

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**FRIDAY, 30 AUGUST 1889**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 30 August, 1889.

Petition—extension of the Northern Railway.—Question.  
—Rockhampton Gas Company Bill—committee.—  
The Sugar Industry.—Adjournment.

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

## PETITION.

## EXTENSION OF THE NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Mr. CORFIELD presented a petition from certain residents of Winton and district, praying for the extension of the Northern Railway from Hughenden to Winton; and moved that the petition be read.

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

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

## QUESTION.

Mr. GLASSEY asked the Chief Secretary—

1 Has he observed the paragraph which appeared in the *Brisbane Telegraph*, of date 28th instant, relating to the London Dock strike, that a number of the emigrants on board the British India Company's steamer "Taroba," bound for Queensland ports, are employed loading cargo on that vessel?

2 If so, does he intend to take any action in the matter to prevent such emigrants from taking sides in that very serious and unfortunate dispute?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. B. D. Morehead) replied—

The Government do not intend to take any action in the matter.

## ROCKHAMPTON GAS COMPANY BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

On the motion of Mr. MURRAY, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee to consider this Bill in detail.

The clauses of the Bill were agreed to without amendment.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

On the motion of Mr. MURRAY, the third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Monday.

## THE SUGAR INDUSTRY.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of adjourned debate on Mr. Cowley's motion—"That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable, early next session, to adopt some means for encouraging the sugar industry;" upon which Sir Samuel Griffith had moved by way of amendment—that the following words be inserted after the word "means"—"not involving a re-opening of the coloured labour question."

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—When this subject was last under consideration the hon. member for Bundamba moved the adjournment of the debate, and, therefore, might have been expected to re-open it this afternoon. He has, however, out of pure kindness to myself, asked me to take his place, as it is necessary that I should not take part in a late sitting. I will endeavour to make myself heard as far as possible; but I am labouring under an infirmity of the throat, and it is only with some little effort that I can, I fear, make myself audible. When the leader of the Opposition was speaking, the Minister for Mines and Works interjected

that this debate was purely academic, meaning, of course, that this question of black labour had been already dealt with and settled. But we had a somewhat contrary opinion given us by the Minister for Lands, who said that the object of this motion was to endeavour to put reasons before the House why black labour should be continued, at all events for another period of five years. The Minister for Lands did not approve of the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition, and thought that the time had come when the discussion upon this great question should be re-opened. It is hardly necessary for me to say to those who have been long in this House that the views I hold upon this question are very different from those held by the Minister for Lands. It has appeared to me during the debate that the sugar planters of the North are something like drowning men catching at straws. It is admitted that, with some few exceptions, such as in districts like Bundaberg, the sugar industry generally in this colony is in a state of bankruptcy. Everything has been done to foster and encourage the industry from the beginning. There has been cheap and reliable labour supplied, cheap land, and a protective duty of £5 a ton on sugar, of which the planters had the benefit until the wants of the whole colony could be supplied. In spite of all this the industry is now in a state of bankruptcy, or at least bordering upon it. If we may believe the majority and minority reports of the Royal Commission that dealt with the subject, the patient is so sick that no remedy can reach his case, and unless something like a miracle supervenes he must die a natural death, much as we may lament the fact. In spite of this the sugar planters, like drowning men who catch at straws, desperately hope that the banks will come to their assistance now if they can only persuade Parliament to continue the supply of black labour for five years. If their position was not so desperate I do not think they would entertain any hopes so fallacious. Outsiders can see clearly enough the predicament the planters are in, and even the planters themselves, or those recently engaged in the industry, admit that that is the position of the industry. That has been plainly said by the hon. member for Barcoo, who is a gentleman engaged in large business transactions, and who certainly knows the difference between profit and loss. He told us he was connected as chairman or as one of the directors of a large sugar company in the North, and, his own interests being deeply involved, he arrived at the conclusion that the industry of sugar planting as carried on hitherto in Queensland by black labour can no longer be carried on profitably. A great deal has been said during this debate to prove the importance of the industry by what to me seems a curious process of argumentation. Some 7,000 black men are employed on the plantations, a very considerable number of white men are also employed, a large number of tradesmen in the North are more or less dependent upon the continuance of the industry, and quite a little fleet of shipping is employed in carrying the islanders from and to their islands; and, further, the sugar planters have embarked something like £3,000,000 in the interest. Now all this may be true, and I have no doubt it is, but it does not prove the importance of the industry. The importance of any industry, I take it, entirely depends upon the question as to whether or not it is profitable, and if an industry can only be carried on at a loss, the more gigantic the proportions it attains the more unfortunate are the persons engaged in it. The game is not worth the candle, and the sooner people ascertain what capital they have left, if they have any—

thing left, and employ it in some other industry, the better. The object of all business, I suppose, is profit, but in the case of the sugar industry it now appears to be all loss. Is there any way to alter it? That is the question we have to consider, I presume. We have had black labour given for this industry for over twenty years, in an abundant supply, and yet we find this state of bankruptcy, in spite of the supply of black labour. Has it been in any measure because of the supply of black labour? I believe that it has. I believe that if the industry had been established in the beginning on different lines, and if the cane had been grown by small proprietary farmers, it might have been profitable, and capital might then have been invested in central mills with some degree of success. I believe that if sugar-planting had been established on those lines, a very different state of things to that now existing would have been the result.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. H. Black): Did you not try it?

Mr. JORDAN: I was not a small proprietary farmer.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think you tried it on those lines.

Mr. JORDAN: I say that if the cane was grown by small proprietary farmers, men who would do their own work, then, I believe, the central mills might be a success. The history of sugar-planting on large plantations, by gangs of black labour, in Queensland, has been similar and almost identical with the history of that kind of sugar-planting, by coloured labour, in all other parts of the world—sooner or later it comes to grief. In connection with this plan of carrying on the industry by black labour, and especially by imported black labour, there has always been wastefulness, extravagance, mismanagement, and every element of failure. The junior member for Mackay, in the very able speech he gave us, seemed to be labouring under an impression of this kind, that in the early days of the colony an ingenious trap was set for catching capitalists. Black labour was legalised, cheap land was offered, and every inducement given to investment of capital in sugar-planting. The contention is that these unfortunate men were entrapped, as it were, in a kind of iron cage—to use the language of that hon. gentleman—and we were now about to shut the door upon those unfortunate victims of misplaced confidence. Under these circumstances, this Parliament is appealed to by the advocates of black labour, to say whether it is fair, or common honesty, for us to deal with the sugar planters in this way. Of course, that is one way of putting it, and a very ingenious one. It reminds me of a chapter I read some years ago in one of the books written by Oliver J. K. Boyd. I think it was in his book entitled “Recreations of a Country Pastor,” and there was a very clever chapter in it on the way of putting things. I have had a way of putting this question for a great many years. For over twenty years a kind of legalised slave trade has been in existence in this colony, established for the exclusive benefit of the sugar planters, and at the expense, I think, of the best interests of the colony. The history of procuring the necessary labour for carrying on sugar plantations has been one of fraud, deception, violence, kidnapping, murder, and outrages too horrible to describe. I am not accusing the sugar planters of fraud, deception, murder, and kidnapping. When the sugar planters came here they found a system in operation that had been established by law. This importation of black labour was under the immediate supervision of the Government, and the planters argued—I suppose with a reasonable show of fairness—that it was not their business as to how this

black labour was procured, as it was brought here with the sanction of the law, and as long as they treated the labourers humanely and kindly, that was all they had to do with the question. If any hon. member should doubt the justice of the expressions I have used, I would ask him to read, if he is curious and does not mind having his sensibilities too much shocked, some particulars of these outrages which are on record. I believe very few sugar planters have read them. It is to them a very uninteresting subject, and they think they have nothing to do with it. I would ask hon. members to read, for instance, a letter addressed to the Colonial Secretary of the day, who, I think, was Mr. (now Sir) Charles Lilley, by the Rev. Mr. Davidson, who was for many years a Congregationalist minister, and had been, I believe, a missionary in the islands, and who was then living in this colony, and took a great interest in the islanders. I would ask them also to read the statements that were made by several missionaries from the islands who formed part of a deputation which waited on the Premier of Victoria, Mr. Service, in 1883, on the subject of the proposed annexation of the New Hebrides and the adjacent islands. I will read a very brief extract from a letter addressed to Mr. Service on the same subject by the Rev. John G. Paton, senior missionary, New Hebrides mission. The letter will be found in our “Votes and Proceedings” for the year 1883-4, page 227. Mr. Paton gives several reasons why the British Government should annex the New Hebrides group, and the last reason is as follows:—

“Because we see no other way of suppressing the labour traffic in Polynesians, with all its many evils, as it rapidly depopulates the islands, being attended by much bloodshed, misery, and loss of life. It is an unmitigated evil to the natives, and ruinous to all engaged in it, and to the work of civilising and christianising the islanders. While all experience proves that all labour laws and regulations, with Government agents and gunboats, cannot prevent such evils, which have always been the sad accompaniments of all such traffic in men and women in every land, and because this traffic and its evils are a sad stain on our British glory and Australasian honour, seeing Britain has done so much to free the slave, and suppress slavery in other lands.”

I would especially ask hon. members, if they wish to acquaint themselves with this subject, to read the life of John Coleridge Patteson, for many years a missionary of the Church of England in the Polynesian Islands, and afterwards Bishop of Melanesia. That gentleman's name will go down to posterity alongside the names of such men as Livingstone in Africa, Colonel Gordon, and Father Damien, and a few other men whose self-denying heroism has commanded the admiration of the whole world. Bishop Patteson describes the evil results of this traffic, and I will give the pages of the book where the references can be found. They are pages 424, 463, 473, 500, 517, 518, 553, and 569. I do not wish to detain the House by reading the particulars. I think it is sufficient to refer to the pages where they can be found. I do not wish to enter into details, or to disfigure our *Hansard* in the present day, when we think the black labour question is disposed of, with the horrible details of these things. I simply refer to them, because the debate has now been going on for a long time, and scarcely any allusion has been made to the cruelties, wrongs, and evils of the system. Bishop Patteson describes how the islands have been depopulated, or half depopulated, by the tricks and ingenious devices by which these people have been decoyed on board labour vessels from year to year. Then I would refer hon. members, especially those members who do not accept the evidence of missionaries, to another authority. There are some people in the present day who either disbelieve,

or affect to disbelieve, the statements made by missionaries. Why that should be so I do not know; but we know that such is the fact. I would refer those persons to what was stated by one of the judges of the Supreme Court of Victoria, at a meeting held in Melbourne in July, 1883, in connection with the question of the proposed annexation of New Guinea, the New Hebrides, and other islands in the South Pacific. That gentleman makes quotations from the evidence of Commodore Wilson, who was, as hon. members will remember, for many years Commodore of the Australian fleet. It was his business to look after these matters, and he knew probably more about them than any other man. Hon. members will, I feel sure, not distrust the evidence of Commodore Wilson. The judge to whom I have referred said:—

"But it is not to Queensland that we must look if we wish to find out the elements of danger in this labour traffic; it is in the islands from which the labourers are imported to which we must look. There have been several letters published in the Melbourne journals from correspondents, some of whose names are known and are apparently deserving of entire credit, telling us of evils connected with the labour traffic in the islands themselves that do not differ very much from the worst evils reported to have existed in the African trade. If those accounts be true, and they are corroborated by the evidence of Commodore Wilson, the labour traffic is not inconsistent with events such as these. Women are entrapped, carried on board licensed vessels, and are kept there for the vilest purposes; men are sold by their chiefs, or are enticed to go on board those licensed ships and are carried against their will to Queensland, or in cases in which they have attempted to escape they have been shot by those who wished to retain them. Commodore Wilson"—

This passage is very important, and I would particularly ask the attention of hon. members to it—

"Commodore Wilson describes in a passage which I will read to you the circumstances under which those imported labourers are returned to their own country, and these circumstances suggest a more horrible state of things than anywhere connected with the removal from the islands. According to the Queensland law these imported labourers cannot be detained in the colony for more than three years. After that period they have to be returned to the islands, and to the villages from which they came. Commodore Wilson says:—

"But the real and most distressing hardship lies in the way these unfortunate creatures are too often returned to their homes. The islands of the Western Pacific are but little known, the bulk of them are not surveyed; their coasts are in some cases not even delineated on the charts, whilst other are not named or even marked on them. Such being the case, some estimate can be formed of the extreme difficulty of finding the exact island and village from whence each labourer was taken. But unless he is not only landed on his own island, but at his own village, he is sure to be consigned to slavery, if not death, as well as the forfeiture of his hard-earned store of trade, in return for his three years of labour and expatriation. . . . Not unfrequently, after a vain search for some time, the unfortunates are landed anywhere, and have been seen gesticulating and wild with despair, as the boat pulls away leaving them to their fate."

"Again, I say I believe he is the highest authority on this subject when he arrives at a very unfavourable opinion on the whole system. That is what he says:—

"I can hardly imagine anyone not interested in obtaining cheap labour for a moment countenancing the labour trade, or the employment of natives by traders and others. Only a few years ago (in 1860-65) much indignation was felt in England because the French Government sanctioned what was known as the *engagé* trade between their colonies and Africa. Such was, I know from personal observation on the spot, nothing but the slave trade under a new name; but I ask where is the great difference between the engaged African and the native labour recruited from the Pacific Islands? I certainly can see none."

That is what Commodore Wilson says. I am prepared to admit it, and I have always admitted, that I believe the sugar planters have treated the islanders well generally. As a rule, I think these poor islanders have been humanely treated on the plantations, and I am disposed to treat

the planters with great consideration, on the ground that the Parliament which allows these abuses is to blame. Some few years ago, however, as we know, there was some evidence taken by Drs. Thomson and Wray, which showed that the islanders were not always treated so well; and we know that a report brought up by Mr. Sheridan, who was, I think, the protector of islanders in the Wide Bay District, contains several circumstantial statements, endorsing the report that the islanders were not always humanely treated. But I am quite prepared to believe that such cases were exceptional. During my term of office as Registrar-General for nearly eight years, I paid special attention to this matter. We know that the mortality amongst the Pacific Islanders in this colony during the last twenty years has been very great indeed. There has been a frightful sacrifice of life, and I will just read a few words from one or two of my own reports. I did not content myself with giving to the Government, to Parliament, and the public the mere figures; but I endeavoured in those reports to put the figures in such a shape that people generally might understand them. In this matter I endeavoured to show what the comparison was between the deaths of these poor islanders, who are generally between fifteen and thirty-five years of age, and those of other persons between those ages, and it will be seen, Mr. Speaker, that the morality per 1,000 amongst the islanders was twelve times as great as the morality amongst young people who did not belong to that class. The following is taken from the Queensland Vital Statistics of the year 1881:—

"To form a correct idea of the mortality among them, these deaths of Polynesians should be compared to the number of deaths among the remainder of the population of these ages in Queensland during the year. The census recently taken shows that the number of persons between fifteen and thirty-five, exclusive of Polynesians, was 63,621; the deaths of persons between these ages, not counting the islanders, numbered 384, and this gives a death-rate of only 5·60 per 1,000."

Now, the report of that year on the same page, shows that while the death-rate was only 5·60 per 1,000, the death-rate of Polynesians ranged over a series of years from 55·78 per 1,000 to 85·18 per 1,000, which it will be seen was quite twelve times as great as in the former case. While the planters have lost their money, the islanders have lost their lives by hundreds and by thousands. They have been stolen from their homes, from their friends, from their wives, from their brothers and sisters—they have been bought from their chiefs for guns, and gewgaws, and gaudy pieces of calico, in order that the sugar planters who were already rich men might become much richer, for it was calculated that the planters would make large fortunes. Thus, what might have been the fair name of Queensland has been besmirched with crime by this Polynesian labour traffic; and when at length the sugar planters, after twenty years of black labour, cannot make sugar planting pay; when the colony, its conscience fully aroused, has loathed this odious thing, and has spewed it out of her mouth, we are called upon to go back, like a dog to his vomit again; and because we are unwilling to do so we are accused of wrong-doing and unfairness and dishonesty to the planters. Now, we can sit very easily under charges of this kind; they need not give us much concern. We do not want to do any injustice to the planters; we wish to treat them fairly. It is contended that a large number of people in the North are dependent for their livelihood upon the maintenance of this industry, and that the industry ought to be maintained at any price. It is said that there from 20,000 to 25,000 people more or less directly interested in this sugar industry. I do not

attach much importance to the view thus presented, because not supported by facts that satisfy me, and I am very much inclined to doubt those critics. It is contended that a large number of white men are employed on the sugar plantations, and that they will be thrown out of employment. Well, let them come down here, and that will save us a very great expense in immigration. I have pointed out to the House several times that the cost of immigration, mostly of the labouring class, during the years 1882, 1883, and 1884, was something like £240,000 a year, and it is now costing £150,000 a year. If those men are turned out of employment they can find employment here, and we can save a great deal in the cost of immigration. Those are the old arguments used by slave catchers, slave traders, and sugar planters in the British West Indies, in the Southern States of America, and in all the colonies of slave-holding European countries. And they are not worth a straw. As to the ship-owners, I have very little pity for them. Let them go into some honest trade. There is plenty of room. The ocean is wide enough; it rolls round the globe. I respond to the sentiment of the poet—

‘Heaven speed the canvas gallantly unfurled  
To furnish and accommodate a world.’

But these men have been carrying on a nefarious trade for the mere purpose of getting gain—a nefarious trade such as that described by Commodore Wilson. It may be said that this is ancient history, that nothing of the kind goes on now. A friend of mine said to me the other day that it had been put a stop to since the cast-iron regulation of Sir Samuel Griffith, and since the example made of those wicked men who murdered the people on board the “*Hopeful*.” I am very sorry to see that some persons seem to sympathise more with the men who perpetrated that diabolical crime than with their victims. However, I will give a little modern history, very briefly. It is a letter which has been recently received by the leader of the Opposition from one of the missionaries in the Polynesian Islands, in which the writer says that the same things are going on now. Many years ago, when we commenced this labour business, the slave catchers—shall I call them? I will not use so harsh a term—the captains and owners of these recruiting vessels were to get £8 per head for every islander they landed in the colony. Now they obtain £20 or more. If their wits were sharpened by the profit they could make when they got £8 a head, how much more are they sharpened now when they can get so much more? This letter is as follows:—

“Sir Samuel Griffith.

“Tanna, 10th July, 1889.

“Dear Sir,

“The New Hebrides Mission Synod, which has just closed its session here for this year, requested me to forward to you its enclosed minute on the ‘*Kanaka Labour Traffic*,’ and to write an accompanying letter, pleading with you to lay it before the present Government, etc. Eleven of our missionaries and the Rev William Bannerman, deputy to Synod from the Otago (New Zealand) Church, were present, and the resolution and its prayer were passed unanimously in Synod. By the papers, with deep regret, we see that in the report of your late Sugar Commission it pleads for the continuing of the Polynesian labour traffic beyond the time your humane Government had by law resolved that it should terminate, and in presenting our resolution we plead with you strongly to urge its complete suppression in Queensland, as you have already by law decreed. Even yet, from what on this tour I have heard of the doings of the collectors in this group, I believe all your laws and safeguards to prevent evils are avoided and broken constantly, and, no doubt, will be while the trade exists, and whereon it exists, as proved by the report of your late Royal Commission on it, as conducted in New Guinea under all your restrictions. On Sabbath, the 30th June, two boats of a vessel which the agent said was the ‘*Roderick Dhu*,’ from Brisbane,

called here about 2 p.m., on returning from spending the forenoon trading farther round the island. When the men in the boat were talking to the natives, the agent (an old man) came and informed the Rev. Wm. Watt, the resident missionary at Kwamera, that ‘The boats were not come in to recruit labour, but to let one of the crew to see his sister, a Tanna woman.’ He returned to the boats, and we saw both boats leaving without any additional labourers. We were then about to enter the church to observe the Lord’s supper. The agent’s voluntary statement that they were not come for recruits, threw the natives off their guard, and after the communion, as we left the church, all were in sorrow, as four lads had been got to go round a point beyond the rocks, where they could not be seen by their friends, and to swim off to the boats in which that agent was, and took them away. The friends of the lads were angry, and the missionary was indeed grieved to have his scholars so taken away, and his work frustrated, as it has often been by the deceiving traffickers. One of the lads was named Nerua, who leaves his young wife in grief and unprotected, worse off than a widow among such a people. The names of the other three were Yarn, Maninga, and Yawegow, who had been regularly attending school for some time. A number of our missionaries have had their schools broken up in the same way, and their labour lost, as many of the lads so trained become teachers and helpers in the good work of our mission. No doubt, as is usual in this traffic, the interested parties will justify tearing away husbands from wives and children from parents, or, indeed, almost any crime, if they can only get them away to work on their sugar plantations. But, Sir Samuel, we appeal to you and the Government and people of Queensland as to how you would feel and act if the vessels of any country had taken away so many of your sons and daughters, the joy and hope of your homes and country, leaving many widows and homes in sorrow to weep for the absent, knowing that, as usual, many, ay, very many of them, will find their graves in Queensland or in a foreign land. Were such boats from such vessels seen returning to Brisbane to try by hook and crook to get away your few remaining sons and daughters, surely every man possessing paternal, fraternal, and human feelings would unite and drive the destroyers of your children from your shores, and the world would praise you for it. As a strong hatred to the traffic which has so largely depopulated the islands exists here, and were it not for fear of the severe punishment men-of-war have inflicted, I fear few boats would escape. But our poor islanders are severely punished and shot down for doing what the inhabitants of Brisbane would be praised for. Hence they fret in anguish over their losses and bereavements, and our hearts grieve for them. In our self-denied, exhausting, disheartening work among these savage cannibals, after labouring for years, and having got a school arranged and a few under Christian instruction, and the work of civilisation advancing, it is exceedingly grievous to us to have all broken up, and the natives maddened to revenge, by the recruiting parties in this shameful traffic, which surely the Government of no British colony should for a moment tolerate, but oppose and suppress by every means possible. I do pity our poor islanders, and may God bless you and help you so to expose the evils of this sad traffic as to secure its complete suppression for ever by the Government, as by law arranged, and we and our islanders shall feel for ever grateful.

“I am, &c.,

“JOHN G. PATON.

“P.S.—I return to Victoria in the end of September, after which my address will be at the Assembly Hall, Collins street East, Melbourne; till then here on Anewa.—J. G. P.”

The resolution was as follows:—

“[Copy of minute of New Hebrides Mission Synod on the Labour Traffic for the *Daily Telegraph*, etc.]

