

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 21 AUGUST 1888

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 21 August, 1888

Petitions—Influx of Rabbits—The Bowen Railway—Protection of Natural Grasses—Railway from Bowen towards Townsville—Railway from Yeulba to St. George.—Messages from the Governor—Railways and Tranways Bill—Brisbane Water Supply Bill—Public Works Lands Resumption Bill—Valuation Act Amendment Bill.—Questions.—Personal Explanation.—Joint Committees.—Motion for Adjournment.—Bremer Railway Bridge.—Address in Reply—resumption of debate.—Adjournment.

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

PETITIONS.

INFLEX OF RABBITS.

Mr. ALLAN presented a petition from certain stockowners, landowners, and residents in the Inglewood division for the prevention of the influx of rabbits into the colony; and moved that the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. MURPHY presented a petition from certain landholders, stockowners, and residents in the Balonne district for the prevention of the influx of rabbits into the colony; and moved that the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

THE BOWEN RAILWAY.

Mr. COWLEY presented a petition from certain residents of the Lower Burdekin praying that the construction of the proposed Bowen railway may be carried on simultaneously from the junction of the Northern Railway towards Bowen, and from Bowen towards the Junction; and moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On the motion of Mr. COWLEY, the petition was received.

PROTECTION OF NATURAL GRASSES.

Mr. PALMER presented a petition from certain residents of the Gregory district praying for such an amendment of the law as will allow of the conviction and punishment of persons who wilfully and maliciously set fire to natural grasses; and moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On the motion of Mr. PALMER, the petition was received.

RAILWAY FROM BOWEN TOWARDS TOWNSVILLE.

Mr. SAYERS presented a petition from 3,000 residents of Charters Towers, Ravenswood, and the surrounding districts in favour of the construction of the railway from Bowen to join the Northern line at the 37-miles peg, instead of at the 6-miles peg; and moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On the motion of Mr. SAYERS, the petition was received.

RAILWAY FROM YEULBA TO ST. GEORGE.

Mr. MURPHY presented a petition praying for the construction of a railway from Yeulba, *via* Surat, to St. George; and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

RAILWAY FROM WARWICK TO ST. GEORGE.

Mr. ANNEAR, on behalf and at the request of Mr. Morgan, member for Warwick, presented a petition from the mayor and corporation of Warwick, and the members of the Glengallan Divisional Board, praying for the construction of a line of railway from Warwick to St. George; and moved that it be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

Mr. ANNEAR moved that the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR.

RAILWAYS BILL.—BRISBANE WATER SUPPLY BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, transmitting for consideration a Bill to amend the laws relating to the construction and regulation by the Government of railways and tramways, and to make better provision for the administration of the same; also a Bill to amend the law relating to the supply of water to the city of Brisbane and the suburbs thereof, and to make better provision therefor.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) moved that the message be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC WORKS LANDS RESUMPTION BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, transmitting for consideration a Bill to amend the Public Works Lands Resumption Act of 1878.

The PREMIER moved that the message be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

VALUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, transmitting for consideration a Bill to amend the Valuation Act of 1887.

The PREMIER moved that the message be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. JORDAN asked the Minister for Railways—

If it is the intention of the Government to proceed with the extension of the South Brisbane branch of the Southern and Western Railway?—and, if so, whether the plans will be submitted for the approval of Parliament during the present session?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. M. Nelson) replied—

The railway proposals of the Government will be submitted to the House in due course.

Mr. WIMBLE asked the Minister for Railways—

When will the plans and book of reference of the ^{the} Cairns to Herberton Railway be _{of the House?}

FOR RAILWAYS re-

The Chief Engineer, Northern and Carpentaria division, advises that he expects those plans will be ready in a few days.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Minister for Railways—

1. Have the Government received any tenders for the construction of deviation at Swan Creek, on the Killarney Branch Railway, necessary to avoid the present bridge over that creek?

2. Have the tenders been considered?—and, if so, with what result?

3. When is the work likely to be commenced?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied—

1. Yes.

2. The engineer has been authorised to accept one of the tenders.

3. As soon as necessary formalities are completed.

Mr. HYNE asked the Minister for Lands—

If export duty is being paid on the Cypress pine now being cut in Wide Bay and exported to the Northern Territory of South Australia?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. M. Black) replied—

There is no export duty being collected, nor is there any law by which such duty could possibly be collected.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. COWLEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to make a personal explanation. On Thursday last I was asked by the hon. member for Toowoomba to pair with him in the division. I did so, and was under the impression that it would be recorded in *Hansard*. I find it not so recorded, and I wish to make this explanation as a justification of my action. I do not wish my constituents to think I shirked the first division in the House this session.

JOINT COMMITTEES.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move—

1. That the following members of the House be appointed members of the Joint Library Committee, namely:—The Hon. the Speaker, Mr. Jordan, and Mr. Cowley.

2. That the following members of the House be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management of the Refreshment Rooms, namely:—The Hon. the Speaker, Mr.iland, and Mr. Murphy.

3. That the following members of the House be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management and superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings, &c.,—The Hon. the Speaker, Mr. Agnew, and

That these appointments be communicated to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form, in reply to their message of the 15th instant. Question put, and passed.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

BREMER RAILWAY BRIDGE.

MR. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move the adjournment of the House with a view of calling attention to the remarkable answers given by the Minister for Works to certain questions he was asked on Thursday last concerning the state of the railway bridge over the Bremer at Ipswich. The hon. gentleman was asked—

“1. Is the Government aware that the present composite railway and foot and vehicular traffic bridge across the Bremer at Ipswich is a constant source of danger to life and limb, besides being entirely inadequate as a means of communication?”

“2. Does the Government intend to take any steps in the matter?”

The answers of the Minister for Works to these questions were—“1. No; 2. No.” It seems very curious to me that though the Minister for Works held his present position before, when this bridge was in no better state than it is at present, and though he was succeeded by a gentleman who admitted the dangerous state of this bridge, and had a survey made for a new bridge, the particulars of which, I suppose, are to be found in the department, yet the hon. gentleman who is now Minister for Works is not apparently aware of the facts of this case, which are known not only to all the officials of the department, but to all railway people, and the people of the district of Ipswich. It seems to me a remarkable answer, because if the Minister for Works had been anxious to give an answer to the question put he could have found in his department all the particulars concerning this bridge. It is well known that not only have cattle, horses, and vehicles been knocked down—cattle killed and vehicles destroyed—on this bridge, but many persons have had narrow escapes of their lives on it. One instance I can give where, on the meeting of a bullock team and dray with another vehicle coming the opposite way, and a train passing between them on this bridge, the cattle took fright, there was a rush to both sides of the bridge, and some persons on the bridge had to climb over the rails and hang on to the wires over the water to escape accident. And this sort of thing is not unusual. It is equally strange that the hon. gentleman should give the same answer—“No”—to the second as well as to the first of my questions. If the department could not inform the hon. member as to the state of this bridge, one of his supporters, the present member for Stanley, could have given him all the information required. That hon. member is so well aware of the dangerous state of this bridge that a short time ago he actually stated to a very representative assembly of the people of Ipswich that the members for Ipswich had not done their duty or a new bridge would have been supplied to them long ago; and

he promised them that in a short time he would be able to supply them with no less than four bridges over the Bremer. I would advise the Minister for Works, if he will not take the trouble to find out these things, to join the body called the “Know Nothing Society.” It seems to me that the answers given were not only unbecoming a Minister for Works, but were given with a view to aggravate the district I represent, and I bring this motion before the House to call public attention to those answers.

Mr. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—I should be wanting in my duty to my constituents if I did not add a few words to the remarks of my hon. friend and colleague in the representation of Ipswich. I can assure the Government that the bridge in its present state is a source of danger. As far back as 1882 I was myself driving in my buggy with my wife and child across that bridge, and we very nearly met with a serious accident. Accidents on that bridge are almost daily occurrences. I have no desire to use strong or offensive language in this matter, but I would call the attention of the Government to the fact that this is a composite bridge. The railway line runs along the side of it, and the bridge itself is very narrow. There is a whistling steam engine on one side of you, and the bridge is nearly always blocked up with traffic. I submit, also, that the exit from the bridge is as dangerous as the state of the bridge itself. After you go off the bridge the roadway forms something like the letter Z, and you do not know what you are going to meet. You may meet a man on horseback or a dray loaded with timber. I do not know that it is necessary to railway management that there should be a perpetual whistling kept up by the engines shunting across the bridge, but that is what is done. I was not aware that my colleague was going to bring forward this motion, and I had no wish to trouble the House so soon again, but I am certain the district I represent does not want anything unreasonable. I should be very sorry to place the claims of Ipswich on anything like an unreasonable basis; and so long as I have the honour to be here I shall not attempt to exact or ask from any Government anything that is not fair and reasonable. I think if the hon. gentleman who has charge of this department with a very serious grievance exists in the state of this bridge.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—There may be some excuse for the last hon. member who spoke, because he is a new member; but there is none for the member who moved this motion for putting it in the way he did. I do not think he ought to commence the session by insulting the Minister for Works by telling him he is a lunatic, and does not know the work of his department. The hon. member got a plain answer to a plain question. The hon. member addressed his question to the Minister for Works, who knew nothing about the matter, and the hon. member knows that if he wanted information about a railway bridge he should have asked the Minister for Railways. One would expect from the hon. member's remarks that the affairs of Ipswich were so utterly desperate that the whole place was coming to an end on the death of the last Ministry; but we know that there is no burning question that requires money to be spent there which had not been moderately well settled before the last Ministry went out. The hon. member is asking too much in asking the Minister for Works for information upon matters that are not connected with his department. He knows the Minister is not able to speak on those matters. More than that, the hon. member is trying to force our hand, to find out what the Government are going to do, but he will not get a single bit of

information on that point beyond what I shall give in the Financial Statement. I do not think the hon. gentleman has any right to press the claims of his district in the way he has done. He must know from the suave qualities of my friend the Minister for Works that he would not give a discourteous or undignified answer, nor would he give an incorrect answer. There was a great deal of the attempt to "catch" Ministers in the questions asked, and they required a little smart answering; and where questions require smart answering, I have no doubt the Minister for Works can do it. The information asked for would be given at the proper time: and any member with good taste ought to be able to see that.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The only fault I have to find is with the hasty way in which this matter has been brought forward. That some improvement is necessary on this bridge there is no doubt at all. The members for Ipswich might have waited a little, however. What struck me was the immense hurry they are in now. Had some of that hurry been shown during the last five years, and had the hon. member (Mr. Macfarlane) talked every day for the last five years about the bridge, I know very well he could have had a new bridge before now. It is certainly necessary, and the statement made by the junior member for Ipswich is perfectly true. I have seen accidents take place on that bridge, and it is miraculous that loss of life has not occurred. With regard to those train whistles, so sure as you are in danger on the bridge, so sure the whistle goes; and it has been remarked that if even a collision is likely to take place, so surely a train whistles and frightens the horses. It is quite possible that before this Parliament goes out something may be done, but certainly there is no necessity to force the hands of the Government. The people of Ipswich require this bridge. There is no greater necessity in the colony at the present time, and there is no doubt it will be constructed. It is such a necessity that Ipswich cannot do much longer without it. I would advise the two hon. members for Ipswich to take their time, and whatever is necessary for Ipswich they will find me always on their side. Let Ministers draw breath, and we shall know what they are going to do.

Mr. BARLOW: Mr. Speaker,—By way of personal explanation, I desire to assure Ministers that it was through no desire to force their hands that I put my questions on the paper. I simply wanted to put the wants of Ipswich before them at an early date.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: It was too early.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of adjourned debate on Mr. Agnew's motion, "That the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted by the House"—

Mr. MORGAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I think rather an unfortunate turn was given to the debate on the opening night, by the introduction for discussion of what the Premier, in following the leader of the Opposition, termed a "tract"—the pamphlet that was circulated throughout the colony in the Northern, Central, and Southern districts, in the interests of nationalist candidates, called "Facts to know." I think it a pity that the leader of the Opposition condescended to honour that pamphlet by denying seriatim the charges contained therein. I think it a greater pity that the Premier undertook the justification of

those charges. There are very few people in the colony of Queensland who do not know that those charges were in the main absolutely false. In some of them there may have been just a shadow of truth, but that was all that was in them. I think it is perfectly clear to anybody who knows the political history of the colony, for the past ten years at any rate, that the late Government did not in any way encourage the black labour trade. That is an evil tree which has grown up in our midst. The seed was planted many years ago, but the tree grew under the previous and blossomed under the late Administration. But the Administration of Sir Samuel Griffith must be credited with having laid the axe to the roots, and I think we shall hear very little more of the evil effects of black labour. Now, with regard to that pamphlet, I rather incline to the opinion that the author is identical with a gentleman who during the late election made himself conspicuous by forwarding throughout the colony—free, gratis, and by no means—political letters dealing with every matter that a non-struction could be put upon detrimental to the Liberal party. I allude to Mr. Arthur Nixon; and I would like to know whether that gentleman is identical with a gentleman who has just been appointed to a lucrative post as Police Inspector at Mackay. With regard to those "Hopeful" prisoners, and the discussion that has taken place during the elections, and subsequently in this House, in reference to the advisability of liberating them, I take it that this is a matter that no great political feeling should be displayed upon. If those men had a fair trial, I believe they were fairly convicted. That is a matter between the Ministry of the day and the judges of the land. If the men had not a fair trial, then I think an inquiry should be held, and if unfairly dealt with, they should be liberated. If they were fairly tried, then I believe they richly deserved their fate. If they were not punished justly, I have no doubt a recommendation to His Excellency would be promptly acted upon. We know His Excellency is prompt to act on constitutional advice constitutionally tendered, and that is the proper course to pursue. With regard to what transpired during the elections, there were one or two matters which might well have been touched upon during the course of the debate, and the most remarkable feature was the very palpable change of front on one or two important questions that characterised the conduct of the party at present in office. We know that five years ago, during the general election of 1883, what the party now in power contended for in the main was a change in the manner of constructing our railways. We were told we should have to cease constructing railways by means of loan money, and that our borrowing powers were at an end. If we were not able to get money, we should either have to cease constructing railways or build them on what was known as the land-grant principle. The Premier has told us himself, during the course of the debate, that he still holds opinions favourable to the system of land-grant railways; but did he face the country on that question? He certainly ought to have done so, holding the views he does, but I do not think the records of the elections will show that he did. He simply told the electors that he was in favour of the construction of land-grant railways; that he still believed in them, but was not going to prosecute his opinions in the present Parliament. I have found that the country was against him. In order, as he said, to get a seat in the House, he was obliged to surrender his views on that question.

The PREMIER: I surrendered no views.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman suspended them, at all events. He has held them in suspense for a period of five years, and the electors of the country, not coming round to his views on land-grant railways, he was obliged to come round to the views of the country. Twelve months ago the present Colonial Secretary paid a visit to Rockhampton in company with the present member for Clermont, Mr. Stevenson. He made a speech there, to which I alluded last session. I then spoke without the report of the speech by me, and from memory. The hon. gentleman was not in the House at the time; but subsequently he charged me with having perverted what he said on that occasion. I have since looked up the report of the speech he then made, and find that it was delivered at Rockhampton on the 27th of May last year. The extracts which I now give are from the report which appeared in the *Courier* on the following morning:—

"Mr. MOREHEAD said he believed the colony would have to go back to the policy which broke the Ministry of which he was a member—namely, the land-grant system for railways. (Hear, hear.) So sure as they stood there, if they lived five years longer they would see that scheme in force in this colony. The other colonies were falling into it—namely, Western and South Australia, and were entering upon it on terms not nearly so favourable as were offered to Queensland. He maintained that if land-grant railways had been constructed, the colony would have been in a very much more flourishing state than it was at the present time. (Applause.) It must have been apparent to everyone that the last loan was a failure, or as near a failure as possible, and in his opinion it would have been wholly unnecessary if the land-grant system had become law. *He hoped, however, to be able to assist in the passage of a land-grant railway—not one, but many.* (Applause, and a cry of "No.") He always held and believed that Sir Thomas McIlwraith had one fault, and that was that he was in advance of his time. The great mistake he (Sir Thomas) made with regard to the land-grant railways was that when he introduced the Bill he should have made it quite clear to them before he introduced it."

And again, further on in the same speech, he said:—

"Within the next few years the land-grant railway would stand as a monument to him"—

(meaning Sir Thomas McIlwraith)—

"and those who advocated it."

With regard to this statement, I think I may use the words the hon. gentleman employed in reference to the late Minister for Lands, and say that the land-grant railway system does not at present stand as a monument to the gentleman who introduced it, but rather as a tombstone. Subsequently, during the late election, the present Colonial Secretary addressed a meeting at Roma in company with the Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith. He then said that—

"Although Sir Thomas McIlwraith had retired from the party he had always been consulted on important questions. He (Mr. Morehead) had never regarded himself as the leader of the party, but merely as his *locum tenens.*"

I merely mention that fact to show that, although speaking as leader of the Opposition, the hon. gentleman was in close intercourse with the hon. gentleman now at the head of the Government; that their views must have been very nearly identical, and that one was acting for the other. It seems to me pretty clear from what I have said and quoted that the Premier of the party at present in power found it necessary, when he discovered that the people of the colony would not come round to accept his views on the question of land-grant railway construction, to come round to the views held by the great bulk of the people in order to get into office. That, to my mind, is a complete endorsement of the action of the leader of the

Opposition, Sir S. W. Griffith, and those who were associated with him for five years in the battle against land-grant railways. A more complete endorsement could scarcely be obtained. Referring now to the question of black labour, it will be remembered that the late Government were returned partially on the strength of their determined hostility to Asiatic labour, and although they have been in office for nearly five years, we find that the opinions of the country are not changed on the subject, but that they still endorse the views of the late Administration. In order to obtain accession to power, the hon. gentlemen who so strongly supported black labour five years ago had to come round to the opinions expressed by the Liberal Government. In proof of this I will read to the House a very brief manifesto issued to the electors of North Brisbane by the present Premier, the Hon. Sir Thomas McIlwraith, on the eve of the general election. It appeared in the *Queensland Figaro* of 19th May, and is as follows:—

"TO THE ELECTORS OF NORTH BRISBANE.

"GENTLEMEN,—With a view of showing you the absurdity of the statements made by my opponents, I now pledge myself to the following if I am returned to power:—

"Not to allow the introduction of coolie or other coloured labour;

"Not to allow the introduction of Chinese;

"Not to pay the survey fees of the Transcontinental Syndicate;

"Not to introduce or support a Transcontinental Railway Bill or Scheme.

"I am, Gentlemen,

"Your obedient servant,

"THOMAS McILWRAITH."

I think that is a pretty complete retreat from the position which the party led by the hon. member for North Brisbane, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, took up five years ago: and it appears to me to be a strong endorsement of the policy advocated by the leader of the Opposition on that occasion as well as at the present time. With regard to the Speech delivered to the House by His Excellency the Governor, I believe that every member of the House is agreed that the opening of the Melbourne Exhibition is a very good explanation of the delay which took place in opening the present session of Parliament. It is, however, a pity that the same facilities were not offered to both sides of the House to attend the Exhibition.

Mr. MURPHY: There were.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not think there were.

Mr. MURPHY: It is a matter of opinion.

Mr. MORGAN: True it is a matter of opinion; but I think the facts are against the hon. member. With regard to the paragraph in the Opening Speech referring to the finances of the colony, and in which promise is made of measures to secure a more satisfactory adjustment of the relations between revenue and expenditure, I think the finances of the colony are certainly not in a very satisfactory condition. But that fact ought not to be allowed to weigh very heavily against the late Government as a charge of maladministration. We all know that during their tenure of office the colony suffered from most disastrous droughts, which made their effects manifest in the business of private individuals by the number of insolvencies which occurred. In view of that fact, then, is it to be wondered that they were very remarkable in their effect upon the public revenue? I think not; I think the drought was mainly responsible for the state of the finances. The appropriation for endowment to local authorities has been termed by one of the papers in the metropolis the "damnation legacy." I do not endorse that description of this

legacy. I look upon the local government laws in this colony as among the best of our statutes, but they certainly have proved rather embarrassing to the Treasurer, because they have placed in the hands of local authorities a power of taxation over which the Central Government have no control whatever. In the tables relating to the Colonial Treasurer's Financial Statement, which were presented to this House by the late Treasurer last session, information was given as to the amount spent for endowment to local authorities. In that table we find that during the three years, 1881-2-3, when the McIlwraith Government held office, there were paid to local authorities the following sums,—I only take the last three years of their administration, because during the previous period the Divisional Boards Act was not in force, and, of course, no endowment was paid to divisional boards,—but during those three years they paid the following sums:—In 1881, the sum of £77,538; in 1881-2, the sum of £109,082; in 1882-3, the sum of £118,986 — or a total, during the three years, of about £304,000, which is at the rate of about £101,000 per annum. The Griffith Government in four years—from 1883 to 1886-7—paid the following amounts yearly as endowments to local authorities:—In 1883-4, £142,614; in 1884-5, £162,520; in 1885-6, £202,179; and in 1886-7, £242,852; making a total of about three-quarters of a million sterling, at the rate of £187,000 per annum—or, for the four years, about £344,000 more than was paid in three years by the McIlwraith Government. There alone is half the present deficit accounted for; and when we remember, as I said before, that the late Government had a series of droughts to contend against, I think the wonder is not that the deficit is what it is, but that it is not very much greater. When we are trying to readjust the balance between revenue and expenditure, I do hope that one of the measures that the Government will introduce will be to provide for a differential rate of endowment to local authorities—I mean divisional boards particularly. I think that it is totally unfair that the same rate of endowment—that is £2 for £1—should be paid to boards within the metropolitan radius as is paid to boards in the country districts. We have boards in the back blocks, in the provincial districts, with a very large area of country to govern, with hundreds of miles of roadways and very little means of raising revenue. Those boards only receive the same rate of endowment that boards with only a few hundreds of acres, and with very few miles of roadway, and with properties heavily improved and other correspondingly large means of raising local revenue, receive. I think they ought to be made to incorporate under the Local Government Act or submit to a reduction of the endowment from £2 for £1 to £1 for £1. I sincerely hope to see the Government propose a measure somewhat in that direction. But there is another measure which I have seen it hinted we are to expect—certainly not hinted by any Minister or anyone responsible for it. I recently read in what we may term the leading journal—and what is popularly supposed to be the Ministerial organ just now—a statement that the Minister for Lands would have to revert to the system of pre-emptive rights. I do not know whether that is a wholly irresponsible suggestion, or whether it was really a piece of political kite-flying. I sincerely hope we may not have any attempt to restore what I call the iniquitous system of pre-emptive rights. We might receive a trifle more money annually by reverting to that system; but for every 10s. we receive in that way we lose 20s. worth of the best lands of the colony. We know enough about pre-emptive rights in the part of the colony from which I come to make us fear any attempt to revert to that system.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have never heard anything of it before.

