assertion that a parliament in which a Redistribution Act was passed could not deal with any other business, he had thereby established a great constitutional rule. He should like to see some constitutional authority better than an ill-informed writer in the Press produced in support of that position. He should like to know also at what period of the session the parliament became incompetent to deal with business.

Mr. MOREHEAD: When you were defeated.

The PREMIER: Was it the moment the intention to introduce a Redistribution Bill was announced, or was it when the Bill was read a first time? There was no distinction between reading the Bill a first time and reading it a third time, so far as that argument was concerned. When it became law there might possibly be something said in favour of the argument, but it was not law yet. In 1878 a Redistribution Bill was the first Act passed during the session, and a great deal of useful work, some of which was contested work, was done after that. In 1872 a Redistribution Bill was passed early in the session, and the House went on with a great deal of difficult work after that, and another session was held in the following year. Until Parliament was prorogued it retained all its functions to do necessary work, and hon. members were now asked to pass a measure they had agreed to by a large majority in 1884. There was not the slightest reason, on constitutional grounds, why they should not proceed with the measure. The fact was that hon. members were, he believed, sincere in the matter, but were "under a strong delusion to believe a lie."

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is rather strong language.

The PREMIER: Perhaps the hon. member did not know that he was quoting; perhaps he was not familiar with the work from which he quoted.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I admit that the devil can quote Scripture. I may not know as much about it as the hon. member.

The PREMIER said it would be much more satisfactory if hon. members met the question on fair grounds. He admitted that some strong arguments had been used, but the arguments he had been combating were absolutely weak. He did not like to see utterly preposterous propositions laid down and treated as if they were overwhelmingly true and right. The hon. member just now said the Government



were beaten on the land tax. That might be a reason why the Government should not carry on certain kinds of business, but it was no reason why they should not carry on any business. It had been said that the Government was moribund, but the Government did not think so. The Government had done some very good work since they became moribund, at any rate, and were likely to do a great deal more. If the hon. member's arguments were correct, they ought to do no more business at all; but that was not the position they were in. The Government were bound to do business. They had passed the Redistribution Bill so far as the Assembly was concerned, and as a matter of fact they were bound to carry on the business of the country as much as any Government that ever existed. He did not want to stay there all night, and he did not propose to ask the Committee to do so. He should be content, if the preamble were postponed, to move the Chairman out of the chair. As to whether the Government should proceed with the measure further, that was a matter to be taken into consideration; hon. members on the other side had expressed their intention to stonewall it. There were periods when stonewalling might be successful, and there were periods when stonewalling might be justified, but he did not think that was one of those occasions. He was of opinion that stonewalling the measure would be highly improper, because it was a matter on which the opinion of the House had been plainly expressed. The second reading had previously been carried by a majority of two to one, and yesterday it was carried without division. Perhaps it would have been better if a division had been taken, to show the majority in its favour. As to saying that some members had gone away, they went after full information had been given that the Bill was going to be brought forward. It was a matter that would have to be settled. He was sure a five-years parliament was too long. It was always too long in Queensland, and it had become especially too long now that members were paid for their services. If hon. members on the other side liked to heap up against themselves condemnation, he did not mind. He never did mind when hon. members on the other side made great mistakes, so long as they did not hurt the country. So long as they only injured their own prospects and diminished their own evil influence, he looked on with great complaisance. It was not necessary to say any more. He had answered some of the most extraordinary arguments that had been used in opposition to the measure.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the Premier was crawling down his tree in as stealthy a way as he had ever seen him come down.

Mr. NORTON: Like a native bear—wrong end first.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Premier had told the Committee that the action he had taken with regard to the Bill was consistent with what he formerly stated, yet in the face of that he told the Committee that he was going to abandon the measure.

The PREMIER: I did not.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that if the words uttered by the hon. gentleman meant anything, he led the Committee to believe so.