“Mission Church, Kwamera, Tanna,

“New Hebrides, 6th July, 1889.

“Which day the New Hebrides Mission Synod met and was constituted, *inter alia*, it was agreed:—Whereas the Kanaka labour traffic has to a large extent depopulated the New Hebrides and adjoining islands, upset family relations among the natives, and has been, and is, the cause of much sorrow, suffering, and bloodshed among them and the traffickers there, and of very excessive mortality among them in Queensland and the other colonies, owing to their altered circumstances in life, food, long hours, and incessant labour on the sugar plantations, etc., which led the humane Government of Sir Samuel Griffith to resolve that the recruiting shall cease A.D. 1890. And whereas in the recent report of the ‘*Sugar Commission*’ of Queensland, it is

said, 'We declare it our opinion that if all coloured labour be withdrawn from the plantations, the extinction of the sugar industry must speedily follow, and we therefore recommend that the introduction of Polynesian labour be permitted to continue, at all events for some years longer than the period now limited, for the purpose of developing tropical agriculture and fruit-growing in the Northern districts.' As this traffic has been an unmitigated evil to the islanders, the New Hebrides Mission Synod respectfully and urgently implores the Queensland Government to let this traffic terminate, as resolved by the late Government, and on no consideration to continue a traffic so steeped in deception, immorality, bloodshed, and suffering, and on which Heaven's blessing cannot rest. Mr. Paton was appointed to forward a copy of this minute to Sir Samuel Griffith, with an accompanying letter. Extracted from the minutes of the New Hebrides Mission Synod by me, W. WATT, N. H. Mission Synod Clerk."

The PREMIER: We read that long ago.

Mr. JORDAN: It cannot be read too often, until it is thoroughly impressed upon the minds of the Government. The question has been asked in the report of the Commission submitted to this House. Can we afford to wipe out this industry? Well, Sir, if the wiping of it out follows as a necessary sequitur to the doing away with the procuring of this labour by the means which we have heard described, upon evidence which we cannot doubt, I say we can afford to wipe out this traffic a thousand times over. Queensland has said so four years ago, and I am happy to think that Queensland said so when the industry was prospering and very profitable to the planters, so that in making the sacrifice the public suffered as well as the planters. If it could be maintained as a profitable industry, such as this was supposed to be, it would be beneficial to the whole colony; so that although some sacrifice was required, the colony determined as it were with one voice, to abandon it—to do away with it—they would have no more of it. But, Mr. Speaker, Providence was beforehand in this matter. The development of beet-grown sugar has proved, I think, that the production of cane sugar grown by black labour all over the world will soon be at an end. We can, I maintain, afford to wipe out this traffic, first, because we can afford to do what is right, and, secondly, because we cannot afford to carry it on, because it won't pay. Those are two very good reasons. But is it necessary to wipe out the industry; must it inevitably be done away with? I do not think so. Let the Northern planters and their advocates in this House answer the evidence of the hon. member for Oxley, which he gave before the Royal Commission, and the statements which he has made over and over again in this House; not by quibbling, we have had a specimen of that. Let them reply to the fact that the hon. gentleman has carried on sugar-growing successfully on a sufficiently large scale—about sixty acres—exclusively by white labour. The result of the inquiries by the Commission on this very important question—both the minority and the majority reports—is that large plantations worked by gangs of black labour cannot be carried on profitably to the planters. Yet this hon. gentleman is going to extend the area of his sugar plantation which is carried on exclusively by white labour. I maintain that the sugar-producing agriculture is no exception to the rule, which I have said in this House over and over again is of universal application—that in new countries where the land can be got for nothing almost, and labour is very costly, agriculture to be made profitable to the farmer must be carried on by his own labour chiefly, or by the labour of the members of his family. It will not pay at the price which labour demands, and fairly demands, in this colony, where labour is dear. Of course the sugar growers know their own business best;

but as I am an old man who has taken great interest in this subject, having been here ever since we have existed as a colony, I will take the liberty of making one or two suggestions to the sugar planters. Let them sell their lands. We learn from the report of the Royal Commission, and especially from that of the hon. member for Toowoomba, that the planters have large areas of land, and very rich land. It did not cost them much money; it cost them a good deal for improvements and machinery—too much; but the land did not cost them much. In this emergency I will take the liberty to suggest this: Let them sell their lands to small farmers, real *bonâ fide* farmers, on a system of deferred payments, and contract with those farmers according to the size of their farms and the capabilities of the mills to grow a certain quantity of sugar-cane every year; and to supply ripe cane to the mills at not less than 10s. a ton. I was a sugar planter myself for six years, so I know something about it, and I know that 10s. a ton pays the farmer well. I am sorry the Minister for Lands has gone away. I know he does not like this subject unless he is speaking himself. We all listened with great attention to his speech on this motion the other day, and although we do not believe in his doctrines, still we like to listen to his speeches. I am sorry, as I said, the hon. gentleman has gone away, as I intend making reference to something he said the other day. The hon. gentleman said that the sugar planters had accepted the situation when it was determined four years ago to do away with black labour—when the Government of the day brought in a Bill modifying the system of introducing labour from the Continent of Europe. We must remember that it was the previous Government which initiated the scheme for the introduction of Continental labour in the Immigration Act of 1882, but that it was not favourable to the immigration of families, owing to the rate of contributions to be made by the persons who wanted the labour. Accordingly some modifications were made by the Act of 1884, which made it more favourable for the immigration of families. The Minister for Lands said the other day in this House that the late Government introduced the Bill in 1884 for the purpose of introducing cheap Continental labour. That the leader of the Opposition denied, and I also deny it now. It was never proposed that we should have cheap Continental labour, but we merely modified the Act of 1882 for the introduction of labour from Europe. Hon. gentlemen on the other side who were interested in sugar-planting said that it was to introduce cheap Continental labour, and they called it "German coolie labour," and all sorts of names. The leader of the Opposition did not propose to bring out cheap Continental labour, and when I was speaking upon the occasion when the Bill was introduced in 1884, I referred to what I had said some time before in public—that the planters should meet together periodically to ascertain the requirements of the labour market in the sugar-planting districts, and that they should communicate with the Agent-General and pay for indenting the necessary labour. I said that they should give a fair price for the labour—not less than 15s. a week, with the addition of rations. Now, rations such as are usually given are, 8 lb. of flour, 8 lb. or 12 lb. of meat, 4 lb. of sugar, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of tea per week, costing, I think, about 7s. 6d. per week, so that the total wages would be 22s. 6d. per week. I never proposed that anything less than that should be given, and I urged that both inside the House and outside of it. That was ridiculed in the papers. When the papers reported me they made no mention of the rations, only speaking of the 15s. a week. One paper did report me correctly, and that

was the *Telegraph*, but the others caricatured my speech. The Minister for Lands said that the planters accepted the situation when the Bill was passed in 1884, but I think that is a mistake, because just about that time, it will be remembered, a pamphlet was published. It was very nicely written, describing the colony, and especially the northern parts of it, fairly and honestly, speaking of it as having a hot climate, and one which was trying to Europeans, but still not unhealthy. The occupation of sugar-planting was also fairly described, and I liked the pamphlet immensely, and thought it would be of use in leading people to come to the colony until near the end, then it went on to say that the wages would be 7s. 6d. a week—I do not think rations were mentioned at all—and described the huts minutely, and, as described, they were not fit for pigs to live in. Now, that was the way in which the planters accepted the situation—by publishing that pamphlet. I believe it was published by someone in the North, and was circulated in Germany and other parts of the Continent of Europe, and I have every reason to believe that it was owing to that pamphlet that the scheme failed. I do not believe in the assumption of the planters and of their advocates in this House, that sugar-planting will be wiped out unless we continue to introduce black labour. I believe that is altogether a gratuitous assumption, as I think that sugar-planting can be carried on by farmers on the central mill system, which has not yet had a fair trial. I believe the picture drawn so graphically by some of the gentlemen who have spoken upon this question, and who certainly handled it very well, when they described all the misery and ruin which was coming upon the North if we did not extend the system for another five years, was altogether a fancy sketch which will never be realised, or anything like it. It was well calculated to alarm unthinking persons; but hon. gentlemen in this House are too familiar with the arguments used to be frightened. The Minister for Lands has made use of the same arguments year after year. He has spoken by the hour, and very eloquently—quite as eloquently as other hon. members who have spoken in favour of the extension of the Act. Those hon. gentlemen have, no doubt, come here instructed by the planters, and they have done their best in a hopeless case as advocates, but they have been addressing an intelligent jury, and the judge has already summed up. The Premier has stated that the Government have no intention of extending the introduction of coloured labour. The question has been settled, as the hon. gentleman said, by the colony, and no Government has power to reverse the decision of the colony in such a matter. Seven or eight years ago I was in despair. I have always taken a deep interest in this question from the very beginning, and I thought we were committed to this intolerably cruel and dangerous system for ever. I have no feeling against sugar planters, and should like to see them succeed under a better system, without black labour; but I say the greed of the planters and the unfortunate sympathy of a certain class of politicians appeared likely to perpetuate the system. Let me here remark that the Liberal party, as a party, have always been opposed to black labour. I know there have been individual exceptions, but most of the people of this colony, for the last twenty-five years, have been strongly opposed to black labour. The working men have always been opposed to the system, and without a single exception the leaders of the Liberal party have been opposed to black labour, and during all these years have done their utmost to put a stop to it. That was a difficult task to perform without ruining the planters. Need I mention

the names of Arthur Macalister, Charles Lilley, Thomas Blackett Stephens, John Douglas, William Miles, and last, but not least, Samuel Walker Griffith? And here I should be unjust if I did not mention the name of a gentleman who for many years—ever since the colony came into existence as a separate colony—sometimes alone, amidst ridicule, obloquy, and persecution, has never ceased to denounce it as cruel and injurious to the best interests of the colony. I am speaking now of the former junior member for North Brisbane, William Brookes. There is no man, in my opinion, to whom this colony is so deeply indebted, with the exception of Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, as William Brookes. I am speaking now, at the end of this miserable business, and I am glad to have an opportunity of recognising the great value of his noble and honest and incessant efforts to point out in season and out of season the evils of this horrible system. Now, so far as this resolution is concerned, I am quite willing that anything in reason should be done for the help of the sugar planters. I know that they have been to a certain extent—I will not say deluded, but they have come here under the existence of a system for which they were not responsible. Most of them have treated their labourers well. Ruin has come upon them, and I think something should be done for them, if it can be done in justice to the interests of other classes in the colony. I do not know exactly what can be done. It would take a wiser man than I am to devise a scheme of relief. The central mills have not yet had a fair trial, and there have been great obstacles in the way of carrying out that experiment. I think that further assistance should be granted to the central mills in the North; and I think that another central mill might very advantageously be established in the South, where sugar-planting can be carried on successfully, as evidenced by the efforts of the hon. member for Oxley and the German farmers. I would be willing to go further. I would advocate that the planters should communicate with the Agent-General, and that his officers should engage labourers on twelve months' agreements to serve at 15s. a week, and no less, with full rations. I would go still further, and give a land order of the value of £20 to every man who fulfilled his agreement with the planter. We have plenty of land. The sugar planters have got so much they do not know what to do with it. They must pay very heavy rates to the divisional boards, and it would be an advantage to them to get rid of their land. They could almost afford to give it away to *bona fide* farmers who would supply them with cane. My opposition was of very small consequence, as I am a very humble individual, but I rejoice that from the beginning I have been opposed to black labour. I was the first man who ventured during the elections for our first Parliament to raise his voice against it, when it was in favour by the Governor, the Premier of the colony, and most of the foremost men in Brisbane—when it was favoured by nearly all, except the tradesmen and labouring classes. They were always sound on the subject. I raised my voice against it as a system which meant ruin to the black man—kidnapping and murder inevitable, no matter how humane the planter was. Some of them we know treated their labourers with humanity and kindness, but I held the system would be injurious to the white labourer, and an obstacle to settlement, and damaging to the best interests of the colony. I rejoice that I have lived long enough to help to ring the death-knell of black labour, and I would spend my last breath, if necessary, in helping to lay it in the grave, from which, I believe, no power on earth will ever raise it again to life.

Mr. O'CONNELL said: Mr. Speaker,—I regret that someone who has had more experience in this House is not here to reply to the speech which the late Minister for Lands has given us this afternoon. I have had considerable experience amongst the islanders, and perhaps a great deal more than that hon. gentleman has had. I was for five years an inspector of Pacific Islanders at Bundaberg, and had a very good opportunity of judging whether they were kidnapped or brought here against their will. It may be interesting to the public to know what an inspector's duties are when a ship arrives with islanders on board. He has to go on board and see that each individual is asked whether he understands his agreement, and whether he has come to Queensland willingly or not; and, if he is not satisfied, then it is the duty of the Government to see that the man is returned to the islands. There is also a heavy bond against the ship-owners of £500 for bringing islanders against their will, and the ship may also be forfeited. During the five years I was in charge of this work, I may say that I was thoroughly satisfied, with one or two exceptions, that the islanders really did understand their agreements; perhaps one or two New Irelanders, or New Britain Islanders, did not. The men used, in fact, to laugh when they were asked the question, and said, "Altogether man along island savee agreement." The agreements are as well understood at the islands as they are in Queensland, and it is absurd to talk about kidnapping. Then, as regards the statement of Mr. Paton, quoted by the late Minister for Lands, this afternoon, about the boys who had run away during Divine service. What does that prove? It proves that they are so very anxious to come to Queensland that they will swim off to the boats. Does that look like kidnapping or misrepresentation? If they did not want to come here, would they take that means of getting away? As for being taken away from their wives and children, are there not in England officers to induce people to leave their homes to come to the colony, and might not employers of labour in the old country object just as much to their labourers being taken away, as the missionaries object to their men being taken away? I really cannot see that the argument is applicable at all. If the labour is obtainable in England, and we want it out here, why should we not get it? and the same argument is applicable to the South Sea Islanders. I was at Bundaberg five months ago, and went on board a vessel that had just arrived from the islands. There I met a chief of the Solomon Islands, who had come to Queensland four years before, as a newchum. He recognised and spoke to me. I said, "You did not stay long in the islands." He said, "No; I wanted to come back to Queensland. I hurt my foot down there, and have come up to get it doctored." That is one case out of scores that have come under my notice. Why, Sir, men have gone back to the islands, stopped there a couple of months, and then returned to Queensland. If they had been brought here with such violence, or had been kidnapped, is it at all probable that they would care to return? I think that the whole statement is absurd. Of course I do not doubt that in the earlier years of the labour traffic there were many things done which we all blush for and are ashamed of, and I do not think the planters, more than anyone else, would deny that such things were done; but I say that if the thing has been done in the past, it certainly is not done now. That is what Mr. Paton tries to prove, and it is absolutely absurd. If it had been going on during the time the late Government were in power, and they thought the traffic so disgraceful, why did they not put

an end to it then, as they were challenged to do by the then Opposition? Of course there is a great deal of responsibility in all this traffic attached to those who were sent down by the Queensland Governments as Government agents, to see that the regulations made for controlling the traffic were properly carried out. I am quite satisfied that the early abuses of the traffic were attributable to the neglect of those men to attend to their duties. I know that when I was appointed Inspector of Pacific Islanders at Bundaberg, there were no regulations at all supplied to guide those men in the discharge of their duties. They were simply given an Act of Parliament, and told to utilise it to the best advantage, and to men who were not in the habit of administering Acts of Parliament, that was very little use to them as a guide to their conduct. In the early stages of the traffic very little care was paid to the proper administration of the laws we passed in this colony. In the case in which the greatest atrocities were alleged to have been committed—the "Hopeful" case—it was undoubtedly proved that the Government agent was for the greater part of the time rendered incapable of performing his duty by drunkenness. It was impossible that the Government should always know the character of the men sent down to the islands as Government agents, but I think it must be admitted that sufficient care was not exercised in the selection of those men. A Government agent holds a most responsible and difficult position, as, while not interfering to prevent the recruiting of islanders, he had to see that the laws and regulations framed here for the proper carrying on of the traffic were observed; and it is simply because a lot of men were sent to the islands as Government agents, who had absolutely no idea of the responsibility they incurred, that the things complained of went on. The other arguments the hon. gentleman used were somewhat to this effect: The sugar industry does not pay and consequently it would be a good thing for the planters to stop it and prevent their losing any more money; and the hon. gentleman by that argument virtually says be virtuous, because it does not pay you to be otherwise. The hon. member for Toowoomba in his speech gave us a lot of figures and quotations to prove what a formidable enemy the cane sugar has in beet sugar. He gave comparisons of the prices paid for sugar, and compared the price of Manilla cane sugar with the price paid for beetroot sugar. The quotation I believe was from the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and showed very badly for cane sugar. It was calculated to make one believe that cane sugar was of less value in the open market than beetroot sugar. As a matter of fact, the values of cane sugars are rather ahead of beet sugars if anything. The relative value of Manilla cane sugar at present, and that is the lowest class of sugar cane, is 13s. 6d., and the price of German 88 per cent. beetroot sugar is 23s. I may state for the information of hon. members having no special knowledge of the subject, that 88 per cent. beet sugar is a standard quality, and as the sugar polarizes more or less than that so the value of the sugar varies. So that the hon. member's comparison was not a fair one, as he compared the very lowest class of cane sugar with what is accepted as a standard class of beet sugar. To make a true comparison the hon. member should have compared a fairly good cane sugar with the same class of beet sugar; and I find "Cuba centrifugals" are quoted in the same article at from 24s. 3d. to 34s. 6d., as against the 88 per cent. beet sugar at 23s.; so that fairly good unrefined cane sugar is preferable in value to standard beet sugar. It is desirable that that should be understood, as from the



quotation made by the hon. member for Toowoomba, people might imagine that cane sugar was of less value in the open market than beet sugar. The hon. gentleman also quoted the proportion of beet sugar yielded per acre, and, in doing so, quoted the returns as follows:—The yield per acre of German beetroot was 6,925 lb.; green-neck, 8,496 lb.; rose-neck, 8,562 lb.; grey-neck, 8,333 lb.; and Vilmorin's, 6,103 lb. Those returns are absolutely correct, but they do not give the actual working yield of sugar, and the returns the hon. gentleman should have quoted are these:—German, 4,541 lb.; green-neck, 4,775 lb.; rose-neck, 4,835 lb.; grey-neck, 4,417 lb.; and Vilmorin's, 4,144 lb. So that even in the matter of yield per acre the beet does not show so much better than the cane. Up here, I suppose the average from cane would be about 3,360 lb., equal to 30 cwt. per acre, and beet seems to give a rather better return than that. Nothing struck me more during this debate, to which I have listened very carefully, than the attempts to prove that the industry cannot pay. It seems to me that in no country except Queensland is there an industry like the sugar industry being run down, an industry capable of giving such a large amount of employment, and for which apparently there is no substitute—and that is a point that deserves a great deal of consideration, because up to the present time it has not been shown that there is anything which can be grown on the Northern lands to take the place of sugar. In the district I represent, of course, it is possible that other farming products may be grown to take the place of sugar, and those products would come into the Brisbane market to compete with similar products grown by the farmers on the Downs and other districts in the South. But in the case of the North, it has not been shown that there is anything we can plant or grow, without the aid of tropical labour, which would take the place of sugar, and there is nothing which, even with the aid of kanaka labour, could take the place of sugar there at present; nobody has ever been able to make a success of anything else there, and I think I can show there has been a success made of sugar-growing in the district I represent. I know that hon. members are thoroughly sick of the whole subject, and want to get rid of it as quickly as possible; but to those engaged in the sugar industry, the question of labour is a matter of life or death. As showing the importance of the sugar industry in the district which I represent, I may state that the total value of the products exported from that district, coastwise and otherwise, for the year ending the 30th of June, 1889, amounted to £324,079, of which sugar contributed £261,936, while all the other products put together only amounted to £62,143. To show the insignificance, comparatively speaking, of all the other products grown and manufactured in the district compared with sugar, I have in my hand a return of the produce of the Bundaberg district, removed coastwise from the port of Bundaberg, during the year ending on the 30th of June, 1889. The particulars are as follow:—Sugar—7,192 tons, value £145,717; maize—41,845 bushels, value £7,325; soap—132 tons 10 cwt., value £2,400; tallow—12 tons 6 cwt., value £237; hides—178, value £81; wool, greasy—2,952 lb., value £64; pumpkins—17 tons, value £33; butter—1,791 lb., value £92; molasses—134 tons, value £187; sweet potatoes—5 tons, value £9; chaff—29 tons 10 cwt., value £151; tobacco—1,500 lb., value £75; skins, 3 bags—value £6; lucerne hay—3 cwt., value £1; fresh fruit—17 cases, value £5; horns—2 bags, value £2; kangaroo skins—1 bale, value £2; copper matte—101 tons 12 cwt., value £5,506; mouldings—76 bales, value £19; sawn timber—pine, 1,331,013 feet, value £9,314;

sawn timber—pine, dressed, 115,549 feet, value £896; sawn timber—hardwood, 771,664 feet, value £5,969; total value, £178,091. The exports otherwise than by sea were:—Bones—99 cwt. 2 qrs., value £20; butter—158 lb., value £16; gold—3 356 oz. 7 dwt. 18 gr., value £13,053; hides—9,026, value £4,751; horns and hoofs—77 cwt., value £84; miscellaneous packages—60, value £40; potatoes—13 tons 18 cwt., value £79; salt beef—14,884 lb., value £120; salt pork—976 lb., value £9; sheep skins—247 packages, value £855; marsupial skins—65 packages, value £574; soap—1 cwt. 2 qr., value £2; tallow—53 tons 19 cwt. 2 qr., value £905; raw sugar—808 tons, value £13,023; refined sugar—4,855 — tons, value £103,000; greasy wool—19,207 lb., value £433; hair—491 lb., value £15; oil—25 gallons, value £5; molasses—18 cwt., value £9; copper matte—2,513 cwt., value £6,179; copper, coarse pig—1,224 cwt., value £2,834; rum—10 gal., value £1; wine—2 gal., value £1; total value, £145,988. Those figures show that out of a total of £324,029 for exports from the Bundaberg district, sugar contributes £261,936. I cannot conceive what will be the result to the district I represent if the extension of the period during which coloured labour may be introduced is refused. The contention that sugar-growing does not pay certainly does not hold as far as the Bundaberg district is concerned. I do not mean to say that all the plantations there, or even half of them, have lately been giving any return on the capital invested. They have not, and that has not been for the want of coloured labour. It is simply due to the bad seasons which we have experienced. Any man who has lived in a sugar district must know that if we are going to have continual droughts, as we have had lately, it is perfectly impossible to grow sugar or anything else profitably. But sugar planters are not fools, and they would not go into the industry if they saw no chance of profit, and every good business man knows that if we have fair seasons and planters have the labour they require they can make a very good thing out of sugar-growing at present prices, or even at the lowest average price of £16 a ton. Soon after the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, addressed the House on this question, I wrote to several planters in my district, pointing out that the whole gist of the hon. member's argument was that sugar-growing in Queensland did not pay, and that consequently no harm would ensue from giving it its death blow. Mr. Young, in answer to my letter, says:—

"Groom's contention requires refutation, the chief cause, so far, of the depression is drought, particularly low prices, of course, with the bad crops, also helping. We ourselves have scarcely wanted for more black or white labour, because we have been allowed by the Act to get it—but another and fatal cause of failure will be added, if the labour is withdrawn. I contend that but for the reliable labour we have had during the past few years of bad seasons and prices, we should now not exist at all; the whole of the plantations must have closed before now. The idea that well managed plantations won't pay, even with black labour, is, I am convinced, a complete mistake. If we can only get our labour, we can take our whack of the bad seasons, which we all have to put up with. The cause of the failure of the large Northern mills is chiefly owing to a want of raw material to work up, not to the size of the mills. Large mills are far the most profitable, but then they must be kept going for at least six months in each year, full swing. We reckon here we can make a profit at the lowest prices yet touched, providing we have reliable labour, and a fair share of good seasons. No one could make anything in such years, however, as 1883, labour or no labour; but, then, last year was certainly exceptionally bad."