Mr. MORGAN: I am exceedingly glad to hear it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Perhaps you will give your authority.

Mr. MORGAN: I said I read it in a leading article in the *Courier*.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What date?

Mr. MORGAN: About a month or six weeks ago. We are also promised an amendment to the Crown Lands Act of 1884, with the object of increasing settlement and revenue. The Act of 1884, it must be admitted, has not proved an immense success from a revenue point of view, and I hope that if the present Ministry undertake the task of introducing a new Land Bill they will accomplish what has hitherto proved a difficult task—that is, frame a Bill which will at once prove useful as a revenue measure, and promote settlement. It is not a difficult matter to do one or the other; but I think it will be found a difficult matter to do both. If we have not received any great revenue from our lands during the past four years, we still have the lands, or the bulk of them, left, and what have been parted with have been turned in the main to the best of uses; they have been settled by men who are likely to prove a benefit to the colony for all time. But I think if we are going to look in the direction of promoting settlement very rapidly, that is the settlement which I take to be the right class of settlement—agricultural settlement by small men who will till the soil—we must have some measure of protection. I know there are many members of this House who look with aversion and think it rank heresy to talk of anything like protection at all; but I think if we are going to promote small settlement, and having got these people upon the soil are going to induce them to remain there, we must give them some guarantee of a reasonable return for the money they expend in taking up and working the land. At present that guarantee does not exist, and settlement has not spread at that rate which members on both sides of the House, I believe, hope and desire. It is not a right state of things that farmers 150 miles from the metropolis of Queensland—men who work hard—are, in this year of drought, only now being able to sell the produce of last year, when they had a good season. Of course nothing is growing this year. Last year, when they had a surplus, the market was closed against them by heavy importations from the South, which were being sold at a lower rate than it would pay our farmers to sell for in the metropolitan market. Consequently the stock was held over, and now, by reason of the famine prices of some articles, they are getting rid of it. If we had a good season in Queensland this year, it would not have paid the farmers to send their produce down here.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Nonsense!

Mr. MORGAN: An hon. member, in whom I recognise a Brisbane "middleman," tells me it is nonsense; but I know it to be solid truth. It is not so many years ago since I heard the present Premier address a meeting of farmers in Allora, and tell them that he considered they ought to have the first chance of supplying the demands of their own market.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: I am glad to hear the Premier say "Hear, hear." I hope he will endeavour to give practical form to that thought during his tenure of office. There is a proposal to amend the timber regulations, and I entirely agree with it. I do not think they have proved of much use, from a revenue point of view. I

know that they have harassed men engaged in that very useful industry, and I think if we are to have protection for the remaining forests, we can obtain it by less roundabout measures than the existing Timber Regulations. In regard to the paragraph dealing with the Civil Service inquiry, I hope the gentlemen who are conducting it will not confine their researches to the offices in Brisbane. I think they may well prosecute their researches in other large towns in the colony, and I hope when they go through the other departments they will make as strict an investigation as they have made into the department presided over by the Minister for Public Instruction. I think, from what I hear, that they will find plenty to interest them when they come, for instance, to the Harbours and Rivers Department—a department, by the way, which may be very little, but on which we spend a very large sum of our money annually. I am not going to inflict my views on the Chinese question upon this House; but I believe that most hon. members think with me that the Chinese must go, and the sooner the better. There is a reference to the floating of a further instalment of the loan of 1884, and to its bearing interest at the rate of 3½ per cent. Well, sir, this calls to my mind that it is scarcely six years since we witnessed the then Premier, accompanied by a gentleman representing a syndicate of foreign capitalists, going through the colony, and telling us we had exhausted all our borrowing powers, and could not get any more money; and yet since then we have borrowed seven and a-half millions, and authorised the borrowing of ten millions.

THE HON. STR. S. W. GRIFFITH: We have borrowed ten millions.

MR. MORGAN: Yes; we have borrowed ten millions, and now, after five years have elapsed, we find the same Premier coming into power again and going to the London market and borrowing more money on more equitable terms than could be obtained by some European states—as favourable as any colony of the Australian group is able to obtain. I think that is an answer to the statement that the Premier, six years ago, made—that we had reached the end of our borrowing tether. A word or two, and I have done. I hope that when trying to obtain a supply of artesian water the Government will not forget that there are other districts besides the West and North, and that some effort will be made in the direction of obtaining a supply in the South, as that will be very acceptable to the farmers in what are known as dry localities. When the tenders for the new mail contract *via* Torres Straits are under consideration, I think this House ought to express an opinion that the labour employed should be, as far as possible, white labour, and that the rate of speed of the steamers should be faster than it is at present, for which we pay nearly £60,000 per annum. I think we ought to be able to get a very much better service, because the present service, as a mail service, is of very little use to the southern portion of the colony; and if we are going to subsidise a line of steamers simply to carry cargo, we ought to get it for a very much smaller subsidy than we at present pay. I think, Mr. Speaker, that there is very little in the shape of surprise in the Speech. It contains promises of what, I believe, will prove to be very beneficial legislation. For my part, I am quite prepared to agree to the Government proposals as soon as I see them, if they are at all in the direction of the views I have indicated. I shall give my voice and vote to assist in carrying them out if they agree with my views. I do not think we ought to condemn the Ministry till we know what they propose.

THE PREMIER: And when they have the majority.

MR. MORGAN: Yes, but some of the hon. gentleman's followers taught us a most useful lesson in "stonewalling." The hon. member for Barcoo taught some of us to be expert at that kind of thing.

MR. MURPHY: I hope the lessons were not wasted upon you.

MR. MORGAN: I think it is a matter of surprise that no reference was made to the Naval Defence Bill in the Speech. We have heard a good deal lately about federation—not the Imperial bugbear, but federation of the colonies. We were told by the Premier in his manifesto to the electors of North Brisbane that he would go a long way to encourage the federal spirit. Some of the Southern colonies have already adopted what is known as the Naval Defence scheme. In Victoria—whose representative, Mr. Deakin, was spoken of here last year in such high terms as the only man who displayed the true federal spirit—they were the first to adopt that measure; and of course I know that when praising Mr. Deakin hon. members opposite were condemning the then Premier of this colony. Not only has Victoria adopted this measure, but some of the other great colonies of the South have done so too, and if we are to go in for federation, and for encouraging the federal spirit, we can hardly stand aloof in a measure of such importance. I think the sooner we know the intentions of the Government the better, whether the measure be a good one or a bad one. If good we ought to pass it, and if bad I would not help to pass it even to encourage the federal spirit. However, as I said before, I shall be glad to hear what the Government have to say on these matters, and I am not prepared to act in opposition to measures simply because they emanate from the opposite side of the House, as I shall consider them on their merits and always vote accordingly.

MR. POWERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I ought possibly to apologise for rising again so early in this House, but the opinion has been expressed by the hon. the Premier that he wishes this debate to close to-night, and as I should like, as a new member, to say a few words, I take this opportunity of giving expression to my opinions. The first thing I notice about the debate on the Address in Reply are the remarks that have been made by the leader of the Opposition, in which he shortly sums up this Address, and I beg to differ from his reading of that Address. I would refer first to his summing up. He says:—

"What do we find? A collection of trivialities, inaccuracies, and somewhat undignified attacks upon a previous Government—an absolute absence of any indication of any idea of the right thing to be done for the benefit of this colony. That is not an unfair summary of it. I will refer to it in detail."

Now, I think, if I leave the "inaccuracies and somewhat undignified attacks upon a previous Government" alone, as a new member, and draw attention to the "trivialities" that are referred to in the Speech, that it will draw more attention to the "trivialities," and the public will be best able to judge whether they are "trivialities." In the first place I take it that if this Address had started at the third paragraph and ended with the last, this House and the colony would have been satisfied, and for the reason that that portion refers to administration, and that is what the colony is looking for from this party and not legislation. It is administration and not legislation; and if the colony had wished for legislation the leader of the Opposition would have been again sitting as

Premier of this House. With regard to the reference to the revenue and expenditure, the Speech says:—

“This position of affairs will require your early consideration, and my Ministers will submit to you proposals by which it is hoped a more satisfactory adjustment of the relations between revenue and expenditure will be secured.”

That is what the colony is looking for, but I am glad to say there are some of the grains of wheat referred to by one of the leaders of the other side in the Address. One of the “trivialities” referred to deals with railway construction and management; and I take it that as far as the railway construction and management are concerned, more depends on those than on anything else, except the financial position of the colony, and that the agriculturists, who are not specially mentioned in this Speech, can be better served by the management of the railways than by anything else, because most of the agriculturists living in the agricultural districts, and having no carriage by water, look to the railways for cheap carriage rates and cheap fares to get their goods to market. I take it that any improvement of the management of the railways will be looked upon with great pleasure by the agriculturists of this colony; and I hope that when the alteration of that management we find mentioned takes place we shall see cheap fares. I trust that we shall see initiated in this colony what is done elsewhere—both in the old country and in other colonies—and that is Saturday excursion fares, so that every farmer can come down on his market day and return at the same fare. With regard to the Timber Regulations, I am very glad to see the Premier carrying out his promise at so early a date. We had a definite promise from him that they should be amended, and I am glad to see that a measure dealing with the matter is to be introduced at an early date. I see that Mr. Hume says in his report:—

“Having had favourable opportunities of investigating the subject, I am distinctly of opinion that the adverse criticism has come, not from the general public, or, in fact, consumers of timber, but from those who, directly or indirectly, are engaged in the timber trade, and have had their profits reduced.”

I take it that the first persons to complain are those likely to be affected by the regulations—namely, the timber-getters; and when the matter comes on for discussion I hope to help in some small way in legislating for the benefit of the timber-getters. I have made myself thoroughly conversant with the subject, and I represent as many timber-getters as any other hon. member. I shall not, however, weary the House now, but when the Bill is brought in I will assist to make legislation favourable to the timber-getters and the general public. With respect to the Chinese question, we should give credit to whom credit is due—and the first man who said “Total exclusion of the Chinese” in Australia is the Premier. It appeared in his address at the last general election; and he is the first statesman who said “Total exclusion” as against any other measures put before us—first a poll-tax, then branding their their boxes, then a residential tax. He simply went on total exclusion. America has had it, and we must have it. That note was heard in New South Wales; that note was heard in Victoria; it has been heard in the British House of Commons. And it is due more to the address of the Premier to his constituents, and the way in which it was endorsed by the colony, that a satisfactory settlement of the Chinese question was agreed upon by the conference in Sydney. It has been said that if we legislate for total exclusion we shall not be able to carry it out; and I should like to refer to what Lord Derby said on the question. It shows that there is some hope

not only of our ability to legislate in the direction desired, but also of our legislation being carried into effect:—

“The Earl of Derby said: There are two questions involved. One is whether the line of conduct the Australian Governments have pursued, are pursuing, and evidently intend to pursue, is in itself altogether wise and reasonable one; and the other is whether, supposing we entertain some doubt on that point, it is any part of our business to interfere to prevent their taking their own course. The former, to my mind, is really an abstract question; the latter is a practical question. I apprehend there may be some shades of difference between individuals, but speaking generally there will be an almost unanimous feeling in this country that in point of fact, and to put it plainly, we have no option. Supposing we were to veto any anti-Chinese legislation on the part of the colonies and to announce that any similar legislation would also be vetoed, what would be the result? Can we suppose that the veto would be submitted to? You know perfectly well that you would have an agitation spreading through every one of the Australian colonies, and even if the prohibition of Chinese immigration could not be obtained by legal means immigration would soon be prevented. We are in the hands of the colonists, and they must do in this matter as they please. If there is in Australia one opinion which is universally held, it is that Australia belongs to the Australians, and they think it is not for us to regulate the conditions for the admission of Chinese.”

So that when we legislate, we are sure, at any rate, to receive favourable consideration at the hands of the Imperial Government. As to payment of members, it is a democratic principle, which I am glad to see brought in by the Ministry, but I hope there will be some provision preventing the payment of a member who absents himself during the session. I take it that will be dealt with in the Bill. One paragraph of the Speech says that “the water supply to the city and suburbs of Brisbane is a subject that demands immediate attention.” I think it should be attended to by the Brisbane people. If I came here imbued with one idea, it is that Brisbane is not Queensland, and I hope that idea will be carried out by the majority of members of the House. We know that Brisbane does get better treatment, generally speaking, than any other part of the colony. I look upon this as a local matter, and I think that Brisbane is quite capable of raising a loan, and also of paying the interest on that loan. To put it plainly, I may say that the metropolitan districts have a population of 48,679, according to the last returns laid on the table of this House; the Wide Bay and Burnett district has a population of 38,032; and if there is any grant to the 48,679 inhabitants of the metropolitan district, I hope a proportionate grant will also be made to the 38,032 people in the Wide Bay and Burnett district, because every part of the colony is entitled to fair play. What I would like to see is a Bill enabling the Corporation of the city of Brisbane to go to the London money market and borrow at 4 per cent. Then they could pay back to the colony the £224,000 odd they owe, and I would like to see that set apart for loans to farmers who wish to go in for irrigation. The municipality would benefit by being able to borrow at 4 per cent. instead of 5, and it would be a benefit to the colony generally. With respect to gold-mining throughout the colony, I take it that the mining industry is really the life of the colony. Our ports are really useless—at any rate they do not progress unless there is a gold-mining community at their back. I hope the Ministry will bring in a prospecting vote and adopt the mining laws of Victoria, as far as they are applicable to this colony, because any legislation that will tend to advance the mining industry will tend to advance the interests of the whole of the colony. As to separation, I take it that separation will never be passed by the members of this House. Those who wish for separation will have to follow the course pursued by others who wished for the

same thing—that is, deal with the Colonial Office at home in the way Dr. Lang did when he worked for the separation of Victoria and Queensland. It has been said that the question of protection has been omitted from the Speech, but, as a protectionist, I am satisfied with the address to the electors of North Brisbane published by the Premier. Even though there may be free traders in the Ministry, I may mention that Mr. James Service, who is a free-trader, was leader of the protectionist colony of Victoria, and there is no reason for suspicion because free-trade members are in a Ministry the leader of which has promised in his address to carry out protection. I do not intend to weary the House, but I think it my duty to point out a few facts, so that when the matter does crop up, as it certainly will, they may receive attention. I find, according to the "Statesman's Year Book for 1888," that the export of wool to Great Britain for 1886 amounted to £1,077,710; that the produce of all the gold mines in the colony was 340,998 ounces, which, at £3 10s. per ounce, amounted to £1,193,483; that the coal mines produced £95,243, and that the produce of sugar was £1,125,284; that there appear to be 10,165 Polynesians in the colony, and deducting £1 each which they take home to their islands, that would mean £1,115,019 that would go into the white man's pocket. My only reason for referring to this just now is that the hon. the senior member for Ipswich mentioned a bonus for the production of cotton. Well, I say this: that if we are going to have bonuses at all, the one industry that is entitled to consideration in that form is the sugar industry. Sugar is a product congenial to the soil, and has always proved a success whenever it has had fair play; while on the other hand it has been proved that cotton cannot stand our dry climate. Therefore, if a bonus is to be allowed at all, I say it should be given to that industry that produces the largest amount to the white population of this colony: and that, sir, is sugar. I should like to mention that it is my intention to bring forward a motion dealing with legal reform, and I trust that in so doing I shall receive the support and assistance of hon. members generally. I intend to deal with the question from a commercial point of view. This may be a matter of surprise to those who know that I am a solicitor, but, as most of my friends are aware, I have been engaged in commercial pursuits, and it is the knowledge I thus gained that has shown me the gross inconsistencies and heavy expenses connected with legal transactions, which, to my mind, are totally unnecessary. It is with the object of dealing with those abuses that I intend to bring the question before the House. The National party was spoken of by the hon. the leader of the Opposition as having been received "with inextinguishable laughter"; that it was looked upon as "a solemn joke." Well, sir, the right hon. the Earl of Carnarvon is supposed to be an Imperialist; he has never held himself up to be anything else, and this is what he says:—

"You have the loyalty, the affection, the sympathy already in no stinted degree in these great colonies. That I will warrant—that I have seen with my eyes, heard with my ears, and am convinced of. But, on the other hand, you have also a generation that has been born in Australia, who, whilst they reverence England, reverence her from a distance, whose home is Australia, whose first ideas are Australian, who have never gone beyond the seas that girdle that continent. It would be unpatriotic if some of their dearest and fondest aspirations were not for the land of their birth, and you must be able to convince them that in any closer organisation and union between themselves and the mother-country not only are all their feelings of sympathy and loyalty satisfied, but also those conditions of self-interest which every reasonable man is bound to entertain."

He did not consider it was a matter for "inextinguishable laughter." I take it, Mr. Speaker, that this is a request almost to us, that although we continue in union with England we should apply to have greater constitutional liberties than we have at present. I say that those constitutional liberties can be greater than we now possess. A lot of sympathy has been expressed by the three leaders of the Opposition for the hon. the Premier and the leaders of the Ministerial party, because we are identified with the various industries of the colony—that, because we represent every industry in the colony, therefore we are more likely to clash and fall away from our leadership. I think, sir, it is a matter for congratulation, and not for regret, that we do represent every industry, and I take it that the fact that we do so is sure proof that we are likely to hold together—the party being united in representing the whole colony, and not any single section of it. There are several things, Mr. Speaker, which are likely to hold us together. I would ask, are the members representing the sugar industry likely to walk over to the other side of the House when the hon. the leader of the Opposition, in the might of his power, gave the death blow to that industry?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition side: No, no!

