

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 1889

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 26 September, 1889.

Brisbane Sanitary Contracts Committee—refusal of witness to give evidence.—Drew Pension Bill—third reading.—The Sugar Industry.—Message from the Legislative Council—Day Dawn Freehold Gold-Mining Company's Railway Bill.—Supreme Court Bill—resumption of committee—re-committal.—Supply—revenue and expenditure accounts.—Adjournment.

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

BRISBANE SANITARY CONTRACTS
COMMITTEE.

REFUSAL OF WITNESS TO GIVE EVIDENCE.

Mr. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—As chair man of the select committee appointed to inquire

into the sanitary contracts for the city of Brisbane, I have to submit the following letter to the House:—

“Legislative Assembly,
“Committee Room, No. 1,
“26 September, 1889.

“To the Hon. the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

“Sir,

“In compliance with a resolution in that behalf passed by the select committee appointed on 8th August, 1889, to inquire into any sanitary contracts that have been made with the municipal authorities of North and South Brisbane during the last five years, the powers of which committee were enlarged by a resolution of the House on 28th August, 1888, and in accordance with the 44th section of the Constitution Act of 1867, I beg to report that the committee had under examination Mr. George Dobbyn, and required him to produce all contracts between Dobbyn and Co. and the municipal authorities of North Brisbane, books of account, statements of accounts, butts of cheques, bank pass books, letters, and other documents relating to the contracts, or relating to the disposal of any moneys received by the contractors under the contracts, or relating to any moneys expended under the contracts in the performance of the contracts. The witness refused to produce any documents relating to the matters and things hereinbefore recited, and refused to answer certain questions put to him by the committee. He gave as his reasons for such refusals, that he was the representative of his father, William Dobbyn, who is the sanitary contractor, and is now absent from this colony, and that the production of documents and the answers to questions would involve matters of his father's private business. I enclose extracts from the minutes of his evidence taken this day.

“I have the honour to be, Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“A. H. BARLOW,

“Chairman of the said Select Committee.”

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—This is a matter of privilege. I do not know whether the head of the Government proposes to take any action in regard to it. It is his duty, as the leader of the House, to take action, or, if he is not prepared to do so now, to move that the matter be taken into consideration at a future date. If the hon. gentleman is not prepared to take action at once, he can move that the matter be taken into consideration to-morrow, to take precedence of other business.

The PREMIER (Hon. B. D. Morehead) said: Mr. Speaker,—That is the course I propose to take. I do not think the House is seized of sufficient information to take action with regard to the matter. The hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, and the shorthand writer in charge of select committees called at my office this afternoon, and stated that some witness—Dobbyn, I think—had refused to give evidence before a select committee of the House after having been summoned in the proper way, and asked me what action I should take in the matter. I inquired from the shorthand writer, Mr. Byrne, what was the nature of the occurrence, and Mr. Byrne told me that he had not yet transcribed his shorthand notes. Unless the House knows exactly the nature of the questions asked, and the whole facts of the case, I do not think we can come to any decision on the matter; but I am quite prepared to accept the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition, and I therefore move that the consideration of the matter reported to the House by the hon. member for Ipswich stand an Order of the Day for to-morrow to take precedence of all other business.

Question put and passed.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I would ask the Premier whether the papers in connection with this matter will be printed and circulated among hon. members?

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—In reply to the hon. member I may state that all the information in the possession of the House will be printed and circulated with the papers to-morrow morning.

DREW PENSION BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

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;’” upon which Mr. Paul had moved, “That the proposed amendment be amended by the addition thereto of the words—‘otherwise than an extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act for five years.’”

Mr. LITTLE said: Mr. Speaker,—As I moved the adjournment of the debate on this question, I claim the right to give an explanation of my views on it. I will not detain the House very long. This motion has nothing to do with coloured labour. It does not touch the fringe or edge of it. If it did I should oppose it. It is simply a fair, just and honest motion. When the motion was last discussed we were told that nearly one-sixth of the population were dependent upon this industry for their living. I am a working man myself, and I dare not go back to my constituency and say I opposed this motion.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition side: Oh! oh!