That is a letter from Mr. Arthur Young, of Fairymead, a man well known amongst sugar planters, and an exceptionally good business

man, one who would not say a thing like that unless he was fully convinced that what he said was correct. In his evidence before the Commission he puts down the return made on Fairymead last season at 2 per cent. upon the capital, and the capital invested in Fairymead is £75,000, so that even 2 per cent. is a very great consideration. Of course I am well aware of what was the cause of their not being able to make a better return on their capital; it was simply this, that they had cut their crops the year before, and had been crushing late. The weather had been exceptionally dry; in fact from February in last year to something like December we had no rain worth talking about, and had it not been that there was a large crop standing over, and the company were able to buy it to keep the mill going, no doubt Fairymead would have shown a large loss last season. But the owners are men of great enterprise. They laid down tramways, and carted the cane no less than five or six miles to the mill from different places. They made a ferry for themselves over the river, and there is no doubt that if they had not shown all that enterprise they would have had the same record that a great many other planters had, and worked at a loss. Owing to the fact that the mill-power in the district had been insufficient to take off the crops, they were able to crush cane for others and show a profit. However, they were not the only planters in the district who did show a profit. The evidence given before the Commission showed that these plantations made a profit out of last season: Farquhar and others, with a capital of £18,000 invested, showed a return of 8 per cent.; John Gaylord, of Windsor, with a capital of £8,980 invested, showed a return of 5 per cent.; John Clark, of Ashgrove, with a capital of £6,000, showed a return of 11 per cent.; Noakes Brothers, of Springhill, with a capital of £25,000 invested, showed a return of 10 per cent.; E. Turner, of Sunny-side, with a capital of £11,150 invested, showed a return of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; Angus Gibson, of Bingera, with a capital of £73,000 invested, showed a return of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., besides allowing 5 per cent. for depreciation of machinery; and Jas. Cran, of Duncraggan, with £50,000 invested, showed a return of 9 per cent.; so that I contend it has been proved that in that district sugar can be grown at a profit; and I do not see why in the rich Northern scrub lands an equally good return and equally good results cannot be obtained. In fact I believe that it was only because they were further away and had more difficulty in getting labour for their machinery, and because they started rather sooner than we did in Bundaberg, and had not the experience, that is the reason why better results have not been shown upon the Northern plantations. It is absurd to say that because a great deal of money has been wasted through bad management and extravagance in putting up the mills, the industry should be condemned. If it is possible for sugar plantations to pay well in the Bundaberg district, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they will pay well on the equally rich, if not more rich, lands of the North. I have seen canes brought down from the Mossman River the like of which we cannot grow at Bundaberg in the time—ten months—and the canes were nine or ten feet long. We have never in our best seasons been able to get cane like that in the same time at Bundaberg. To hear the sugar industry run down as it has been run down here, one would imagine that the beet sugar industry had never at any time any difficulty in carrying on. Nearly all the large manufacturing mills on the continent during the great depression of prices of sugar, showed very heavy losses, and it

is only lately since the rise has taken place that they have ever begun to do any better. I have here a quotation from the *Deutsche Zuckerindustrie*, a paper quoted from by the sugar-cane journal, and it gives some particulars in regard to the results of the manufacture of sugar in Germany during the bad times there—

"The Friedensau Sugar Manufactory closed its balance-sheet up to the 31st July, with a loss on its year's transactions, in spite of all the efforts of the directors, amounting to M203,655, of which about M70,000 is attributable to the fall in prices, and about M100,000 to the slight difference between raw and refined sugars, so that the cost of manufacture could not be covered, the remainder being loss on farming operations.

"The Münsterberg Factory shows a loss of M119,006, which, added to the loss brought forward from last year, makes the amount to the bad to be carried forward to new account, M339,711.

"The Mannheim Refinery, which gained in the campaign 1884-5 M147,555, has lost in 1885-6 M108,844 owing to the constant depreciation of refined sugars.

"The Starch Sugar (glucose) Manufacturing Company, at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, will pay a dividend of 10 per cent.

"The Baden Sugar Manufacturing Company, which brought forward from 1884-85 a credit balance of M12,630, has lost in 1885-86 M228,335. They have three establishments—Wagläusel, Altshausen, and Züttlingen. At the close of the report they say:—Finally we will take a short glance at the new campaign. Unfortunately this presents no delightful picture. It is true that the beets which are being worked up are of a satisfactory quality, and will exceed last year's quantity by about 50 per cent., and hence, in spite of the greater burden inflicted by the advance of 10 pfennings in the beet tax, there is a well-founded hope that the cost price of our own raw sugar will be lower, but it must be regarded as questionable whether at the extreme low value (about M39) on the basis of 96 per cent. this will still leave a profit. How far the refining will produce satisfactory results is in the nature of things also uncertain. However, in consideration of the universal scarcity in stocks of refined goods, and also in the expectation of steadily increasing exports, the hope of better trade during the present campaign does not seem unjustifiable.

"The Bahnhof of Marienburg Sugar Manufactory lost M13,304 on last year's working, and M51,794 on stock, which, added to the deficit of 1884-85, makes M144,912 to the bad for two year's operations.

"The Immendorf Sugar Manufacturing Company pays a dividend of 9 per cent.

"The First Silesian Pilé Refinery shows a loss of M92,893.

"The Mewe Sugar Manufacturing Company, and the Kleischkan factory (Silesian), have called their creditors together."

That is a very cheerful lot of reports to read. The argument used in this House by some members was that, because the sugar-cane industry is depressed, we should destroy that industry. That argument has not been used to the German manufacturers, as to whether they would be satisfied to wipe out all the capital they have invested to prevent their being bothered any more, by carrying on an industry at a loss. I really think it is the people who are carrying on the industry who are the best judges as to whether they can make a profit out of it or not. No one, whether sugar planters or not, carries on work continuously at a loss; and if these men did not see some hope of getting a fair return for the money they had invested, they would not care to continue struggling at what has been described by several hon. members as such an uphill game. I hold in my hand a telegram which, to a certain extent, exemplifies what might be the result of doing away with this labour. Owing to some complications with the Pacific Island labour office in Bundaberg, a planter, Mr. Samuel Rome, was debarred from getting any kanaka labour, and he telegraphed to me to see if I could not get that decision altered. I was unable to do anything for him, though I believe to a certain

extent he was rather hardly dealt with. The result of his being refused to employ kanaka labour has been that he has abandoned his plantation and let it to somebody else. I know he was very anxious to carry on his plantation with white labour, but he was so thoroughly satisfied that he could not do so without the help of coloured labour that he has given up the idea of carrying on the plantation himself, and has let it to somebody else who can get the necessary labour. That, I think, will be the case all over the colony if this labour is refused. We have been told over and over again this session that the colony has declared against coloured labour, and that it is useless talking. As to the uselessness of talking, I believe it is the same with this as with other subjects, that if a man cannot get the ear of the Ministry or of the leader of the Opposition he may as well sit down and let them run the show. It is very little good talking or suggesting anything unless you can get it taken up by somebody who has some influence in the House. I am quite satisfied to be told that what we do here in the shape of talking on this subject is very harmless indeed. At the same time we have a certain duty to perform to our constituents, and that is what I am doing this evening. With regard to the question of the country having decided against this labour, I maintain that they have never decided against it—that they have never had the question fairly put before them. What has been put before them is the sort of stuff that the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, gave us the other day:—

“And from my place in this House, as a representative of working men, I warn the working men of this colony not to be led away by the sophistries disseminated among them on the subject of coloured labour. I call their attention to the consistency and persistency with which the Liberal party has endeavoured to preserve Queensland for the white man; and I tell the working men that if they listen to the sophistries of those who favour the introduction of coloured labour they will be like Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, and when he sought a place for repentance found it not, though he sought it with tears.”

Mr. BARLOW: Hear, hear! And I say so still.

Mr. O'CONNELL: I am very glad to hear the hon. member say “Hear, hear.” It is an acknowledgment of what we have always said, that our views have been misrepresented in every shape and form, and that the working men are told deliberately what is known not to be the case. If the matter was put before them in a fair way, if, for instance, a person said, “Look here, boys, these kanakas can't come here and interfere with you, and they are helping Dick, Tom, and Harry to get a living in these sugar districts, what do you say if we let them have them?” Then you might get a different answer, but not whilst the matter is misrepresented as it is at present. If it were really the case that the colony had deliberately made up its mind that there shall be no more coloured labour, it seems a most extraordinary thing that all the sugar districts have returned members who are pledged to get an extension of the Act if they possibly can.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: We know exactly how it happened. We know what influence the employer exercised over the employé.

Mr. O'CONNELL: How about the town of Bundaberg, where there are very few persons employed in sugar inside the township?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Why, it is a well known fact that at Bundaberg the man who is not in favour of black labour is boycotted. The storekeepers are afraid to say a word against it.

Mr. O'CONNELL: One always has to go away from home to hear news. I have lived at Bundaberg for seventeen years, and I have never

heard anything of the sort. There are men carrying on business there who are known to be avowed opponents of black labour.

Mr. BARLOW: I was told the same thing at Bundaberg.

Mr. O'CONNELL: You are told a great many funny things. It is a statement made to damage the planter in the eyes of the public. When the Cingalese came to Bundaberg, was it not the white inhabitants who turned out and prevented them going to work? And I am very glad they did, because the Cingalese are a most objectionable class of men. I am as much opposed to the introduction of Cingalese, or Javanese, or Indian coolies as anybody; but I maintain that the kanakas in the colony are a real benefit to the working classes. At Bundaberg the working men, who ought to be the best judges as to the fact, say they are perfectly content with them as long as they are kept on the plantations; and after my election several men, whom I knew to have been avowed opponents of kanaka labour two years ago, told me that as long as the kanakas were kept on the plantations they were quite satisfied to have them in the colony. And it is only those who want to make political capital out of this business who will not see this, and stand up before audiences of working men and tell them they are selling their birthright for a mess of pottage. The planters are only asking for this extension of the Act for five years.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Does anybody really believe that?

Mr. O'CONNELL: If it is such a difficult thing to get—this five years—why try and make out that we are putting in the thin end of the wedge before asking for it for ever?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: All the arguments have been for a continuous extension of the Act.

Mr. O'CONNELL: The hon. gentleman is taking up a different position now from what he did when he brought in the Amending Act in 1884. He recognised then the responsibility of his position. He said, “Before I do away with this labour with which the industry is now carried on, I will try to find them some other labour to carry on the industry, for if I ruin a big industry like the sugar industry, the export value of whose produce is nearly one-fifth of that of the total produce of the country, I shall bring on a financial crisis.” The hon. gentleman knew that if he killed the sugar industry at that time, which was producing an enormous amount of wealth, that instead of the exports of the colony being between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000, there would be £1,000,000 less with which to meet the responsibilities of the colony. No business man would like to pass through such an ordeal, knowing that he would have to go back, or else to tax the colony much more heavily to meet those liabilities. So that when the hon. gentleman had the responsibility of working the Government of the colony, he looked at the matter with very different eyes to those with which he looks at it now; and nothing struck me more than the fact that after the hon. member for Herbert had finished his able address to this House, the question, “Is the sugar industry doomed to die?” did not seem to occupy the attention of the leaders of the House for one solitary moment. Their only idea seemed to be: This is very dangerous ground—ground upon which political capital can be made, and if we make a false step our opponents will try and oust us from office. That was the idea, not “How can we contrive to continue the industry;” but, “What is the Government going to do; can we find a hole in their coat, and

turn them out?" That was really the contention that was put before the House the moment the hon. member for Herbert closed his address.

Mr. BARLOW: They were pledged.

Mr. O'CONNELL: They were pledged against allowing any class of labour to come into the country that was going to take labour out of the hands of the white man, or was likely to become a permanent evil in the country by settling in it and making a mixed population. They were not pledged to do away with kanaka labour at any particular time without thought or care that a large portion of the colony would suffer from doing away with it. You might as well say the colony was pledged to reciprocity. Nearly all public men have pledged themselves more or less to reciprocity and federation.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. O'CONNELL: A very large number have. Intercolonial freetrade and protection against the world has been a sort of platform with orators for some time, and that principle has been more or less generally accepted all over the colonies. And if because that idea has got some general credence it was held that the Government were bound at once to put it into force, what would be the result? Would not everybody cry out against it? Do we not hear some hon. members talk about reciprocity as the greatest danger possible. The hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, said:—

"I should like to ask what would be the condition of affairs if the sugar industry, gaining strength as it went on, found that its market in Victoria was not sufficient, and demanded a reciprocity treaty with South Australia and New Zealand? What would be the effect on the farming industry in West Moreton? I would engage to say that it would be most disastrous that we should be asked to sacrifice almost our only agricultural interest in order that a certain form of agriculture might be carried on in North Queensland."

Well, Sir, what constitutes the agricultural industry of the colony, and where is there agricultural industry like sugar-growing? I contend they have not got one. Hon. members do not seem to know what is under cultivation in the colony. I have got here last year's statistics—I have not been able to get this year's—from which I find that 188,845 acres were under crop, out of which sugar occupied 51,815 acres. The only other crop that showed up at all—that exceeds sugar—was maize, with 73,139 acres. The other crops consist of lucerne, oats, wheat—and while on this subject I should like to call attention to the way our wheat farmers are getting on. They ought to be making their fortunes, as far as I can see. Here is a return for ten years, showing the area of land under crops: In 1878 there were 12,511 acres under wheat, out of which the total area affected by rust was 6,482 acres. Then we come down to 1884, which is the year of the largest acreage, 15,942; and next to that 1888 when the acreage was 15,665, and out of that area 8,734 acres were affected by rust. What is the use of growing a crop like that? Talk about people being strung on to grow crops that are unprofitable, I think the wheat-growers are very much in that condition, and I say, without hesitation, that there is no agricultural industry in the colony that can be compared in the slightest degree with the sugar industry. It employs more men, circulates more money, and has done more good to the colony than any other industry that can be named, and the only thing I cannot understand, is how a body of intelligent men like we have in opposition can sit quietly here and see such an industry go to the wall without trying in some way or other to help it. We have had any amount of expressions of sympathy from hon. members

who disagree with this extension. They say, "We will give you anything we can, but we cannot give you black labour." Shortly after the opening of the debate I happened to go and hear the Fisk minstrels, of whom Mr. Loudin is the leader. Of course, you are aware that they are coloured people, but I certainly could not see that any deterioration was likely to occur to anyone from contact with them. Very likely a good many white people would have their manners and tone raised by mixing with them. They are very intelligent and pleasant people to meet. Mr. Loudin gave us a sort of harangue on the subject of sympathy, as illustrated by an incident that occurred some years ago in the town of Johnstown, where the recent disaster occurred. He said a man who made his living by the use of a horse and dray had the misfortune to lose both in the river. As soon as the accident was known a great deal of sympathy was expressed for the man in the loss he had sustained, until at last one of the bystanders said, "Well sir, what is your sympathy worth; mine is worth 10 dollars?" He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out the money, and before long they had raised enough to buy the man another horse and dray to enable him to earn his living. That was *bona fide* sympathy. I should like some of those hon. gentlemen who express sympathy with the sugar industry to tell us what form the sympathy is going to take that they are always talking about. They will not give us the labour we require, and what are they going to do to enable the industry to be carried on.

Mr. GRIMES: Eat more sugar.

Mr. O'CONNELL: The hon. gentleman may eat more if he likes; it is only a question of going to a grocer's and buying some. I maintain that the sugar planters do not wish to do any wrong whatever to the country; and if those towns and districts which are directly interested in this industry are satisfied that kanakas are necessary, and a direct gain to them, I do not see why the rest of the colony—who do not come into contact with them, and who do not understand the circumstances under which we are labouring—should dictate the policy of those districts. If we, in Brisbane, or people in the rest of the colony, wanted to dictate to the miners as to what they should do and what they should not, do you think they would object to it? I am sure they would object to it as strongly as the sugar planters object to their business being interfered with, and to being dictated to in the management of their affairs. Take, for instance, the Wolsleys shearing machine, which has lately been imported into the shearing sheds out West, and which must to a certain extent curtail the number of shearers wanted. Suppose the shearers petitioned this House, and the House said to the squatters, "You are taking the bread out of these men's mouths; you shall not use those machines." Do you think the squatters would like that? And it is exactly the same with the sugar planters. They say that in carrying on the industry it is necessary to have this class of labour, that the employment of this class of labour does not to any material extent interfere with any white man in the country, that through its agency a large number of white people are benefited directly and indirectly, and that if it is taken away the industry will be destroyed. I do not think it ever before happened that men not directly interested in an industry, and who did not understand that industry, were to be made the judges of how it should be carried on. If you wanted an opinion about pleuro-pneumonia you would not ask a townsman to go out and see a sick bullock, unless he was a veterinary surgeon. The other day we took the trouble to send to Sydney

for certain French *savants* to see what could be done to remedy the dreadful scourge of pleuro; and if it is necessary to get the opinions of experts on such a question as pleuro, surely the opinions of the men who have been carrying on the sugar industry under all sorts of difficulties ought to have some weight when the sugar question is under consideration. If the House is prepared to give any substantial alternative, I am sure the planters will be only too glad to accept it; but, up to the present time, not a single alternative has been offered. This barren expression of sympathy has been heard from one speaker after another, and the planters are simply told, when they see the keystone of their industry going to be taken away, that if they cannot carry on without it they can go to the wall.

Mr. SMITH said: Mr. Speaker,—The question has been so ably debated on both sides that it is scarcely possible to say anything new on the subject. However, I will endeavour not to weary the House by repeating any arguments that have already been used, or by making use of any quotations already made. I wish first to correct a statement made by the hon. member for Burrum in regard to the district I represent. That hon. member, in speaking of the sugar industry, instanced Bowen and Gladstone as two places that were dying because the sugar industry was not commenced there; but I think it is a very fortunate thing that the industry was not commenced there, and I totally disagree with the inference he would lead the House to draw from the statement. I perhaps would not have referred to this so pointedly, were it not that one of the evening journals of the city repeated the assertion that Bowen had no good land in its vicinity. It is true that the land in the vicinity of Bowen is limited in area; but there is a pretty fair proportion of land of good quality. Unfortunately, however, that in the vicinity of the town is in the hands of absentee proprietors, who are simply waiting for the increase in the value of the unearned increment, and consequently that land is not utilised. I dissent from the assertion that there is no good land in the vicinity of Bowen; and I know some hon. members can bear me out in saying that there is a large proportion of good land in the district of Bowen, and that selections of great extent were taken up for the purpose of sugar-growing on the Proserpine River. One company started there—the Crystal Brook Sugar Company. They took up a large area of land, fenced it in, planted a proportion of it with cane, and ordered a 2000-ton mill. Then the Act limiting the importation of kanakas was passed, and that caused the company to hesitate before proceeding further; and the consequence was that the mill which had been ordered from Scotland was sold. That mill is now at Eton, near Mackay. It is called the North Eton sugar mill and is worked by a company formed for carrying on the industry under the central mill system. There were several other selections taken up for sugar-growing in the district, and large sums of money would have been spent there in carrying on the industry but for the passing of the Act in 1885, limiting the importation of kanakas. Whether the passing of that Act was a good thing for the colony or not is a question on which opinions differ; but I believe it was a good thing for those who intended to carry on the industry in the Bowen district. Exception has been taken to the constitution of the Commission appointed to inquire into the industry; but considering that two reports were brought up—the majority report and the minority report—and that those reports agree to a very great extent—in fact, they are essentially the same—I do not see that possible

exception can be taken to the constitution of the Commission. Indeed, hon. members who have spoken in favour of the motion have taken the minority report, and argued from the standpoint taken up by the chairman who was the author of that report. Therefore, I think it may be considered that the members of the Commission were fair and reasonable in their deductions. The planter, I think, is to be congratulated on the way the question has been received by the House. Hon. members have expressed great sympathy with them, and I have no doubt that their intentions are to give the planters every facility for carrying on the industry outside of black labour.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to call your attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. SMITH said: Mr. Speaker,—Hon. members on both sides are unanimous in their expressions of sympathy, and their wish to assist the sugar planter in every way they can, with the exception of giving them coloured labour. I think that when this question of how we are to assist the sugar planter is being discussed we should take the planters into our confidence, and find out in what way they think they can be best benefited. If we do not, it will be just like deciding upon some intricate piece of machinery without consulting an expert. The sugar planter is the man who is best able to judge what is for his benefit, and for the benefit of the industry in which he is engaged. Hon. members are quite at one as to the importance of the industry, and recognise that it is one of the few we have which has enabled our colony to take a very high position in the Australian group. I am sure they will be inclined to give it every consideration. When the colony was young the importance of assisting the industry was recognised—or rather of initiating the industry—for we find that in 1868 every inducement was held out to the sugar planter to come and pursue his avocation in the colony, and a great amount of capital—as much as £5,000,000—was invested, giving a great impetus in other directions as well as to sugar-growing. Foundries were established. What has the result of the present state of the sugar industry been to the foundries? At present foundries, which formerly employed 300 or 400 men, have been reduced to thirty or forty; and that is a very important point to consider. There can be no question as to the importance of fostering the industry, the only question being as to the way in which that assistance shall be given. Next to the mining industry, it gives employment to the greatest number of white men of any occupation.