Mr. POWERS: Are the separationists in this House likely to walk over to the other side when the same hon. gentleman went out of his way to say that their petition was put before the Home Secretary by false pretences, and that the statements it contained were not true? Are the protectionist members likely to walk over to the other side when, for almost five years, the late Premier had the power of introducing a protective policy and did not do so? Are the members of the country party likely to cross over when they find £250,000 expended on two and a-half miles of railway, while the people in the country districts are crying out in all directions for branch lines? And, sir, are the members of the National party likely to step over when wanting, as they do, greater constitutional liberties? The hon. the leader of the Opposition, an able constitutional lawyer, has never put before this House a single Bill that would in any way increase our constitutional rights and liberties in connection with the old country.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said: Mr. Speaker.—I rise to make a few comments on the Speech His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to deliver to this House, and also upon some of the remarks that have been made by previous speakers. Before I declare my general approval of the Speech, I feel disposed to express my astonishment at what I deem to be the inconsistency of some of the utterances of hon. members opposite. That party, as is perfectly natural, has condemned the Speech for several reasons. That was to be expected; but, sir, when we remember that many of those members have absolutely stated that the policy now placed before the country by the present Ministry is their policy—that it has been filched from the Opposition—I am surprised to hear the condemnation of which I speak. Generally, I give my approbation to the Speech. It seems to me to deal with practicalities: and I take it that practicalities are what this House is called upon to deal with. There are one or two clauses of the utmost consequence—the one, especially, with reference to railways. That, sir, is an endeavour to increase the income of this colony; and I understand that the Commission recently appointed by the previous Government to deal with the Civil Service is intended to diminish expenditure. Now, Mr,

Speaker, unless the expenditure and the income of a colony are placed in equilibrium then that colony is in somewhat the same position as a human being who is expending more than he receives, and a body that wastes more than it receives stands in danger of dissolution. One of the most important points for a colony to look to is to see that sufficient is coming in to make up for whatever waste occurs, and I believe that the present Government are fully seized with the importance of establishing that financial equilibrium of which they speak, and which I am satisfied they are much more likely to obtain than their predecessors. I observe that, while certain industries are mentioned in the Speech—such as the timber industry and the mining industry, there is one notable omission—it has already been referred to by previous speakers—namely, the agricultural industry. I take it that you, Mr. Speaker, and every member of the House will agree with me that the agricultural industry should be, and ought to be expected to be, one of the greatest industries of the colony, and that it is exceeded in the potentialities of future wealth only by the mining industry. One reason why I am surprised that no mention has been made of that industry is that the branch of it with which my own constituents are connected is in a very depressed condition. I may point out that agriculture in this colony can only be favourably prosecuted within a limited distance of the coast, because it is only those localities which are well watered, and that, in consequence of the coast-line of Northern Queensland, in tropical regions, being twice the length of the coast-line within the temperate zone, we may expect to see twice the development of agriculture in the North that we may expect to see in the South. It follows, therefore, that that industry would be tropical agriculture, from which it will be admitted that tropical agriculture is, at any rate, of very great consequence to the colony. I have had twenty years' experience—not, certainly, as a grower, being myself neither a farmer nor a planter—and during that time I have seen farmers and settlers trying to grow arrowroot successfully, and I have seen them grow coffee successfully. One settler succeeded so well in growing and preparing coffee that the coffee he prepared was preferred to any other. It is evident that there are many products which might be grown, but this I have observed: that all those who attempted to grow those outside products found they were less profitable than the sugar industry, and they abandoned them and reverted to sugar. I take it, then, that for the future the agricultural districts within the tropics will be mainly dependent on the production of sugar. I am the more willing to bring this matter before the House because I believe a sum of £5,000,000 sterling has been invested in that industry. In the district I represent a sum of £1,500,000 has been invested in it. Now, if the sugar industry should collapse, the whole of that money, or at any rate the greater part of it, would be absolutely lost to the colony. There are 11,000 people or thereabouts depending on that industry in the district in which I reside, and to them must be added the number of people who live in other sugar-growing centres. That industry at present is depressed. I have seen it flourishing, but now it is suffering a gradual diminution. Instead of new mills being erected it is painful for me to see—when I consider the persons dependent on that industry—that the smaller mills are being closed; the only ones surviving are those owned by the big men, the men with capital at their back. There are various causes to which this depression is attributable. It has been attributed partly to the late Administration, partly to low prices, partly to bad seasons, and to a very large

extent to the competition which is met with from foreign markets from growers who have superior advantages over the Queensland producers, inasmuch as they are able to get an unrestricted supply of cheap labour. That is the position of the industry, and it is a difficulty which, considering the magnitude of the industry, is staring a considerable proportion of the people in the face. The difficulties of that position are so great that it is possible—I hope it is not probable—the industry may collapse. We have an example in an industry which preceded it, and with regard to which great hopes were entertained by the inhabitants of the colony—namely, the cotton industry. They had sufficient faith in the industry to invest large sums of money in it, and in those which depended upon it. What has happened in the case of cotton—and we must be guided by experience—may happen in the case of sugar. I am not going to express any opinion here on the question of coloured labour. I have recognised for a long time the soundness of the objections which the leader of the Opposition entertains to coloured labour—that is to say, to coolie labour—and, generally speaking, I may say I am of the same opinion as he is. I am no bigoted supporter of coloured labour. As I said before, I am not a sugar-planter, and am not biased one way or the other; but having lived for so many years as an observer in a sugar-growing district, that is the conclusion at which I have arrived, and at which most people, I think, would arrive under similar circumstances. This industry being so important, everyone in the colony, and I am sure every member of the House, must wish to prevent its destruction; and I am led more especially to express this opinion because already one or two hon. members have already urged that the cotton industry should be resurrected, even if we have to give the cotton growers a bonus. There is a general feeling in the House that new industries should be created, and there seems to be no objection, in order to create those industries, to pay a certain price for them—that is, to saddle consumers with a certain additional cost of living. It seems to me to follow very plainly that if it be worth while—and a considerable number of hon. members do think it worth while—to create new industries at a certain sacrifice, and to restore an industry that has ceased to exist, it is also worth while to make some effort to preserve a large industry, on which many people depend, and on which many more might depend, from absolute destruction. And I hope to see some such effort made. I hope the Governor will be pleased to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the causes which lie at the root of the difficulties, which those of our colonists who are engaged in this industry are experiencing, in order that they may, having ascertained them, devise some means which they can venture to recommend to the House to preserve that industry to this colony. The junior member for Burke spoke of separation, and indulged in a sneer at the idea of obtaining a Governor for £1,000 a year, which led me to suppose that the hon. member is one of those who are disposed to appraise a man's worth by his money. He spoke of separation, and told the House that in his opinion separation is dead. That may be his opinion, and he may judge by what he sees, or he may not judge by what he sees. If I mistake not, there were 300 or 400 votes recorded in his own electorate in favour of separation candidates, and the hon. member is scarcely justified in saying that separation is dead when that proportion of the electors in his own district declared themselves in favour of it. In a matter of that sort, when he, as a young man, addresses this House and expresses an opinion upon a matter of such vast moment to the people

of the colony, I should expect him to do what I would do myself in such a case, and tender to this House the reasons which led him to form that opinion. I ask you, sir, to remember that sixteen members have been returned by Northern constituencies, and out of that number eleven are separationists, and were returned more or less on the Separation ticket.

Mr. HODGKINSON: No, no!

Mr. DALRYMPLE: A great many were. That is a matter of fact, for the proof of which I can refer the hon. member to their election addresses. I think I may fairly hope that every member in this House will believe that we on this side of the House who have advocated separation will adhere as faithfully to the promise we have made as hon. gentlemen on the other side will to the intentions they have expressed to oppose it. That such a large proportion of the Northern members should be returned on that special ticket is sufficient to show that separation is not dead. We may not take special measures to advocate it, knowing that any measures which we might take in this House would be perfectly useless, and the matter is not absolutely one which this House will have to decide; but because we do not go about gesticulating and shouting that we are separationists, it is ridiculous to suppose that the movement is dead. I say distinctly that the movement is not dead. I say so long as the causes which gave rise to the feeling are there, so long will the effects of those causes be permanent. No doubt the Premier will do his best to allay grievances, but there is far more than grievances behind the Separation movement. The people of the North are labouring under disabilities which no one can remove. They are too far away from the seat of government to have their wants promptly attended to. Many matters connected with the area of the colony, the distance from the capital, the different conditions, justify us as much, in our own interest, in order to get capital there and to have centres of population formed there, from a patriotic point of view, in agitating for separation, and doing our best to achieve it, as the inhabitants of Moreton Bay were justified in demanding that separation whence this House proceeds. We have, I hope, as much patriotism in this matter as those in the South had in the movement they undertook. If it proved a good thing—and I defy any hon. member to say it has not proved a good thing—that the colony of Moreton Bay should be separated from New South Wales and erected into the colony of Queensland—if it proved a good thing—and it has proved a good thing—that the settlement of Port Phillip should be separated from New South Wales and become the colony of Victoria—good for those colonies and good for Australia—there is no reason to suppose that the process which proved so beneficial in those instances will not prove beneficial in others. I desire now to make some criticisms upon what has been uttered by other hon. gentlemen. The leader of the Opposition stated that the change which has taken place in the distribution of parties has proceeded from a love of change on the part of the people. That is a very agreeable way of facing the fact that, for some reason or other, the people wanted a change. Had I occupied the same position as the hon. gentlemen, I might have accounted for it in the same way. It is a great deal better than saying what I believe to be true. At any rate, the hypothesis which I shall offer to account for the relative positions of the parties is this: that the people were tired of purely restles legislation and a continuance of new Acts, so that they were unable to know at the beginning of the year under what laws the colony would

be governed at the end of it. Another and more important reason is, that a majority of the people were firmly of opinion that, unless something was done to change the administration of the colony, and put in charge of it wiser and more practical men, the colony would drift into bankruptcy. That is why the change in the parties has taken place. To say the change was consequent upon a mere restless desire on the part of the people is to slander those people. That is not the way for us, who are elected by the sovereign people, to deal with their decision. There is another matter concerning the "Hopeful" prisoners, which was introduced by the leader of the Opposition in consequence of some pamphlet which was issued during the elections. I have not read, and do not want to read, that pamphlet, and I repudiate any such tactics. An hon. gentleman who occupied the position of Premier, as that hon. gentleman did then, in such a case as where a crime has been committed, and which has been brought before a jury, and which the judges of the realm have decided upon—I say the Premier, in such a case, occupies a grave, onerous, trying, and painful position, and I think everyone should endeavour to believe that under the circumstances such advice was given to His Excellency as was dictated by the conscience of his adviser. Such tactics as the publication of disparaging statements, which will possibly not bear a strict investigation, should do no good to either party. But if it is said such tactics have been resorted to by our party, then I say we cannot claim a monopoly of them, for the other party is tarred with the same brush. We know that, from the raising of what I may call the "coolie bogey" by the party who did not desire to introduce coolies into this colony. I may say that during the Townsville election, when I believe the leader of the Opposition was present—though I am not quite certain—in order to disparage the opposite party there was a procession formed, in which there was a kanaka in chains. I cannot see much difference between a performance such as that and the tactics complained of on the other side. I hope the hon. gentleman who has so discredited, and very properly, the treatment he received, will with his party endeavour to put down such practices, and I am confident the Premier will do the same on this side. I may say that I was rather surprised to discover that the leader of the Opposition felt so sensitive about such a matter. When I decided to become a candidate I knew well what I was to experience, and I think that hon. gentlemen who are so sensitive should decline to endeavour to enter this House. It is perfectly certain that if they do, they must expect severe criticism, and, as a rule, I find they get it. I should recommend future candidates to read the works of Mark Twain, or that portion of them which deals with his running for the Presidency—he was the virtuous lad who was brought up by his mother in order to improve the general tone of the State legislature, because she had observed that all persons who became candidates were of the most abominable character. The moment that unfortunate youth became a candidate he heard himself spoken of as "the infamous perjurer Twain" and "Twain the body snatcher." Now, there is another matter of very considerable importance which has been brought before this House, and that is the discussion which has taken place with regard to the permission given by the ex-Premier to recruit in New Guinea. This is, I believe, what took place: Vessels were licensed to recruit in the Pacific Islands. If they were licensed to recruit there, in places outside the jurisdiction of the civilised powers, then, as the greater includes the less, every vessel licensed to recruit in the Pacific Islands was *de facto* licensed to recruit on

the coast of New Guinea. Therefore I should say, from what I have heard in this House, that it follows that the licenses were granted for vessels to go to New Guinea, because they were granted to vessels to go to the South Sea Islands. The hon. the Premier positively stated that he held the late Premier responsible for licensing vessels to go down and recruit in New Guinea. That statement was denied by the gentleman who lately held the position of Attorney-General. Now, I think I can understand how it is possible for an hon. member to assert that and another hon. member to deny it, because that proposition, although apparently simple, really contains three distinct motions. That is to say, a man may be responsible; but how is he responsible? He may be responsible officially; he may be responsible morally, or he may be responsible both morally and officially. I believe when the charge is made, it simply includes the meaning "officially." The Premier holds that the late Premier is responsible officially for giving these licenses. I believe myself that the number of times that this debate recurs in this House is simply owing to the fact that the party opposite feel that when they are told they are officially responsible the charge involves something against their honour, and that moral blame is attachable to them. There is a distinction, and an important distinction, and I think it desirable that the two positions should be reconciled. As this discussion has taken place very many times, and may possibly be re-opened, I have ventured to throw what light upon it that occurred to me. Perhaps I may appear presumptuous in doing so, but if so I can only say that such is not my intention, and I hope that my intention will at any rate serve as my apology.

Mr. PAUL said: Mr. Speaker,—I will not detain hon. members long in the few remarks I have to make, and will refer generally to the speeches that have been made. The hon. gentleman who has just sat down has spoken of the sugar industry, and I entirely sympathise with him. It is known that I have always been an advocate for the sugar industry, and although we can, of course, no longer think of black labour, yet I think something might be done by which the industry could be resuscitated. That, I maintain, would be the result if we could bring about intercolonial free trade between all the colonies and protection against the world. With regard to the remarks made by the member for Ipswich with reference to the management of our railways, I understood the hon. gentleman to say that he has not yet found out that the Victorian system has been a success. From personal observation I know it has been a very great success. I have had the privilege of enjoying for a number of years the acquaintance of one of the gentlemen who form the board, and he has given me a great deal of information as to the manner in which the railways were managed before the board was appointed and how they are managed now. When they were under a political head we all know that Ministers, who are but mortal, were subject to great pressure, and must yield to the majority with whom they are allied. There is not the slightest doubt that, in all the colonies, the railways have not been managed on the principles of commercial intelligence. As witness our own railways. We will take the traffic from Roma to Brisbane. Some years ago, under the McLlwraith administration, encouragement was given to the stock-owners to bring stock to market by reducing the railway freights. Stock could be brought in from Roma at 1s. 9d. a head per 100 miles, and the Government of the day charged 2s. a head freight. When the next Government came in—an anti-squatting Government—they increased the rate to 5s. per head per 100 miles, and the consequence is that the trucks

have been lying idle for years. Now, that is a positive fact, and I am certain that that was done because they felt that if they had given encouragement to squatters they would have alienated the support of their followers, who, from ignorance and not prejudice, have a down on the squatters. I would earnestly draw the attention of members opposite, many of whom I believe are ignorant of the squatting industry, to the importance of this subject. See, for instance, how little representation the large squatting interest has. Warrego, North and South Gregory, and Burke, return only four members, whilst Brisbane and the suburbs return fourteen. If town members only knew the hardships and risks that squatters have to contend with, they would certainly give a helping hand, especially when they know that the squatting districts are so sparsely represented in this House. I do hope that everyone of us, whether we represent the country party, the sugar interest, the mining interest, the agricultural interest, or the commercial interest, will do our level best to assist every interest to our utmost ability, and not be prejudiced against either one class or the other. I therefore entirely approve of the railways being managed by a board, because then they will, I believe, be managed on commercial principles. All the English railways are managed on commercial principles, and I do not see why we should not manage them on commercial principles in Queensland. Of course I do not contend that we should look to our railways as a source of profit; we ought to be satisfied if they simply pay expenses. Before railways were in existence in this colony large sums of money were annually spent on the roads of the country, and the work that was done was frequently washed away by floods. The main object in the construction of railways is to open up the land for settlement, and we ought not, as I have already said, look to our lines as sources of revenue.

Mr. MURPHY: But they might be made sources of revenue.

Mr. PAUL: Probably they might be made sources of revenue, but the main direct benefit to be derived from them is the extension of settlement. But the subjects mentioned in the Speech have been gone over so often during the discussion that I will not further detain the House.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—At this late stage of the debate it is not my intention to go over every item in the Speech seriatim, but I would just like to draw attention to one or two of the principal paragraphs. In reference to the finances of the colony I have to remark that I suppose every member will admit that they are very intimately connected with the policy of the Government. We are all aware that the policy of the Government is shaped very much in accordance with the finances of the colony, and one naturally expects that after the reference to the finances the policy of the Government would be properly depicted in the Opening Speech. I cannot, however, see any very distinct policy enunciated in this Speech. I am glad, at any rate, that the Government now in power have promised to deal with the discrepancy that exists between the revenue and expenditure of the colony. If they are able to equalise the expenditure and income, they will certainly do a work that members sitting on the cross-benches on this side of the House have contended for for many years past. We claim to have been earnest contenders for a reduction of expenditure. At the present time it seems that, no matter what may be the amount of revenue or income, we have it always exceeded by the expenditure.

The PREMIER: Yes; when your side is in.

Mr. MACFARLANE: When either side is in. During the last ten years, and during the last session of Parliament, the expenditure per head of the population has certainly been increasing. I have never been able to see why any Government should not be able to govern the colony at a less rate per head of the population as the number of inhabitants increases. Although immigrants are continually coming into the colony it seems that we are taxed in a greater ratio year after year. I am, therefore, very glad that the present Administration have promised that they will submit proposals to secure a more satisfactory adjustment of the relations between revenue and expenditure. No doubt the public expect a great deal from the present leader of Parliament. As a financier, his fame has gone not only throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, but it has also gone into the other colonies. Some of his political supporters have gone so far as to indicate their belief that he has only to take his magician's wand, say "Heigh, Presto!" and the financial position of the colony will be assured. The Premier himself is not so sanguine; he understands the position better than some of the new members who have spoken in this way, but I nevertheless hope that he will be able to do something towards rectifying the present condition of affairs, and satisfy the demands of his followers. I notice that very few members have paid any attention to the paragraph dealing with the expenditure of a large sum of money on so-called rabbit-proof fences. The mover of the Address in Reply made a statement to the effect that if this £75,000 had been expended nine months earlier, it was very likely it would have answered the purpose of keeping out the rabbits. My opinion of rabbit-proof fences is something like this: we do not expect a wire sieve to hold water, and I do not expect a wire fence to keep out rabbits. This £75,000, to my mind, might as well have been cast into the river as have been expended on wire fences. The Government seem to hold somewhat similar views, because they say that the success of the work is very doubtful. It was always doubtful to members on this side of the House.

The PREMIER: Then why did you vote for it?

Mr. MACFARLANE: I voted against it, and all the reformers on the cross-benches voted against it also; it was carried by the supporters of the present Government. They are now satisfied that the fences have been a failure, and want something else. I hope that something will exterminate the rabbits—I am sure wire fences will not accomplish that object. The mover of the Address in Reply also termed the Land Act of 1884 a huge failure. That is only the cuckoo cry of his predecessors in this House, who were opposed to the late Government—a cry which was frequently uttered by them while the Bill was going through the House. The Crown tenants and many others on the then Opposition side prophesied that it would be a failure, and, of course, they have done and said everything they could do or say to bring about the fulfilment of their prophecy. But I say it has not been a failure. Just as one hon. member has said, that we should not look to railways so much as a source of revenue as a means of securing settlement on the lands, so I say we should look to our land laws to bring about the same result. The Land Act of 1884 has certainly as a revenue measure not brought in a great deal of money into the Treasury, but it has put a great number of people on the land.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: No, no!

Mr. MACFARLANE: Yes. I will refer to my own district. I can testify to the fact that during the last year more land was taken up in the West Moreton district than had been taken up in any other year, except one, since the colony has been in existence. If the present Government would look upon that Land Act as a kind of fixed piece of legislation, I believe it would ultimately prove the finest Land Act the colony ever had. I have always believed in the Land Act of 1884, and if we could make it the fixed land policy of the country, it would be one of the finest for the colony and work more beneficially than any other Act which has yet been passed. However, I hope the Government will not deal harshly with it. If they are going to make any amendments, I hope they will deal leniently with it, and give it a fair chance. It is probable we may have weather more suitable for the pursuit of the agricultural industry, and if we should it is possible that the Land Act of 1884 will be a boon to the country, and much better than it is supposed to be. I quite agree with what was said by the hon. member for Warwick in reference to the Timber Regulations, which have always been a grievance to timber-getters and other interested persons, and I think it would be quite easy to bring in as much revenue as at present with less trouble and expense. As to the Royal Commission, I have not yet read the report, except so much as I have seen in the newspapers; but I think it very likely, from what has been said, that that Commission is answering the purpose for which it was appointed. I hope it will deal with all the departments of the government, without fear or favour, and thereby be a benefit to the country, and result in a saving of expense. There are a great many matters to be unravelled when the time comes to go into them, and some things will, no doubt, be brought out that will astonish hon. members of this House. I do not intend to take up much more of the time of the House, but I wish to say a few words in reference to railways. The Ministry think it necessary that a radical change should be made in the construction and management of our railways. I suppose a radical change means a thorough change; but I do not know exactly what is meant by a radical change in construction. Perhaps it means we are to go back to that "cheap-and-nasty" system of railway construction which was carried on in the West Moreton district, such as the Fassifern line which crosses the Ipswich district, and also the Brisbane Valley line. They are both railways that were made with good intentions; that is to say, cheaply. But they have proved failures, and it would be better that we should make permanent and substantial railways than build these toys, which do not answer the purpose for which they were made. I believe they will both have to be reconstructed at some future time. As to the difference in management—I suppose that refers to management by a board—there is much difference of opinion in reference to boards. Personally I do not think the system will be much of a success in Queensland. I think our railways are very well managed indeed, and any hon. member of this House who travelled from Queensland to Victoria will admit that our carriages compare, in comfort and cleanliness, very favourably with those on the Southern railways. I was thoroughly disgusted with the state of affairs in New South Wales. Our carriages run quite as smoothly as they do in any of the other colonies, except perhaps those between Melbourne and Adelaide. So far as the management is concerned, we should keep to the management we have. I am not in favour of boards on the whole, and I think it would be far better for the

Government to keep these railways in their own hands than pass them over to a board. We should wait a time and see how the Land Board works, and how the commissions work in Victoria and New South Wales. We need not be in a hurry. That is my advice, but, of course, the Government will do what they think best. I may say, in concluding my few remarks, that I shall be very glad to assist the Government in anything that will tend to do good to the people. I think the less we have to do with bonuses the better, if we can avoid them. Bonuses in the past did a good deal for the woollen industry, and we tried the system in connection with the cotton industry, but it was a failure. I think it would be a mistake to give a bonus for cotton-growing, although it might not be a mistake to offer some kind of bonus for the manufacture of cotton. Of course, old members of the House are aware that there is at the present time on our Statute-book an Act which authorises a Government grant of about £1,500 at first in connection with cotton manufacture, and about £1,000 more after a few years' work. That would be inadequate to start a cotton factory, as it is more expensive to start a cotton factory than a woollen factory. However, that subject may come before the House upon a future occasion, so I will not detain hon. members by saying any more in regard to it at present. I promise the Government my hearty support in everything they may do for the benefit of the colony, and my determined opposition to everything I think will not be for the best interests of the colony.