Mr. W. BROOKES: He did not say so. He said he would give it consideration.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would much rather deal with the senior member for North Brisbane in that Chamber. Outside he admitted that the junior member for North Brisbane was a much

more pleasant companion. They had had from the Premier a statement that he hoped the Opposition, during the next Parliament, would be led in a stronger manner than during the present. He (Mr. Morehead) sincerely hoped so too. So far as he was individually concerned, he cared nothing for the honours, or patronage, or emoluments of office. He did not care whether he was ever in office again; but so long as he was a member of the House he cared for the good government of the colony, and he hoped he would never see again an individual Government, an autocratic Government, such as had existed all the time the Premier had held office. There had been no more offensive Minister ever held sway since he (Mr. Morehead) had been a member of parliament, as he had been for the last ten or fifteen years. There was no gentleman who, with the knowledge that he possessed and the great ability that he also possessed, and the legal knowledge that he undoubtedly possessed, had more deliberately tried to injure the feelings of young members than the Premier. He heard some hon. member say "Bosh!" but he could tell that hon. member that when he had been as long in the House as he had, and had had as much experience of the House and had as intimate a knowledge of the way in which the Premier dealt with a political adversary, he could not say so. As he had said before in that House—even before, possibly, the hon. member who had interrupted him had ever read a political paper—he had accused the Premier of having reached his position over the tarnished reputations of his adversaries. That was the reputation the hon. gentleman had acquired, and the reputation which would stick to him. He (Mr. Morehead) would rather remain in the humble position that he was in at present, without a handle to his name, than have acquired the position the Premier had by the arts, the strategies, the devices, and treacheries the hon. gentleman had employed.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I rise to a point of order. Is the word "treachery" parliamentary?

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was when applied to the Premier.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I submit that the word "treachery" is not parliamentary, and not a word to be applied to a gentleman.

The CHAIRMAN: The term "treachery," if used by one member to another in the House of Commons, would not be allowed.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that without a moment's hesitation he disputed the Chairman's ruling, and he could prove incontestably that the word had been used over and over again in the House of Commons. It was the only word in the English language by which he could describe what he believed to be the conduct of the Premier. If the junior member for North Brisbane could find a word that would convey his meaning, and which would suit him better, he would be very happy to accept it. He had at any rate attempted to convey in, he trusted, the most vigorous English at his command, the way in which the Premier had stepped into power, and he might go on to say that he had no desire to obtain place, power, or patronage on such conditions as the hon. gentleman had. He was perfectly willing, if a constituency did him the honour to return him to a seat in the House, to do all he could for the benefit of the colony, so far as his lights went. That was all he wished to do, and was all he had to say to the Premier in that direction. So that when the hon. gentleman sneered at members on the other side, as if they were beneath his notice, as he did over and over again, he might consider this—that their positions in the colony outside

the House were as honourable and as respectable as that which the hon. gentleman held himself. Let that not be forgotten.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Nonsense!

Mr. MOREHEAD said of course he did not know what position the hon. member held outside. But he knew what position he held inside, and he must say it was a very elevated one on certain occasions.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Talk sense!

Mr. MOREHEAD said the junior member for North Brisbane asked him to talk sense. He admitted that it was very hard, with the hon. gentleman opposite to him, to talk in a way that would be considered by him to be sense. With regard to the statement made by the Premier, he might say that it never was anticipated by any members of the House, except possibly by the hon. member himself and his hangers-on, the other members of the Ministry, that that measure would ever have been persevered in. It was perfectly true that on the 30th August the Premier announced to the House that he intended to proceed with a measure in that direction; but with what had happened since that time, and the Premier's finding that his Redistribution Bill would have been actually wrecked and abandoned by the Government had it not been for the support received from the other side, no one imagined he would ever go on with any other measure besides Supply. He would ask the Premier to admit, if he could admit anything candidly, whether the Redistribution Bill was not saved by the Opposition at the sacrifice of the interests of the North? With a loyalty to the country which, he thought, was almost unexampled on the part of an Opposition in the colony, the present Opposition stuck to the Government and carried them through in times of trouble and grievous tribulation, over that Redistribution Bill. The Government knew it, and all hon. members knew it. The Opposition helped them over the bridge, and as soon as they were safely over, and the Premier thought he had a fresh lease of office, he turned round and abused every man who helped him.