Mr. HODGKINSON: What about the pastoral and shipping industries?

Mr. SMITH: I do not think that the shipping industry employs anything like as many white men as the sugar industry. Then, is it not a fact that the sugar industry gives employment to those engaged in shipping? If this industry is lost to the colony the results will be disastrous, and the effect on the sale of land will be dreadful. Sugar planters have expended large sums of money upon their plantations, and now they cannot sell their estates for one-fifth of the money spent upon them. If sugar-growing perishes the colony will lose a great security when it wishes to borrow money. There is no doubt that when capitalists lend money they look at the prosperity of the colony as the security for the money lent, and if this security is taken away I fear that our borrowing powers will be proportionately decreased. The sugar industry was established without any cost whatever to the country, and the Government have

never been called upon to spend a farthing in carrying it on. There is no Government department to look after its interests, as is the case with mining and other interests; it has always been self-supporting. Whatever the causes of the depression may have been, our duty is plain—that is, to do our utmost to keep it going, and keep this very important factor in the colony's welfare afloat. Now the causes of the depression are said, in the first place, to be the low price of sugar, caused by the large amount of sugar that is being produced from beetroot on the Continent of Europe. That is being produced owing to the bounty which the Continental governments give to foster the industry. As much as £9,000,000, I believe, has been annually spent by the countries of France, Germany, and Austria in fostering the beetroot industry. That has been spent principally with the object of giving employment to the labourers of those countries, but also with the hope of wiping out the cane sugar industry in the British colonies throughout the world, and I think we should be on the defensive, and endeavour to keep this industry in our colony and make it a success. The drought, of course, has had a great effect in causing the industry to languish, and then there is the want of confidence of financial institutions, caused by the existence of the Act prohibiting kanakas from being imported after the year 1890. There is no doubt that the passing of that Act has deterred a great many capitalists from investing money in the industry. In my own district, I know of one company that was prepared to spend £200,000 on their estate; but owing to the passing of the Act the money was not spent. To the people who were going to invest that money the Act was a mercy. It was a providential thing that the Act was passed, because whether it was passed or not they could not have made the estate a success under the circumstances that arose afterwards. Still that money would have been spent in clearing and cultivating the land, and the colony would have benefited. I know the effect of passing that Act was to prevent people from spending a large amount of money in the industry. The remedies proposed are, first, reciprocity treaties with the other colonies. I think something could be done in that direction, although from the long list of articles supplied by the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, which the hon. member for Toowoomba read the other night, it would appear that there would be great trouble before we could come to any friendly arrangement with the other colonies. If we could come to such an arrangement it would be a great benefit to the sugar planters. Another remedy proposed is by giving a bounty on the sugar exported. I think that is a very reasonable suggestion for this House to adopt. Whether it would be advantageous for all time I do not know. I do not like the idea at all; but it is worthy of consideration whether we ought not to give a bounty on sugar exported for a limited time, to allow the planters to recover their position. Irrigation is another remedy that has been proposed, and I think it is a very important question. It is a question which I trust the Government will take up in earnest, and endeavour by every means in their power to bring to a successful issue. It has often been said that we copy a great deal from Victoria. Well, I think if we look to that colony and see what she is doing in the direction of irrigation, we may learn a lesson that is well worth being learned. Victoria has water and irrigation trusts, and they seem to be a great success. If we can only establish some such system here, it will relieve the Government of a very great amount of responsibility and lead to a great deal of good. I said at the outset that I would not trouble the

House with extracts, but I cannot refrain from reading an extract from a speech delivered by Mr. Deakin, the Chief Secretary of Victoria, on this question of water and irrigation trusts. In a speech delivered at Bacchus Marsh, he said:—

"When the first coalition Government took office in 1883 there existed fourteen water trusts whose expenditure amounted to £53,000. Now we have thirty-one trusts, representing an expenditure of £700,000. Seven more have been initiated, who are asking for £56,000, and in a short time we will have thirty-eight trusts, with £850,000 invested, to supply the country districts with water. In 1883 there was no irrigation trusts; but now fourteen are formed, covering 900,000 acres, on which £700,000 has and is being expended. There are twenty-two trusts in various stages of growth, covering 2,900,000 acres of country, and requiring loans up to £1,500,000. We shall shortly be able to show a total of thirty-six irrigation trusts, covering 3,800,000 acres, and representing an investment of £2,200,000. The department is rendering all the assistance possible to farmers and others to irrigate their lands; and in helping the formation of trusts, in expending large sums of money for surveys, river gauging, boring, etc., generous pecuniary assistance is also being given. For instance, there is the original grant of £100,000 for head works. Since that we have, under the powers of the Act, remitted and are remitting interest on loans, which represents a free gift to the trusts of £150,000 more. We are also spending some £50,000 for boring and outside engineering works. We have also initiated national works which will cost £150,000. I anticipate that the remissions of interest will amount to another £35,000, so that in connection with irrigation and water supply we have a total sum of £650,000. In connection with the Coliban, which has been the life-blood of a great district, we have remitted interest amounting to over £500,000, so that for the country scheme of water supply we have a sum of £1,250,000 of the national money. The total expenditure on irrigation works already commenced will be at least £1,000,000, and there will be invested in water supply generally six millions of money."

I think the Government would do well to consider this subject of irrigation and water trusts, and endeavour to bring them into operation in this colony. The next remedy suggested is the extension of the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1885. This is the only suggestion worth speaking of made by the planters themselves, and why should we not consult the planter as to what is the best way to assist him? Is it because we know better than he does what is best for him? He does not ask for pecuniary assistance; he does not ask to put his hand in the public purse; he simply asks us to allow him cheap reliable labour for a further term of five years. It is no use in saying that that is re-opening the black labour question. It is nothing of the kind. The black labour question, in my estimation, is quite a different thing; it means allowing blacks, Chinamen, coolies, and other coloured races to flood the colony, and I presume that no hon. member will say that there is any chance whatever of the kanaka flooding the country. There is no possible chance of that, because it is admitted on all sides that the supply of kanakas is limited. They cannot possibly do this colony any harm, but they can do it a great deal of good. If I thought they would do it the slightest injury, I would be the last to advocate their admission into the colony. But we have positive proof to the contrary, and it is vain to shut our eyes to things which are as palpable as the noonday sun. The kanaka has been amongst us for some time now. Is he beneficial to the country, or is he not? He is simply a harmless working human machine; and I hold, notwithstanding all the sentiment that has been expressed with regard to black labour, that the employment of kanakas on sugar plantations has a humanising effect upon them, and is a benefit to the colony; and if for every three kanakas employed in the colony one white man is employed, I contend that it would be cruel to the white men in this colony not to allow that labour to

be introduced. It is no use to try to throw dust in the eyes of the working men on this question, because the working men most interested—namely, those employed on sugar plantations—are not hostile to the kanaka. On the contrary, if they were polled to-morrow they would, to a man, poll in favour of allowing kanakas to be employed on sugar plantations. Much will, no doubt, be said of the evil that exists in those parts of the colony where these blacks are allowed; but I think that, looking at the matter from the kanaka's point of view, the employment of kanakas on sugar plantations has a very humanising effect upon them. Before they were introduced on the sugar plantations they were cannibals of the lowest type, but now there is no such thing as cannibalism among them, even in their own islands. Of course the missionaries have had a great deal to do with that, but I say that the influence of the religious teaching that is given to kanakas on plantations, and the kindly way in which they are treated, have a humanising effect upon them. The sugar planter is not wedded to the kanaka; he does not care if the kanaka goes to-morrow. All he asks is that, until he can get cheap reliable labour, the provisions of the *Polynesian Labourers Act* should be extended, so that he may have time to replace the kanaka either by white labour of a reliable character, or by machinery. Doubtless in the future, machinery will solve this difficult question of black labour. Every day there is some new invention in machinery, and that will have the effect of reducing the number of hands required on a plantation, and do away with the necessity for the black man. Some hon. members, who have spoken on this question, regard it entirely from a Southern point of view. Now, there is a totally different state of affairs in the North from that which prevails in the South. Here, in the South, it is possible that sugar may be grown without black labour; I do not deny that. I believe it is done because the plantations here are near the centres of large population, and planters can obtain extra labour when they require it. But, on the Northern plantations, the sugar planter has to keep his labour all the year round; if he does not he cannot obtain an extra supply of labour when it is required. We know that in the sugar season it is absolutely necessary that the planter should have double or treble the number of hands he requires in the ordinary course of his industry. Therefore, I cannot admit the premises in the comparison which is sought to be made between the North and the South with respect to growing sugar with white labour. The conditions are not the same; there is a difference of climate, and, in the South, an extra supply of labour is available when required. Another thing in favour of kanaka labour is that it is completely under the control of the Government, and they can order the kanakas away to-morrow if they wish. They can regulate the trade in this labour just as they please. They may pass any regulations they like to keep the kanakas from interfering with white labour. I would not advocate the introduction of kanakas except under restrictions, and I should restrict them to sugar plantations, as, if they are so restricted, they cannot do any harm to any individual. On the contrary, they will assist the white men, and be the means of getting them employment. It has been contended that because this Act does not expire until the end of 1890, therefore the sugar planters can obtain a supply for the next three years; but that is impossible. The sugar planters cannot obtain more than one year's supply. The kanaka supply is not sufficient, and if a planter did get three years' supply at once, what would he do with them? What would he do with three

times the number of kanakas he requires? I think that is an absurd proposition to make, and I do not think the planter should be placed in such a position, that he should be required to keep a lot of kanakas when he does not require them. But he cannot get them. So the point is not worthy of consideration. I hope the question will be very carefully considered, because it is one of very great importance to the colony. I do not think the black bogey should have been raised again. It is holding a red rag to a bull, and should not have been brought up. We do not consider that an extension of this sort will reopen the question of black labour in this colony. If there is no supply of kanaka labour, there will be very little demand for white labourers on the sugar plantations. The colony is certainly in a very bad state, and it can ill afford to lose this industry at the present time. The revenue from land is decreasing, and in two years more we shall find out the extent of that decrease. The taxes, on the contrary, are increasing, and we have a very large deficit to contend against, and, therefore, we should study well what we are going to do in regard to this question. Unfortunately, the leaders on both sides of the House are against this demand of the planters, and, as a Queenslander, I very much regret it, because the only feasible way in which the sugar planter can be benefited is by allowing kanaka labour for some time longer. I know there is a majority in the House against giving the sugar planter a chance of competing with the outside world by allowing this labour. We have been told by the hon. member for Toowoomba that Javanese work for 6d. per day and find themselves in their own country, and how are our sugar planters to compete upon those conditions? The sugar planter has everything against him, and nothing in his favour, and he is deserving of great sympathy. Hon. members have recognised the great issues at stake, when they have spoken kindly of the sugar planter in his present state of distress. We have tried to help the sugar planter, but we have done it in a direction which he did not wish. We have tried the central mill system, and we have found out that it is a mistake; we have tried to do a thing we do not understand; we have gone about it in our own way, and we have failed. As sure as we take it into our own hands to help the sugar planter without consulting him, and taking him into our confidence, so surely will we make another mistake. The central mills have been a failure so far; but I hope they will ultimately prove a success; but there has been £50,000 devoted to the purpose of erecting sugar mills, which the planter never asked for. We have been trying an experiment for the benefit of the sugar planter; the motive has been a good one; but a great deal of that money is lost. We must in future ask the advice of the sugar planter if we intend to benefit him, and the small concession he asks is not much. Hon. members must get rid of this matter of sentiment, in regard to kanaka labour, because it is only sentiment. There is no fear of overflowing the country with kanakas. The leader of the Opposition himself knows that the supply of kanakas is limited; and that is the only supply the planter asks. As for Chinese, or Javanese, or coolies, they are out of the question altogether. I do not think there is a member of this House who is not firmly and steadfastly opposed to the introduction of Chinese or any other kind of labour except kanakas, and therefore it would be wise to put aside any sentiment that may arise, because it is fully proved in the report of the Royal Commission that the kanaka is well treated, and does his work



well, and is perfectly happy. Any hon. gentleman can go on to a sugar plantation and find the kanaka in the evening when his work is done full of mirth and contentment and happiness. It is a pleasure to listen to kanakas in their camps at night, they seem so happy. It would be quite a disaster to these islanders if they were not allowed to work on the sugar plantations, as I do not think they are so well situated now for obtaining their living on their own islands as before they came to the colony. The kanaka is a very important person to the sugar planter, and without him the sugar planter says he cannot exist as a sugar planter. With the kanaka, he says he can exist. Is any one a better judge of the case than the sugar planter himself? He knows it better than anyone else, either inside this House or out of it, and it is only fair that any concession which he demands of us should receive our most careful consideration.

Mr. COWLEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to say a few words on the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition. Before doing so I would like to answer the complaint made that we have been taking up a great deal too much time in debating this question. I fail to see that we have done so, because I consider this question is one of great importance to every section of the community, and, therefore, we should have been failing in our duty if we did not thoroughly ventilate and discuss it. There is no doubt that it will affect every interest most seriously, and I feel assured that hon. members who represent other industries of any importance would be the very first to cry out and agitate to the utmost if those industries were in any way endangered or jeopardised. Therefore, I think I shall be pardoned if I exercise the privilege which I believe is accorded to me in speaking to the amendment. One great objection I have to the amendment is that I consider it very unfair, in a question like this, to restrict the hands of the Ministry. The proposition moved by myself was an open one. It was simply an expression of opinion that the Government should take some action to encourage the sugar industry. It is unfair to restrict or bind them to any course of action.

Mr. DRAKE: The Ministry have bound themselves.

Mr. COWLEY: It is a peculiar thing that men should bind themselves; they are generally bound, not by themselves, but by somebody else. The motion proposed by myself simply asks this House to express an opinion that something should be done to benefit the sugar industry, and I feel assured that it would have been much better to have left it entirely in the hands of the Ministry, who are responsible to the country for their action, to decide what that something should be. I am convinced that the House—at any rate, this side of the House—are of opinion that whatever the Ministry do will be done with a full regard to the best interests of the country generally, and not to any section of the community. On those grounds I think it unfair and unjust to trammel the Ministry in any shape or form, and for that reason I strongly oppose the amendment of the leader of the Opposition. Another reason why I object to it is that the term used, "coloured labour" is too vague an expression. Coloured labour includes Indian coolies, Chinese, Malays, Javanese, aboriginals, and all other description of coloured races. Therefore I strongly object to the term as being too vague. If the hon. member had added to his amendment, not involving a re-opening of the coloured labour question otherwise than by an extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act for five years, I would have supported him gladly, for I wish it to be dis-

tinctly understood what we mean by coloured labour. The hon. gentleman in moving his amendment, did so, I have no doubt, with the idea of making it vague.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: It is vague, but comprehensive.

Mr. COWLEY: What we object to is the term "coloured labour," because it includes races which I, along with every other member on this side, am utterly opposed to, and would do my best to prevent their introduction into this country.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: In that case there can be no objection to the amendment.

Mr. COWLEY: Another reason why I oppose the amendment is, that there has been no valid or substantial reason given against the employment of kanakas. A great deal has been said, but nothing really substantial has been given to the House to induce hon. members to vote for the amendment. It includes kanakas, of course; and I maintain that it has been proved from this side, and also by the experience of twenty years, that those men, instead of doing any injury to anyone in the country, do a vast amount of good; and there is no doubt that if they continue to remain among us the good will increase, and that ultimately, as an hon. member said this evening, we may be able to do without them. Had there been any argument given against the employment of those men, we are open to reason. But as no argument has been adduced to show that those men are an undesirable class, or interfere with the whites of the country, how can it be expected that we should give up the ground on which we have taken our stand, and consent to the utter and entire abolition of the sugar industry which is dependent upon them? The hon. gentleman, when speaking in reply to myself after I had moved the motion, said I had not convinced him, and he did not suppose I expected to be able to do so. I do not know why the hon. gentleman should entertain that opinion. Why should I not convince him? Is he so blinded by prejudice as not to be open to conviction or amenable to reason?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I hope not.

Mr. COWLEY: I thoroughly believe he is not. I believe he is capable of taking a common-sense view of this question, and to decide it on its merits. Therefore, I say I had every right to expect to be able to convince him, and the arguments I used would have been sufficient to convince him if he would only give the matter his careful consideration. I believe that he will yet grant this extension, and in saying so I judge him by his past actions. In 1877, when the hon. gentleman was Attorney-General in, I think, the Thorn Administration, Mr. Miles, who was then Colonial Secretary, introduced a Bill regulating the employment of Pacific Islanders. One of the chief features of that Bill was to limit their employment to within thirty miles of the coast. Well, the hon. gentleman did not oppose that; he strongly supported it, and was prepared to go further. In order to meet those who were in opposition, he was prepared to extend the distance to fifty or sixty miles from the coast. Therefore, if he was of that opinion then, I think I was fairly entitled to believe that the arguments which I was prepared to bring forward would induce him to take the same view now, and vote for the extension of the Polynesian Act if required. But there was another reason, and a stronger one still, which induced me to believe that the hon. member was open to reason, and that was this: In the following year there was a change of Ministry, and a Bill was introduced by the then Colonial Secretary,



Mr. Palmer, dealing with the subject. The hon. gentleman, in speaking on that Bill, expressed very decided opinions indeed, and for the benefit of the House I will read them. They are to be found in volume xxxii., page 330, of *Hansard*. The hon. gentleman said:—

"He was not one of those who went to extremes in the matter of Polynesian labour. He did not think it desirable to abolish the law on the subject altogether, or to exclude Polynesians altogether; nor, on the other hand, did he think it desirable to allow their unlimited introduction and their unlimited employment in the colony. As to their unlimited employment, he need say no more. With respect to prohibiting their introduction altogether, he was not prepared to go to that extreme—though he believed many hon. members, and certainly many people in the colony, were prepared to do so—because at the present time it was not sufficiently proved that their services were not more valuable for the interests of the colony than those of any other people, in certain districts."

Those were the opinions of the hon. gentleman in 1880, and I think, taking all things into consideration, I was fully entitled to believe that, if the matter was laid before him clearly and explicitly, he would again entertain those opinions. I look at it from this point of view: At that time there is no doubt certain social evils existed; there was a different state of things existing in connection with the introduction of islanders to what there is now. The hon. gentleman has, I believe, purified the trade, as it is called, of the introduction of kanakas, and those evils have been abolished. In spite of the laughter of the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan, who thinks they have not, I say those evils have been abolished, and therefore the hon. the leader of the Opposition would be fully justified in supporting an extension of the Polynesian Act, if the Ministry in their wisdom thought it necessary to introduce such a measure. If he could do it before, I say there are additional reasons why he should do so now. Another reason why he should support it, is the state of things he alludes to—"because at the present time it is not sufficiently proved that their services were not more valuable for the interests of the colony than those of any other people, in certain districts" is intensified now. If their services were valuable then, they are more valuable now; therefore that is a strong reason why I should believe that I could convince the hon. gentleman of the necessity of retaining this labour. Another reason why I thought I should convince him was this: The hon. gentleman was desirous to put an end to kanaka labour, and he devised a scheme of central factories. He now admits that that scheme has not had a fair trial, and I say let it have a fair trial before we abolish the kanaka system. A still further reason, as I stated previously, was that he prepared and passed a law by which Continental labour should be introduced, and, as that has not proved a success, I say allow kanakas to remain until we can induce those people to come here. There is no doubt that the planters are desirous, and will be only too happy to employ any class of labour which they can get from the Continent of Europe if they will do the work. There is no question of that. They have offered every facility for carrying that scheme into effect. The hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan, said to-night, why did not the planters cut up their land and do everything to induce small farmers to settle upon it? If the hon. member had read the evidence taken before the Royal Commission he would find that the planters have done their utmost to induce small settlers to go on their lands. They have offered the most favourable terms. They are prepared to give the land on long leases, with the right of purchase.

Mr. JORDAN: At what price?

Mr. COWLEY: At any price, from 2s. 6d. an acre upwards. They are prepared to let them have first-class agricultural land under the plough at 10s. an acre—land which cost about £5 an acre to clear, and then £5 an acre to stump. They are prepared to let them have that land at 10s. an acre annual rental; or they can take it at a fair price with deferred payments. They are prepared to go further. I know a firm owning a plantation and machinery who are prepared not only to do this, but to give the farmers every facility to get their cane to the mill, or they will take it in the field at a fair price.

Mr. BUCKLAND: First-class land?

Mr. COWLEY: First-class land and first-class machinery. They are prepared to work on the co-operative principle: give a fair price for the cane, and at the end of every year a balance will be struck, and the profits, after paying working expenses and interest on the capital invested, shall be divided *pro rata* amongst the growers of the cane and the owners of the machinery.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That has not been made known to the small farmers.

Mr. COWLEY: It has; at any rate, if it has not, I will make it known through *Hansard*. If any small farmers are prepared to go in for it and come and see me, I will put them in communication with the gentlemen who are prepared to treat with them.

Mr. JORDAN: You have not told us the price of the land; only the rental.

Mr. COWLEY: The price of the land varies from £3 to £5 or £6 an acre.

Mr. JORDAN: That is too much.

Mr. COWLEY: Too much for land upon which about £10 an acre has been spent in clearing and improving? This land is not in a wild state; it is actually under crop at the present time.

Mr. JORDAN: What price will they give for the cane?

Mr. COWLEY: From 8s. to 10s. a ton.

Mr. JORDAN: Eight shillings is very small.