Mr. LITTLE: It is all very well to say “Oh.” Wait until I have done. I think it is the duty of every member of this House to thoroughly understand the position of the labour market at this moment. I am acquainted with the manager of the Valley Railway, and he told me recently that when he required twelve men a short time ago, 600 men applied for the work—men who wanted to earn their living, working men, and not street loafers. I see every morning congregated round the Colonial Secretary's Office, and at the corner of George street, and near the *Telegraph* and *Courier* offices, numbers of men who are not street loafers, but men who are actually anxious to earn their living, and who are prepared to do anything at a small wage. Now, what will become of those 60,000 people who are to be knocked off when the sugar industry does not exist. I think it is the bounden duty of every member of this House to think of them. That is why I came here. No member was sent here to destroy that industry. I shall not do it, and I dare not go back to my constituents and say that I voted against the motion of the hon. member for Herbert. There is no coloured labour attached to it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition side: Oh! oh!

Mr. LITTLE: It is all very well for the leader of the Opposition and the “push” behind him to say “Oh! oh!” The leader of the Opposition ought to know. No man knows better, that if you send these men adrift they have nowhere to go. They cannot go to Brisbane. The pastoral properties and the mines are fully manned, and what is to become of these people?

They must go to gaol ; nothing else. I am telling the truth, and I hope that if there is a division to-night on this motion it will be carried by a large majority. I will take particular care that I remember every name of every man who votes against the motion ; and, mark my words, I will be a thorn in his side some of these days. I will do all I can to keep him out of this. I will not detain the House any longer. I can stay here as long as you like. I can camp here if there is to be any stonewalling.

Mr. LUYA said : Mr. Speaker,—I wish to make a few remarks upon this motion before the House. I will not detain the House very long, and I hope we shall come to the end of it, because it is assuming an octopus-like proportion and is swallowing up everything else. The motion of the hon. member for Herbert, Mr. Cowley, is, without a doubt, as it appears on the notice paper, one of the most innocent-looking motions that could be brought forward. It says :—

“That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable early next session, to adopt some means for encouraging the sugar industry.”

We may say the same of nearly every industry in the colony at the present time ; and I say that if the State is to put itself out of its way to encourage one industry, there is quite as much justice in asking the House to relieve any other industry that may be suffering from depression. I say that motion as it appears on the paper is very innocent, but its innocence has disappeared to those who have sat here and listened to the speeches with which it has been supported. The cloak has fallen clean away from it and we have got at it in its naked truth, and can see exactly what it is intended to mean. It is undoubtedly intended to mean an extension of kanaka labour, and for that reason I shall most certainly oppose it. I shall oppose it because my memory is not so short but that I can remember that within a few years two general elections have taken place in this country, that this was a prominent question at both of them, and that at both the electors of this colony by overwhelming majorities pronounced against the employment of any black or alien labour in this colony. They decided that Australia should be for the Australians, Queensland for Queenslanders, and that this should be a land for white men. I am not a convert to those views or to that line of thinking, as I have always entertained such views and have advocated inside and outside of this House that, no matter what sacrifice we make, this land must be retained for our fellow countrymen. Holding those views I shall vote against the motion of the hon. member for Herbert. Then we come to the amendment of the hon. leader of the Opposition to insert the words “not involving a re-opening of the coloured labour question,” after the word “means” in the original motion. That amendment looks very simple also, but there is something under it as well. Any man reading the original motion might say, “I will vote for that, as I believe in relieving any industry,” and he might say the same for the amendment, because it provides that there shall not be a re-opening of the coloured labour question. Looking at them together in that way any man might vote for both conscientiously ; but looking at them as I do, and holding the views I hold, there is good reason for voting against both. I have not forgotten the Amended Immigration Act of 1882 and the way it was introduced, and the attempts made under it to introduce a low class cheap labour into this colony. The idea was to introduce what has been called a “servile” class of labour, but what I call a cheap class of labour, from European countries, who would cut under our own countrymen out here and reduce wages, and, in my opinion, that class of labour is as much to be dreaded as any. No

doubt if we were to flood the place with cheap labour from the south of Europe, wages in the colony would be materially reduced as a natural consequence. In introducing the Act of 1882, the leader of the Opposition, who was then Premier, admitted that it would tend to reduce the rate of wages in the colony.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH : I do not think I did anything of the sort.