Mr. GLASSEY said: Mr. Speaker,—Like most new members, I rise with considerable diffidence to make a few observations, not only on matters conveyed in His Excellency's Speech, but also on some matters which find no place in that lengthy Address. The paragraph to which I wish briefly to allude is one relating to the contract for the conveyance of mails between the various ports of the colony. The last contract expired in July last, and tenders were invited for the service extending five years from that date. The tender of the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company for an annual subsidy of £15,900 was accepted. Under this new contract the services to Cooktown and the Gulf are practically bi-weekly and weekly instead of, as formerly, weekly and fortnightly, while the subsidy is less by £550 than was paid on the previous contract. What I wish to bring before the members of this House is, in my judgment, the seeming—if not the real—hardship done, and which I will explain, and which was embodied in a letter which appeared in the *Brisbane Courier* of July 28th of this year, from William Howard Smith and Sons—another company competing for that contract; and if I am in order I shall read that letter, which is headed "The Coastal Mail Contract." The letter is as follows:—

"SIR,

"As the result of the tenders for the coastal mail contract is something of a surprise as well as a disappointment to us and to the large number of your readers who are interested in the healthy development of the coasting steam traffic, we trust you will allow us to address a few words to you on the subject.

"We had been urged on all hands, especially in the Northern ports, to tender in order to secure a share of the mail subsidy.

"This advice was no doubt partly given in a merely friendly spirit, but chiefly from a proper desire to foster a thoroughly healthy competition between the two companies now running along the coast, which meant more and better steamers, quicker communication, and greater encouragement to the trade from the smaller ports. It is well understood that the small amount of

traffic from some of the minor ports is not sufficient to justify the expense of regular calls from the larger steamers, unless the earnings are supplemented by a reasonable amount of mail money.

"The Postal Department advertised for tenders for carrying out the mail service in sections, and, having completed all our preparations, we sent in a tender for a certain section. The advertisement stated that the lowest tender might not necessarily be accepted; and in view of this reservation we expressed our willingness to consider any reasonable modification in the tenders, or the service, which the department might suggest.

"We heard nothing more until we were informed that the A.U.S.N. Company had secured the *whole* of the contract from Brisbane to Normanton.

"We would now venture, very respectfully, to urge that our enterprise and assistance in the development of the Queensland coastal trade fairly entitled us to rather more consideration than the Government have shown us in the matter of the mail contracts.

"Without desiring to unduly magnify our service, but in common justice to ourselves, we think it is no more than fair to remind your readers that we have given Queensland the advantage of a wholesome competition launched thirteen years ago in the face of a powerful monopoly, and have since made remarkable epochs in the history of steam-shipping on the coast.

"We have no wish to introduce sentimental considerations into the matter, but, all things being equal, we contend that past services should at least be remembered. We were prepared to carry out part of the mail contract with improved steamers, and we were prepared to consider any reasonable modification which the department might suggest. All things, therefore, were equal, and an opportunity was given of allowing the two companies to fairly compete on equal terms. Instead of that the Government has decided to give the whole of the contract to one company, without even giving us the opportunity of showing how we proposed to carry on a share of it, and of judging whether it would, or would not, be better to divide the mail subsidies between the two companies, as is done by the Southern colonies with the Orient and P. and O. Companies.

"The result is that one steam company on the coast will draw £15,000 of the colony's money, yearly, for the next five years; while the other, running on parallel lines for half the distance, has to compete against that weighty handicap without any State assistance.

"It may not yet be too late to alter the position; but, if it is, we submit that it is the reverse of advantageous for the trade of Queensland generally.—We are, sir, &c.,

"WM. HOWARD SMITH AND SONS, Limited.

"Melbourne, 12th July."

The point which I wish to get at is this: that I think, seeing there were the two companies conducting steamships along this large seaboard, and the Government invited tenders in sections, the least that could be done was, as this letter wisely says, to encourage a "wholesome competition"—to have given some reasonable consideration to Howard Smith and Sons' tender for a certain section. I should like to ask the Postmaster-General if he would object to place the papers relative to this contract, together with all correspondence, on the table of the House, so that hon. members might see how far the Postal Department was justified in taking the course they have taken in giving the whole of this contract to one company. The principal reason of my rising was to call the attention of the House to this matter to which I have just referred. In the whole of this lengthy Speech of His Excellency—which, I presume, is the policy to be carried into effect by the Government—there is a total absence, with one solitary exception—and that is relating to the Chinese question—of labour legislation. I happen to occupy the peculiar position of being what is commonly termed the only "labour" member of this House: so perhaps hon. members will pardon me if I refer briefly to labour matters, which, I think, deserve the early and the most serious consideration respecting labour legislation. Those members of the House who

have taken the trouble to watch the proceedings of the late Trades Union Congress, which sat in Brisbane in March last, must admit that some very important questions were brought before that congress, the chief of which I have before me—namely, an amendment of the Employers Liability Act of 1886 so as to include seamen. Most members who have taken the trouble to go into the matter carefully must admit that seamen, like other workers in the various pursuits of life, require protection by law on account of the peculiarities of their work. If time permitted I could cite cases of considerable hardship whereby seamen engaged on the coast of Queensland have suffered considerably, and have had no protection by law when they have been maimed or otherwise in the discharge of their dangerous duties. Another measure requiring early attention is that relating to the inspection of land boilers. There is an Act providing that all boilers used on steamships shall be inspected periodically and reported upon; but, so far as the boilers used in the various industrial works of the country are concerned, there is no Act to enforce their inspection, to provide that they are in the hands of competent persons, and to insure the safety of the communities of people surrounding those boilers. Another matter of considerable importance, which was briefly referred to by the senior member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, is a Labour Lien Act, to protect the wages of workmen. In my own district I have seen most glaring cases of hardship in consequence of there being no law to protect the wages of working people. About eighteen months ago some men were engaged in some brickwork in my constituency, and the person conducting the work not having the necessary means to go on became insolvent. Many of the workers had waited for their wages two and three months, expecting them week by week; and when the man went insolvent the workers were placed on the same footing as the ordinary creditors who had supplied the material for the construction of the work. I think hon. members will agree that the man who gives his work practically puts all he possesses into that work, and if any difficulty arises, and the individual for whom he is working is unable to pay him, the man should have a lien on the material on the ground, if not on the ground itself, so that his wages may be secured. Another matter calling for early legislation is a Factory and Workshops Act, whereby the health of the young people engaged in the various workshops may be protected. Provision should also be made for sufficient accommodation for them to perform their duties; and the general surroundings from a sanitary point of view should receive proper attention. At present we have no such Act in force, and I sincerely hope that the Government, at an early date, will bring in such a measure as will protect female labour especially, and young persons engaged in our workshops and factories. Another matter I feel a little sore on is with regard to the laxity of the Corrupt Practices Act for the purpose of more effectually protecting workmen at elections. If time permitted I might give instance after instance where men in my own district have suffered in consequence of their opposition to certain candidates chosen by some employers in the district. When it was known previous to the last election, and since the election, that those workmen were a little hostile—or, at all events, did not express their sympathies with the candidates their employers favoured—many of them were removed from their situations. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Corrupt Practices Act will be so amended as to make it stringent indeed; so that if any employer should take advantage of the weakness of the workmen and their peculiar

surroundings—their having to bear almost any imposition that may be placed upon them—such employer will be severely punished. There is another point to which I would briefly allude—that is the legalisation of the eight hours as a day's labour. There was no question that came before the conference to which I have alluded, held in March last, upon which there was so much unanimity and so much spirit exhibited amongst workers generally as upon this. For more than twenty years I have been connected with trade societies; and during the whole of that time every effort has been concentrated to have that law placed upon the Statute-book, so that the workers might have a chance of being protected by the statute law of the country. At present, supposing there are reasonable employers who would agree to eight hours as a day's work, another employer engaged in the same work, producing it may be the same material, may not be agreeable to granting the same privilege, and in consequence of the opposition of this employer, who demands longer hours—and perhaps longer hours for less wages—the employers who would agree to eight hours are handicapped to such a degree that they find it impossible to do so. The consequence is that, in many instances, men are compelled to work more than eight hours, employers being obliged, for the reasons I have already advanced—namely, the keen competition by which they are surrounded—to enforce the same conditions as their neighbours. I feel so strongly, Mr. Speaker, on this matter, which I have so long advocated to the best of my ability, that I am obliged, in consequence of no mention being made of it in the Speech delivered by His Excellency, to adopt a course which, under other circumstances, I should not take. I do not do so in consequence of my hostility to the present Government. If the party with which I am now allied occupied the benches on the other side, and the circumstances were the same, I should take exactly the same course that I now intend to take—that is, to move that the Address in Reply be so amended as to include at the end of the last paragraph the following words:—

We regret that Your Excellency's Speech contains no reference to the important question of establishing by law that the rule of eight hours labour is to be deemed a whole day's work.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that I feel obliged, in consequence of the very strong and unanimous feeling that exists amongst workers generally on this question, to move this amendment.

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

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—A number of the Opposition members, instead of confining themselves to the subject of the Address in Reply, appear to have dealt with matters entirely foreign to it. Apparently one of the gravest accusations against the present Government is, that during the late election they had no policy, while the present Opposition had a clear and defined policy. If that is the case, then it is a sad reflection that the people of this colony, after four and a-half years' experience of that policy, were so thoroughly disgusted with it, and so fearful of another term of a similar policy, that they preferred throwing themselves into the arms of a party that had no policy whatever. However, it is hardly correct to say that the present party in power had no policy, as the verdict of the people at the last general election arose partly from a comparison of the policy of the late Government with that of the present National party. Look at the action of the late Government in connection with the Chinese question! When they came into power, nearly five years ago, they promised a satisfac-

tory settlement of the Chinese question, and yet in the only measure they introduced was a clause to the effect that only one Chinaman should be allowed to be carried for every 50 tons of the vessel's tonnage. The National party considered that was not sufficiently severe, and proposed as an amendment that only one Chinaman should be allowed for every 250 tons. That was objected to, and the late Government, headed by Sir Samuel Griffith, voted *en bloc* against that severe restriction, and it was lost. It was then proposed by the Hon. J. M. Macrossan, member for Townsville, that only one Chinaman should be allowed to come for every 100 tons of the vessel's tonnage; that also was objected to by the late Government as being too severe a restriction altogether against the poor Chinese, and they voted against it, the result being that the weaker restriction of one for every 50 tons was adopted. Against that let hon. members put the policy of the present National party, who pledge themselves to total exclusion of the Chinese. Then let us compare the policy of the late Government with that of the present Government in connection with the mining interest. During the last two or three years £20,000 was on the Estimates as loans in aid of deep sinking, but the whole sum spent from that vote in Northern Queensland was £60, and that sum was not spent for the purpose for which it was voted, but in paying an old debt for soap and St. Jacob's oil in connection with a Bowen prospecting party. The present Government know the importance of the mining interest, and intend to foster and develop that industry. We know that Northern Queensland is immensely rich in minerals, and any Government really wishing to rapidly develop the colony will do all they can to foster that industry. I shall support no Government which will not endeavour to do so, and I am sure all the mining members will say the same. I am glad to see that year by year the mining members are becoming more numerous, and I am convinced that, setting all party questions aside, they will work together hand in hand to develop the industry they represent. The policy of the late Government in connection with land was said to be to prevent the aggregation of big estates, and to prevent the dummied which had occurred under the previous Act. No doubt under the previous Act dummied land, and the aggregation of large estates did take place, and Sir S. W. Griffith referred to the large amount of sugar lands that were dummied. But those lands were dummied under an Act which was introduced by a Ministry of which he was a member. The present Act, however, gives far greater facilities for dummied. Under the previous Act the largest amount of land that any one person could take up was 1,260 acres. Under the present Act one man can take up 20,000 acres—and in several instances that has been done—of the best agricultural land in the colony, simply by having it classed as grazing land, and holding it for thirty years at a nominal rental. One case has come within my own knowledge where an individual in this way by dummies took up more than 100,000 acres of land. The leader of the Opposition jeered at the term the "National party," but I am certain the principles of that party find an echo in the breast of every true Australian. As to the Liberal party, the Liberal party is dead; it died long ago. Every true Liberal has seceded from that party. We recollect how the Hon. Mr. Macrossan, now a member of the National party, seceded from it on account of its refusal to take action in connection with the Chinese, such refusal causing the colony to be inundated with 20,000 Chinamen. We recollect how Sir

Thomas McIlwraith left the party on account of their do-nothing policy. The hon. member who last spoke referred to the eight hours system. We recollect how Mr. Buzacott, a leading member of the party, deserted it on account of the manner in which they received a measure of his in connection with that eight hours system. We recollect how the Hon. John Douglas, a former Premier of the Liberal party, also deserted, leaving one solitary member blooming alone—like the last rose of summer—a gentleman who, we all know, is a rank Conservative and Imperialist. There are two parties in the House now—the National party and the Imperialist party. The hon. member who spoke before me referred to the corrupt practices during the last election. I quite agree with him that there were corrupt practices, for we know that in Mr. Dutton's electorate one gentleman, who is now a member of the House, travelled round that electorate and made all kinds of promises provided that Mr. Dutton got in. We recollect also what took place at Cairns, where a certain contractor was so much favoured by the Government that he was given a contract, although his tender was far higher than that of another contractor; and not only that, but the Government indented 300 labourers for him in order that he might reduce the price of labour to 7s. a day. We recollect, also, how, during the elections, the members of the Government went round, ostensibly on State business, drawing their salaries, and sailing about in the "Lucinda" at a cost to the country of £20 a day, champagne not included, but which I suppose the State paid for also. We recollect, also, how the polling places were manipulated, and how in districts where Nationalist tendencies were suspected, polling places were very scarce indeed. The leader of the Opposition referred the other night to a certain election placard, and he said:—

"It represented, I understand, two prisoners in irons appealing to be let out, and representing myself outside saying they could stick there. I do not remember the exact wording of the thing, but it was very brutal."

The hon. gentleman ought to know that the wording under that picture was taken from a speech of his own at North Brisbane—namely, "If they wait until I recommend their release they will wait a very long time." It is reported in the *Courier* that those were the words he used in reply to a question. Reference has been made to leaflets flying about during the last election. Well, the leaflets circulated by the present Opposition contained statements which were not correct, and it has not been shown that anything incorrect was contained in the leaflets circulated by this side of the House. One leaflet was referred to by the leader of the Opposition in strong terms; he called it, with rather questionable taste, a "dastardly collection of falsehoods." The first statement in that leaflet was—

"That S. W. Griffith was the first Minister of the Crown to license vessels to recruit on the coast of New Guinea and the adjacent islands."

What was the fact? During the previous five years of the McIlwraith Ministry not a single vessel had gone to those islands, and during the first six months of the Griffith Ministry every vessel that went labour recruiting went to those islands. The next statement is—

"That, in so doing, he was aware of the fact that the natives of that portion of the West Pacific were, so far as knowledge of white men and Queensland is concerned, in as great a state of ignorance as the natives of the New Hebrides and Solomon Groups twenty years ago."

"That by licensing vessels to recruit labour in those regions, he practically opened the way to the abuses he, after the mischief was done, complained of."

That cannot be denied. Another paragraph comments very strongly on his conduct in permitting a number of cannibals to look at the "Hopeful" prisoners through their bars, and it states—

"That even if the men had been the most guilty wretches on earth, our nineteenth century civilisation should have protected them from the ordeal of being paraded like wild beasts before a crowd of cannibal savages."

It is quite true that an order was given by the then Premier to blackfellows to inspect those men. The order was given on the 29th December, 1884—I have seen it; and, in consequence of that, two bus-loads of niggers went to the gaol, and those white men were paraded before them. But the judge had punished those men, and I hold that Sir S. W. Griffith had no right to increase their punishment in that way. When I was at Cooktown the other day, a French convict ship came into the offing, and was piloted down from Thursday Island by a friend of mine. On the pilot asking the captain whether he would like to go alongside the wharf, he replied, "I refuse to allow Englishmen to see my countrymen in chains." Those were not the feelings of Sir S. W. Griffith when he allowed blackfellows and cannibals to look at our countrymen in chains. Further on this leaflet states—

"That if Sir Samuel Griffith tells the truth—when he asserts that kidnapping and false representation were the usual methods adopted to obtain recruits before he had had time to discover the true nature of the traffic—he distinctly brands himself as an aider and abettor of slavery."

"That there were 12,000 kanakas in Queensland at the time he took the reins of Government, and if he now says he believed that all or any of these men had been brought here unfairly it was his manifest duty to send them at once to their homes."

"That he did not do so in any one instance is well known; therefore we may assume that not one of the 12,000 kanakas was obtained by foul means, or that Sir Samuel Griffith was content to allow the 12,000 slaves to toil on our shores until their term of service had expired."

No other logical deduction could be arrived at. Only during the present session the leader of the Opposition said that "outrages on kanakas had been a scandal for many years." At the latter end of last session of the last Parliament it was shown that the whole of the vessels which the Royal Commission reported on as having any connection with murder and kidnapping were every one of them licensed by Sir S. W. Griffith—captains, Government agents, and vessels were all licensed by him. Sir Samuel Griffith's justification or excuse at the time will be found in *Hansard* for 1887, page 1966. He said then:—

"Before he had found out the real nature of the trade and the way in which it was being carried on, and had obtained the power from the House necessary to stop the abuses that existed, those vessels had gone away with their captains and agents."

That was the hon. gentleman's excuse, but if, as he states now, it was a scandal and outrage for years, then the only excuse he could give at that time for neglecting to exercise proper supervision is entirely gone. The way in which the reference to the measures introduced to allow kanakas to give evidence is made by the hon. gentlemen tends to give the Opposition all the *kudos* for the introduction of that measure, whereas it was introduced by Mr. Chubb, who had been the Attorney-General of this party, under the title of the Oaths Act Amendment Act. It is stated that these "Hopeful" murders were cold-blooded murders; but if that is the case the onus must rest upon him through whose carelessness those murders took place. It must be recollected that the "Hopeful" did not sail until the 3rd May, six months after the McIlwraith Government left office, and it is evident that if proper supervision

had been exercised in obtaining a proper Government agent and a proper captain, those murders would not have taken place. No law can prevent murder or robbery, and the only way to do it in such cases is to appoint persons in authority incapable of such conduct. If that had been done in the "Hopeful" case those murders would not have occurred, and the late Premier is responsible for the appointment of the captain and agent of that vessel. It is possible that some people consider it is not so bad to murder a black man as to murder a white man; but I do not hold that opinion, because I consider that the more defenceless a man is the more cowardly the person who injures him. I have had spears thrown at me while riding in the bush, but I preferred to ride away rather than bring my revolver into play, because I thought it would be cowardly to use it against men who would have had no chance against me. If the men in this "Hopeful" case were guilty I would hang them as high as Haman; but it is stated that the evidence at their trial was not sufficient and was not reliable. One of the witnesses—"Messiah"—has since, we know, been convicted and is in gaol, and a white man was forced to give evidence which he states was not true. What is wanted now, I believe, or what is asked by the people, is that a fair inquiry should take place, in order to ascertain on whom the onus of those murders rests, and then, if these men are proved guilty, let them hang whether they are white or black. I cannot help thinking there was some vindictive feeling displayed in this case, and my reason for thinking it is this: We know that prisoners like to get to St. Helena, but the "Hopeful" prisoners were kept in irons in the gaol, and when Mr. Jessop, the present Chairman of Committees, asked why they were not sent to St. Helena, Sir S. W. Griffith's reply—which will be found at page 561 of *Hansard* for last year—was as follows:—

"We cannot send men in irons to St. Helena."

The SPEAKER: I must interrupt the hon. member for one moment. I understand that he is alluding to the leader of the Opposition; and if so he should speak of him as the "leader of the Opposition" or as "the hon. member for North Brisbane."

Mr. HAMILTON: The leader of the Opposition said they could not send men in irons to St. Helena, and yet he actually did send men in irons to St. Helena a month or so before those men were convicted. I can hardly see how he could have forgotten that, because when men are sent to St. Helena the warrant goes through the Colonial Secretary's Office. There were two men sent down a month or so before, and I can give their names—Francis Raymond and John McLean. They were sent down for similar offences on the 2nd June, 1884, and were then in irons until 2nd June, 1885. There are three statements regarding Mr. Pring in connection with these "Facts," and they are as follows:—

"That the late Mr. Pring once stated in the House that he had received a letter from Sir S. W. Griffith containing certain statements; that he would have produced the letter had he not either lost or mislaid it."