Mr. COWLEY: It is a good price. The hon. gentleman must consider that he is not familiar with the conditions of the North; 8s. per ton when you can grow a crop in twelve months is better than 10s. a ton when you have to wait two years for a crop. If he were familiar with the climate of the North he would understand that 8s. a ton was really a good price. I say that the planters have done, and are still willing to do all they can to induce the small farmers to come amongst them and settle on the land and make their homes there, and develop the resources of the country to its fullest extent. The leader of the Opposition also, in speaking to the amendment, recapitulated my arguments, especially those about the importance of the industry, and said that they proved nothing, and he would make me a present of them—that is, that they proved nothing towards solving the question. Admitting all that, I say it proves the desirability and necessity of doing something to solve the question. We have proved that this vast industry gives employment to thousands, and circulates over half a million of money every year in the colony, and that it is capable of being considerably expanded; and having proved the importance of the industry, it devolves on the country to take some steps to prevent its total extinction. Whatever those means are, they should be brought forward by the Government and submitted to the House for full and fair discussion, without being trammelled in any way. If the

extinction of other industries was threatened, the country would rise in arms at once. If the mining industry was threatened, we should have the miners of every description rising; there would be strikes throughout the length and breadth of the land; there would be demonstrations, banners waving, bands playing, and I know not what. The planters have not agitated as they ought to have done. If they were only alive to their own interests they would not rest as they have done, but would take a lesson from the books of the working classes and make such a demonstration that the country and the Government would be compelled to do something. If the pastoral industry were threatened, what a hue and cry there would be—and quite right, too—and I would join with them to get what was fair and just. If this colony is to go ahead, we must do our utmost to develop all our industries to the fullest extent, and not hamper them with restrictions. What have we not done for the pastoral industry? Have we not built railways that do not pay, and will not pay for years to come? And is not the country taxed to a great extent to maintain those railways? There are hundreds of miles of railway in the colony that do no good to anyone but the pastoral tenants. They do no good to anyone else directly; but indirectly the whole colony benefits. Have we not assisted the pastoral tenant by giving compensation for improvements and extended leases? This was done to support an industry that was, if not failing, in a very precarious position. And it was only fair and right that it should be done, because the industry is such a large one that we cannot afford to lose it.

Mr. JORDAN: They gave up half of their runs.

Mr. COWLEY: They gave up half of their runs, but they have got them still on occupation licenses and they got a better lease for the other half with compensation for improvements. And surely they are greatly the gainers. That is proved by the fact that to a man they voted for the change. I do not condemn the country for benefiting this industry, because it would be suicidal to treat the mining industry, the timber industry, or the pastoral industry the same as the agricultural industry has been treated. Then the miners have been assisted by giving them facilities for going on Crown lands, supplying them with diamond drills, voting money for deep sinking, schools of mines, and lecturers. I say that is only fair and right; and I only ask that the same consideration should be extended to the planters in their difficulties. We are not asking the Government to contribute one penny towards supporting the industry; we are simply asking the country to give us fair play and allow us to employ a class of labour, not inimical to the best interests of the country, but which gives employment indirectly to thousands of white men. I do not admit that these men, being amongst us, injure us in any way; but supposing there was something that did not exactly suit us, and that they were robbing a few men of their work, are we not to consider the greater benefit that is conferred? What is all legislation but a matter of compromise? What are our actions all through life but a matter of compromise to a large extent, so long as no great principle is violated. Legislators, merchants, mechanics, and all other classes have to give and take. Therefore, supposing there were existing evils, so long as the greater good is derived, it is a fair matter for compromise. What have we done towards supporting our manufacturing interests? We have imposed a tariff for their protection to a considerable extent. There is no one but must admit that theoretically freetrade is far better

than protection. But we tax the bulk of the consumers and place them to a certain extent at a disadvantage for the protection of certain industries. That is a matter of compromise. There is no doubt in my mind, and in the minds of most other hon. members, that if we could have a freetrade policy and carry on our industries as well, we should be in a much better position; but as we cannot do that, we put up with a certain amount of evil that good may be derived. Therefore, they are making a compromise, and I claim that we should treat the sugar industry in the same way, even supposing there was a certain amount of injury done by the employment and retention of this class of labour amongst us. The hon. gentleman has also told us that it is idle to say that black labour does not compete with white, and he said that he had received a letter from the Burdekin district, stating that some hundreds of acres of maize had been grown by black labour on the Burdekin. That is the only argument he brings to prove that black labour competes with white labour. I do not know who his informant may have been, but I fully understand the nature of the case alluded to, and I shall explain it. The plantation on which this corn was grown belongs to the firm of Messrs. Drysdale Brothers, and the corn was grown on old land which had formerly been occupied with sugar. It was put under maize so that the land should not become exhausted—in fact, it was merely a rotation of crops. The whole of that land was ploughed by white men, and the cultivation was all done by that class of labour. I saw this corn growing when I was on the Burdekin a few months ago, and I drew the attention of the manager of the plantation to it, and asked him why he was growing corn instead of cane. He said, "Well, the fact is, the cane was ploughed out, and I thought it better to change the crop than go on planting cane the year after." I concurred with his opinion, but at the same time I pointed out that I thought it would not pay; but he said that the benefit he would derive from the land having a rest from cane would more than compensate for any labour spent upon it. Since that time, and since the hon. member drew attention to the matter, I have received information from the owners of the plantation to the effect that this corn was planted and cultivated by white labour only, and that the corn was sent to Townsville. I was told that they purchased all the corn grown by the settlers on the Burdekin, so that no one was injured, and all their surplus corn was sent to Townsville. Hon. members may probably say that that was competing with corn grown by white men in the South of the colony; but it was not, because, as the hon. member for Toowoomba said, they are importing corn in the North from America, and selling it in Townsville. Further than that, a vessel arrived there either this or last month from Noumea with corn grown by black labour. If Messrs. Drysdale Brothers, had not grown this corn they would have had to purchase corn grown by black labour elsewhere. I think that disposes of the hon. gentleman's argument that the coloured labour enters into competition with white labour, as that was the only instance he brought forward in support of his statement. But there is another thing to look at, and that is this. Had it not been for the sugar industry, Messrs. Drysdale Brothers, and all the other agriculturists on the Burdekin, would not have been there at all, because prior to the growth of sugar on that river, there was not a single agriculturist there. Any hon. member who knows anything about the district will bear me out in that. It was entirely confined to grazing stock, and, therefore, had it not been for the growth of

sugar, Messrs. Drysdale Brothers, who have invested some £80,000 on the Burdekin River, would never have been there at all. Then again, the hon. member said, in speaking to his amendment, that the result of black labour has been to lower the dignity and reputation of labour—that working in the field is considered degrading and dishonouring, and only fit for a man with a black skin. That I utterly deny. Any one who is conversant with the North, and with Northern plantations, knows that the blacks and the whites work side by side, and that the whites consider it no dishonour at all to work with the blacks. The only thing they object to is to a certain class of labour, and that labour they have a right to object to if they like. Are we to compel men to degrade themselves, if they feel certain labour degrading? Are we to compel men to enter into a class of labour which is objectionable to them? Certainly not. We allow them to enjoy their freedom in this respect. The white men simply object to labour which they cannot perform without injury to themselves in some shape or form, such as working in the cane fields in the hot sun trashing the cane. It is that which they object to, but they do not object to other classes of labour. They do the draining, they lay the trams, they form the roads, and do the ploughing, and do not consider any of that degrading at all. We must certainly allow men to exercise their own judgment in this respect. We do not expect the mechanics in the cities to become scavengers, nor do we expect the lawyer with his wig and gown, nor the portly merchant with his white waistcoat, to soil his hands with manual labour. The fact of working men doing this work does not degrade them in their own eyes. They simply confine themselves to their own sphere of labour, which they find most congenial. It is only fair to the working men in the North to allow them to choose their own employment. As for its being degrading, I never heard a single man in the North refuse to do anything but trashing cane and going to work in the cane fields. The employment of the islanders is not degrading to the whites in any shape or form, and they do not consider it so. The hon. gentleman has another objection, and this he calls the greatest objection. To be correct, I shall quote his own words. He says:—

“But the greatest objection is that, according to the spirit of our Constitution, every man in this colony is equal, and is entitled to a share in the government of the country, and we cannot afford to have amongst us men of a servile race who cannot be admitted to a share in the government of the colony. That is a fundamental objection. If we intend in Australia to govern on the principle that we shall be a free community, and an English-speaking race, we cannot afford to admit men of an alien race amongst us whom we cannot allow to enjoy the privilege of having a share in the governing of the country.”

I should like to ask the hon. gentleman who has propounded this theory what injury our Constitution has received from the employment of these men during the last twenty years? I fail to see that they have injured the Constitution in any shape or form. They have been amongst us for twenty years. We all know how they conduct themselves, and if they had injured our Constitution, or were likely to do so, the hon. gentleman would have adduced arguments to show how and in what way it had been injured. That argument would also apply to all aliens. Supposing the planters send home for 3,000 or 10,000 Continental aliens, that argument will apply to them, unless they choose to become naturalised, and what grounds have we for believing that they will become naturalised and give up their native country. Some of them may. So that I say that no alien, whether black or white, can share

in the Government of this country. He must be naturalised, and unless he is the argument of the hon. gentleman applies with equal force to him as it does to the islander.

Mr. BARLOW: One is fit for naturalisation and the other is not.

Mr. COWLEY: Now, it has been said by the leader of the Opposition that the planters prevented the introduction of aliens, and it has also been asserted by others that it was not the planters who did so, but the Government. This may have been the reason that the hon. gentleman prevented their introduction: that he was afraid of those aliens. I do not know whether it was so; but the probability is that that may have been the reason. He found out after passing the Bill that he had made a mistake, and I can only conceive that that was the reason why they never came amongst us.

Mr. JORDAN: The low wages.

Mr. COWLEY: The hon. member has told us they were offered only 7s. 6d. a week, but I can tell him they were offered more. Supposing they were offered 7s. 6d. a week, rations, and passage money, that is about 5s. a week more than they were getting in the old country, and whether it is little or not, if the men were willing to accept it, and 7s. 6d. a week was more than they were getting in the old country, it is a fair offer. The hon. gentleman also says that he does not see how anything can be done in the matter of a reciprocity treaty without sacrificing some other industry as important as the planting. I would very much like to know what that industry is, and I wish the hon. gentleman could tell us, because I have taken considerable trouble in this matter, and there is no industry that I know of approaching in magnitude the sugar industry, and which would be injured by a reciprocity treaty. The only industries which surpass the sugar industry are the mining and grazing industries, and I maintain that a reciprocal treaty with the other colonies would immensely benefit both the mining and grazing industries. The miners would be able to get everything they require at a cheaper rate than now; and the same argument holds good as applied to the grazing industry. All consumers in the country would be benefited by a reciprocal treaty. Therefore, what is the industry, I would like to know from the hon. member, equal in importance to the planting industry that would suffer?

Mr. GRIMES: What about the farmers?

Mr. COWLEY: “What about the farmers,” says the hon. member? What is the value of the farm produce? Does the hon. gentleman know? I believe he calls himself a farmer, and prides himself upon the fact, and therefore he will know what the value of the produce of the farming industry is. If it is anything like the magnitude of the sugar industry which has exported in one season £700,000 or £800,000 worth of sugar in times gone by, I should like him to tell me of it. I have never heard of it yet. There is no doubt that the two great benefits to be conferred on the sugar industry, at the present time, are those of reciprocity and an extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act. If the hon. gentleman's argument holds good, and a reciprocity treaty would injure other industries, then I say that that is the very reason why he should consent to the extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act. There is no doubt about that, because he himself, and everyone, I believe, in this House, recognises the very great importance of the sugar industry, and the desirability of keeping it amongst us. Therefore, if they are serious in this, if they are in earnest, if they believe what they say, and are desirous

of benefiting the sugar industry, there being only two ways of benefiting it—leaving out of consideration the bonus, which I do not believe the country would entertain—then, I say, the only thing is an extension of the Polyne-ian Labourers Act, because that will give permanent relief, and will not injure any other industry in the country. Then there is another thing. I believe that the only objection taken to these kanakas at present is that we do not want them amongst us, because they will injure our Constitution. Well, as they have not injured it in the past, and as the hon. member has stated that they are a decreasing quantity, I fail to see how they can injure our Constitution in the future. Therefore, I take it that the hon. gentleman might give up any sentimental objection which he entertains, and see his way to vote as he did in 1880. Now, having disposed of the arguments, I think, fairly and fully, which the hon. member has brought forward, and having proved that the islanders are not prejudicial in any way to the best interests of the country, and that they do not compete with white men in any shape or form, but, on the contrary, give employment to a large number who would otherwise be unemployed; having proved conclusively that the sugar industry is entirely dependent either on a reciprocity treaty or an extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act, and that thousands would be ruined without it, I think that we may fairly conclude that the hon. member will again entertain those opinions which he entertained some years ago, and which he so ably and stoutly maintained. Now, the hon. member seemed to feel very much indeed the fact, and it appeared to irritate him very considerably, that some planters in the Mackay district had drunk his health the wrong way, as the hon. member for Mackay put it. I am sure, speaking for the planters in the Northern portion of the colony, that we not only deprecated any such thing as that, and always did deprecate it, but that we felt very much annoyed when we heard that such things had been done; and I can easily understand that the hon. member felt considerably annoyed, and that, to the present day, it still rankles in his mind. But, at the same time, I would ask him not to visit the sins of a few deluded Mackay planters, who, in their convivial moments, drunk his health the wrong way, and request him not to visit their sins upon the heads of thousands who are dependent upon the sugar industry for their daily bread, and who are quite innocent of the action of the Mackay planters. If the hon. gentleman feels so keenly the Mackay toast, what will he feel if there are 10,000 or 15,000 men thrown out of employment, and they do as the Mackay planters did? That will rankle with him far more than ever the Mackay toast has done, and I feel sure that he would be the last man to do anything which would be the means of bringing upon him the imprecations of thousands of unemployed men with their wives and families. Therefore I sincerely trust that he will not press his amendment, or if he does that he will allow it to be amended by adding to it the words I previously quoted, namely “otherwise than the extension of the Pacific Island Labourers Act for a further term of five years.” Before I sit down, I should just like to say a few words regarding the statements made by the hon. member for Oxley, Mr. Grimes. He spoke strongly in favour of the amendment, and tried to prove that sugar could be grown with white labour and that islanders were unnecessary. In speaking on this question he severely censured me for the way in which I cross-examined him when he gave evidence before the Sugar Industry Commission. I felt when I was performing my duty as a commissioner, that I had a very onerous duty to perform, not only to this House, but also to the country at

large, and my object was to elicit the fullest information upon every point which I thought would benefit the sugar industry; and the statements made by the hon. member before the commission were so different from any which had been made to the commission previously, that I wished to ascertain the why and the wherefore of this great difference, and see whether he could give any information that would benefit the planters in the Northern districts of the colony. That is the reason why I was so persistent in trying to elicit information from the hon. member for Oxley, who was then giving evidence. I think the hon. member for Burrum has so completely annihilated all the hon. member said that it is scarcely necessary for me to say much more about it. But I wish to draw the attention of the House to the manner in which the hon. member quoted evidence, and I think I am fully justified in doing so, because the manner in which he quoted it was, to say the least, very unfair to the House and to the witnesses who gave the evidence. The hon. member, in referring to the evidence of Mr. J. O'Halleran, quoted it as follows:—

“And Europeans can perform it (that is labour on sugar plantations)? Yes, they can.

“And the heat and the climate is no obstacle to their doing it? No, not a bit. I have not heard them complain much about the heat.

“Then what is the work that you would put the kanaka to? I would put him to hoeing, planting, and cutting cane.

“Is the European capable of doing that? Yes.”

Mr. CROMBIE: That is only an opinion.

Mr. GRIMES: It is the opinion of a gentleman who is manager of the Innisfail estate, where kanaka labour is employed in sugar cultivation, and he is of opinion that there is no difficulty whatever in the way of Europeans doing the same work as is done by kanakas. Now, I would ask hon. members to direct their attention to the evidence as it was really given by Mr. O'Halleran. In answer to a question by the chairman that gentleman gave this evidence—

“Is the European capable of doing that? Yes; but he won't do it. I have seen it and experienced it.”

I submit that the man who would suppress evidence like that, who would only give half the answer to a question, is a man who required to be very severely cross-examined indeed when he was giving his own evidence, and that I was thoroughly justified in probing the hon. member to the quick.

Mr. GRIMES: I was only arguing that Europeans were capable of doing the work.

Mr. COWLEY: The argument of the hon. member was that it was the opinion of the manager of Innisfail that there was no difficulty whatever in Europeans doing the same work as was done by kanakas. Hon. members can now see the necessity of cross-examining the hon. member. Mr. O'Halleran was asked—“Is the European capable of doing that?” and he replied “Yes; but he won't do it; I have seen it and experienced it.” Yet, in the face of that, the hon. member says there is no difficulty whatever in getting them to do it. That is the evidence on which he grounded his assertion that there is no difficulty whatever in getting white men to do the work.

Mr. GRIMES: That is a misquotation. I spoke of the ability of Europeans to do the work, and the witness proved that. Their willingness to do it is another thing altogether.

Mr. COWLEY: I must simply repeat once more to the House the deductions which the hon. member for Oxley drew from the answer which the witness gave, because I do not intend that there should be any misconception upon this

point. The hon. gentleman said: "That is the opinion of a gentleman who is manager of the Innisfail Estate, where kanaka labour is employed in sugar cultivation, and he is of opinion that there is no difficulty whatever in the way of Europeans doing the same work as is done by kanakas." The hon. member then said that there is no difficulty whatever in the way of getting men to do the same thing as kanakas do. What the witness really said was, "Yes; the Europeans are capable of doing the work, but they won't do it; I cannot get them to do it." After that I think it is unnecessary that I should further refer to the arguments of the hon. member for Oxley. Every right-thinking member of the House will, I am sure, agree with me that they are very worthless. Now, Sir, it is unnecessary for me to speak further on this amendment. I would simply ask the leader of the Opposition, who has proposed it, if he is willing to include the words which I have already mentioned, and make the amendment read, "not involving a re-opening of the coloured labour question, otherwise than the extension of the Polynesian Act." If he will do that, I am sure hon. members on this side will sincerely join in supporting the amendment; but it would be even better if he would withdraw it altogether, and not trammel the Government, but leave it to their discretion to bring in anything which they, in their wisdom, think best calculated to benefit the sugar industry. I think that would be only fair and just.

Mr. PAUL said: Mr. Speaker,—After the remarks of the leader of the Opposition and the Chief Secretary and the Minister for Lands in regard to this question, I feel somewhat diffident in speaking; but I assure you that the importance of the subject impels me to carry out what I consider to be a public duty. I must, first of all, ask the indulgence of the House to give me a patient hearing in the few remarks I am about to make. I feel that the subject has been so well thrashed out that there is but little left for me to say, but I will endeavour to avoid repetition, and bring forward my own experience in regard to the development of the sugar industry during my five years' experience in the management of the business of a firm which is largely interested in that industry. I believe that the principal object of the hon. member for Herbert in bringing forward this motion has not been so much to obtain a vote of this House as to ventilate the subject, and, if I may use a term made use of by the leader of the Opposition, to "crystallise" public opinion and educate the working man up to what I consider his duties. I assure hon. members that there is no man who has more sympathy with the labouring classes—I will not call them working men, because we are all workers—or anyone who has had greater experience of the labouring classes than I have had. During my twenty-seven years' residence in this colony I have been with them the greater part of my time, and the position which I occupy as member for Leichhardt is simply owing to the sympathy I have always shown towards them. I do not wish to glorify myself in regard to what I have done; but I have always maintained this: that the true friend of the working man is the man who will boldly point out what he considers to be detrimental to their interests. I have always done this, and I look upon this agitation against kanaka labour as I look at the agitation that arose in the old country against the introduction of machinery. Machinery has elevated the working man to a much higher position than he ever held before, and I am certain that the employment of kanakas—men who are moral and kindly and gentle—will never demoralise white workmen; but will, in a great

measure, assist in employing skilled labour. I wish to point out a few facts in support of what I am saying. When I was managing for Messrs. Sloane and Co., my notice was directed to the fact that the Burdekin Delta at one time was simply a cattle ranch, employing three or four stockmen and an overseer; but before I left that firm's employ, there were over 400 workmen—white men—employed in that district, and during the greater part of my time I was engaged in securing labour for that portion of the Northern part of the country—all descriptions of labour varying in wages from 10s. per day with rations to £1 1s. per day for engine-fitters and highly skilled mechanics. From the year 1881 to the year 1887 the sugar exports of the colony—I am not speaking of the total production—rose from 7,560 tons to 34,756 tons, an increase at the rate of 451 per cent., and my argument is this, that if the same conditions exist during the next seven years, and the amount increases at the same ratio, the amount of exports will reach 156,614 tons. £15 per ton for that would be a very low valuation, because if you look at the Registrar-General's report you will find that he states the declared value of sugar in Brisbane was £18 2s. per ton. Therefore, I have taken £15 per ton, in order not to exaggerate, and 156,614 tons of sugar at that price represents a money value of £2,349,210. Now, I have also gone into calculations to show what an increasing industry this is. The returns for the year 1887 show that the production of sugar in that year was 57,960 tons, and the amount exported was 34,756 tons, leaving 23,204 tons for home consumption. Now, the population in the same year, according to those returns, was 366,940, and the amount of sugar I have stated as being left for home consumption represents an annual consumption of 140 lb. of sugar for every individual in the colony. Unfortunately, I only obtained these figures this afternoon, and as I am not an actuary, I cannot give a correct estimate of what the population will be in seven years hence. But I take the population of the colony from the year 1878 to the year 1887, and during that period it increased from 210,510 to 366,940, and there is a centesimal ratio of increase given for each year. The last year there was an increase of 24,000. I have taken this simply as a basis of calculation, which, I believe, is considerably under what it will be, and I make out that the population in seven years' time will amount to 537,222; and if you put down 140 lb. to each individual, you at once see the great importance of the sugar industry. It is an industry which everyone who has the interests of Queensland at heart should foster. My attention was drawn in the papers a few days ago to a deputation from the ironworkers of the city which waited upon the Chief Secretary. It was there stated that while at one time in one establishment 400 men were engaged, at that time there were not more than thirty or forty. The great impetus given to the iron trade was due entirely to the sugar industry, and in support of that statement I will quote from the evidence of Mr. Knox, manager of the Colonial Sugar Company. Mr. Knox is asked—

"What is the cost of the annual overhaul and repairs on the three plantations? Machinery, tramways, rolling stock, steam ploughs, &c., from £9,000 to £10,000."