Mr. LUYA : I read it only yesterday, and I am pretty clear on that point. He said it would tend to reduce the rate of wages, and anything that will tend to reduce the rate of wages should meet with the consistent opposition of every man who has the interests of this colony at heart. All colonists, who take any interest in colonial affairs, must know that low wages mean bad times, and high wages mean good times, and the lower the scale of workmen's wages the worse for business all round. I shall therefore vote against the amendment of the leader of the Opposition for the reason that it will tend to reduce the rate of wages. The amendment merely says, “not involving a re-opening of the coloured labour question,” but if it had gone on to provide that the means should not involve the introduction of any class of cheap labour I should support it. As it stands now I shall vote against it, because I shall not be a party under any cloak whatever to the introduction of any form of low class labour, to work any industry in Queensland, whether the sugar industry or any other. I come now to the last amendment, and it is almost too ridiculous to discuss. It proposes an addition to the first amendment or the words : “Otherwise than an extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act for five years.” I do not think we need discuss that, and I am fully convinced that the House will not entertain it at all. It is hardly necessary for me to say I shall vote against it. I would willingly vote for the first amendment if it provided for the exclusion of all kinds of cheap labour—if it excluded all labour but that we are at present getting into the country from the home market. That would be a very different thing, but as the amendment now stands, it might mean the introduction of Maltese or Basques or labourers from the various islands of the south of Europe, and they would all be equally undesirable. I trust the question will be settled this afternoon for good, and I shall myself vote against the original motion and the amendments.

Mr. JORDAN said : Mr. Speaker,—I have spoken upon the question before, but not upon the last amendment, and I rise to say I think my colleague in the representation of South Brisbane has made a mistake in his references to the Act of 1882. I say that the Hon. Sir Samuel Griffith did not introduce that Act with a view of introducing cheap European labour, nor did he say anything in his speech, in introducing the measure, to that effect. If I remember rightly, it was in this way : When the Bill was under discussion, some hon. members, who were then on this side of the House, and especially those now sitting on the Treasury benches—objecting, no doubt, to the substitution of European for coloured labour, because that party was always in favour of black labour until recently—said the effect of the Bill would be to introduce a considerable number of labourers from the Continent, at a very low price. Sir Samuel Griffith rejoined that he did not intend that to be the effect ; but even if it were, it would be better than inundating the colony with coolies, or other forms of black labour. I think that if my hon. colleague looks again he will see that is exactly what the Hon. Sir Samuel Griffith said. I spoke on that occasion too, and I think the hon. gentleman approved of

what I said—that there was no intention on the part of the Government to introduce a system of cheap labour from the Continent; and I further went on to say, as I have stated in some of the public addresses I have given during the elections, that if the sugar planters had a regular supply of European labour—especially British labour—they would do very much better than with coloured labour, because I believed from what I knew of emigration from Great Britain during my experience for six years, that a very great number of highly eligible working men, accustomed to labour in the fields and out of doors, would be only too glad to come out to Queensland under proper regulations, and under written agreements to serve for one or two years at 15s. a week, with the addition of rations, which rations would cost at least 7s. or 8s. a week. That is a very different thing. I am sure great numbers of the best kind of labourers in Great Britain would be only too glad to come out under written agreements of that kind. I know there is a very desirable class of people in England who would come here were it not that they are afraid of the uncertainty of getting employment in the colony. Quite enough was said both by myself and others to show that the late Government had no idea of introducing cheap European labour. I think the leader of the Opposition fully endorsed what I said on that occasion. It has been reiterated repeatedly that the Act of 1884, amending the Act of 1882, which first provided for European labour being obtained under contract, was introduced for the purpose of inundating the colony with what were spoken of as “German coolies,” and with cheap labour. We deny that entirely; and I believe every member on this side of the House fully understood that there was no such intention on the part of the Government.