"That—(mark this)—as soon as Sir S. W. Griffith learned that the letter was in all probability lost, he emphatically denied having written such a letter, meaning thereby that Mr. Pring was guilty of mendacious falsehood."

"That a few nights after Mr. Pring appeared in the House with the missing letter in his hands."

The leader of the Opposition denies these statements, and according to *Hansard* expressed himself thus:—

"These are three statements which I may call deliberate and wilful falsehoods. All the facts are recorded in *Hansard* in 1879. Mr. Pring, in a speech here, said I had once offered him the office of Solicitor-General. I said I was sure I had never offered it to him, and that I

never had any communication with him on the subject. There never was an office of Solicitor-General in this colony, and I certainly could not have offered the office to him. There was no reference made by him to a letter, or having lost it. I went away under the impression that I must have written something, and I ransacked my memory, and then remembered that two or three years before, when in office—in 1877 or 1876—a proposition had been made to have a Solicitor-General instead of a Crown Prosecutor. I was Attorney-General at the time, and I offered Mr. Pring about that time the office of District Court Judge. On looking into some drawers in my chambers, I found a draft of a letter I had written to Mr. Pring offering him the office of District Court Judge, and in that letter I wrote: 'If we should at any time create the office of Solicitor-General this will not preclude you from consideration.' I then went to Mr. Pring, and said to him, 'I have found this draft. Have you the original? Will you read it, or shall I read the draft?'

I shall now read from *Hansard* of 1879, pages 62 and 68, what did occur, so that it may be compared with the leader of the Opposition's present version. Mr. Pring then said:—

"The hon. member (Mr. Griffith) brought in that Act—a most injurious one to the profession—and it was done for a purpose. The facts were that he (Mr. Pring) had been asked by the hon. member he referred to if he would accept the office of Solicitor-General without portfolio, the senior member for North Brisbane being Attorney-General.

"Mr. GRIFFITH: The hon. member is quite wrong. I never had any communication with him on such a subject in my life."

On the following day Mr. Pring moved the adjournment of the House, and is reported as follows:—

"The Hon. R. PRING moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of reading to the House two letters which the hon. member for Brisbane, Mr. Griffith, had requested him to send to him, but which he had not done, as he preferred to read them to the House for the purpose of proving the accuracy of the statements he had made on the previous evening. It would be recollected by hon. members that he stated that he had been asked by the hon. member he referred to if he would accept the office of Solicitor-General without portfolio, the senior member for North Brisbane being Attorney-General. He was interrupted by the hon. member, who said—

"The hon. member is quite wrong. I never had any communication with him on such a subject in my life."

"He was at the time referring to some conversation which took place in his own chambers, and concerning which he had requested the hon. gentleman to send him a formal letter, and it had not occurred to him until the hon. gentleman gave him such a flat denial that he had that formal letter in his chambers. That letter he had now in his hand, but before reading it he would premise that it was marked 'private and confidential,' and that he would not have referred to it if the hon. member had not contradicted him. As the hon. member had done so, he considered he was perfectly justified in reading the letter to the House. It was as follows:—

"[PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.]

"Chambers, 5th November, 1875.

"MY DEAR PRING,—I send with this note a formal offer of the Central or Northern Districts Court Judgeship.

"In considering the matter, I wish you to be aware that it will probably be proposed next session to appoint a Solicitor-General to perform the duties of Grand Jury and Chief Prosecutor, now attached to the office of Attorney-General. The proposition, if made, is almost certain to be approved by Parliament. Should I be in office when the appointment is to be made, I feel that you are, of all others, the man to whom it should be offered. Your acceptance or non-acceptance of the judgeship will in that respect make no difference, as, in either case, if the appointment rests with me, you will have the first offer of it.

"Believe me,

"Yours very truly,

"S. W. GRIFFITH.

"Hon. R. Pring, Q.C."

"The note accompanying that was in the following terms, and reached him at the same time:—

"Crown Law Office,

"5th November, 1875.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have much pleasure, on behalf of the Government, in offering you the Judgeship of either the Northern or Central District Court.

"Permit me to add that, while I am fully sensible of the great loss the bar, of which you have so long been a distinguished ornament, would sustain by your departure from their ranks, I feel at the same time that, if you deem the office worthy of your acceptance, their interests ought not to stand in the way of the higher interests of the public.

"Believe me,

"Yours very truly,

"(Signed) S. W. GRIFFITH.

"Hon. R. Pring, Q.C."

We find, therefore, that the *Hansard* to which the leader of the Opposition refers actually disproves his own version. The first "Fact to know" of which he denies the truth is—

"That the late Mr. Pring once stated that he received a letter from Sir Samuel Griffith containing certain statements, and that he would have produced the letter if he had not lost or mislaid it."

Now, the leader of the Opposition states that there was no reference made by Mr. Pring to a letter having been received or mislaid. I was present at the time, and I heard the reference made to the letter. Mr. Pring stated that he had received a letter from the leader of the Opposition offering him the appointment of Solicitor-General, but that he had lost it. I heard him make the statement, and I heard Sir Samuel Griffith reply that he had never had any communication with the hon. member on such a subject in his life. I see many members present now who were present then. I see the member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, and I ask him if he heard the same statement? He has informed me that he did. Mr. Stevenson, the member for Clermont, also informs me he heard Mr. Pring state that he had received the letter, and heard the leader of the Opposition deny having written it. I am certain the member for Balonne will also bear me out, but I have further evidence. Mr. O'Sullivan also informs me that he heard Mr. Pring make the statement, and heard Mr. Griffith's denial. I have not only the evidence of every one of those gentlemen, who will state, if challenged, that they heard Mr. Pring state that he had received the letter and lost it, and then heard the leader of the Opposition deny having written it—

The SPEAKER: I think if the hon. member wishes it to be understood that the leader of the Opposition is guilty of deliberate misrepresentation in his statements he is out of order. The hon. member is out of order if he accuses the leader of the Opposition or any member of the House of making a deliberately false statement.

Mr. HAMILTON: I have not accused him of making a deliberately false statement, Mr. Speaker, but I simply wish to show that he must have forgotten the facts. I intend to show that he himself, in *Hansard*, refers to that letter. He stated the other evening—

"There was no reference made by me to a letter, or to having lost it."

After Mr. Pring appeared in the House on the day following Mr. Griffith's denial, and read the letter which Mr. Griffith had written him, Mr. Griffith got up and said:—

"The hon. member for Fortitude Valley had informed him that morning that he had found the letters, and he told the hon. member that if he did not bring them before the House he (Mr. Griffith) should do so. Therefore, he could not blame the hon. member for having read them, whatever might have been said last evening as to the mention of a private letter."

As the only two persons who spoke on this subject the evening before were Mr. Pring and the leader of the Opposition, the fact of the leader

of the Opposition, on the following day, when the House was adjourned by Mr. Pring, admitting that something was said about a private letter proves that he, when he states now that no reference was made to any letter, is wrong. The next statement in "Facts to know," is "That the leader of the Opposition denied having written such a letter." But I have shown that Mr. Pring appeared in the House with the missing letter in his hand. The leader of the Opposition states that what Mr. Pring read was the draft of the private letter which he, Mr. Griffith, found, but Mr. Pring clearly states in *Hansard* that it was the original that was found, and by himself; that when he found the original he informed Mr. Griffith that he had found it, upon which the leader of the Opposition sent to him for it, in order that he might read it. But Mr. Pring stated that he refused to let the letter out of his own hands, because he proposed to read it himself. I have, therefore, proved from *Hansard* that the statements which are challenged as three falsehoods are perfectly true. It will be remembered by hon. members who were then in the House that, when that hon. member saw he had made a mistake, he said his memory was a blank. It must be a blank again. I would never have thought of bringing up this matter if I had not heard the veracity of gentlemen impugned; but, having heard that, I think it only right to prove that those statements are correct. One would have thought that, after the contemptuous manner in which the black bogey question was brought up and dangled before the electors, hon. gentlemen opposite would have avoided the question altogether; but they have evidently not done so. The present Opposition have continually, session after session, promised to do something with the black labour question, but they have done nothing. During their last reign coolies and kanakas were coming in as large numbers as the planters wished. There was not a single member of the late Government, with the exception of the present leader of the Opposition, who had not a kanaka servant. The late Treasurer had kanaka servants, and he excused himself on the ground that they talked French. The Attorney-General had a kanaka servant; the Hon. B. B. Moreton had a kanaka servant; Mr. Dutton, the Minister for Lands, said he preferred black-fellows for servants, and the present leader of the Opposition engaged a servant, at the Government expense, to work on board the "Lucinda," pleading as an excuse that he was a British subject. Why, sir, coolies are British subjects. But that does not excuse them; it does not take away the objection white men have to their coming into the colony. *Appropos* of that matter I would draw attention to the fact that the very first action of the present Government has shown what they intend to do with regard to the labour question. In connection with the mail contract, the contractors wished an arrangement to be made by which they should not be required to pay a penalty in the event of a strike taking place and the mails not being delivered within the contract time. The Postmaster-General objected to any such proposal, unless it was a condition that Chinese should not be employed on board the vessels. We have heard a great deal about labour legislation, but what we want is administration, not legislation. We want by proper administration to encourage capitalists, then labour will be encouraged, and the country will move along like it did many years ago when the present Government were in power. Of course the Opposition cannot be expected to approve of the policy of the present Government, but it is satisfactory to know that the country approves of it.

Mr. COWLEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not wish to occupy the attention of the House for any length of time, but I believe it is generally

understood that on the Address in Reply each member should say a little just to give an expression of his political faith. I shall, therefore, not shirk my duty in this respect. Before passing on to the consideration of the Opening Speech, I wish to state that I very much regret the action of the leader of the Opposition in speaking as he did, when he spoke on the Address in Reply. I think the country, and I am sure most members of this House, were perfectly satisfied with the result of the North Brisbane election, without going into all its harrowing details; and I am confident that if hon. gentlemen on this side were to mention the many election tactics which were practised in their districts by the present Opposition, the hon. gentleman would be the first to cry shame on them for doing so. I shall, however, refer to one matter showing, not what private individuals have done, but to what has been done by one of the hon. gentleman's colleagues to try to influence another election. I mention the subject now because the hon. gentlemen to whom I allude is present in the House, and as he has not yet spoken he will have an opportunity of refuting what I am about to say, if it is incorrect. I refer to the late Minister for Lands. In the electorate which I have now the honour to represent there lives a storekeeper by the name of Earles. He settled on a piece of land in Geraldton, which had before that, I believe, been proclaimed a pilot reserve. After the town was surveyed, and previous to this piece of land being reserved for pilot purposes, he erected a small shanty on it. The building consisted of old packing cases, and was covered with galvanised iron. Subsequently he applied for the land to be sold and asked that his improvements might be protected. This was in July, 1885. A reply was sent to him the same month stating that the land in question was required for pilot and harbour purposes. Mr. Earles then offered to lease it for five years at an annual rental of £25. To this offer he had no reply. Again he communicated with the Minister for Lands requesting him to put up the land at auction, and asked that his improvements should be protected, but failing in this he secured the services of that very able diplomatist, the hon. member for Rosewood, Mr. Isambert. That hon. member also failed, but before the answer was sent, the head of the Lands Department referred the matter to Captain Heath, who reported that the land was very necessary for pilot purposes, and strongly objected to the sale. Again, Mr. Earles wrote to the Minister for Lands, and sent him a map of the district showing a piece of land about two miles away, which he suggested should be given to the Harbours and Rivers Department instead of the piece he occupied, and that the latter should be put up for auction. This application was referred to Captain Heath, and he repeated his objection to the sale of the land in still stronger language, stating that the land was absolutely necessary for a reserve for pilot purposes, because it was adjacent to the wharves, and no other suitable land was available. Captain Heath further suggested that if the Government wanted to give Mr. Earles a piece of land they should take the piece which that gentleman proposed should be reserved for the Harbours and Rivers Department. This did not satisfy Mr. Earles and the hon. member for Rosewood. The hon. member then had an interview with the Minister for Lands. Unfortunately for us who are young members there is no record of what took place at that interview. Had there been such a record I have no doubt we should have gained very considerable experience, which would have been exceedingly useful to our constituents in future. But the result of that interview was that two other letters

were written by the hon. member for Rosewood, and the Minister for Lands, on the 21st of April, shortly before the general election took place, decided that the land should be sold. The reserve was cancelled on the 9th of June, and was advertised for sale on the 10th of July. Well, sir, knowing as we do, the distance between Brisbane and Geraldton, it will be easily understood how very little information would be given to the residents of this fact, and I wish to point out how the sale of the land was hurried through. It was gazetted on the 14th June. As it takes over a week for letters to get there, and sometimes for the papers to be distributed in the district, scarcely anyone, especially of those people interested in the land, knew anything whatever about it. I desire to draw particular attention to the fact that the value of the improvements was not inserted in the *Government Gazette*, and no one had the faintest idea what the sum was until it was stated by the land agent when the land was put up for auction. It was then discovered that the improvements were protected to the extent of £215. Several of my constituents, who are practical men and know well the value of a bush shanty, have written to me stating positively that the total value of the building on that allotment is £50. Besides this, I know of two individuals who attended the sale, and one of them was authorised by a principal to go to the extent of £250 for the land if the improvements did not exceed £50; and if it was a condition that the improvements were to be removed he was to pay £300. What was the result? The land was sold, and Earles bought it, for £101, so that the revenue of the country has been defrauded, and the Harbours and Rivers Department have lost a reserve which, according to Captain Heath's statement, was absolutely required. I make this statement now in order that the Minister for Lands may have an opportunity to explain, but I believe the truth of the statements cannot be denied. If I make any misstatements I shall be only too willing and happy to apologise, because I have always understood from those who have known the late Minister for Lands, and from the opinion I formed of him from reading *Hansard* for several years, that he has been one of our purest politicians, and I assure you, sir, that when I heard this statement from my constituents, and searched the records of the Lands Office and found it true, that hon. gentleman fell very considerably in my opinion. I sincerely trust that for his own sake, if for no other, he will be able to refute or give good explanation of his conduct upon that occasion. I wish to be as concise and terse as possible, because I know time is valuable, but I shall make a few remarks concerning what has been said of the Speech by several hon. members opposite. We have heard from the members for Ipswich, and particularly from the senior member, Mr. Barlow, that the railways of Victoria, so far as he understood, have not been successfully worked by the board of commissioners. Now, I was under the impression, and I formed my opinion upon good authority, that the fact was entirely the reverse. I have been led to believe, upon good authority, that since the railways have been placed under a board of commissioners, they have not only paid interest but have been a source of revenue to the country, and I believe the people of Victoria are far more satisfied than ever they were with the working of the railways. The hon. members for Ipswich seem to think that the present Government, in bringing in a measure to rectify the existing evils in the management of our railways, are determined to raise the freights, but I understand that they intend to do nothing of the sort. What they mean to do—at any rate what I give them credit for meaning to do—is to go thoroughly

into the administration of the whole system and thereby be able to reduce the freights, not to increase them. There is no doubt in the mind of any thinking man who travels through the country, that our railways are not worked economically, and I believe, from what I have seen since I have been travelling on the railways in the South, that there is a great amount of deception and fraud being carried on by the travelling public. I came here a month ago, and have travelled ever since on the suburban railways, and although I am a perfect stranger, only on one single occasion have I been asked to show my ticket. They did not know me. I had never ridden in the trains here before. I have seen railway guards come and say, "Tickets, gentlemen," and some people treated the request with indifference, and others simply nodded their heads, and the guards went out of the carriage perfectly content that the passengers all had their tickets. I have also seen at the suburban railway stations, dozens of men pass unchallenged—men who looked, so far as I could read countenances, very guilty indeed. I believe they were defrauding the country. Now, that is a small thing in itself; but if it is carried on in every department—if these little things are allowed to pass by unchallenged—I consider that it is very wasteful and extravagant. I presume that the object of the present Administration in placing the railways under a board of commissioners, is to see that they are not only managed economically, but effectually to the advantage of the public. The more economically they are worked, the more advantage the public will receive. Not only will the railways be made to pay the interest on the capital, but rates can then be lowered throughout the whole of the country, and the Government will be able to build more railways where they are actually needed. Hon. members opposite have also taken great exception to the manner in which the clause in the Speech refers to the construction of railways. Now, I think, with all due deference to those gentlemen, that they should have remained silent upon this point until the Bill was actually before the House. So far as I myself am concerned, I sincerely wish that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government would bring in a Bill to construct railways upon land-grant principles. I believe that it is the best system that could possibly be brought into the colony, and I believe also that someone, if not the hon. gentleman, will have the courage to bring it forward and carry it through this House. Hon. members must remember that the heroes of this earth have been men who have been treated with contumely and scorn and contempt by one generation, and succeeding generations have raised monuments to their memory. Hon. members should not say "No, no," but should give some valid argument against the system. I believe the time will come when someone will introduce a measure and successfully carry it through this House, to construct railways upon the land-grant principle. I have always been of that opinion, and shall remain so until I have heard good arguments to the contrary. There is one other matter I shall refer to, and that is the Land Act. A great deal has been said by hon. members opposite, showing that, according to the report of the Under Secretary for Lands, a great deal of settlement has taken place. That report states that the total area selected last year—759,343 acres—is in excess, with but one exception, the year 1882, of the amount selected in any year under the Act of 1876:—

"A total, be it noted, not made up of large grazing farms, but consisting of nearly fifty per cent. of agricultural farms, and the above figures point to the conclusion that settlement has made better progress this year than last."

I consider that hon. members, in using this argument, have totally forgotten that, under the existing Act, any selector who holds a selection of 1,280 acres, or a smaller area, can select, under the existing Act, another 1,280 acres, without balliffing it—that is if he lives upon his own selection. But he can do more than that; if he lives upon country lands, within ten miles of a grazing farm, he can still benefit, although it is not a selection under any previous Act. He may have 50 acres freehold, and if he holds that land, if it is not within a township, or town land, or suburban land, it is classed as country land, and he can select a 1,280-acre grazing farm under the present Act and benefit by living upon his own property. Then there is another way. Even supposing he has no land, and is engaged in business, he can pay a man and benefit as he could under any previous Act. Therefore, I say, that although nearly 50 per cent. of the land selected is for grazing farms, it does not show that there has been any additional settlement. I should have liked the Under Secretary to have embodied in his report a statement showing how many of these agricultural farms are held by men who hold conditional purchases under the previous Act. I would also like to see how many of these agricultural areas are held by men who live upon country land, and how many are held by bailiffs, and how many the actual selector is residing upon. If we had those particulars, we should be able to come to a fair conclusion as to the amount of settlement that has taken place under this Act, and until we get that information we shall never be able to come to that conclusion. Several members on the Opposition side have also taunted the Premier with not bringing in his fiscal policy in this Speech; and they seem to take it very hard that he has not declared himself an out-and-out protectionist, bringing in a protective policy. Well, although I may stand on the floor of this House in a minority of one, I shall always oppose any measure of a protective character, no matter whether for the sugar industry or the cotton industry or any other industry. In meeting my constituents I told them plainly and boldly that I was a free-trader, and that I considered any measures brought in antagonistic to free-trade are not only inimical to the best interests of this country, but are certainly very much so to the interests of the North, and as a Northern member I would fight against any protective measures which might be introduced. Therefore I sincerely trust that in any revision of the fiscal policy the present Administration will only amend it for revenue, and not for the purpose of protection, because I feel assured that a vast amount of harm will be done to the colony, and that we shall suffer far more than we shall gain. If this matter should come forward, it will, I have no doubt, be ably debated by older and more experienced members than myself, but I shall do my best to check any protective measures as far as I can. The Premier has also been taunted for not referring to the Naval Defence Bill. Now, I think had he done so, he would have acted in direct opposition to the Speech which he made to the electors of North Brisbane, and the address which he published to the electors of the colony. I do not see there has been any change. I consider that so long as he can keep out of it the better for the country, and for the northern portion of it especially. There is no doubt that, if that measure is carried, it will only be carried from the federal point of view, and not because the members on this side of the House believe that it will be of advantage to the country except to promote federation, which, I believe, we are all very anxious to have, and if we do make a sacrifice of

our feelings and vote for the measure, it will only be on that account. They also seem to take exception to the reference to the decentralisation measures proposed; and the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, and the hon. the junior member for Burke, Mr. Hunter, have spoken very strongly on the Separation question. I can easily understand that the hon. member for Ipswich may have been misled during his brief sojourn up North, but I cannot excuse the hon. member for Burke in that way, because I feel assured he must know that the Separation question is not dead, but is very active and fully alive, and only waiting to see what the action of the present Ministry is before it wakes up again. Anyone who is cognisant of the results of the elections in the North knows that the Separation question is not dead, and I shall give a few figures to show that in the North in all the electorates the Separation cry was heard and fought out on the polling-day. I believe every member excepting one—the hon. member for Cook—who went before his constituents spoke very decidedly on this question on one side or the other—either for or against. Therefore I think we may consider that when the voters recorded their votes on the polling-day they knew what they were doing, and they recorded them in favour of the separationists or of the anti-separationists, as their consciences dictated. I find that in Bowen there were 272 votes recorded in favour of separation, as against 35 anti-separationists; in Burke, 559 in favour of separation, as against 755 anti-separationists.