With regard to the depression in the sugar industry, I am perfectly prepared to admit that the principal cause has been the low price of sugar. But have not other interests suffered in exactly the same way. Look at the Western squattages, and at the enormous prices paid for some of them. There had been a succession

of good seasons, and high prices were ruling, and money was very cheap; and the consequence was that ridiculous prices were given for stations out West. I know of one instance where £110,000 was given simply for a grazing right and a lease of six months. The same thing occurred in the sugar industry. The Macknade Plantation, on the Herbert River, cost the original owners something like £150,000, and it was bought back by the mortgagees for £35,000. These are things that occur in a country like Australia, where everything fluctuates so extraordinarily. There is not the slightest doubt that if this industry is to be maintained, it can only be maintained by the use of reliable labour. Supposing white men could do the work—which I maintain they cannot, after my experience in the North—what would be the effect if a goldfield were discovered? They would all clear out. The sugar planter is at a greater disadvantage than the squatter in that respect. If the squatter's hands go away to a goldfield, he can let the wool grow on the sheep's backs for three or four months without any great detriment; but on a sugar plantation, if the cane is not cut when it is fit it will be destroyed. That is the reason why sugar planters want reliable labour. The leader of the Opposition, when he was Premier, introduced the Act, extending Polynesian labour to a certain period. I believe his principal reason for doing so was to give some chance of proving that the central mill system would be a success, and that European labour would be employed in it. Since that time low prices and droughts have been the order of the day, and the hon. gentleman will, I think, admit that the central mill system has not proved a success. We ask him to extend this period so as to prove, under good seasons and better prices, whether the central mill system will be a success or not. I think it is a fair thing to ask. There is another point I should like to draw attention to. If the industry ceases altogether we shall have to send out of the country large sums of money to import sugar.

Mr. DRAKE: You will get protective duties on sugar long before things get as far as that.

Mr. PAUL: In the industry with which I am more particularly interested, after a long series of years, the export of wool has never reached more than £1,500,000, and here is a comparatively young industry, which in about ten years has reached close upon £1,000,000, and, as I previously pointed out, if it progresses in the same ratio, by the end of seven years the value of the export will be nearly £3,000,000. That involves an immense amount of skilled labour, not only skilled labour employed on the plantations and in the mills, but in many other directions. It gives employment, for instance, to a great many sailors; the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company alone carried over 22,000 tons of sugar in one year. It is of great benefit to the coal industry, because they must have coal to drive the engines. In fact, the sugar industry gives employment to every industry in the colony, even to mining, because when the planters were prosperous they no doubt invested their surplus capital in mines. During the five years I was connected with these plantations I was constantly sending up large numbers of horses and vast quantities of material of all kinds. I will not detain the House any longer. I am well aware that the majority of hon. members are pledged against black labour, and I should be very sorry to try to persuade any hon. member to violate a pledge. But after the full discussion that has taken place—a discussion that must have convinced any unprejudiced mind that the sugar industry is a benefit to the working men throughout the colony—I can only

hope that during the recess they will have the pluck to go before their constituents and get an expression of opinion as to what they consider the result of the debate. If it is honestly put before the people that we are advocating this in the interests of the working man, they will be only too glad to support it. I know that I fearlessly supported it. I am speaking now of six or seven years ago when there were three candidates in the field, and one who was supposed to be in my favour rattled and went against me. I refer to Mr. Dutton. Mr. Dutton and Mr. John Scott were both against black labour, but I fearlessly advocated it, and I had the almost unanimous support of the working men. But, unfortunately, I lost the election by twenty votes, because the new Electoral Act had come into force. Under the old Act the police collected the names of the electors, but under the new one personal application had to be made, and, although the roll represented 2,000 people, only 232 voted, and I lost the election, as I have said, by twenty votes, through my colleague rattling and getting his friends to plump for him, while I was splitting votes with him. Eleven years ago I was returned unopposed, and everybody knows the manner in which I was returned at the last election, and I can assure you that it was simply because during the whole of my career in the Leichhardt district I have worked actively in the interests of the working man, and fearlessly announced what I would advocate. I may mention that at the last election I even expressed myself in favour of coolie labour, but told the electors that I would not vote for it without having an expression of opinion from them. I wish to conclude by moving an amendment.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: At the instigation of the Government.

Mr. PAUL: Not a single member of the Government has spoken to me on the matter. I hope the hon. gentleman will accept my disclaimer. I am acting quite independently in supporting the sugar planters. I have nothing whatever to do with the Government, but I forgot to move the amendment, which is to add after the words "coloured labour question," the words "otherwise than an extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act for five years."

Mr. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—I presume the tongues of hon. gentlemen on this side are unloosed by the amendment, and I shall take advantage of it for about two minutes to call the attention of the working men of this colony to the conduct of the "whip" of the Government, who is supposed to represent the Government in the active management of the amendment which has been proposed. Here is a Government who are pledged against black labour, and yet their official representative in this House evidently has the active management of this amendment, which is intended to manipulate this question and to prevent the voices of the representatives of the people from being given upon it.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—The statement made by the hon. member is utterly untrue. I have never seen the amendment which the hon. member for Leichhardt proposes to make. He informed me that he intended to move an amendment, and I, knowing he is an excitable individual, and seeing that he was about to sit down without moving it, courteously reminded him of it. I may state that five minutes previously the Premier asked me, as we were sitting at the table, what the amendment was, and I told him I did not know.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAUL said: Mr. Speaker,—May I ask the House to permit me to make a personal explanation. After the remark of the hon. the leader of the Opposition, and the charge made by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, I wish to state that I have not been in communication with any member of the Government, or the "whip" of the Government, in reference to the amendment. I have only been in communication with the hon. member for Herbert, Mr. Cowley, and the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Dalrymple. They are the gentlemen who asked me to move the amendment. I had delayed speaking until the leaders of the House, and those immediately interested in the sugar industry had spoken, and it was only because I had been recently in the North that the hon. member for Herbert did me the honour to ask me to move the amendment.

Mr. BARLOW: Which has the support of the Government, but they have not the pluck to say so.

The PREMIER: They have more pluck than you have.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: A great deal more.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—The secret of this amendment has been very badly kept. I heard of it before 6 o'clock. However, that is not the matter I rise now to discuss. I think I should make some reference to this proposal, because the hon. member for Herbert himself suggested that an amendment of this kind would be desirable. In fact, he appealed to me to consent to the amendment I had moved being amended by the addition of some such words as those now proposed, and it is due to him that I should say a word or two on the subject. I proposed an amendment to give effect to the pledges given by both parties in this House at the last general election, that the black labour question should be considered settled. I for a long time doubted whether it was settled, and I still have my doubts; but I think it a desirable thing to affirm in this House that it is settled.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I doubt it, too.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I object to the question being continually kept open, and I therefore moved my amendment in general terms affirming that this House does not want to reopen the coloured labour question. The amendment suggested by the hon. member for Herbert, and moved by the hon. member for Leichhardt, invites the House affirm to that the Polynesian question is to be considered still open for revision. I think that is a rather embarrassing amendment for many hon. members—a great deal more so than mine—because every man who votes for it votes distinctly for extending the present Polynesian system for five years. I am not at all sorry the amendment has been moved, because it raises the question in a very concrete form, and we may just as well come to a division at once. I have no desire to discuss the matter further, nor would it be fair now that the hon. member for Herbert has spoken in reply.

Mr. COWLEY: I only spoke to your amendment.

Mr. GANNON said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to say that I intend to support the amendment of the leader of the Opposition. I believe it should be supported, and I feel sure that not only I, but a good many other hon. members, would not be here if they had not been entirely against black labour. I make it a rule not to go behind anything I have said, and as I have expressed myself strongly against the introduction of black labour, and against helping to bring

the matter on again, I should not have taken part in the debate at all after the declaration made on the part of the Government, but for the endeavour to make it appear that everyone on the Government side is in favour of black labour. I distinctly say that I for one am opposed to black labour, and I intend to support the amendment of the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said: Mr. Speaker,—I am glad the leader of the Opposition took the opportunity of contradicting the implication made by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow.

Mr. BARLOW: It was only an inference.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: A great many people prefer to proceed by inference and innuendo rather than by making an honest and straightforward charge.

Mr. BARLOW: That was a straightforward charge.

Mr. HAMILTON: But not an honest one.

Mr. BARLOW: I saw it with my own eyes.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: There is nothing more certain than that the Government of the country, as a Government, and the great majority of the House, as a House, are against coloured labour in all forms, and nothing could be more ungenerous and nothing could be more natural than that the hon. member for Ipswich should endeavour to drag into the subject a party charge and try to make political capital of it. We have heard a good deal about dummies lately. Whenever the land question is considered we have the squatter who is a kind of oppressive baron, the man settled on the soil who turns up everywhere as a sort of indispensable political property, and then there is the dummy who is another kind of political property. I am sorry to say that there is an enormous number of dummies in this House; and they all sit on the other side. For some reason or another they are determined not to take any part in this debate; but on this side we are not afraid to speak on the question. We believe we are advocating a cause which closely affects the working man, and we believe we are working for his good; and we believe further that the question has been made a party question. It is considered easy to gain votes and come into office by trading on this question; but sooner or later it will be found that the effect of stopping Polynesian labour will be exceedingly detrimental to the well-being of the colony, because we cannot do away with that labour at present without inflicting serious injury on the sugar industry. From various causes, mainly, perhaps, from financial embarrassment, there is some slackness in trade and a great many people are out of work. We are trying to prevent more people being thrown out of work, and we are not ashamed to make our opinions public. We believe it would be a fatal mistake to shut out absolutely all hope that the planters may possibly obtain what they have obtained by the consent of the parties on both sides of the House for some years—namely, Polynesian labour. The leader of the Opposition said this evening that every member of the House who votes for the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt will thereby pronounce in favour of Polynesian labour; but I do not agree with him. At the present time, when the fate of the sugar industry is trembling in the balance, and we are asked to affirm that something should be done to assist it, we say by means of the resolution, not that the colony must grant an extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act, but that it shall not at the present moment say that it shall not be done, leaving that question open till the time when the question will be



practically decided as to what is the best way to assist the sugar industry. There is a difference between leaving the question open, and coming specifically to a decision on the subject. That is the difference. Believing that it is for the good of the colony, I hope that hon. members will see their way to vote for the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt. If they do not see their way clear it is at any rate our duty, who believe that the amendment will be useful to the colony, and that by passing it we shall encourage a great many people to persevere in an enterprise which is very arduous, and which possibly may be given up, and which we believe will benefit the colony generally, and particularly a large number of the working classes, to do so. It is my intention to refer to what fell from the lips of the late Minister for Lands, for whom I must say I, in common with all other hon. members of this House, have a great respect. Instead of meeting fairly what we have brought forward he has attempted to besmirch our reputations, and in doing so he was careless of the reputation of the colony. In the course of his statements the hon. gentleman reflected, I think unjustly, upon a great many people in the colony, and he dug up stories which most of us who wish well to the colony would have been very glad to allow to remain undisturbed. As I understood him, he seemed to say that the planters, if they did not actively participate—and he was just on the point of saying that he believed they did—were perfectly indifferent as to whether those persons employed by them were obtained by fair means or by foul. I say it was no such thing, to the best of my knowledge and belief. I have known a considerable number of those engaged in this industry, and it was not only the men of wealth who were permitted to employ Polynesians, but the small farmers growing cane were also permitted to employ them. I say that after publicity was given to certain very terrible outrages which were committed in the South Sea Islands, I believe the trade was conducted perfectly honestly and fairly, and so far as the planters were concerned, they were perfectly innocent of any participation in those outrages. Further, they had every guarantee which any intelligent man could wish for that those boys were honestly obtained. First of all the Government had taken certain precautions by appointing men representing themselves, to supervise the captains of the vessels, who again in their turn had to be approved of by the Government. After the vessels returned from a recruiting voyage a certificate was given to the captain by the Government representative, and those records were brought forward and examined by a Government officer—the Polynesian agent. The recruits were asked by him whether they came on board of their own free will, and whether they understood the nature of the engagement they were entering into. All that was asked by the representative of the Government, who certainly was not in favour of the planters, but held the balance between them and the Polynesians. He put such questions as he considered necessary in order to assure himself that the engagements had been made in good faith, and then the indentures were signed. Every precaution was taken, and after that if the planter did not take those boys whom he had in a manner engaged beforehand, he would be punished by law. The hon. gentleman, he was sure, did not know what he was doing when he tried to excite prejudice against those who are engaged in a business which has been approved of by the people of the colony, and which they follow as honestly as anyone else follows his business. The hon. member has said that I and other hon. members who have advocated

the extension of the Act are in some way in favour of slavery and brutal atrocities. I say for myself that I am as little disposed as anyone to see the colony swamped with black labour, as I have an honest desire that its civilisation should be based upon white civilisation; but I fail to see that the employment of a few Polynesians temporarily can in the least endanger that civilisation. When I, myself, cease to participate in that civilisation, I shall still have some interest in it through my children. I am an old colonist, and I have quite as much feeling and hope, with regard to the future of the colony and its well-being as anyone else can have. It is true that we are advocating the employment of Polynesians, but we are no more disposed to favour the introduction of any race which would endanger the institutions of the colony than the most rabid opponent of this amendment. Our motives are also as pure as those of hon. members who may think differently to what we do. I have told you that any charge that this is slavery is a charge in which there is not a particle of truth—in fact, if we look at the evidence there is the clearest proof that, whatever may have occurred, for some years the immigration has been conducted in such a manner as to give us documentary evidence that it has been carried on honestly. We get the evidence of the Government representative who is a perfectly free agent; and a still clearer proof that this is not slavery lies in the fact that one-third of the Polynesians return after having completed their term of service. We know that the number of islands in which recruiting is carried on is now small, and is continually decreasing, and we also know that little stories—what we may call gossip—spread in those islands as quickly as in this colony. The recruits know all about the treatment of the boys in Queensland, and they know what to expect when they come here. When it is stated that the boys are not fairly treated, that is what I call “Exeter Hall” business. I approve of “Exeter Hall” business so long as it is right, but I do not believe in harping upon a string when there is no justification for it, as there is not in this case. It is not right to say that the trade is conducted wrongly now because it was conducted wrongly in the remote past. If we go back far enough we shall find that most of our institutions commenced wrongly, although now they are held in the highest respect. Labour originated in slavery, as in the early days labour was forced, and yet labour is highly respectable now. Anyone knowing anything about history knows that the institution of marriage, which is a most honourable institution, was at first a form of slavery or of capture. It is not fair to say that, because in our institutions something was bad at one time, they cannot be useful now, even if the something bad has been removed from them. Now, I say with regard to this traffic, whatever may have been said of it in the past, it is unfair and unjust to make any charges against the way in which it is now being conducted, or with regard to the motives of those engaged in it, or with regard to the motives of those who, as I do, advocate it. I say it is unfair to create prejudice, it is not a fair way to meet the arguments; it is carrying out the old-fashioned maxim, that when you have no case, abuse your opponent. Now, a letter has been read to-day by the hon. member for South Brisbane. There is an old proverb that says, “Many men, many minds,” and, although that letter gives, in the hon. gentleman’s mind, a certain impression, it has been read in a certain way, and he makes certain comments on it. I should like to give my reflections with regard to it, and they certainly do not coincide with the hon. gentleman’s reflections. This letter refers, with deep regret, to the reports of the late Sugar Commission, because that



commission pleads for the continuance of the Polynesian labour traffic beyond the period that the Government have, by law, decided that it should terminate at, and it urges very strongly the necessity for the complete suppression of the traffic. It then goes on to say that the laws and safeguards with reference to the traffic are violated and broken constantly, and that no doubt that would continue to go on. Now, I may point out that that is a very serious charge against the Government agents of the labour vessels. I have reason to know, and I believe what I say will be corroborated by the leader of the Opposition, that the greatest care was taken in the selection of those Government agents, and that no man was appointed unless the hon. gentleman was perfectly satisfied with regard to the respectability of that man. He would not appoint anyone if he had the shadow of a doubt in his mind. I say, as against this statement, which comes to us at second or third hand, that the Rev. Mr. Paton has been told something by somebody, who was probably told by somebody else. We have the knowledge that the late Premier's motive, in this case, was above suspicion. He is a man who is well known as being determined to put down the abuses of the traffic, and when we know that these agents were appointed by him, we have every reason to hesitate before we accept, what I call, hearsay evidence. Those charges, which were made on such a foundation, are of very little importance indeed, and, if there is anything in them, I presume it is possible to examine the Government agents, whose characters are implicated; that is to say, assuming that this kind of evidence is worthy of consideration. Now, a statement is made, apparently on the authority of the reverend gentleman himself; it is not hearsay evidence. He says:—

"On Sabbath, the 30th June, two boats of a vessel, which the agent said was the 'Roderick Dhu,' from Brisbane, called here about 2 p.m., on returning from spending the forenoon trading farther round the island. When the men in the boat were talking to the natives, the agent (an old man) came and informed the Rev. Wm. Watt, the resident missionary at Kwamara, that 'The boats were not come in to recruit labour, but to let one of the crew see his sister, a Tanna woman.' He returned to the boats, and we saw both boats leaving without any additional labourers. We were then about to enter the church to observe the Lord's supper. The agent's voluntary statement that they were not come for recruits, threw the natives off their guard, and after the communion, as we left the church, all were in sorrow, as four lads had been got to go round a point beyond the rocks, where they could not be seen by their friends, and to swim off to the boats in which that agent was, and took them away."

Now, I presume that would be considered by non-thinking persons as a species of kidnapping. It is said here that the boys had been "got to go." The only way the boys could possibly have gone was to have followed the boats, and apparently the boats not coming for them they absolutely swam out to the boats. Under similar circumstances it would be the grossest inhumanity not to pick up people who had swam a long distance out to sea. Mr. Paton says the other boys were angry, but what does that show? It is quite clear to me that the boys who swam to the boat desired to go to Queensland; that they did so without being asked; that they did so because they had heard of Queensland, and because they believed they would be well treated, and better treated than they were by the missionary. It is evident that the boys would not have rushed away from the land where the missionary dispensed the blessings of civilisation unless they thought that after all there was a fly in the ointment, as Solomon said. It was quite clear in those boys' minds that they preferred Queensland and no missionary, to stopping on the island in the

presence of the missionary. They wanted to leave the island, and they took extreme means of getting away. Now, Mr. Paton says:—

"Were such boats from such vessels seen returning to Brisbane to try by hook and crook to get away your few remaining sons and daughters."

There is no evidence that any attempt was made to get anyone away. They apparently landed a boy and then they went away, so that the attempt to make people believe that there were any special efforts made to get those boys away does not seem to be justified by facts.

"Were such boats from such vessels seen returning to Brisbane to try by hook and crook to get away your few remaining sons and daughters, surely every man possessing paternal, fraternal, and human feelings would unite and drive the destroyers of your children from your shores, and the world would praise you for it."

That is pretty strong language, but there is not the slightest proof that anyone in the boat went there with the idea of getting boys, or inducing them to come away. The letter simply shows that the boys were extremely anxious to get away, and that they ran away voluntarily. Now, if we send home from this colony a gentleman to represent that Queensland is a land that is particularly well endowed by nature with all sorts of advantages, a land where people can make fortunes rapidly; if people come out here from the United Kingdom and they come out to better their condition, they leave many friends, perhaps relations, in sorrow at their departure. That is simply one of those drawbacks which are incidental to a change of country, and yet most of us have changed our country and some of us have bettered our condition. But I would point out that the mere fact that the people who were left behind regretted those who went away, does not show that the transaction was an improper one. If there was anything wrong in this labour traffic at all I certainly would oppose it, but if the traffic is conducted legitimately I cannot see why it should be objected to. The hon. member for South Brisbane quoted this letter apparently as one of those instances in which a great wrong is done by the introduction of South Sea Islanders, but I must say that the evidence, so far as I am able to judge, entirely fails to prove the case. In fact, it tells quite the other way, and shows that those people wanted an opening, that they thought Queensland a good country to come to, that they went out of their way and risked their lives to come to Queensland, and that they infinitely preferred to work on the sugar plantations in this colony to all the blessings the missionaries were prepared to offer them in their own island. I have been given to understand that one of the reasons why missionaries object to Polynesians going away is that they have a distinct interest in their stopping on the island, that they combine the salvation of souls, as it were, with a reasonable percentage on the turnover. It is evident that the missionaries, in the pursuit of their, we will say, cocoanut business, the whole proceeds of which people may think are devoted to the buying of bibles and flannel petticoats for female kanakas, find it exceedingly convenient to have a number of young men in their vicinity whose labour may be depended upon. But I am quite certain that Polynesians, when they are imported into this colony, get a great deal more in return for their labour than they are likely to get on their own islands. I am willing to credit missionaries with the best possible intentions, but there is very often a bias in human nature, which leads people to believe that that is right which is most profitable to them. There is one thing that the savage learns by coming to this colony. The first step in civilisation, I venture to say, is

made when the savage learns to labour steadily. When he learns that, he makes a far greater stride towards civilisation than he does by having his mind filled with a religion which at the stage to which he has got, it is perfectly impossible that he can understand. So far as their well-being is concerned, kanakas gain great advantages by coming to this colony in that they are compelled to work, that is to say, they acquire a certain habit of steady work; they learn what trade is, and find out that money has a certain value; they discover that steady industry brings its reward; and they find out how many shillings they ought to get for a pound. That is not quite the height of knowledge some missionaries are anxious that they should possess.

Mr. MACFARLANE: What about the white man's vices?

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I am extremely thankful to the hon. member for interrupting me. I am asked what about the white man's vices? That is a pretty large order. I suppose it is intended that I should reply by explaining what effect the white man's vices has on the Polynesian. I have no doubt that he is apt to catch vices, but that is not a peculiarity of the Polynesian. I find that even white men are subject to precisely the same peculiarity. It is a great deal easier to acquire vices than it is to acquire virtues, hence the necessity for the number of churches that we have. But the Polynesian, I presume, in becoming civilised, has got to run the risk that everyone else has to run in becoming civilised. Our forefathers had to run that risk, and wherever there was a strong tendency to learn the vices rather than the virtues of civilisation they have gone; their vices have killed them. But the more virtuous of the community have lived and propagated their race; hence this Assembly. The kanaka, I imagine, will take the same risk. The more vicious will probably die out; the more virtuous will live; and in time to come the social condition of the Polynesian islanders, and their condition in regard to virtue, will probably be found as beautiful as the prospects of their island, and we shall no longer have to sing—

"There every prospect pleases,  
And only man is vile."