Mr. ISAMBERT said: Mr. Speaker,—The speeches delivered upon this very important question, so far as they have come from those in favour of the extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act, may be divided into two parts—the first dealing with the very laboured arguments used to prove the actual truth. It is strange that so much trouble should have been taken to prove the incontestible truth of the great importance of the sugar industry, as if such proof was required. Then another strange thing in connection with this question is that the Government have not come forward themselves with some definite proposal. The subject being of such immense importance, and the Government having been chiefly returned to power by the vote of those interested directly or indirectly in this industry, it was and is their duty to come forward with some proposal to meet the difficulty. That there is a difficulty no one doubts. I drew attention on the very first day of the session to the fact that it almost looked as if the Government were afraid to touch the question. We see the great importance attached to this or any other branch of industry in Continental countries and in America. There the Governments have devoted millions of money, and have enacted special legislation, to assist the various industries, and particularly the sugar industry; but the only legislation which takes place here, as well as in the other sugar-growing colonies of the British Empire, is to favour the capitalists and make their schemes easy. The whole of their schemes consists chiefly in class legislation and in the introduction of cheap coloured labour—to introduce slavery as nearly as the laws of the land will allow, because coloured labour is slavery in every respect but name. These sugar growers have made use of an inferior class of people, and exploited them by trading upon their ignorance; and with the products, they have

exploited civilised societies. It has been really exploitation all round; but it has been carried on in such a reckless manner that they have more or less come to grief. It is idle at this time of the day to suppose for one moment that the sugar industry can be helped by fresh legislation favouring the introduction of cheap coloured labour. The time for that is past, and the sooner those interested in the industry make up their minds to this fact the better for themselves. When they come to face the question I hope they will face it in the way it can be faced. It cannot be supposed that the Continental countries and America are so ill-informed that they do not know what to do. They have brought the cultivation of the beetroot for the manufacture of sugar to such a state of perfection that they have almost ruined the industry in places where it is carried on by means of coloured labour. If the sugar industry were cared for in an intelligent way, I can see no reason why it should not hold its own. Some people argue that the bounties given by Continental nations to the sugar industry are a grievous tax upon the people of those countries, and that they favour Great Britain by supplying that country with cheap sugar at the expense of the Continental taxpayers. If that were so the countries affording that support to the sugar industry would long ago have been ruined; but the longer they go on with this assistance to the industry the more they seem to thrive, and it requires the very superstitious brain of a free-trader to come to the conclusion that it is suicidal to those countries. The Continental powers give a bonus of from £2 to £5—and I believe even up to £8—on every ton of sugar exported. With the advance of science the people in those countries manage to get very much more sugar out of the beetroot than they did formerly. In effect the apparent drawback is a very heavy and powerful bonus, which appears to come out of the pockets of the people. But the Government simply takes that money—the bonus—out of one pocket and puts it into the other. The money remains in the country. This system not only keeps the money in their own country, but, in addition to that, the price at which the sugar is sold for is added to it, and the whole of this money is circulated in the country. Though it may appear on one side a taxation, on the other side the whole of the money, with the exception of a small percentage to the dealers in sugar, is circulated again among the people; and, what is a very important feature, it is circulated at a time when there is absolutely no other employment in the country. Most of it is spent in the winter time. I can see no difficulty, if we choose to face the question in an intelligent manner, why the sugar industry should not be brought into a state of greater prosperity than ever it has been before by means of a bonus. I am not afraid to acknowledge the necessity of a bonus, because I see the importance of it, and the profit it will be to the State. There is any amount of room for taxation. There is no country on the face of the earth so well able to pay a bonus on the sugar industry as we are, because there is no other country with a civilised taxpaying population where cane sugar can be produced. The Crown colonies of Great Britain, where they legislated from the beginning entirely in the interests of the sugar industry and of capital, and passed all sorts of enactments for the introduction of cheap coloured labour, are in such a very bad condition that they do not know what to do. The coloured population is fast growing; the revenue is decreasing, and the white population is decreasing. And the coloured labourer, when once emancipated, will not touch sugar again. The idea of being employed in sugar reminds him too much of his former slavery. In no country do working men like to slave themselves in order to grind out