Mr. HODGKINSON: No.

Mr. COWLEY: In Cairns there were 344 in favour of separation, and 366 against separation. In Charters Towers there were 660 in favour of separation, as against 1,201 anti-separationists. In Carpentaria there were 126 in favour of separation, as against 79. In Cook 127 in favour of separation, as against 422; and hon. members will mark here that I have given the anti-separationists the benefit of the doubt so far as Cook is concerned, because, although the present member previously advocated separation, both in the House and elsewhere, he was silent on the point while up North.

Mr. HODGKINSON: He had no opposition.

Mr. COWLEY: In Flinders there were 290 in favour of separation. Both candidates spoke in favour of separation, and there were no anti-separation candidates, so I think I may claim every vote. In the Herbert, both candidates were very pronounced in their views on the separation question, and the same also applies to the Kennedy, where both candidates were separationists; and at Mackay all the candidates were in favour of separation, and the same may be said of Townsville. In Woothakata, there were 422 in favour of separation, as against 298. The sum total was 6,126 in favour of separation, and 3,186 anti-separationists, or a percentage of 65·8 in favour of the question, as against 34·2 opposed to it. I think, taking this into consideration—and I can assure the House they are the actual records of the polls in the various places—I think hon. members must admit that the separation question is not dead, but that we are anxiously waiting to see what are the proposals of the present Government in this decentralisation question. I have no doubt that on the Opposition side of the House, and probably on this side also, they will be treated with very strong opposition. When these proposals are brought in I sincerely trust there will be a provision for the employment of black labour on the sugar plantations. The hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hodgkinson, laughs. I expected a laugh from him, but if hon. members would only give this matter their serious consideration they would find that it is necessary.

Mr. HODGKINSON: Now the National policy is coming out.

Mr. COWLEY: This industry is worth over £1,000,000 per annum to the country, and there are thousands of people engaged in the sugar industry, either directly or indirectly. If they would remember all these things, and what the consequences would be if all these people were thrown out of employment, they would admit that the sugar industry, which annually produces over £1,000,000 worth of a valuable commodity, was deserving of consideration at their hands; and I sincerely trust that when these decentralisation measures are brought before us there will be a provision enabling the districts which require to employ black labour to avail themselves of the privilege of doing so.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The sugar industry alone?

Mr. COWLEY: We have a local-option clause, and if we admit the principle in reference to one thing, why not admit it elsewhere? The principle of government is that the majority rules, and if you narrow it down to localities you will see that we have every right to ask that our wants should be granted in regard to this matter, as well as in local option. I believe in local option. I believe it is a measure which is of great use to the country, and if we can introduce a measure of that description into the Decentralisation Bill, we shall give universal satisfaction to the northern portion of the colony.

Mr. HODGKINSON: The miners are against it.

Mr. COWLEY: The miners are not against it. They oppose the Chinese, but they are not against the kanakas.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes, yes!

Mr. COWLEY: I have been before the miners, and I have argued it out with them, and they have admitted that they want to get the Chinamen away. They say, "Get the Chinamen away. The Chinese are the men who injure us, and so long as you will not introduce a race which will injure our industry we do not care where else they go." It may be a selfish one, but that is the opinion prevalent among the miners. It will be only fair to consult the majorities on this question in certain localities, and it can easily be arranged. For instance, if the majority within a certain area—say a police district—require black labour, they should be allowed to have it under safe restrictions. They should bear the whole cost of their introduction and cost of maintenance while in the colony, and be compelled to return them at the expiration of their agreements. That would be fraught with immense benefit, not only to the employers, but also to the shippers, mechanics, and every other class of the community throughout the length and breadth of the land. I sincerely trust that hon. members will give their serious consideration to an industry fraught with such vital consequences, not only to the North but to the whole of Queensland. There is no doubt, as was shown by an hon. member who spoke previously, that you can very well throw a little sympathy overboard and look at the industry from a practical common sense point of view. It gives employment to so many that if the industry ceases to exist now, the first people to cry out will be the working classes, who derive their living by it and from it.

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Speaker.—The hon. gentleman who has just sat down has told us plainly what he means, and in his speech he certainly has given no uncertain sound. He believes in free trade, black labour, and land-grant railways, and he would have us believe that these form part of a national policy; but I

would rather believe that the hon. gentleman's speech is not an exposition of what the policy of the National party is likely to be. Some of the leaders of the National party, at any rate, are committed to "no black labour," and the head of the Government, at all events, is committed to "no land-grant railways during the period of the present Parliament." The Government have also committed themselves to stimulating settlement on the land. These things are quite inconsistent with the views held by the hon. gentleman who has just sat down. The hon. member has charged me with political corruption.

Mr. COWLEY: I said the very reverse.

Mr. JORDAN: He said he should hardly have supposed that I was capable of doing anything in my public capacity as a responsible Minister merely for the purpose of pleasing a party likely to support the Liberal party in the colony. I am confident that the gentlemen who know me, and who have known me for many years, even those on the opposite side, would not believe me capable of any such proceeding. I wish the hon. gentleman had given me some notice of this charge. It would have been courteous of him when I had the pleasure of a little talk with him this afternoon to have mentioned it; and then I would have gone to the Lands Office and refreshed my memory. I remember that a Mr. Earles, living at Geraldton, applied several times, by letter I think, to be allowed to purchase the land on which he resided at Geraldton; and it appeared to me that he had a good case. He was one of the earliest settlers in the locality, and had a piece of land which, when the Government auction sales took place, he was not allowed to buy, as it was considered suitable for some public purpose in connection with the Harbours and Rivers Department. If I recollect rightly, he was the first person who put up a building there. It was a small piece of land, and it appeared to me that his request was highly reasonable. I believe requests of that kind have usually been granted. I know that where early settlers have improved property they have been permitted to buy the land on which their improvements have been made. In this case, however, it was objected to, and the matter was referred to Captain Heath, of the Harbours and Rivers Department. Government departments always do object to giving up land; and Captain Heath objected on the general ground that it was suitable for the purposes of the department. I believe Mr. Earles again urged his case in another letter, and I referred the matter again to Captain Heath, I think. I rather think I saw Captain Heath on the subject; and that it was pointed out that there was another property in or near the township that would suit the department as well as that which Mr. Earles wished to buy, or better. On that ground it was finally brought before the Cabinet and passed. As to its being hurried through, the fact is that it took several months, but would have been conceded immediately only for the objections of Captain Heath. I suppose Mr. Earles stated the value of his improvements, and his representations were taken as truthful. However, I can promise the House and the hon. member who made the charge that I will refresh my memory, and give a full and true account of the whole case; and I am sure I shall be able to remove from his mind the impression that I have been guilty of corrupt practices in connection with the late election. I never valued my own election or that of the leader of the Opposition, or of anyone else, at so high a price that I would have made a misstatement or done any crooked thing on purpose to win for my side.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear hear!

Mr. JORDAN : I hold in my hand the annual report of the Department of Public Lands for 1887. I think when this was being quoted from by the leader of the Opposition, I heard one or two gentlemen on the Treasury benches say that this was our report, and that the Minister for Lands in the former Government was responsible for the report. I never saw the report in print until about a fortnight ago, when I looked up my parliamentary papers, some of which have not yet been opened. I never saw the rough draft of the report, much less the complete manuscript, and I suppose the report was issued since I left the office on the 13th June last. Had it been completed even in rough form before I left office I think the Under Secretary, seeing that he always acted with courtesy towards me, would have shown me the rough draft before he sent it to be printed. I think that as there was no interregnum, my successor stepping into the office the day after I left, this report must have been issued when he was Minister for Lands, and if there are any mistakes in it certainly I think he must be held responsible for them. I do not think there are any mistakes in it. But if there are no mistakes in the report, I submit, Mr. Speaker, that there are several in the Speech which we are now discussing. For instance, what is stated in it with regard to the royalty on timber is certainly not consistent with what is contained in the report, which says the expense of collecting the royalty has been very small. It says that, even supposing the cost of the additional five rangers that have been employed during the past three years was all chargeable to the collection of this duty upon timber, all the extra cost that can be put down to it is £685. That multiplied by three would give about £2,000, whereas the increased income from the new royalty is £8,479, thus showing a clear gain to the colony of over £6,000. The Premier explained that away by saying, as I understood him, that the rangers' duties would very speedily be brought to a close; that as the payments under the Act of 1876 were constantly falling in, all the collections under it would soon be made, and then we could dispense with the services of the rangers. Now, hitherto the business of the rangers has been to look after selectors, to see that they are acting *bonâ fide*. Conditional purchasers get land at a mere nominal price. We do not want persons to take up land for the purpose of selling it again—as mere land speculators. We give them the land at a nominal price in order that there may be *bonâ fide* settlement—that the land will be actually and profitably occupied. The business of the rangers has been to see that selectors live upon their land, either personally or by bailiff, continuously, or generally, at all events, and that the conditions of improvement are fulfilled. Now, in what sense are we to understand that the arrangements under the Act of 1876 will speedily come to an end—that the rangers will no longer be needed? Are we to have unconditional selections all over the colony? If so, we shall have something like universal dummying. I do not think the Premier can mean that. Even if that were his intention it would still be true, as the Under Secretary for Lands has stated, that the income from the royalty under the new regulations has been upwards of £8,000, while the cost of five additional rangers employed for the purpose of giving effect to the regulations was only £2,000, thus leaving a clear gain, as I have stated, of over £6,000. The Under Secretary puts the matter very guardedly. He says: "Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the payment of the five additional rangers was made necessary by the new regulations imposing this royalty, all the extra cost that can be put down to them is £685." Although he puts it in that way, for the sake of

argument, to show that at the very utmost we could only charge against the collection of the royalty the cost of the five additional rangers, when I inquired into the matter, as it was very much talked about during the early stage of the election campaign, the Under Secretary placed before me the memorandum I now hold in my hand, in which he assumes that the five additional rangers would have been required for the ordinary business of rangers—seeing that the conditions of selection were fulfilled, and that really the expense of collecting the royalty did not amount to more than £250 17s. 10d. I mention this because I made use of this memorandum at one of my meetings, in which he says: "This is the only amount that the department has had to pay *re* timber. Rangers' salaries would have to be paid in any case—even were there no timber to attend to." The hon. the Premier promised that we should have an entertainment from the hon. the Minister for Lands on the subject of village settlement. Judging from the manner in which he referred to the matter, I expected that we should hear something very entertaining, and I am rather disappointed that the Minister for Lands has not given us that entertainment before I say what I have to say in defence of that system. I was not the inventor of the village settlement scheme. I wish I could take credit for it. But I thoroughly believe in it—that it would be a good thing for people to settle in little communities in countries like this, especially in the North, where there is some danger attached to settling the country, because they might by that means secure mutual assistance and protection, and establish schools and churches. If the land were well selected, I believe the scheme would prove a good one. That depends, of course, partly on the way in which it is carried out, and partly whether people, after all, will fall in with the system. However, it was my duty on entering office to look into the clause of the Amending Act of 1886, which provides for village settlement, and, although it had been in existence for some time, I found that nothing much had been done. Inquiries had been made in different places, but no design had been sketched out. I felt it my duty, in the first place, to direct a letter to be sent to the surveyors employed all over the colony, calling their attention to the 22nd section of the Act, and requiring them to send in a report of any land in their locality which might appear suitable for the purpose. It was particularly explained that it was to be good agricultural land, permanently watered, and within a certain distance of a railway or a centre of population. I then engaged the chief draftsman to sketch out a design. I had sketched out one myself to begin with; he improved vastly upon mine; and in course of time reports came in from surveyors in all parts of the country. I found by experience that as a rule surveyors do not know much about the settlement of the country by farmers. Whether they really are not capable of judging what is agricultural land, or affect to be incapable of doing so, I do not know. But I found that a good many of the surveyors were scarcely prepared to give us any definite opinion as to whether the land was suitable or not. They could tell you all about its size and shape, the amount of rainfall, and the supply of water, but whether it was suitable for agricultural purposes they seemed, many of them, to have very vague and indefinite ideas. I was very much amused with the report of one of them. We wanted to have some village settlements in the North, and he sent in a very elaborate report on the land in his locality. In this case he knew the quality of

the land, and he concluded his report in this way: "The selectors who settle on that land would be included in three classes—those who died through fever, those who died from starvation, and those who were drowned." That was not very encouraging for the North, but we were not entirely discouraged. We got ninety-one reports, if my memory serves me correctly, and, from time to time, I got the Surveyor-General to report progress to me. Some of the areas were very unsuitable; even some recommended by the surveyor. They seemed to have forgotten, in many cases, that the land was to be good land, and a great many of the sites were rejected. There was a great deal of correspondence and work in connection with them, and I devoted a great deal of my time to them, my *bonâ fide* intention being to make the scheme a success if possible. Many were rejected, some were ordered to be surveyed, and others were still under consideration; and six of those, during the time I was in office—a little more than nine months—were proclaimed open for settlement. There was one in the Isis Scrub, near Bundaberg, one near Nanango, one near Mackay, one near Maroochie, and one near Inglewood. The first of them was taken up very quickly; all the farms were gone immediately, except five or six, where the ground was rather rough and broken. The last three were proclaimed open the day before I left office. Why it is that more success has not attended the proclaiming of those six places for village settlement, I do not know. It is partly attributable to the fact that during the elections a number of gentlemen not belonging to our side represented that the spots selected were very barren, and the Minister for Lands was accused of having selected wretched places where the people would go and lose their labour and break their hearts on bad land. That was partly the reason, I believe. In the meantime, before we hear what the Minister for Lands has to say on that question, I will say a word or two on the Land Act of 1884, including of course the Amending Acts of 1885 and 1886. That Act, if I have gathered the meaning of the leader of the Government correctly, is condemned. At all events, the hon. member who moved the Address in Reply, whose very able speech I read, but did not hear, stated that the Land Act of 1884 had been a huge failure. I have heard people say that many a time, and when I have asked them in what particular it had proved to be a failure I have never received a satisfactory reply. No doubt we shall hear more shortly, when the change of policy, if there is to be any change, is propounded. In the meantime let me say—and having held the position of Minister for Lands I am bound to say something on the subject—without wasting the time of the House, that the Land Act has been a success; at all events in this particular, that it has provided a vast area of land for close settlement. It has thrown it open. I know the leader of the Government believes in close settlement. I remember one speech of his in which he expressed views on this subject—with which I entirely agree. He spoke of a "teeming population forcing wealth from the bowels of the earth." That is the view I have always held in this colony. We have a vast territory; much of the land is very rich, and we ought to utilise it. All wealth comes out of the ground, and if we had a teeming population we should be able to set up a machinery which would force that wealth out of the ground. This Act, at least, as I said, has provided us with land for trying this grand experiment for forcing wealth out of the ground by means of labour. The Act brings about half the colony under its operation; 232,000,000 of acres are included in the first schedule. There is power in the Act to extend its operations to the entire area

of the colony—427,000,000 acres—and 232,000,000 are included in the first schedule. Out of this 154,000,000 acres have been brought under the operation of the Act voluntarily by the pastoral tenants of the Crown. That shows, at all events, that they have some faith in the Act of 1884; that they thought it was a fair Act for them, and would answer their purpose. The Premier intimated his opinion that we had not proceeded with the work of dealing with that land so rapidly as we ought to have done. Well, nearly 100,000,000 acres of land—the exact amount being 97,000,000 acres—have been dealt with by the dividing commissioners and by the Land Board. It is known, of course, that the Land Board receives the reports of the dividing commissioners, which contain the design for the division of the runs to be brought under the Act. They have to consider them, to approve of them, to hold their courts in various parts of the country, and to examine witnesses—and there is a good deal of conflicting evidence sometimes as to how the runs should be divided—and then to arrive at what they consider an equitable conclusion. Considering that the work has been so great, and that the half of this vast colony has had to be dealt with by two men, and considering the nature of their work, and the time it must take for the examination of the cases, I think a large measure of success has attended their labours when we are able to say that nearly 100,000,000 of acres have been actually dealt with by the commissioners and the Board, and divided into leased and resumed portions. Out of this more than 40,000,000 of acres have been actually resumed for close settlement, and nearly 12,000,000 of acres have been proclaimed open for settlement in farms—either grazing farms or agricultural farms. That is a great fact. Nearly 12,000,000 acres have been proclaimed open for actual settlement, waiting only for the people to go on to the land.

The PREMIER: Which they do not do.

Mr. JORDAN: That is, of course, the vexed point. I say they do do, and I am sorry to have to differ from the hon. gentleman opposite. I say the Act of 1884, with the amending Acts of 1885 and 1886, are admirably calculated for the encouragement of close settlement upon the land. We know what the difficulties have been in former times. We know that great facilities have existed for the alienation of land. Vast areas of land have been taken up, not by *bonâ fide* settlers, but by speculators and large capitalists, under the Act of 1868. We know that under that Act the amount of land that was allowed to be taken up by a single pastoral tenant was 10,000 acres, but the amount which he could really take up was practically unlimited; he could take up just as much land as he thought was good. I do not like to weary the House with figures; but I have figures here, compiled in the Lands Office, which show that, under the Act of 1868, 2,666,319 acres were taken up by great capitalists at 5s. per acre, with ten years' purchase. The present Act has at least had the effect of putting a stop to that; it has stopped the aggregation of large estates.

Mr. MURPHY: No.

Mr. JORDAN: I say the present Act is calculated to encourage settlement upon the land by men who want it for *bonâ fide* settlement, for squatting on a small scale, or for tillage. Supposing a person wishes to secure a farm, he can get from 20 to 1,280 acres of land on easier terms than he ever could before since this colony has had an existence, and on easier terms than any person ever could before in Australia since Australia has had an existence. Although it has been said by those who have never ceased to abuse the Act

—and too often their statements have been left uncontradicted—that a farmer cannot get a freehold under the Act; that it is Henry Georgism; that it has put a stop to the sale of land; I say that the facilities for the acquisition of a freehold by the farmer are greater than ever existed before. He can get from 20 to 1,280 acres upon ten years' credit—or upon twelve, if he likes that better. What he pays in the meantime is an infinitesimal rent; the price of the land is fixed, when the land is proclaimed open for selection, at from £1 to 25s., or, in some cases, up to 30s. an acre, and the rent is fixed at 3d., 4d., or sometimes 6d. an acre, or from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on the capital, and averaging $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. If the land is good, and suitable for farming, the man who cannot get enough out of it to pay £1 or 25s. an acre for it at the end of ten or twelve years must be a muff. The infinitesimal payments, in the meantime, are taken as part payment of the principal, and at the end of the term the selector pays up the balance. What can be more liberal or more encouraging to the farming class to settle upon the land than that? But there are men who do not wish to wait so long, and who wish to get a freehold in a shorter time, and they can do so under the homestead arrangement. They can get a freehold in five years by five annual payments of 6d. an acre, making 2s. 6d. an acre, for which they get the freehold of the land. Hon. gentlemen opposite have taken to themselves the credit of—I was going to say inventing the homestead system, but they did not go quite so far as that. They took the credit of getting the homestead clauses embodied in the Act of 1884.

Mr. MURPHY: So we did.

Mr. JORDAN: They gave us very good help in that matter, and you, sir, among the number. When the then Minister for Lands, my much-respected predecessor—about whom I was glad to hear my friend Mr. Rutledge speak so highly the other evening for his ability, honesty, and manliness—I have known many men in my public career, and I never knew a man I admired more than Mr Dutton for honesty of purpose, manliness, and everything which we can respect in a man—when Mr. Dutton had provided for the 1,280-acre farms on the terms I have just described he considered that sufficient, and as the greater includes the less, he did not consider the homesteads necessary. However, that was not the opinion of the House. Attention was called to the omission of the homestead clauses, and every member on our side spoke upon the question. We were called at the time “dumb dogs,” not able to speak at all; yet some inspiration must have come over us, for every one of us spoke on this Land Bill, and everyone held the opinion that we should have the homestead clauses in. We did not claim the merit of inventing them, but we did claim this: that when the Act of 1868 was before Parliament the then leader of the Liberal party, now Sir Charles Lilley, and the much-lamented T. B. Stephens, made it a condition of their giving their support to the Bill that this American homestead system should be introduced. They carried it, and it became the law of the land. It was retained in the Act of 1876, and it is the law now. The leader of the Opposition framed the amendments embodying the present homestead system under the Act of 1884, and he made them much more liberal than they were under the Acts of 1868 and 1876. Under the Act of 1876 if a man had a homestead, and if after working on it for two or three years he was overtaken by unfavourable seasons and could not pay his rent, he had to give up the land.