But granted that he has got to encounter certain risks. The good will at last survive; the bad will not prosper. That is my reply as to what will become of the Polynesian with regard to vices. The difference between the race which succeeds and the race that fails is that the one has met with vices and safely gone through the ordeal, while the other has succumbed to those vices. Whether Polynesians come here or not they will have to encounter vices, and in encountering our vices they may possibly learn some virtues. I am perfectly certain they would, if they went to the town represented by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane. There is no part of the world that is not now open to commerce, no part of the world that has yet to be discovered by the white man, as there was 100 years ago, so that wherever we go the savage races have got to meet the vices of the white man, and not only of the white man, but of every race under the sun. If we do not bring the Polynesians here white men will go there, and we know perfectly well what the Polynesians in those islands have occasionally had to meet. It has been pointed out to us that the Bible was the gift which the white man gave to the Polynesian, and that he may possibly turn it to his advantage. But is it not quite true that men who have had the Bible have gone down to those islands and committed outrages which were a blot upon the name of Queens-

land? Those men have lived in a country where virtue as well as vice existed, but they were vicious, and some men who are vicious will inevitably gravitate to the South Sea Islands. The French are assuming the government in the eastern seas, and the Germans in the north. The seas are open to all, and the Americans and Britishers are there also; and if the Polynesians are unable to resist the vices of Europeans, then undoubtedly the days of the Polynesians are numbered. We cannot prevent vice coming into the world. Even the hon. members for Ipswich have not been able to stamp out wickedness in Ipswich. The hon. ex-Minister for Lands contemplates with a stoical indifference, which I greatly envy, the ruin of the sugar industry. As Rochefoucauld says, it is wonderful with what great fortitude we can sustain the misfortunes of even our best friends. Unfortunately for us Northerners we are still a portion of the great colony of Queensland with its 600,000 square miles, and happen to live 600 miles from the South. Although we believe that it is a question of our commercial existence, that it is a question of whether we can pay 20s. in the £1, and whether we are to see the efforts of twenty years of toil and expenditure of capital, and many struggles against difficulties, and whether all this is to be brought to a termination or not,—all this does not affect that hon. gentleman nor the majority in this House. If we were Russians or Turks our struggles could not be treated with more entire indifference. The hon. gentleman has a very simple solution for this difficulty. I remember hearing of another hon. gentleman, who has been removed by Providence from this House, and who said that the North had neither money nor brains, and the sugar industry could perish. That the sugar industry should perish, and all those of their fellow-colonists who had embarked in it, is a matter of perfect indifference to such persons, because they believe that the results do not happen to affect them. The hon. member for South Brisbane says, "Oh, let the sugar industry perish, I believe the people engaged in that industry are bankrupt, and if they are bankrupt and all the men are out of work, let them come here, and we will give them employment." Well, it is much easier to talk about giving employment than to find it for them. The finances of the colony, thanks to the late Government, are not quite in that state that we should desire to be burdened with supplying a large number of persons with necessities of life. It may be very easy to say, "Let those people come here and find employment;" but there is no real sympathy for the 25,000 people who are to be left out of employment. The hon. member for Townsville says there will be 50,000 men out of employment, and when he comes to speak, as it will be his duty to do in time, hon. members will find that that hon. gentleman does not make a statement he is unable to prove. If he said there would be 100,000 people out of employment, the confidence I have in him would lead me to accept that statement. The people of the North, after all, are our fellow-colonists, and they work very hard and have spent all their lives in the North, and to calmly say, "This industry is of no use; bring them to Brisbane and give them work; we will open soup kitchens for them—probably," is hardly just. It is for the House to say whether, amongst the remedies which are desirable to encourage the sugar industry, the extension of this Act is the right one or not; but at any rate this remedy should be left open as one of the remedies. This debate is not over yet, nor will it be for a long time, I imagine. We have a great deal at stake, and hon. members opposite have not. It matters very little to the

majority of people, perhaps, whether this industry is continued or not; but it matters a very great deal to the constituencies which we represent. You may pass as many resolutions as you like, and yet we who represent these Northern constituencies will continue to bring resolutions such as the present forward in this House, in season and out of season, because our existence depends upon it, and because we have our duty to do to our constituents, and that is paramount. We desire to survive, and we shall spare no exertions to attain our object. I speak because I do not want to be crushed out myself. This is an academic discussion, as it were. We are dealing with a something which will occur next session; but it is our business to prevent people saying that they will not do something, if we think that that something will be a benefit to us and will do no injury to the colony. I wish to emphasise the fact that we are just as much in earnest as people usually are whose lives are at stake. I remember not long ago reading a story of a judge who had sentenced a man to death, and who desired to attend his execution. The sentence was to be carried out on a certain day; but the judge found that he also had an engagement for that day. I think he was invited to a picnic. He called upon the man and said, "Well, Samuel," or whatever his name was, "you are sentenced to be hanged on Tuesday week. I have an engagement on that day. It would not make much difference to you, and I should take it very kindly if you would be executed the day before." So in this case. Our fate is too much at stake to allow us to study your engagements. This business which to many hon. members merely involves sitting up, talking, and wasting a certain amount of time, involves our existence, and the exigencies of our existence are of supreme importance to us. We are sorry to say it, but if it comes to a question as to whether you are inconvenienced, or whether we are going to lose anything in educating the public by means of this discussion, I am very much afraid that hon. members, or some of them at any rate, will be inconvenienced. The hon. member for South Brisbane also spoke with regard to the mortality which has occurred amongst the Polynesians since they came to Queensland. That mortality I deplore as much as anyone; but he has to prove, if he is going to make out any case whatever, that those islanders, who die at so much greater a rate than people of the same age of our own race in the colony, would not have died at the same rate if they had never left their islands. Before he can draw the conclusion that this great mortality is caused by change of climate or harshness of treatment—which, I presume, is the conclusion he wishes to draw—the hon. member must show what is the rate of mortality amongst the boys in their own islands. Even in a country like England the death rate is varied by local conditions. If the Polynesians were of the same race as we are, possibly the hon. member's experience might be a correct one. I will mention one fact which may lead the House to believe that the mortality among the South Sea Islanders is very much greater amongst people of equal ages than it is with an equal number of persons of similar ages in this colony. In the United Kingdom we find that the population is continually increasing, notwithstanding the fact that every year 1,000,000 persons leave its shores, and that population presses hard upon subsistence, compelling many people to live under conditions not favourable to longevity. On the other hand, the population of the South Sea Islands has not increased within historic time. They have their natural increase, but, apart from their tribal wars, it is reasonable to believe that, from the mode of life they adopt and the

exposure they are subjected to, the mortality amongst them is very much greater than it is amongst our own people. Take, again, the case of New Zealand. Where are the Maories? Forty years ago, or perhaps less, the Maories numbered a quarter of a million. They have now dwindled to something like 41,000. Take, again, the case of the aboriginal inhabitants of this country. When a white man comes here he does not enslave them, he does not even change their local habitation, generally—I admit they have to shift, yet they are still in the same country—still, apparently, the mere presence of white men has a tendency to reduce their numbers.

Mr. HODGKINSON: We have deprived them of their subsistence in their natural mode of life.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: It may be so; and I deduce from that, that if we are going to be moral we ought to go away. We come here and rob them of their country. Some people are not very scrupulous when it suits them, but when they can be scrupulous at the expense of other people it is wonderful how very scrupulous they become. I do not wish to deal further with these statistics as to the mortality of people in New Zealand, and still less so to the country in which we live, more particularly as it is difficult to get reliable tables. I am satisfied that the mortality among Polynesians in this colony, where excessive, has been owing, in the main, to causes over which the people here had no control. A great deal of the mortality referred to in the record arose from an epidemic of measles, which swept off numbers of Polynesians exactly as it did in Fiji, where, as a matter of fact, the island was nearly depopulated. Hon. members, in considering this matter, may not make allowance for that exceptional cause. It was as exceptional with the Polynesians as the great plague of London was with Englishmen. It is perfectly well known that whenever a new disease makes its appearance in a race, the mortality is really terrific, not only amongst human beings, but also in the case of animals. For instance, when pleuro appeared for the first time in the colonies it carried off about half our stock, and whenever a new disease breaks out the mortality is severe, in proportion to the extent it has been present in the race; that is, whether the race has been more or less habituated to the disease or not. The hon. member for South Brisbane also attached blame to the persons interested in the continuance of the Polynesian traffic, and in the sugar industry generally, for things of which I have already shown they were perfectly innocent. Certain outrages were committed in the South Seas; who is to blame for them? I know that the people who employed that labour in this colony were not in the least to blame. That the Government were to blame is possible; that is to say, the persons who were at fault were the Government agents. But the circumstances which led to the charges referred to by the hon. member for South Brisbane with so much earnestness were consequent upon vessels going to parts of the South Seas which previously they had been forbidden to trade with, together with the fact that notoriously unfit men were unfortunately appointed as Government agents. Therefore, if we are going to blame anybody, if blame is attachable to anybody, let us put it on the proper shoulders, and not upon a class of people who, from the very nature and circumstances of the case, were very plainly innocent. As blame has been thrown on them, I shall venture to read some passages from *Hansard* when the matter was dealt with, and when it was much fresher that it is at present.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: This is what is called "talking against time."

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I am quoting from volume liii. of *Hansard*, page 1965:—

"Mr. HAMILTON said the stigma attachable to the various acts of kidnapping and piracy which were revealed during the inquiry held some time since was generally considered attributable to the action of the last Government, and not of the present Government—that, in fact, the present Government had put a stop to it."

"In consequence of that, and desiring that certain persons should not remain under an improper stigma, he should bring forward a few facts which would show who was to blame, if anyone. The commission appointed to inquire into the matter—Messrs. Buckland, Kinnaird Rose, and Milman—found that every one of those ships, most of which were proved to have acted improperly, left for the islands during the reign of the present Government, and every one of the masters who were appointed to those ships was licensed by the present Government. They knew that care must be taken to appoint persons of good character, and if proper care was not taken, then the lamentable results would accrue which had accrued. If proper men had been appointed to those vessels none of that piracy and bloodshed would have occurred. The commission expressed its opinion that the recruits by the vessels—'Ceana,' which left Brisbane on 31st December, 1883, and arrived at Townsville on 17th February, 1884; the 'Lizzie,' which left Townsville on 22nd December, 1883, and returned on the 17th February, 1884; the 'Ceana,' which left Townsville on the 13th March, 1884, and returned to Townsville on the 28th April, 1884; the 'Lizzie,' which left Townsville on the 14th March, 1884, and returned on the 2nd June, 1884; the 'Hopeful,' which sailed from Townsville on the 3rd May, 1884, and arrived at Dungeness on the 17th July, 1884; the 'Sybil,' which left Mackay on 22nd April, 1884, and arrived at Mackay on the 8th October, 1884; the 'Forest King,' which left Brisbane on 17th May, 1884, and arrived at Brisbane, 31st October, 1884; and the 'Heath,' which left Mackay on 19th July, 1884, and arrived at Townsville on 25th November, 1884—were either deliberately kidnapped or deluded by false statements. In regard to one of these ships—the 'Hopeful,' which was not only licensed by the Premier, but the Government agent of which was appointed by the present Government—the commission stated that her cruise was—

"One long record of deceit, cruel treachery, deliberate kidnapping, and cold blooded murder."

Every officer of those ships was appointed by the present Government, except three—namely, C. F. Brown, John Thompson, and James Lane; and it was evident that they were not criminally responsible, because, subsequently, Brown was subsequently engaged in the 'Madeline' by the present Government; Thompson was also engaged subsequently by the present Government, and the other resigned nine months afterwards. He mentioned those facts because great capital had been made of the statement that the last Government were to blame for all that had occurred, when really the masters were all licensed by the present Government, and the Government agents were appointed by the present Government."

Then that statement was met by the leader of the Opposition, who at that time occupied the position of Premier, and in reply Mr. Hamilton said:—

"He had no doubt the Premier was a first-class special pleader, but, at the same time, he had not disproved one single statement he (Mr. Hamilton) made. It was all very well for the Premier to say that similar things had taken place under previous Governments, but they all knew that if the Premier had had a scintilla of evidence to prove the statements he had made, he would have done so. The Premier knew very well that every one of the masters of those vessels was licensed by the present Government, and he had not denied it. He could not deny it. He knew also very well that the Government agents, who had been found criminally guilty, were appointed by the present Government."

The Premier then interjected, "One of them," and Mr. Hamilton then said:—

"That one was a personal appointment by the Premier, and if he looked over the papers he would see that every one of those masters was licensed by the present Government, except three who were appointed by the previous Government, and who were found innocent. If due care had been exercised in those appointments, all those things they had heard of would not have

occurred. The Premier knew that no regulation would stop piracy, or murder, or anything of that kind, and those were the crimes those men were guilty of. The only thing to prevent those crimes was to take care what men were appointed, and it was evident the Government did not take due care when they appointed the persons who had been guilty of those crimes."

I have endeavoured to show that there is no reasonable ground for saying that the extension of the Act is at all likely to injure the islanders; and I maintain that in coming to the colony they will learn more that is useful to them than those other things which may perhaps prove detrimental. Five years ago the leader of the Opposition extended the Polynesian Act, because he considered it would not be a proper thing to do anything that might cause the collapse of an important industry. But whatever necessity there was then for the employment of Polynesian labour in the industry, that necessity exists to an increased extent at the present time; while any dangers which might have been apprehended from their introduction two years ago have been greatly diminished on account of the recruiting-field having been greatly lessened. The necessity for the employment of Polynesian labour is greater now than it ever was, because the difficulties the planters have to face have become greater in consequence of the very serious lowering of the price of sugar. During the last two or three years the planters have been endeavouring to make provision for the time when the Polynesian labour would cease. In some cases they have increased the number of white men on their plantations. There is one mill in the Mackay district now where 200 whites are employed. The Sugar Commission in their report have only shown the number of men engaged on the plantations. There are, Mr. Speaker, a great number of men actively employed in the sugar industry, but they have not all been returned, because their names do not appear on the rolls of the plantations. Many men are employed in carting and cutting firewood, and who do other work from time to time. They reside in the vicinity and their livelihood is equally dependent upon the sugar industry with other men whose names appear on the pay-sheet. The planters have also endeavoured to settle people upon their plantations by cutting up their estates. They have tried to substitute other labour for Polynesian labour; and, in addition, they have endeavoured to go in for irrigation. In the Mackay district a planter spoke to me about the extension of the Polynesian labour for another period, and I told him that I did not think the House would pass any resolution to that effect. He said he was prepared to get a number of families to come out from Lincolnshire, his native county, and settle them on his estate, which at present is simply used as a farm, as he gets his cane crushed at other mills. The firm who have advanced large sums of money to him were prepared to agree to his proposal, but they were waiting to see whether the provisions of the Act were to be extended or not.

Mr. JORDAN: Is it fair to ask what wages were offered?

Mr. DALRYMPLE: It is perfectly fair to ask, but the scheme never got sufficiently far, as they wanted to know whether the present system was to continue before they went on with their proposal and with the erection of irrigation works. However, if the people had been indentured they would not have come as wages men at all; but the plantation would have been cut up, the people would have been provided with implements, and their remuneration would have depended upon the amount of cane they brought into the mill. I support the motion of the hon. member for Herbert,

because I consider it is a very great pity at the present moment to make people more despondent than they are—people who are endeavouring to carry on an industry of the greatest consequence to the country, and which is entitled to some reasonable consideration. They should be given time, as business people give their clients, to allow them to make a change in their arrangements. I do not ask the House to come to any decision upon the question at present. I only wish the House to affirm that the sugar industry is one of great importance to the country, and that it is deserving of consideration. We have had enough of legislating for the future. The £10,000,000 loan, for instance, is the worst piece of legislation ever known. That was a case where one Parliament looked a great way ahead, and bound another Parliament to a certain policy. There is no more need for this House to come to a decision now than there is for a judge to make up his mind before a case is presented to him. There is no more danger of this House passing a resolution in favour of coloured labour next year than there is this year. Hon. members must be very much afraid of their own resolve, and of their own strength of will and common sense and the justice of their case, if they dare not delay their formal decision for a short time.

Mr. BARLOW: You are loading a gun and you are afraid to fire it and take the risk.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: Whether I am afraid to take a division or not is one thing, whether I choose to take a division or not is another thing. I am afraid of nothing in this House, and still less am I afraid of the hon. member for Ipswich, or of anything that he may interject. I am prepared to meet the hon. member in argument, and I am perfectly prepared to meet him in any way he likes outside the House, although not in any other than a friendly way. There is no necessity for this House to make up its mind at the present moment. This question may not be of importance to some hon. members, but it is of the greatest importance to my constituency and to me, and I believe to the colony at large, and I shall continue to do what I think I am bound to do. If this discussion has been prolonged, it is entirely owing to the tactics of the leader of the Opposition. I do not see why there should be a monopoly of these little stratagems. I do not see why the leader of the Opposition should have a monopoly of this kind of business.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: What are you speaking about?

The PREMIER: I thought you wanted to get home last night.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: This question has been stonewalled for an hour and a-half with the concurrence of the Government.

Mr. HODGKINSON: You are irritating your well-wishers.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I am sorry to find that hon. members on an important occasion like this offer as an inducement to me to cease my remarks that I am irritating my own well-wishers. I hope that, no matter what the occasion, personal motives will not carry weight, and that support of, or opposition to, a motion will not depend upon the characteristics of any speaker. I do not see any inducement for prolonging the debate any longer than it has been determined to prolong it. I should be exceedingly sorry to trespass unduly on the attention of the House, or unnecessarily harass the Government, but we have a subsection on this side who do not admit the Government into all their

secrets. We do what seemeth right to us in our own eyes. We have done what we thought right. If my friends desired me to talk for the next three hours, and I thought it good for the country or my constituents that I should talk, I would do so, no matter how anxious hon. members were to go home. I have observed that hon. members opposite have determined that they will not discuss the question, though there are a good many mute inglorious Miltons in the land who can talk for twenty-four hours, if they choose to do so. The Opposition members have been very silent to-night. They occupy the distinguished position of being dummies in more than one sense, and it has become my painful duty to speak for them as well as for myself. It is for that reason that I have inflicted such a lengthy speech upon hon. members. I have taken up the time of the House for reasons which, I believe, are satisfactory to some of my friends, and in pursuance of what I believe to be a public duty, and I am sure, hon. members will, as a rule, acquit me of verbosity. It is very seldom that I speak, for the reason that I am conscious that the Government business has to be done, and I am frequently silent when perhaps otherwise it might be my duty to speak. If I have trespassed—and I certainly admit that I have to some extent—on the time of the House, then I can only say that I considered it my duty, and, knowing that, I do not believe hon. members of the House will expect me to apologise.

Mr. LITTLE moved the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

Mr. COWLEY moved that the resumption of the debate stand an Order of the Day for the 26th September.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to move that the words "26th September" be omitted, with the view of inserting the words "this day week." I think this is really becoming a perfect scandal—that is not too strong a word to use. The debate, ever since 6 o'clock this evening, has been simply stonewalled by gentlemen who are supporting the motion. When it was brought forward it was dealt with as a serious motion, and on the two last occasions both the leader of the Government and myself have tried to bring it to a conclusion. Now the hon. gentleman wishes to put off the resumption of the debate for a whole month, when, I presume, the tactics of this evening will be repeated, and the motion be stonewalled by hon. gentlemen who are supporting it and by others who have expressed themselves opposed to black labour. Surely they are not afraid to take the opinion of the House upon it. I say, in the interests of private members and the House generally, it is not right that any matter should be kept hanging on in this way. I appeal to every hon. member of the House who desires to see this matter disposed of to let it come on next week. There is nothing on the paper for next Friday, and I undertake, on behalf of this side of the House, that nothing will intercept the motion. I think that both sides ought to be determined that the matter shall be disposed of in some way.

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

AYES. 23.

Messrs. Black, Morehead, Macrossan, Donaldson, Callan, Pattison, Stevenson, Murphy, Rees R. Jones, Paul, Cowley, Philp, Hamilton, Watson, Dalrymple, Gannon, Little, Smith, Luya, Adams, O'Connell, Corfield, and Murray.

NOES, 17.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Hodgkinson, Jordan, Foxton, Isambert, Barlow, Unmack, McMaster, Glassey, Grimes, Mellor, Macfarlane, Stephens, Salkeld, Buckland, Drake, and Sayers.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the resumption of the debate stand an Order of the Day for the 26th of September—put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. The first business on Monday will be the second reading of the Prisons Bill, and after that it is proposed to take the Estimates in Committee of Supply.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I want to say something about the Prisons Bill, and I cannot be here.

The PREMIER: Then we will take the Estimates first.

Mr. GANNON said: Mr. Speaker,—Before the question is put I wish to say a few words. I have been very outspoken in my remarks this afternoon, and I am not at all frightened by the taunts thrown by the leader of the Opposition at members on this side of the House who voted with the ayes on the question of the adjournment of the debate on the motion of the hon. member for Herbert. The hon. gentleman is a very big man, but it will take a bigger man than he is to frighten me from doing what I believe is right. I think it is very unfair for him to taunt me as he did. What I have said I stand by, and intend to stand by, and when the time comes to vote for the hon. gentleman's amendment, he will find me on his side; but this was simply a motion for the adjournment of the debate. I would like to hear all the members who wish to speak on this question, though my mind is quite made up as to how I shall vote. I do not care what may be said; it will not prevent me voting against any motion involving the introduction of coloured labour. It is well known that I am pledged against black labour, and I do not think it is right for the leader of the Opposition to throw taunts at myself and other members who voted to-night for the adjournment of the debate.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: You would vote for its adjournment till doomsday.

Mr. GANNON: The hon. gentleman has tried to score a little point over this, but he has not managed to do so. I believe he has rather lost his temper, and that is the reason he has taunted the members on this side who voted for the adjournment. But he knows that I am pledged against black labour, and no member will work against it more strongly than I will. The hon. gentleman made a great mistake in trying to taunt us for voting with our party for an adjournment, and nothing else.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I was very much surprised, I confess, to see the hon. member vote as he did, and after hearing his speech I do not think he knew what he was voting for. When the debate was adjourned, a motion was made that it should be resumed on a day when it could not come on, so that practically it should not come on at all, so that hon. members might be saved the disagreeable duty of voting upon the question. That was the motion made. I rose and pointed that out, and moved that the debate be resumed next Friday, stating that that day was clear, and there would be a whole day for the discussion of the question, and that it could then be disposed of. I also pointed out that the tactics of hon. members in support of the motion were evidently to

prevent it ever coming to a division, and the division just taken was to see whether the question should be decided upon, or whether it should be postponed indefinitely. The hon. member voted for putting it off indefinitely.