dollars for their rich employers. To say that coloured labour is necessary to perform those duties which the European cannot and will not perform, is idle. The Government have abolished the tax on beer; that alone would bring in £30,000; and there should be no difficulty in taxing tobacco and spirituous liquors to the extent of another £50,000 at least. That would give an ample revenue to pay a bonus of £2 or £3 on every ton of sugar exported, being the produce of white labour, and white labour only. That would make the production of sugar by white labour profitable. It would be chiefly produced by farmers who, of course, cannot engage in the production of sugar in such a wholesale manner as the capitalist with his 800 or 1,000 acres under cane. This large production is a thing of the past. It does not pay any more, and I am very glad it does not. Farming by the white farmer using his own labour always pays, while planting on a large scale by the capitalist with his nigger will not. Therefore, I contend that the Government are neglecting their duty entirely in not coming forward with a bold measure. Even if they were defeated upon it, they could retire from office with honour to themselves; whereas if they shirk the question, either from cowardice or from free-trade prejudice, they will go down with a dishonoured political record, as sure as the day. As to the speeches that have been made in favour of coloured labour, they are very old friends. They are plagiarisms of speeches made many years ago in favour of slavery. The other day I came across a speech reported to have been made 200 years ago at Algiers, which is identical with one made 100 years ago in America defending slavery; and I have yet to hear any speech in favour of this black labour which is not, in effect, a speech in favour of slavery. The speech delivered at Algiers to which I have referred is so much like some of the speeches we have lately heard on this question that it will be interesting to the House if I read it, in order that it may appear in *Hansard*. It is said to have been delivered in Algiers when they wanted to put down piracy and slavery, and it begins:—

"Allah Bismillah! etc. God is great, and Mahomet is His prophet."

We have only to say "Money is his prophet," because a sugar planter said to me at the beginning of this session, "We do not work from sentimentality; what we want is to make money." It was an hon. member of this House who said that. Never mind the country; never mind the future; only let us make money. That is identical with what the planters said in the Crown colonies—they wanted to make money. Those colonies are not fit for white civilisation, and the Imperial Government does not know what to do with them. They are a burden on their hands; so much so that a considerable number of statesmen question the continuance of the colonial policy any longer. Is that the way in which a great empire manages its affairs? If Great Britain chooses to make herself a policeman for the capitalist that is no reason why the colonies should do so. This speech goes on:—

"Have these *Erika* considered the consequences of granting their petition? If we close our cruises amongst the Christians, how shall we be furnished with the commodities their countries produce, and which are so necessary for us? If we forbear to make slaves of their people, who in this hot climate are to cultivate our lands? Who are to perform the common labours of our city, and in our families? Must we not then be our own slaves? And is there not more compassion and more favour due to us as Mussulmen than to these Christian dogs? We have now above 50,000 slaves in and near Algiers. This number, if not kept up by fresh supplies, will soon diminish and be gradually annihilated. If we then cease taking and plundering the

infidel ships, and making slaves of seamen and passengers, our lands will become of no value for want of cultivation."

Exactly what has taken place in the North. It has been made out that the lands and property of the planters are of no value, because they cannot get any more slaves.

"The rents of houses in the city will sink one-half, and the revenue of Government arising from the share of prizes be totally destroyed. And for what? to gratify the whims of a whimsical sect, who would have us not only forbear making more slaves, but even to manumit those we have. But who is to indemnify their masters for the loss? Will the State do it? Is our Treasury sufficient? Will the *Erika* do it? Can they do it? or would they, to do what they think justice to the slaves, do a greater injustice to the owners? And if we set our slaves free, what is to be done with them? Few of them will return to their countries; they know too well the hardships they must there be subject to; they will not embrace our holy religion; they will not adopt our manners; our people will not pollute themselves by intermarrying with them; must we maintain them as beggars in our streets, or suffer our properties to be the prey of their pillage? for men accustomed to slavery will not work for a livelihood when not compelled. And what is there so pitiable in their present condition? Were they not slaves in their own countries? Are not Spain, Portugal, France, and the Italian States governed by despots, who hold all their subjects in slavery, without exception? Even England treats its sailors as slaves; for they are, whenever the Government pleases, seized, and confined in ships of war, condemned not only to work, but to fight, for small wages, or a mere subsistence, not better than our slaves are allowed by us. Is their condition then made worse by their falling into our hands? No; they have only exchanged one slavery for another, and I may say a better, for here they are brought into a land where the sun of Islamism gives forth its light, and shines in full splendour, and they have an opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the true doctrines, and thereby saving their immortal souls."