Under the Act of 1884 he can sell it with all his improvements. That is a wonderful improvement on the old homestead system. Then there is a great improvement in another particular. The homestead areas were generally good lands, and there is always keen competition for the best lots. Under the Act of 1876, where there was competition, the price was determined by auction, and the applicants bid against one another, and had sometimes in consequence to pay a very high price; but, under the present Act, it is determined by lot who is the successful applicant. In another very important particular the homestead arrangements under the Act of 1884 are very much better, because the survey fee of £7 9s. 6d. paid on 100 acres was paid down at once under the old Act, but now it is paid in instalments extending over five years. So that I say this Act is good for the squatter, as proved by the fact that the squatters have brought their land under the Act; it is good for the farmer, either the large or small farmer, and however much the village settlement system may be laughed at, it is excellent, and, I believe, by-and-by may be made very successful. It has been said that no land is taken up. Now, the report of the Under Secretary tells a very different story to that. Mr. Hume's report says that there was more land taken up last year than there was in any previous year, excepting 1882, and in that year very large blocks of land in the North were taken up at 5s. an acre. But we cannot take that as settlement. That was alienation, not settlement, of the land. That kind of alienation which prevents settlement, locks land up in vast blocks, and prevents it being taken up in *bonâ fide* settlement. Now there is something better. I was in the Lands Office for nine months, and a fortnight before I left I got the Under Secretary to prepare for me a table showing all the land taken up, and he supplied me with a return of “Applications for Agricultural and Grazing Farms, showing the area and the rent received by the Department for Public Lands from each land agent's district in the colony for the nine months ending 31st May, 1888.” That shows that during nine months of the year 207,438 acres of agricultural farms were taken up. Add a quarter to that and you have 259,297, in addition to which there were grazing farms to the extent of 828,400 acres taken up. Add those two together and you get a total of 1,087,697 acres, being the rate of selection during the year. Now, who can say, in the face of those figures, that selection has been a failure? Though all the land was thrown open people did not take it up, we are told. I say they did. Then it is asserted again that they do not take it up for a good purpose; that they dummy the land wholesale. The Colonial Secretary says he never saw such a scheme of dummyming as has been introduced under the Act. He has a great horror of dummyming. Well, we all dislike it, and he is very much afraid that under this Act pastoral lands will be taken up unlawfully; that persons will get possession of it and will not fulfil any conditions; and as under the Act they have thirty years, we shall see that the very worst form of dummyming will take place. This is what he says:—

“I repeat, it has created a greater system of dummyming pastoral lands than has ever been known at any time in Australia, and dummyming of the very worst form because of the tenant receiving a very long tenure.”

He no doubt alludes to some lands that were taken up by two families at Aramac. He professes to have special information on this question of dummyming the land by means of these grazing farms under the Act, and he mentions Aramac as one of the places where dummyming has taken place. He referred to the case of

119,000 acres said to be dummied in the district of Aramac, and the leader of the Opposition interjected that there were ten men on the land instead of one. Then the Colonial Secretary says that these ten men have combined to take up the land from the pastoral tenant and dispossess him. At Mount Cornish, Aramac, and other stations he says there have been combinations of that sort for dispossessing the pastoral tenant. These combinations, he says, are, in fact, bodies of men banded together to become huge holders of land on long tenures, and the land is used simply for pastoral purposes. That is terrible, is it not? And he says the lands are bringing in scarcely any increase of rent. I have no objection to land being used for pastoral purposes, but when he says it brings in scarcely any increase of rent, then I must inform him that he is not so well informed about it as I am, because I know all about these 119,000 acres at Aramac. They were taken up by six gentlemen who happened to be related in some way. They were members of two families, and so the Colonial Secretary calls that a combination of men for dummied purposes. But it is no matter whether they are relatives or not; they cannot escape this: Those 119,000 acres are divided into six farms of about 20,000 acres each. They cannot take more than that. There must be six men, and those six men, instead of paying "scarcely any increase of rent," are paying exactly four times as much as was being paid on the 119,000 acres by the former lessee. They pay £743—that is 1½d. an acre; and before that the pastoral tenant was paying one farthing and a quarter per acre. Well, I should like some more combinations of men like that, and yet, when paying four times as much rent as the former occupant, these gentlemen are called "dummiers." A certain class of politicians speak of farmers as "cockatoo farmers," but now it appears that the grazing farmers are called "dummiers." I do not see it. If they fulfil the conditions, which they cannot escape, then, at all events, these six farms into which the 119,000 acres are divided must be fenced off within three years. But the Colonial Secretary said they were worked in combination. I do not care a straw for that. Each farm must be fenced within three years, combination or no combination. What will that cost? Will not that work employ any men? Will that not lead to the expenditure of any money? It will. This land contains altogether 186 square miles. It would take a piece of land 15½ miles long by 12 miles broad to make an area of 186 square miles. To fence in the farms on that run 94½ miles of fencing will be required. That will cost £5,600, or a little more, and the work should afford employment to ten men, half the cost being for labour, at 36s. a week for three years. Is that not a good thing for the country? And suppose this is multiplied 1,000 times, see what the result will be. Then provision will have to be made for water supply. If men are to carry on squatting within their fences it must be a very different kind of squatting to the old wholesale, wasteful squatting that has existed for many years in this colony. We know that some of the great runs of the colony contain between 3,000 and 4,000 square miles. I have a list here of those large stations, and can, if necessary, particularise the runs. It is time that they should be divided, and they have been divided under the Act of 1884, and we are going to put the resumed portions to a much higher use. It does not follow that because the land is used for the same purpose as before, it is not made a better use of. These grazing farmers, when they have taken up their farms of 20,000 acres each, have to fence in their holdings, and in doing so they fence the rest of the world out, and

cannot drive their stock to the neighbouring river for water. They must therefore supply water on their farms by sinking wells, or preserving in tanks and dams the showers which heaven sends upon the earth. I suppose that the ordinary work on six farms of 20,000 acres each will be employment for four men on each farm. Under this system we are likely to have family settlement, and these four men will have families. The average number to each family is estimated at five persons, so that on each farm there will be four times five, or twenty persons. These six farms, comprising 119,000 acres, and which are adduced to prove a radical fault in the Act—namely, that it leads to wholesale dummied—will have on them 120 people. And as each person—man, woman, and child—in the colony contributes £3 per head in Customs duties alone, we shall receive from these 120 persons £360. If we can multiply this by 1,000, we shall have from this source £360,000 a year.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When is it going to begin?

Mr. JORDAN: It has begun, and the Colonial Secretary denounces it as wholesale dummied. I do not want to see it ridiculed, cried down, denounced, or done away with. I want to see it a grand success, and I believe it can be made a success. We only want the people. The squatters have helped us, and have given 40,000,000 of acres for close settlement, to their honour be it said. These 40,000,000 acres have been resumed for that purpose, and people are settling on the lands, and they are called dummiers. I want, as I said, to multiply such cases by 1,000, and, as I have pointed out, the people who will be settled on these six farms will pay £360,000 to the Customs. It has been said that we have not realised the expectation that was formed in regard to the land paying interest on the loan when the Bill was before the House. But we must try to realise it. The Act is a good one. It has had a very good beginning, but it is not known. Who knows its provisions? They are beginning to know them in the other colonies. I was taking systematic steps to make the Act known in the other colonies, and if I had remained four or five years longer in the Lands Office I would have made it known. If we keep it to ourselves what will be the result? We shall have no settlement. But it is said it does not bring in a revenue. I said there were one or two inaccuracies in the statements made on this subject, and in doing so I was echoing what was said by the leader of the Opposition. I believe I have shown that there were inaccuracies, and I think I can show another, or rather a grave omission. When speaking on the question of revenue it is stated in the Speech that, leaving out of account the receipts from pastoral rents, the revenue under the Act was only £7,000 a year. But why should we leave out a proper statement of what we are realising from the pastoral tenants of the Crown under this Act, when the report says that there was an increase of over £23,000 in the rents received from the pastoral tenants under the Act of 1884 as over the receipts of the former year? It will be remembered that the Speech points to the discovery of water in the Western districts as being a most valuable discovery, and it is assumed that we may reasonably expect that these discoveries will be repeated in that vast and magnificent country. The Speech goes on to say that it is not considered premature to conclude that the colony may be congratulated on the greatly increased value of the public estate in those districts. It must also be borne in mind that the railways have been extended so as to afford increased

facilities for the transit of goods and produce in those pastoral districts. Nearly all the best country in the Western districts has been brought within a hundred miles of railway communication. The discovery of water and these improvements in communication must certainly enhance the value of the lands and lead to an increase of rent, for which provision is made under the Act. But, notwithstanding the fact that the pastoral tenants have given up one-half or one-fourth of their runs, the revenue from pastoral leases has increased by £23,000. That was up to December, 1887. By this time it may have increased very much more. In the Speech of His Excellency the Governor it is stated that the income only amounts to £7,000. The Premier asked what they would think of a commercial firm which carried on business in such a way that the income did not meet the expenditure. I would point out that the increase of the revenue from the pastoral lands is, I believe, enough to pay the cost of the department, and perhaps more than enough. I can show that it is a very imperfect and misleading statement to make, that the revenue the land has produced only amounted to £7,000 per annum. I can show that the revenue during nine months was at the rate of nearly £9,000 per annum; I need not give the particulars. But this represents only an infinitesimal part of the business carried on by the Government during the present year. What would that £9,000 amount to? Take the payments for agricultural farms alone—£4,094. Hon. members will say that is very little. I know it is very little; it is only the infinitesimal rent paid in the first year. It is only 1½ per cent., but that represents a very great deal more business done. Supposing that is an average of only 1½ per cent. on the price of the land sold, if a man owed me £100, and paid me 30s., he would still have £98 10s. to pay. They have ten years or twelve years to pay in, to give them time to look about them, to clear their land and make a little money before they have to pay for it. At the end of ten years they will pay for their land, and that £4,094 will have amounted to £209,000. Now, it is a mistake, and I regret it very much—I am sure it was an inadvertence on the part of the Premier to put such a statement as he did before the country—that the whole revenue from that Act only amounted to £7,000. I have shown that it is £9,000, and I say that when these farming lands are paid for at the end of ten years, the amount will be over £209,000. That is a very different way of putting it, and I think a very fair way. I have made no mention of the advantage of agricultural settlement. I have spoken chiefly about grazing farms. I was very greatly taken with this part of the Land Act. I did not believe, and I do not think hon. members believed, that the pastoral tenants of the Crown would have come under the Act so readily. If anyone at the time had told me that in four years 40,000,000 acres of land would have been actually resumed, and 100,000,000 of acres dealt with and divided, I should not have believed him. In that respect it has been a marvellous success, far beyond my expectation. It has provided land for settlement: and now it is the solemn duty of any Government in power—I do not care which party it is—to induce settlement. I will give my support to the present Government, if they will carry out a system which will stimulate settlement on the land, especially as they pledge themselves that Australia is for the white man. There is to be an end of black labour for ever, so far as Queensland is concerned. What does it matter upon which side of the House we sit so long as our principles have triumphed? Whatever silly things have been said—and I regret that the time of the House has been so wasted—

we know, and everyone in Queensland knows, that Sir Samuel Griffith has destroyed black labour in this colony. That is putting it in a few words, and we cannot get out of it. The atrocities, murders, kidnapping, man-stealing, and other terrors of black labour have been brought to an end. I saw it in its first stage, when Henry Stuart Russell, a man universally liked and respected, was a candidate for the city of Brisbane. He was defeated because he advocated black labour, and I, a comparative stranger, without even a committee to work for me, went in second out of seven candidates, three members being required, simply because I was opposed to black labour. Though the Government of that day brought in a Bill authorising the employment of coloured labour they dared not carry it out. Then Captain Towns introduced a lot of South Sea Islanders to work his plantations, and the Conservative Government thought that was a suitable time for regulating it. They then threw the ægis of the State over the system, and of course legalised it and rendered it respectable. In this way a number of gentlemen who had capital at their disposal were induced to go in for sugar-planting in the North, and then we could not put a stop to it, as the coloured labour was approved by the Government and regulated by the Government, and the Government took the responsibility,—I can turn up chapter and verse upon the subject. From the beginning black labour in Queensland has been a miserable history of evil-doing; but the blame of the late atrocities is now laid at the door of the present leader of the Opposition, because it so happened that the ships that went out after he had become Premier went to New Guinea without his knowledge, and certainly without his instructions. He is accused of all the atrocities and villainies connected with black labour in this colony. It is utterly absurd, and requires no confutation. We know that a few days after he went into office he put a stop to the sending of firearms to the islands, and we know very well that in five weeks he had published those cast-iron regulations, and put a stop to those atrocities, and was accused all over the colony of having by that means destroyed the sugar industry. We know those cast-iron regulations worked well. We know that he gave the final death-blow to the system when he brought in the Bill bringing the whole thing to an end in 1890. It is no use talking about New Guinea or New Ireland. It is childish—it is unworthy of the leader of the Government to accuse Sir Samuel Griffith when he thought it necessary to vindicate his own character from the gross charges which had been hurled against him.

The PREMIER: I adopted and proved those charges.

Mr. JORDAN: We know very well that the sailing of those vessels to New Guinea was accidental, and we know the atrocities that were perpetrated on board those vessels—

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: They never went there before.

Mr. JORDAN: I think I could prove, if it were necessary, by turning to page 1403 in the "Votes and Proceedings for the year 1883-4," that one ship did go to one of the islands very near to New Guinea during the time the hon. gentleman was in power.

The PREMIER: I gave you that information myself.

Mr. JORDAN: That proves that one of the ships, when the present Premier was in power, did go to New Guinea; but to say that because those atrocities occurred in those vessels which went out whilst Sir Samuel Griffith was in power, he was the cause of them, is

to say what is not correct. It is not in accordance with the facts of the case. The first thing I did when I came back from England in 1867 was to present a petition from Sydney against the Queensland black labour, and the House would not receive it—the Conservative party were in power—and said it was impertinent; but it was called forth by the misery of the system, and I could read extracts from speeches at that time. In June, 1883, when meetings were held in Melbourne with regard to annexing the New Hebrides, and the Rev. Mr. McDonald, the Rev. Mr. Nelson, and the Rev. Mr. Paton adduced instance upon instance, and detailed some of the horrors of what was called the “Queensland slave trade,” I think the present leader of the Government, who was then in power, called these statements “missionaries’ lies.” At all events no action was taken, but as soon as the present leader of the Opposition came into power we know what action was taken, and it has resulted in the extinction of black labour in Queensland, and the party that has now come into power have published a manifesto, in which they have pledged themselves before all the world that they will have no more black labour. I am perfectly satisfied. I never was more satisfied in my life in connection with politics in Queensland than I was when I read this in their manifesto. I have a great opinion of the ability of the leader of the Government, and I have great respect for his ability, and for many others sitting on the other side, and I, as an individual member, will give him as much support as I can, as long as he carries out this grand purpose. I regret the attack made upon the Land Act, and I think it is very much to be regretted indeed that the present Government seem to have made the fatal mistake of confounding alienation of the land with settlement on the land. Under the Act of 1868 there were 2,666,319 acres taken up at 5s. per acre to be paid in ten years, but this hindered settlement instead of helping it. I will just point to one piece of land to illustrate the operation of that system. It lies between the towns of Toowoomba and Warwick, and you can ride through fifty miles of magnificent country. I suppose you cannot find better land in Australia, but it is of little use; it is enclosed in fences, and it seems to be put to no purpose but to graze cattle and sheep. Yet it is rich agricultural land and well watered; it is where it gets regular rain, and we ought to have the best farming carried on there. I am opposed to that system which allowed the aggregation of large estates, but this colony will be snatched from the grasp of capitalists by the Act of 1884. I should regret immensely if this aggregation is brought about again. Of all things, I implore the present Government, who have a large majority at their backs and great power in their hands, that they give this Land Act a fair trial. When I went into the Lands Department I was afraid that the grazing farms were going to absorb a good deal of rich agricultural land, and that I should regret, because they should be put to a higher purpose. The highest and natural use of the land is for tillage. Now, I wanted to know what the amount was that had been resumed, which I found to be 40,000,000 acres, and I caused instructions to be sent to the land agents all over the colony. I caused maps to be made in the first place showing the lands that had been brought under the Act in certain colours in the maps, which were on the large scale of two miles to the inch. These were to be sent to all our land agents to report upon the lands in their own districts, so that we might know what lands there were in each district, and what they were suitable for. One of the dividing commissioners

sent in a very able, interesting, voluminous, and exhaustive report concerning the runs he had been dealing with between Mungindi, St. George, and the Culgoa River. I had a talk with him, and he described almost every one of those runs as containing very rich, chocolate, loamy soil, and he said they were well watered. He recommended that they should be divided into grazing farms. I said, “Is it your opinion that this land is suitable for pastoral purposes? You said it is beautiful rich land; surely some of it is suitable only for a higher purpose?” “Oh, well,” he said, “of course farmers would go there.” Now, I happened to know there were a great many people looking after this land, and I gave instructions that this land—4,000,000 acres of land—should be divided with the object of sending the present Under Secretary for Agriculture with a surveyor to that land, so that when it was proclaimed open there should be reserves made, which reserves I thought possibly might be leased under an annual license to the neighbouring pastoral tenants of the Crown; and that we should reserve these for a time at all events, so that we should not lock them up for thirty years. Then I gave instructions to this effect: that the land agents throughout the colony should be supplied with those maps, and that they should take care that when any land was applied for, even although it might only be for 160 acres, to mark it on his map as applied for, and send a wire to the head office so that we could mark it off on our maps, and thus all the maps now exhibited in the map room of the Lands Department would be able to give a poor man wanting a farm all the information as to all the land in all the districts where land was open to selection. Then I took care to disseminate necessary information throughout the colony. A gentleman, the manager or secretary of the Mildura irrigation farm, received a letter from a gentleman in England, applying for information to him. There are hundreds of thousands of people at home wanting information about the colonies. The population of England increases 1,000 a day, and thousands of them go away to the United States who would come here if they had information about the colony. This gentleman sent this letter to Mildura, and the gentleman he sent it to wrote to me, thinking I was still Minister for Lands, asking me to send him the “Queensland Guide,” which he had heard highly approved of in the *Mildura Irrigation Journal*. My purpose was to send these little books to England, and have them circulated in hundreds of thousands. It would have cost some money, but it would be a very wise expenditure. If we make the very liberal terms of our Land Act properly known, as they ought to be, in the other colonies and in Great Britain, I believe we shall have a great immigration. I see by the *Courier* that the Victorian Assembly have voted £250,000 to be expended within six years in bonuses for farm produce; and I think that is a step in the right direction. I should like to see a system of bonuses for growing cotton here again, because I think it would start the industry again and help to make it a success. It is not generally known that when cotton was grown here the value of the crop exported in one year was £79,000. The great difficulty then was that most of the profit got into the hands of “middlemen”; but now it could be grown successfully by small farmers, and the children could do the picking. Then, I have no doubt, the manufacture of cotton-cloth could be established here. Woollen manufacture is a successful industry in the colony, and I see no reason why the manufacture of cotton-cloth should not be successful. I sympathise with the sugar-growers, but I would rather not have the sugar industry in the colony at all if it is to be at

the expense of black labour. We have to make it a success without black labour. The sugar-growers have had the advantage of black labour, a duty of £5 per ton on sugar, and the expenditure of £50,000 on central mills, so that they have been assisted very materially. There can be no harm now if we give some assistance to the cotton-growers. If there is any feasible method of assisting the sugar-growers, I shall be happy to give it my support. I should have liked to have said something more; but I will not weary the House. I do not regret the change that has taken place. It has been beneficial in one important respect—it has saved the life of a man who is the most valuable man in the colony: that is Sir Samuel Griffith. He does such a wonderful amount of work when in office that another term would certainly have shortened his life. When his turn comes again he will be all the better for having been in Opposition for a time. I must congratulate both sides of the House on the talent shown by the new members. I am a good listener, and I was delighted to hear some of them speak. I am an old man whose work is nearly done, and I am delighted to see young men coming forth, especially on our side of the House. And now that the Premier has adopted our principles, and pledged himself to every one of them, what more can we wish?