The PREMIER: This is too much!

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was not half as much as the hon. gentleman deserved.

The PREMIER: Where does the abuse come in?

Mr. MOREHEAD said the whole conduct of the Premier that evening deserved it. His whole conduct of business since he had carried his Redistribution Bill had shown that he had waxed fat and kicked, or wanted to kick, but they would prevent the hon. gentleman's kicking. The Opposition said—and he thought unanimously—that they would go no further in the way of legislation; they were quite prepared to give the Government Supply. They had passed the Redistribution Bill, and beyond that they would not go. Those were words not of threat in any way; but they were words of information to the Premier, and, in making that statement, he would say that he believed that the feelings of the inhabitants of the colony were with him. They had acted all through, more particularly lately, for the benefit of the Government. They had helped them through with their Redistribution Bill, and they were willing to help them through with Supply; but no further would they go. He thought he had explained exactly the position the Opposition had taken up. The Opposition had shown no inordinate desire, he thought, to put the Government out of office. If they had desired it they could have done so, and it would have suited the Premier exactly; but at that time it did not suit the Opposition to do so. The

Premier knew what he was alluding to. That gentleman knew he was well prepared for defeat on a certain occasion, and he was also prepared to resign and request the other side of the House to form a Ministry; but the other side of the House was not to be caught thus, though possibly the time was coming, which the Premier seemed to think was not far distant, when he himself would have to haul down his colours, and sit on the Opposition side of the House, where he had no doubt the hon. gentleman would be a very much better critic of those who had then the honour of sitting on the Government side than any hon. member at present on the Opposition side of the House was of him.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he wished to anticipate the Premier so that he might reply to him. The hon. gentleman had forgotten one very important point. He defended himself by saying that if the Triennial Parliaments Bill had applied to the present Parliament they could not possibly have had the Redistribution Bill, as Parliament would have been dissolved before the result of the census was known, and therefore a Redistribution Bill could not be passed. Now, the Bill they had before them was not a Triennial Parliaments Bill; it was a Quadrennial Parliaments Bill. It was not a similar Bill in any sense whatever, and had the hon. gentleman desired to shorten the duration of parliaments he should have introduced the present Bill instead of the Triennial Parliaments Bill. He could have then had all his arrangements made for the general election, and they would now be on the eve of a general election.

The PREMIER said he was not going to answer the angry speech of the hon. member for Balonne, but he wished to say a word or two in reply. First as to the contention of the hon. member for Townsville. It did not occur to anyone at that time to introduce a Quadrennial Parliaments Bill, to make the duration of parliaments four years instead of three—it did not occur to him certainly; but during the last year it had been suggested to him, by the hon. member for Enoggera, he thought, that four years would be a convenient compromise between the two periods. But, as he had said, he had not the slightest wish to answer the angry speech of the hon. member for Balonne.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I was not angry.

The PREMIER said he fully recognised the assistance which the Government had received during the passage of the Redistribution Bill from the Opposition, for which he gave them his hearty thanks. He believed they only did their duty, but he thanked them for it. He had just this to say: that he wondered how often the Government were to be told that they were at the end of their tether, and that they would never come back to power again, without occasionally saying a word or two in reply. Was the monopoly on one side of saying that kind of things, and were the Government to be told ten times a day, or ten times in every speech, and in hundreds of speeches, that they would cease to exist as soon as this Parliament dissolved, and might they not once to the hundred times reply that it was just possible that the other thing might result? Might they not say once, in reply to the hundreds of speeches on that subject, that it was possible that the boot might be on the other leg? And yet for that the hon. gentleman had given him the lecture which they had heard.

Question put and passed.

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. There is only one item of private business for to-morrow. After that is disposed of, the Government propose to take the second reading of the Distilleries Bill, which is almost formal, and then proceed with Committee of Supply.

The House adjourned at a quarter to 11 o'clock.