Mr. WATSON said: Mr. Speaker,—Had the hon. leader of the Opposition taken the pains to explain himself in a proper way, I should have voted on the other side of the House. There is no man in the House more against kanaka labour than I am, and the leader of the Opposition knows that perfectly well.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I hope hon. gentlemen will not lose their tempers. Hon. members opposite have become very disorderly lately, led by the leader of the Opposition, whom I had to accuse the other evening of being very disorderly, and now I have to accuse him again. Ever since I have been a member of this House, more than fifteen years, it has been the practice to allow a private member to adjourn a motion until any time he pleases. Hon. members opposite are disorderly because they have been defeated, and because they have not been able to carry what they wanted by a trick. Any private member who has a motion on the paper is entitled to put that motion off until whatever time he pleases. That is the rule, but if the House decides otherwise, every hon. member must obey the House. In this case the House has not determined otherwise. Some hon. members on the other side of the House are afraid to vote upon the question, and I may remind the House that the Government, through its leader, stated on the evening that the hon. member for Herbert introduced his motion, that they were not going to extend the Polynesian Act. I can also tell the leader of the Opposition that if the motion goes to a division, as I have no doubt it will before the end of the session, I shall vote not only against the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt, but I will vote against the amendment of the leader of the Opposition. I will vote against both, and will give strong and sufficient reasons for so doing when the time comes. The hon. gentleman knows that I have been as opposed to Polynesian labour as ever he was, and I challenged him twelve years ago, in company with Sir Thomas McIlwraith, to stop Polynesian labour, and what was his reply, "Oh, I have often been asked by my friends to put an end to Polynesian labour, but I can never see my way to do it." The hon. gentleman cannot deny that.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I do not deny it. I did not see my way to do it twelve years ago, but now I do see my way.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: There is no desire now on the part of the Government to extend the Act beyond 1890, no matter what tricks the hon. gentleman may play to gain a little fleeting popularity. The hon. member for Herbert expected to come to a division this evening, and I believed he would succeed until 8 o'clock when I heard the hon. member for Leichhardt propose his amendment. The leader of the Opposition said he knew that amendment was to be moved at 6 o'clock; but I did not know it until 8 o'clock; so that the leader of the Opposition has a means of knowing these things which the Government has not.

Mr. SAYERS: It was well known in the smoking-room.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I very seldom go into the smoking-room. I think any private member has a right to postpone a motion until any time he thinks fit, or even to withdraw it if he thinks fit. It is a privilege allowed by courtesy of the House.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: It depends what the motion is.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: Of course the House can do what it pleases; but the House does not please to do these things. The House is always courteous to private members, more courteous to them, perhaps, than to the Government, especially to private members who are not well acquainted with the forms of the House.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: You never saw a private member stonewall his own motion before.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I never saw it to-night either.

Mr. SAYERS: You know all about stonewalling.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: The hon. member for Charters Towers talks without authority. That hon. member has been allowed by the leader of the Opposition to assume, God knows why, a position in this House which even ex-Ministers sitting on the other side do not pretend to assume; men who know more and who have forgotten more than the hon. member for Charters Towers ever knew. I hope the hon. member for Herbert will stand by his motion, and will bring it to a division as soon as ever he possibly can. I shall give my vote in the way I have indicated, and shall give good reasons for doing so.

Mr. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—I have something to say upon the subject. This motion, introduced by the hon. member for Herbert, assisted by the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Dalrymple, seems like a monstrous blunderbuss, so loaded that they are afraid to fire it off. I wish to sum the question up distinctly, so that the people living in the Southern parts of the colony may understand it. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Watson, the hon. member for Toombul, Mr. Gannon, and the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Luya, I understood, from reports I read in the papers, are pledged up to the eyes against black labour.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: They are not pledged to you.

Mr. BARLOW: They are pledged to their constituents, and the case stands in this way: There was an opportunity for them effectually to vote against black labour, and by their votes they deliberately postponed the discussion which would have been taken, until a day when notices of motion take precedence, and when it will be impossible for the House to come to a decision. If they were so eager to redeem their pledges to vote against black labour it was their duty, so far as my lights go, to vote for a postponement until a day when the matter can be effectively discussed, and when they can give their votes against black labour which they so earnestly promised their constituents to give.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—This side of the House has been accused by the Minister for Mines and Works of using little tricks to-night. I wish to ask you, Sir, who commenced using little tricks when the House met at 7 o'clock to-night? I have been in the House twelve years, and I have never until to-night heard the bell rung so promptly. You, yourself, Sir, took the chair at 7 o'clock exactly, and at once began to count the House. I think the Ministry were at the bottom of this—every member of the Opposition knows all about it—but the little trick did not succeed; and they have been going on with little tricks ever since, their object being simply to postpone the consideration of this motion till such a day when it will be impossible to take a vote upon it.

The SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member does not imply that the Speaker was guilty of what he calls little tricks. When I took the chair at 7 o'clock there were very few members present, and immediately afterwards my attention was called to the state of the House. Following the usual course, I instructed the Sergeant to ring the bell.

Mr. UNMACK said: Mr. Speaker,—It was a most unfortunate remark of the Minister for Mines and Works when he said the Opposition had endeavoured to resort to a trick, but were defeated. I am not going to sit silent under such an accusation, because I say most distinctly that the members of the Opposition have, this day at all events, remained almost absolutely silent, and have had no trick of any sort to carry through. The only member on this side who spoke was the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan, and he made a *bona fide* speech. As we have been accused of tricks, I may just as well let the country know what tricks members on the other side have resorted to to-day to prevent the House from voting for or against black labour. These tricks which have been practised upon the House to-day have been done with the connivance and sanction of the Government.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member means to assert that any tricks have been attempted by the Government he is stating what is utterly untrue.

Mr. UNMACK: I said these tricks have been attempted with the connivance of the Government.

The PREMIER: On behalf of the Government I say that that statement is untrue; and that statement must be accepted by the House, according to the rule which has prevailed up to the time when we got this genius, the hon. member for Toowong, as a member of it.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is bound to accept the statement of the leader of the Government.

Mr. UNMACK: I am very pleased to accept the denial. I may have been in error in ascribing this trick to the Government, from the fact that it was the Government "whip" who tried to force this trick upon me, and I naturally came to the conclusion that they were cognisant of what was going on. When I was about to enter the House this afternoon I was met at the door by the Government "whip," who said to me distinctly, "Do not go in, because we want to count out, and this matter has been arranged by both sides of the House." I refused to do so, saying the question was fairly open to be discussed to-day, and that it would be unfair to have a count out upon a question of such vital importance to the country. On entering the House I found, on consultation with the leader of the Opposition and the party, that no such arrangement had been made. I saw then that a trick had been attempted to be practised upon me, and it was practised upon other hon. members of the House.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is not true.

Mr. UNMACK: I was further told by the same hon. gentleman, the hon. member for Cook, the Government "whip," that the object of the count out was not to have a division on the question, but to postpone it.

Mr. HAMILTON: That statement is utterly untrue. I simply stated that both sides of the House wished a count out, because they were sick of the discussion, and they knew perfectly well that no other business would be done.

The SPEAKER: I will point out to hon. members who appear to have overlooked the rule that no hon. member has a right to interrupt



another hon. member while he is speaking, even for correction, without his sanction. If an hon. member, in addressing the House, makes a statement which another hon. member wishes to correct, the proper time to make the correction is when the hon. member has finished his speech.

The PREMIER: That is a rule which I am afraid is more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

The SPEAKER: That is so; but as some hon. members do not appear to be acquainted with the rule I mention it.

Mr. UNMACK: I am not one of those who are given to making untrue statements, or to say what I am not perfectly satisfied upon, and I say again, and in all sincerity, that the hon. member for Cook, the Government "whip," told me that it was their intention that this resolution should not go to a division at any time during this session. It was to be postponed from week to week, or from month to month, and they were not going to take a division upon it. That I say distinctly and advisedly was the statement made to me. I at once said to hon. members on this side that if we lent ourselves to a count out on this matter we should very justly lay ourselves open to the charge, on the part of the public and of the Press, and more especially of the Press of the Northern part of the colony, of wishing to shirk a vote upon this important subject. All I can say is that there is not a member on this side of the House who is not ready to vote upon this subject, and who has not been ready to vote upon it weeks ago. We are ready to vote upon it without any further discussion. We wish it to be distinctly understood that we are not only willing but anxious to vote upon this question, and to fulfil the pledges we have made to vote against black labour. We are willing and anxious to do it. Well, Sir, the second trick that was played upon us this evening was this: We are in the habit of meeting after the adjournment for tea at about ten minutes past 7 o'clock, and members knowing this generally come in at about five or eight minutes past 7. But, this evening, no sooner had you, Sir, resumed the chair with your usual punctuality at 7 o'clock, than the Government "whip" again called attention to the state of the House. There was not a quorum present then, and it looks exceedingly strange that even a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes after the Government "whip" called attention to the state of the House there was not a single member of the Government on the Government benches. I say it does not look as if they intended to carry this business through. Of course I accept the Premier's denial that he did not know of this; but it looks very strange indeed that when their own "whip" called attention to the state of the House there was not a single member of the Government present, and it was ten minutes or a quarter of an hour before two of them turned up. I say it comes with very bad grace from the Minister for Mines and Works to accuse the party on this side with wanting to play tricks. We had no such intention. The question is too serious, of too great moment to the country, to attempt to play tricks in connection with it. I never before heard of such a thing as the proposer and the supporters of a motion stonewalling that motion, as has been done to-night. I do not know what the object of it could have been.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You are only a new chum.

Mr. UNMACK: Whether I am a new chum or not I have the right to express my opinion here. It may be taken for whatever it is worth, but I am not going to ask any hon. member what I am to say or not to say. I intend to

exercise my right of freedom of speech in this House in just the same manner as every other hon. member; and I say that although my experience in this House may be small, and although it may be a common occurrence here, I never before heard of members of any House stonewalling their own motion. It is a most extraordinary thing. We on this side have been sitting here as patiently as possible the whole evening, waiting for the conclusion of this business, simply because we did not want to be under the imputation that we would lend ourselves to a count out, and so that we should not be accused afterwards of being afraid of recording our votes against black labour. We are not afraid. We are willing to go to a vote now, if we are given the opportunity; but I am perfectly certain that no opportunity will be given this session to come to a vote upon this question.

Mr. SAYERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall not detain the House many moments. A short time ago, when the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Dalrymple, was speaking, he said he was going to do as he thought fit in this House; that he was going to delay the House as long as he pleased, if he considered it was for his interest or the interest of the people he represents. Well, Sir, I have been read a lecture to-night by the Minister for Mines and Works, and I shall now give him a bit of my mind. The hon. gentleman, in his usual tricky way, and with a bit of a sneer—

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: You are not worth it.

Mr. SAYERS: Before I sit down I think I will show the hon. member I am worth as much as he is. He said I was returned to this House by Sir Samuel Griffith.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: Chosen by him.

Mr. SAYERS: I can tell the hon. gentleman, in the presence of the leader of the Opposition, that I was never chosen by him.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: The hon. gentleman has misquoted me. As a personal explanation, I may tell him what I did say: I said that he was returned to this House, and that he was chosen by the leader of the Opposition as his "whip"—for, God knows what!

Mr. SAYERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I may have wrongly construed what the hon. gentleman said. I certainly understood him to say what I have stated. I can tell the hon. gentleman this, that I was returned to this House by twice as many votes as he was —

The PREMIER: I was returned without any votes at all.

Mr. SAYERS: And I was returned for the place which the Minister for Mines and Works was at one time returned for, but where he was afterwards kicked out; and as long as he tries to insult me in this House, he will always get an answer for it. The hon. gentleman thinks himself very clever, and I daresay, in the estimation of some hon. members opposite, he is very clever. But it is well known that when the House met to-night there was a very clever thing done. There was not a Minister in the House when the bell was rung to form a quorum.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That has been said before?

Mr. SAYERS: I may say it again. Hon. members on the other side have stated that they intend to say what they think fit, and they were not called to order; but the Government are very quick to call hon. members on this side to order. It was plain to every person that when



the quorum bell was rung to-night there was not a Minister in his place. The first to come in was the Minister for Lands, some ten minutes or a quarter of an hour afterwards; and if the Government had wished to put this matter to a test, and redeem the pledges they acknowledged having made to the country, they could have met the House, and, I daresay, have brought pressure enough to bear upon members on their own side to have come to a division. They were able to bring pressure to bear on the Land Bill yesterday. The Minister for Mines and Works then spoke, when we were discussing a vital clause of the Bill, about so much time being taken up, and so did the Premier; but it appears that this question can take days and weeks to discuss. That is not dealing with the business of the House.

The PREMIER: That is not Government business.

Mr. SAYERS: I do not know whose business it is, if it is not the business of the Government. If the Government wished to have this matter decided, there is no doubt they could have done so; but they do not wish it, and they have succeeded in defeating the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, so that it will not be decided this session.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No!

Mr. SAYERS: The hon. gentleman says "no," but when this session is over he will find that such is the case, and I daresay he will be told about it.

Mr. LUYA said: Mr. Speaker,—I suppose, after the lecture that has been given me by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, I ought to feel very much cast down; but I can assure that hon. member that anything he may say, as far as my conduct is concerned, falls quite harmless—like water on a duck's back.

Mr. BARLOW: It is not so with your constituents.

Mr. LUYA: I am quite able to answer my constituents, and if the hon. member goes back to his constituents and can give as good a record of his votes as I can, he will be very lucky indeed. I may tell the hon. member—it is no secret in this House—that, when the time comes, I shall certainly vote against any black labour; but I am not going to please hon. gentlemen opposite by voting for them on any amendments they may introduce. I shall please myself, and when the proper time comes, my vote will be found on the right side at all events, and I shall give my reasons for it before then. I hope to do so at any rate. I do not like to bring forward any personal matters, but I would certainly advise the hon. member for Ipswich to keep on that cloak of humility which so well becomes him—that Uriah Heep kind of business. He has thrown it off for a few minutes, but I think it becomes him far better than aping the lecturer.

Mr. DRAKE said: Mr. Speaker,—When I first rose to speak I did so merely for the purpose of giving the Minister for Mines and Works a little information, because he, not having been in the House the whole of the evening, did not appear to understand exactly what had taken place. However, other hon. members, abler than myself, have given him some information in that respect, and, I think, if the hon. gentleman takes all the circumstances into consideration, he must come to the conclusion that the charge made by him against hon. members on this side of the House, of being disorderly, was not justified. I will ask him to go back in his mind to the time, a few weeks ago, when the hon. member for Oxley, Mr. Grimes, was speaking on this subject, and to remember what was the action and the behaviour of mem-

bers on the Government benches and cross benches on that occasion. I undertake to say that everything that has been said on this side of the House, rolled up together, would not equal the amount of interjections that came from the other side of the House, in the course of five minutes, on that occasion. If he excuses that, he ought not to blame us for the interjections that have taken place during the latter part of the evening. He told us just now that he believed the hon. member for Herbert was sincere in his intention of coming to a division to-night. I have been here all the evening in expectation of coming to a division; and I will now add a word or two to what has been said with regard to the attempt at a count out. When the bell rang, and we were summoned to form a quorum, a quorum was formed by members of the Opposition, and only three members on the other side—namely, the hon. member for Herbert, the hon. member for Bowen, and the hon. member for Cook.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: What was the time?

Mr. DRAKE: It was less than two minutes past 7 o'clock when attention was drawn to the state of the House; and it was most unprecedented to call attention to the state of the House at that moment. I am not going to say that it was done with the connivance of the Government; but I will say this: the hon. member for Cook is an old parliamentarian, and has occupied the position of "whip" for his party for a long time; and I do not believe he would have taken the extraordinary course he took if he had thought he would give offence to his own party by doing so. I do not believe he would have taken such an extraordinary course if he thought that in doing so he was running counter to the wishes of his own party. Since then we have been waiting to come to a division, and we have been very quietly listening to some very long speeches on the other side. The hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Dalrymple, made a speech which was very interesting in some respects, but it was very long. It was "linked sweetness long drawn out." We got to the end at last, and then the hon. member for Herbert purposely postponed the further discussion of the motion to a day nearly a month hence, when, in all human probability, it cannot possibly come on for discussion. The leader of the Opposition pointed out that there is no business down for next Friday, and that it could be discussed and decided on that day; but on the motion to postpone the question till a day on which it cannot come on, he was supported by the array of hon. members on the other side. Is not that significant? With the exception of the three I have mentioned, not one of them was here to form a quorum, but when it comes to postponing the motion indefinitely the Government benches are full.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—The object of hon. members on the other side is to attempt to fasten upon us the stigma of wishing to break the pledges given to our constituents against black labour. I acknowledge that I was one of those who attempted to get a count out to-day. I did so on the ground that I was sick and tired of the waste of time resulting from the interminable discussion on the motion.

Mr. DRAKE: There will be more now.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: You said just now it would not come on again.

Mr. MURPHY: I think there will yet be more discussion, and that we shall come to a division on the question after those hon. gentlemen who are supporting kanaka labour—and they are

quite right in doing so—have exhausted themselves. So far as I am concerned, I shall speak to my constituents as well as hon. members on the other side. They know what my views are and always have been on this question; they know that I have all along opposed all forms of black labour, and that I did all I could to abolish black labour when it was employed by the squatters in the West. I suppose I have by my actions suffered more than any man in the House, because I was a sugar planter myself, and had a large interest in a sugar plantation all the time I persistently opposed black labour. Having shown my consistency in that way, even to my own heavy loss, I think I have proved that I am acting entirely from conviction. I know that the Government were not in any way conniving at the count out to-night. A small knot of us, including the "whip" of the party, put our heads together, and said, "We will stop the discussion; we are sick of it; why should we not have a holiday this evening?" And we agreed, with the assistance of some members on the other side who were of the same opinion, that we would count the House out. I voted just now with the hon. members representing the sugar planters out of pure courtesy to them to enable them to deal with the motion as they like. I would do nothing to stifle discussion on an important question like this. What does it matter to the country or to the House whether a vote is taken on the question or not? We have had a declaration by the Government that they will not renew the Polynesian Labourers Act, and that should be sufficient for every hon. member and for the country also. I can say, at all events, for myself and other hon. members on this side, that if the Government renew the Polynesian Labourers Act they will not occupy these Treasury benches very many hours afterwards. It is impossible that they can do it, and it is as well that the country should know that, no matter what hon. members on the other side may say. It is no use for them to try to fasten upon us the stigma of attempting to break our pledges, because we are as steadfast to them now as we were when they were made. The conduct of hon. members on the other side in attempting to wilfully mislead the country upon this point, merely for a little party trick in order to gain a little temporary advantage will ignominiously fail. The hon. members who are supporting the motion have not been speaking for the purpose of appealing to the House, but in order to educate the people of the colony upon this important question in the direction of coloured labour.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—As my name has been freely bandied about this evening, I have a few words to say. The hon. member for Enoggera, in spite of the denial both of Ministers and myself, said that I was acting in collusion with the Government, and the only reason the hon. member gave for that statement was that I, as an old parliamentarian, would not be likely to do anything to give offence to the Government. Of course I would not like to do anything to give offence to anyone, so that argument falls to the ground. Since it has been stated that we do not vote on this question because we are afraid, I may state now that I am going to vote against black labour, therefore it cannot be said that I am afraid; and seeing that the Government have plainly expressed their views against it, it cannot be said that they are afraid to vote. With reference to the tricks we are accused of, I may state that hon. members on both sides wished to have a count out, and it would have taken place when the hon. member for South Brisbane was speaking, only hon. members opposite said they did not

want to act discourteously towards the old man, and that they would wait until he had finished his speech. That hon. gentleman, however, attacked several hon. members on this side, and then they would not have a count out until they had replied. With regard to the version of the hon. member for Toowong, in the first place, it is not usual for gentlemen to repeat statements inside the House which are made outside. However, I do not include the hon. member for Toowong in that category after his conduct to-night. Moreover, he stated what was not true. I told him we were trying to have a count out, and asked him not to go into the House, and an hon. member on his own side also tried to persuade him, but I suppose he wanted to get his two guineas. I stated that hon. members on this side, who were interested in the sugar industry, were taking up private members' days day after day, and that they intended doing so, the consequence being that no other private business could be proceeded with, and that we were sick of it. As some of those members had expressed their intention of speaking night after night upon the subject, as it was of great importance to them, and as they wished to educate the people, hon. members on both sides, in order to prevent that, wished to have a count out. The hon. member for Toowong stated that they intended keeping the House night after night, thereby conveying the impression that it was the Government who intended doing so. I have not acted in collusion with the Government in this matter at all. The count out was agreed upon, but the leader of the Opposition came in afterwards, and hon. members opposite who had agreed to the proposal, when they found that he objected, in a most docile manner agreed to keep a House, and the consequence is that we have had some very interesting speeches. With regard to the attempted count out after tea, when I called your attention, Sir, to the fact that no quorum was present, I alone was responsible for it, as I spoke to no one of my intention. I was sick of the discussion, and wanted to go and enjoy myself instead of sitting here till 12 o'clock, as I have done. Many hon. members on the other side are simply mad because they have been licked on the division which took place, and the leader of the Opposition has endeavoured to misrepresent the action taken by several hon. members on this side. The hon. member who brought on this motion wished to fix the resumption of the debate for a certain date; then the leader of the Opposition moved that the debate should be resumed on another day, but hon. members on this side thought that the hon. member who brought the motion in should fix his own time. The leader of the Opposition also stated that the hon. member does not intend bringing on this discussion again, but time will show that that statement is just as untrue as the other statements have been. I did not tell anyone that I was going to try and get a count out after tea, for fear that there might be a traitor, who would let my intention be known, so I quietly came in and called attention to the state of the House, and there would have been a count out had it not been for the presence of two members on this side of the House.

Mr. GRIMES said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Barcoo in explaining the reason why he voted on the last occasion explained that it was out of courtesy to the hon. member who brought this motion forward. It seems to me that in giving that as his reason he was very inconsistent, because he also said that he had attempted to have a count out in conjunction with the hon. member for Cook. Certainly that does not appear to show any

great courtesy to the hon. member who introduced the motion. I rose principally, however, to corroborate the statement made by the hon. member for Toowong with reference to the tricky attempt to mislead hon. members on the Opposition side of the House. There was a distinct attempt to mislead us, as it was represented to us that it was arranged by both sides of the House that there should be a count out this evening. The hon. member for Cook, the Government "whip," came to me and wanted me to stay outside the House so that there could be a count out.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS called attention to the state of the House.

The SPEAKER said: There being no quorum present, the House stands adjourned until Monday next.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to 12 o'clock.