Mr. SMITH said: Mr. Speaker,—In the few remarks I am about to make I hope I shall receive the indulgence usually accorded to a new member in his first attempt to address the House. The Speech under consideration is a very important one. There is scarcely a clause in it but refers to something of very great importance to the colony. It has been objected—by the leader of the Opposition, I think—that it does not disclose the policy of the Government. The same objection was made when hon. members who are now on the Treasury benches were on the other side and I remember reading where Mr. Dickson, the then Treasurer, explained that the object of a Governor's Speech was not to disclose the policy of the Government. He explained it is this way: that it simply lifted a small corner of the curtain, allowing hon. members to have a peep behind, and just get an inkling of what the Government policy was to be. That policy will, no doubt, be disclosed by degrees, and hon. members will be able to digest it. Another objection was made by the late Attorney-General, who despondingly referred to the fact that he could only reckon up five new bills in the Speech. Certainly, from a lawyer's point of view, that is a disastrous thing, but to a man employed in the every-day business of life, I think it is not an unmixed evil. I think that to encumber the Statute-book with many Acts of a trivial nature is not a good thing. It only mystifies the path to the ordinary man of business, and makes frequent appeals to his legal adviser an absolute necessity. I think, therefore, that the less we encumber our Statute-book with Acts of a trivial nature the better. I would sooner see five Acts of a comprehensive nature, calculated to give substantial benefit to the colony, than fifty which would not have that effect. I quite concur, of course, with what hon. members have said regarding the action taken by the Government in postponing the meeting of Parliament so as to allow members an opportunity of visiting the Melbourne Exhibition. I think that the oftener the statesmen of the different colonies are brought together, and the more intimately they become associated, the sooner we shall see that great measure of federation an established fact. It is rather a remarkable fact that Victoria and Queensland, two of the most distant colonies, are yet more in sympathy—"in touch," I may say—with each other than any other two colonies

of the group. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that this is the little leaven that will leaven the whole lump, and that in a short time we shall see the same amicable relations existing among all the colonies as now exists between Queensland and Victoria. I need not detain the House at any great length, as most of the subjects have been pretty well threshed out. There is, however, one subject of very great importance upon which I desire to say a few words—that is, irrigation. I trust the Government will take that question into their most serious consideration. Drought is the great enemy of this colony, and if we can only conserve a portion of the water which falls in the wet season so as to be able to utilise it during the dry months to irrigate the soil, it would result in the greatest general good, and tend more than anything else to settle people on the lands. The artesian supply is a grand thing, of course, for the colony, and I trust the Government will extend their operations in that direction—so that wherever the want of water exists they will cause borings to be put down and obtain a supply. There is no doubt that artesian water is to be found all over the colony; the only question is depth of bore. I do trust, sir, that especially in the dry belts, the Government will devote their attention to boring for water. With regard to separation, there is a very strong and very pronounced feeling in the North on that question, notwithstanding what has been said by some hon. members to the contrary. I am quite aware that some slight dissension at present exists in the separation ranks; it is not necessary to inquire into the cause of that dissension now, but I trust it will soon be removed, and that the North will join together as one man and demand this measure of justice. I hold that the people of the North have a right to this measure. Where there is a community 60,000 strong, and they demand a measure of this description, I can see no reason why they should be refused it. Separation and federation are intimately connected. I do not exactly agree with the hon. the Chief Secretary in the opinion that federation should take place before separation. I think, sir, that separation should precede federation, because if the colonies were federated to-morrow, what voice would the North have in the Federal Council? It would certainly not be represented there, because the representatives from Queensland would be men chosen from the Southern portion of the colony, where the large preponderance of voting power exists. Therefore I think, with all due deference, that separation should precede federation. I am quite certain that the present Government will endeavour honestly to do justice to the North in their decentralisation schemes; but I am very doubtful of their success. I think myself that nothing short of territorial separation will satisfy the desire of the people of the North. However, we are willing to take this scheme as a first instalment towards separation. The first move that should be made in this decentralisation scheme should be to remove the capital. It is a great cause of discontent that the capital should be in one corner of the colony. Hon. members opposite have spoken with dismay of the growth of large cities, and the Government have now an opportunity of neutralising that by shifting the capital to a more central position. I shall not detain the House longer. I am exceedingly obliged to hon. members for the patient hearing they have given me.

Mr. UNMACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I also desire to offer a few remarks on this occasion. I confess that I feel almost completely overwhelmed with the eloquence that has been poured out in this Assembly. I must say, however, speaking for myself, that I am a great deal more fond

of work than of talk, and I do trust that we shall not at all times be favoured with so much eloquence, but that we shall get warm to the collar and settle down to practical legislation instead of indulging in so much discussion. In the first instance, Mr. Speaker, I desire to congratulate the Ministry upon their decision to adopt and follow up the policy initiated by their predecessors of boring for that inestimable blessing, water. I do trust, sir, that they will earnestly and heartily persevere in their efforts in that direction; and I am confident they may rest satisfied that whatever funds may be required for that purpose will be willingly and cheerfully granted by every member of the House, provided that they proceed with diligence, discretion, and economy. I regret that they have not seen their way to go a little further in connection with this subject, because there are two other matters so closely allied to it that I deem them to be of almost equal importance—one is irrigation, and the other the conservation of forests and the cultivation of trees. These two subjects are of such vast importance—capable of producing the most marvellous results in developing the resources of the colony and of ultimately producing such large revenue—that I sincerely hope the Ministry will not neglect the opportunities now presented of taking them earnestly in hand. The hon. the Premier has been good enough to give us an inkling into certain strictures that have been passed upon our borrowing system by our financial advisers at home, and I commend him for the course he has adopted in taking us into his confidence, because I am perfectly satisfied that it will have a good effect, inasmuch as it will induce everyone of us to exercise judgment and discretion, not only with regard to demands on the part of our constituents, but also in preventing excess in any one direction. Looking at the present state of the finances, and bearing in mind the caution which I have just mentioned, and which should never be forgotten, I must say I shall most certainly oppose, in the first instance, the extension of the Brisbane water-works. I consider that Brisbane is very well off for its supply of water. During the long drought, which ended a year or eighteen months ago, Brisbane was never without a supply, and since then we have had an addition to our supply in the shape of the Gold Creek reservoir. I can see no justification whatever for an expenditure of about half-a-million of money, which I understand the proposed scheme is to cost, under existing circumstances, not even from loan funds. I am one of those who are deeply impressed with the necessity of dealing out even-handed justice to every portion of the colony. Be it North, South, or West, each district has a right to be treated with an equal amount of justice. Brisbane, in the matter of its water supply, has had a fair share at present, and there are scores of country towns where there is not a drop of water to be had. If we were in a position to spend this half-a-million of money out of the Loan Fund, I should say by all means let it go towards those country towns. That amount would possibly suffice to procure for twenty of them that great blessing, an ample supply of water. It is refreshing to me, after all these years, to hear an admission on the part of the Premier that the British-India mail service, as a mail service, is a failure. It is certainly only a qualified admission. But I state without hesitation that no one has ever looked upon the British-India service as a mail service. Even the Government themselves have not for years forwarded their despatches by the British-India boats. They may have forwarded duplicates, but the originals went by another route—a fact which speaks for itself. However, I admit with pleasure that the inauguration and carrying on

of the British-India contract has been of immense service to the colony in developing trade and keeping us in direct communication with the Old World. But we have paid very heavily for that privilege and I see no obligation whatever to continue the contract with the British-India Company. If it is deemed necessary, after fair discussion, that a further commercial service should be subsidised, I have no objection to assent to such a thing; but I should in that case, expect that our necessities should be fairly and fully advertised in London, so that we should have the benefit of competition, and see what we can get for our money. The paragraph in the Speech on railways is, I confess, a mystery to me. I look upon the bare statement there set forth that we only get 2½ per cent. on our investment of £13,000,000 as an injudicious statement, calculated to injure our credit in London. There was never a member, not even the most sanguine, who ever sat in the House and who assisted to vote the necessary funds for the construction of those railways, who ever expected that for many years to come they would earn the interest on the outlay. On the contrary, everyone expected that the indirect benefits to be derived from them would more than amply repay us for the outlay. If that statement has simply been put into the Speech for the purpose of justifying a radical change in construction and management, we are very much indebted, indeed, to the hon. member who moved the Address in Reply for having so very plainly proved to us by statistics, which he had evidently worked out with considerable trouble, that our lines are better and cheaper than those of the other colonies, and that we are a great deal better off than they are.

Mr. AGNEW: And yet there is a demand for placing them under a commission.

Mr. UNMACK: I am coming to the commission presently; I am only speaking now about construction and management. It has been said by some hon. members that it is impossible to carry on and work our lines on commercial principles. This I most unhesitatingly deny. I not only believe they can be managed on commercial principles, but that they ought to be. Unfortunately, owing to the action of successive Conservative Governments in times past, large quantities of land have been sold from time to time, and the colony has been compelled to construct hundreds of miles of railway through those lands, which are to the present day without population and produce nothing but natural grasses. Those are chiefly owned by men who are now absentees, and who profit largely by the enhanced value of their land in consequence of the construction of the lines. I contend that we ought to initiate this principle: either to insist that the gentlemen owning these large tracts of land through which the lines pass should pay the interest on the lines passing through their country or that they should be compelled to sell their land and settle population upon it. Then we shall be able to start on a fair basis on commercial principles. The charges for traffic on our lines are in many instances prohibitory. The haulage power of the trains is not, in many instances profited by to within 50 to 75 per cent. Trains travel not half laden, and come back empty, and the result is that we lose both up and down traffic, while we have the sad spectacle of seeing a large quantity of wool transported on drays from the border into New South Wales, in order to be carried at a cheap rate. I wish to be perfectly open, and I have much pleasure in acknowledging that the present Government have made a step in the right direction in initiating the system of commercial management. They have

reduced lately the carriage on wool and flour as far as Charleville, and the consequence of that is, as I am able to say from personal knowledge, that one firm alone has a contract to forward 500 tons of wool this season by rail down to Brisbane, which in former years was forwarded by drays over the border. Unfortunately the concession was made about two months too late, or the quantity would have been at least doubled. Those 500 tons alone mean an extra carriage of 1,000 tons, and an extra trade to the merchants of the colony, because if 500 tons of wool come down, another 500 tons of stores will have to go up. Hon. members can, therefore, see how we are influenced by our railways being managed on commercial principles. I see no reason and no justification for the proposed radical change in management and construction, especially in view of the labours of the Civil Service Commission now inquiring into the various departments. It would, I think, relieve the Government of much trouble if they waited for the report of the Commissioners on the Railway Department. It would strengthen their hands, and might provide greater justification for a change—if a change were thought necessary. That, I think, would be the wiser course, unless the Government are in possession of evidence of mismanagement which is withheld from us. I shall next refer to the statement that the report forwarded from the Civil Service Commission is recommended to our attention. I construe this to mean that the recommendations contained in that report are acceptable to the Government. I, as one of the members of that Commission, desire to request hon. members to discard the report of the Commission, and I ask them to be good enough to first read the evidence, and read it carefully. I guarantee that if they commence to read that evidence they will not stop until they have gone through with it, for it is very interesting reading and should be read, as the interests involved are very large. I believe that every member who reads that evidence through will come to the same conclusions as those arrived at by the Commissioners. Those members acquainted with me in this House, and the thousands of colonists with whom I have come in contact during the last twenty-seven or twenty-eight years that I have resided in Brisbane as a merchant, will know that I am not a man given to making rash promises, but rather one of those who err on the side of caution, and I am prepared, and now pledge my reputation, that if the recommendations of the Civil Service Commission are adopted we shall, without losing any of the educational results we now achieve—and that is the chief thing we have to look to—without losing any of our educational results, we shall within three years be enabled to instruct the same number of pupils, and effect a saving to the country of from £45,000 to £50,000 per annum. The constituency which I have the honour to represent is largely composed of working men, and they, in common with the electors of every other suburban constituency as well as the electors of the metropolitan constituency, during the course of the last election loudly called for certain legislation to assist them and remedy certain grievances from which they are suffering. I think many of these grievances are worthy of great attention, and I regret very much indeed that the Premier has not seen fit to allude to them at present. I am willing to be perfectly liberal in my ideas towards the new Ministry, and I am quite prepared to accept the remarks of the Colonial Secretary when he said they could not do everything in two months. That is only what we could expect; at the same time I do hope that the Premier will take some early action to introduce some measures

of relief for the working men. I believe this is a fitting opportunity to make some reference to the numerous annual reports which have been laid upon the table of the House. I am very much afraid that some of them are of less than no value to the country or to members of this House. I have been, and am under the impression, that the report by the Minister ought to be a summary of the facts and results arrived at during his administration of the proceedings of his department for the twelve months. I would like to say something of the report of the Secretary for Public Instruction. What did we find here? We find that one of the inspector's reports is dated in May. The report of the General Inspector—the "Great I Am" of the Education Department (if I may so call him)—is dated May 5th, and the Minister's report, which is supposed to embrace the whole of these sub-reports, and every other matter connected with the working of the department, is dated two months earlier, or the 15th March.

The PREMIER: How long?

Mr. UNMACK: At least two months earlier.

The PREMIER: What else could you expect from such a Minister?

Mr. UNMACK: I may say that the report I am referring to is that of the late Minister for Education, the Hon. B. B. Moreton. The General Inspector's report, I may tell you, is really worth reading, and no doubt, owing to the very severe examination through which he has passed, it contains some really valuable statements, which ought to have been taken notice of by the Minister. But how could he take notice of the "Great I Am's" report, published two months or six weeks later than his own? There is another very important fact to be disclosed in this matter, and which will be found in the evidence taken by the Civil Service Commission, and that is in connection with the reports from the various inspectors. There are about nine sub-reports from the various inspectors, and I assure you every one of those reports has been written to order—every one of them. Not one of those men has been allowed to tell his own story of what the progress has been. They are simply told, as you will see from the evidence to which I have referred, that their reports are the reports of subordinate officers to their superiors, and in them they are not allowed to indulge in any expression of fault-finding in reference to the administration of the department. They are to report simply bare facts and statistics which come under their notice. Many of these men could have supplied us with most valuable evidence and information. Year ago they could have supplied information by which the country might have saved that £40,000 or £50,000 which I now prognosticate will be saved. They have to send in their reports to order, and if they make any comment upon the administration of the department they are requested to kindly take it out, because it will not do. If this sort of thing is found to exist in one of the departments, then similar abuses may be found to exist in others, and, if that is the case, what value can we attach to these reports. I hope the Premier will see that in future these reports are more in harmony with what is required and expected by members of this House. There is another little matter to which I will make reference, and that is the Colonial Stores report, and a lively look-out I consider it is. I consider this scrap of paper, supplied by the Colonial Stores Department, is a perfect insult to the House. A board was appointed some time ago to inquire into the management of the Colonial Stores Department, and that department was thoroughly and completely condemned by the members of the board, which recommended that

the department should be abolished. Now, if there is any one justification required in support of that recommendation, I can supply it to you from this report, which was laid on the table of the House yesterday. Would you believe it, Mr. Speaker, they have actually so over-strained their nervous system and so over-exerted themselves in that department as to be able to produce a report of the working of the department dated up to and inclusive of June, 1887, or only fourteen months ago! What use is that report to members of Parliament? How can they judge of the working of a department from a report fourteen months old? They can know nothing from that of what is the state of the department now. I am in a position to say that during certain months of the year they are so very much over-staffed in that blessed Colonial Stores Department that they have time to play skittles. At any rate, if they do not do that, they have plenty of time for leap-frog. The destruction by fire of our Exhibition Building has been considered a national calamity. I am inclined to believe that it will prove the reverse. Anticipating, as we do, the prosperous times of the next two years, I would throw out this suggestion for the welfare of the colony, and I trust the Premier will take it into consideration: that we simultaneously with the opening of the new building arrange to hold an exhibition on a scale of magnificence that has not yet been attempted in this colony. I think the idea is a good one, as we should then be enabled to attract to our shores all the most eminent men in the colonies, and show some little hospitality in return for the generous treatment extended to our representatives during their visit to Victoria. I have, perhaps, wandered away from the subject I was talking about. There is one other report upon which I wish to say a few words, and that report I consider of very great importance. I refer to it with some diffidence. I have no great fault to find with it, but I must say that I do not believe it is issued to members of Parliament in a constitutional manner. I may say that I refer to the report of the Auditor-General, an officer of this Parliament. The present Audit Act was founded upon the recommendations of a Royal Commission, which was appointed to inquire into the system of keeping the public accounts of the colony. Their recommendations chiefly tended in this direction: that the Auditor-General, who then kept a large set of accounts—in fact, he kept a very large staff for the purpose of constituting himself Accountant-General—I say their recommendations were based on this fact, that the Auditor-General should keep no accounts, but that his duties should be confined to the auditing of the Public Accounts. The financial year was to be closed on the 30th June, and the Statement by the Treasury must be duly audited by the 31st December. Now the Auditor-General, with the most praiseworthy desire, I admit, seems to think that members of Parliament ought to be supplied long before that with the latest data and latest figures to enable them to judge of the state of the finances. That I admit. I believe it to be a good plan; but in order to enable him to accomplish that, he employs a portion of his staff during the whole of the year to keep a set of books, in which he collects a vast number of details which are kept in other departments and which enable him to place the latest figures before Parliament in his report. Now, I direct attention to this: that in doing so, according to my idea, he anticipates the Treasurer's Financial Statement; but what is of more importance, the figures which he places before us are his figures, and they are not audited.

We have to accept his figures, which are compiled from a certain number of returns in the office, which, no doubt, may be correct enough. I do not dispute that, nor do I disparage the consideration of the Auditor-General in sending in such a report; but the figures are not audited, and according to my idea they anticipate the action of the Treasurer in making his Financial Statement. The suggestion that I have to make in that respect is that it would be desirable to alter the closing of the financial accounts from the 30th June to the 31st March. By altering the dates the accounts would be closed on the 31st March, and within the next three months the Treasurer could prepare his Financial Statement. The accounts therewith could be audited, and then laid before us in a constitutional form. I believe that would be found to be a very desirable course to pursue in order to get reliable figures and statements. You will see evidence on this matter in the Civil Service report before you, on pages 116 and 117. The Auditor-General falls back on the Act and refers to clause 47, under which he is empowered to report at any one time he thinks proper to Parliament upon the state of the finances. That is true so far, but I think he is only expected to report under certain conditions. Clause 47 says:—

"It shall be lawful for the Auditor-General in such yearly report, or in any special report which he may think fit to make, to recommend any plan or suggestion which he may think worthy of attention for the better collection of the Consolidated Revenue Fund."

Now, there is no such recommendation in the annual report. There is no such object which he seeks to accomplish, and therefore he goes out of his way to supply figures which are not audited, and are not as reliable as those accompanying the Treasurer's statement. Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the courtesy extended to me, and trust I shall be found to be one of those anxious to promote the welfare of the colony, and a supporter of any measures which I think will be of service to the colony.

Mr. GOLDRING said: Mr. Speaker,—It was not my intention originally to have spoken this evening, on account of having been absent until this morning and not having heard the speeches of several hon. members; but, owing to some remarks which have been made this evening by some other hon. members, I feel it my duty to say a few words in support of what they have said. I refer to the speeches of the hon. members for Mackay, Herbert, and Bowen. I wish to allude particularly to the Separation movement. I can honestly say, from what I have seen and heard during my trip through the North within the last few weeks, that the Separation movement is not dead, that there are many—in fact, the majority of Northern people—who are still strongly in favour of separation; and if some measures are not brought forward to satisfy them, nothing but territorial separation will be acceptable. The fact of Queensland being a very extensive colony was acknowledged by the present leader of the Opposition when travelling through the North. He had no idea previously that Queensland was such a large territory. In fact, no person who has not travelled through the length and breadth of this colony can form any idea of its size, and it is utterly impossible to attempt to govern it from its most southern point. So far as the expenditure is concerned I can speak for my own district, and up to the present time I can say that we have been most unfairly treated, particularly as regards expenditure on water borings. The Flinders district, which is the one I represent, has scarcely had any money at all expended in it for the purpose of water conservation. We have hundreds of miles of dry tracts of country there, and we

have had no work done, although repeated applications have been made to the Government. I hope sincerely that the present Government will treat us more fairly in this matter, and that they will recognise that the greatest need in that district is a permanent supply of water. I think the question of separation will have to be well ventilated hereafter, and I am confident that members who have been elected on the separation ticket, and promised their constituents that they will support the movement, will not go back on their word, but will stand up like men and advocate separation. I believe, though I am not quite sure, that there is one matter which has not been discussed during this debate. At any rate I have not heard it mentioned. I refer to the licensed victuallers and the Licensing Act. I think there are many clauses in that statute that require amending, and the sooner that is done the better will it be for those who are licensed under the Act. In the event of any public houses being closed by a poll taken under the local option clauses the publican can get no compensation for his premises or good will. I am of opinion that it is only fair and just that he should be recompensed in some way, and I believe that is also the view taken by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. I should, therefore, be very pleased to see a provision to that effect become law, and also to have the statute amended in other respects. Another matter to which I would draw attention is the necessity for reserves in the outlying districts. These we have been unable to obtain from the late Government. I trust we shall be more successful now that there is a change in the Administration. In Hughenden, which is the terminus of the Northern railway there is no reserve on which travellers and carriers can depasture their horses. A traveller coming into the town late at night turns out his horse and very likely in the morning he will find him in the pound, and this trouble and annoyance might be avoided by the proclamation there of a suitable reserve. We, as I have said, tried to get a reserve from the late Administration but without success. With regard to the financial condition of the colony it is not a happy one, and the balance being on the wrong side must cause some embarrassment to the new Treasurer. The North did not get its fair share of expenditure, and therefore did not assist in augmenting the debit balance now existing. I can only hope that measures will be brought forward by which the debit balance will be decreased and converted into a credit balance. With respect to free trade and protection, I, for my part, consider that any Northern member who advocates protection is only injuring the interests of his constituents. What protection can do for the North I cannot understand, excepting that it will increase the price of goods to the consumer, and the burden will fall most heavily on the working man. There might, perhaps, be some industries protected, in which we can compete with outsiders if a reasonable duty were imposed on the imported article, but so far as wholesale protection is concerned, I certainly will not support it. I hardly think, in view of the number of speeches that have already been made, and also of my being unprepared with statistics, that it would be advisable to detain hon. members any longer, and as the hon. gentleman who last spoke hinted that the speeches were rather long, I will act on the hint and resume my seat.

Mr. WIMBLE said: Mr. Speaker,—I move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER moved that the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

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