They in those days showed even more consideration and compassion for their slaves than our planters have done. Very few planters care anything for the immortal souls of their dark brethren, whom they employ as slaves. It has been said that those islanders who remain in their islands do not get civilised, and therefore it is far better that they should come here; but although some of them return here and re-engage with the sugar planters, it is not because they are happier here. It is because, having been away from their islands for two or three years, on returning they find all their family relations and ties broken up; they have acquired new habits, and find themselves strangers in the land of their birth. Miserable as they were here, they find themselves more miserable there, and in order to escape from that misery they come here again. There is no other course open for them to pursue; they cannot help themselves. I will proceed with the quotation.

"Those who remain at home have not that happiness. Sending the slaves home then would be sending them from light into darkness—I repeat the question, what is to become of them? I have heard it suggested that they may be planted in the wilderness, where there is plenty of land for them to subsist on, and where they may flourish as a free state; but they are, I doubt, too little disposed to labour without compulsion, as well as too ignorant to establish a good government, and the wild Arabs would soon molest and destroy or enslave them. While serving us, we take care to provide them with everything, and they are treated with humanity."

In that respect chattel slavery is infinitely preferable to the white slavery of the capitalist. The exploiting capitalists cannot exist except they exist by slavery, and the white slave in the present century is ten times worse off than the chattel slave of the past. Chattel slavery carried with it the responsibility of maintaining the slave; but white slavery by capitalists does not carry with it any such responsibility. The capitalist buys his slave for the day, and when

he has no further use for him casts him off again ; he is no longer responsible. The labourer in these days is just as effectively exploited as the chattel slave was in the past ; and when the labourer has no opportunity of earning his living he is cast off as a pauper, and has to be maintained by the rest of the country for the benefit of exploiting capitalists.

"The labourers in their own country are, as I am well informed, worse fed, lodged, and clothed. The condition of most of them is therefore already mended, and requires no further improvement. Here their lives are in safety. They are not liable to be impressed for soldiers and forced to cut one another's Christian throats as in the wars of their own countries. If some of the religious mad bigots, who now tease us with their silly petitions, have in a fit of blind zeal freed their slaves, it was not generosity, it was not humanity that moved them to action ; it was from the conscious burthen of a load of sin, and a hope from the supposed merits of so good a work, to be excused from damnation."

I have often heard the arguments which fell from those who are against the introduction of black labour stigmatised in the same way—in the identical words.

"How grossly are they mistaken to suppose slavery to be disallowed by the Alcoran. Are not the two precepts, to quote no more—'Masters, treat your slaves with kindness ; slaves, serve your masters with cheerfulness and fidelity'—clear proof to the contrary ? Nor can the plunderers of infidels be in that sacred book forbidden, since it is well known from it that God has given the world, and all it contains, to his faithful Mussulmen, who are to enjoy it of right as fast as they conquer it."

Identically the words we heard this very day. Thus the greedy, crafty, grasping capitalist secures the land, the birthright of the people, and holds it and enjoys it.

"Let us hear no more of this detestable proposition, the manumission of Christian slaves, the adoption of which would by depreciating our lands and houses, and thereby depriving so many good citizens of their properties, create universal discontent, and provoke insurrection to the endangering of the Government, and producing general confusion. I have therefore no doubt but this wise counsel will prefer the comfort and happiness of the whole nation of true believers, to the whim of a few *Erika*, and dismiss their petition."

That is exactly what is said here, that by doing away with this slavery we are driving capital out of the country, and depreciating the lands of the North which were monopolised in such a reckless manner for what was called "settlement." But it was no settlement. When the Sir Thomas McIlwraith Administration was in power before, they boasted that they were kept in power by the reckless squandering of the public lands. And what is the consequence ? These lands are now locked up, and anyone who wants to settle on the land has to go into the mountains, which are very difficult of access. I hope the Government will take wise counsels and have sufficient courage not to allow this important sugar industry to succumb, but assist it by giving those engaged in it a bonus if the sugar is grown by white labour. Such a bonus need not be any tax on the community, except on those people who ought to be taxed. The whole of the bonus can be squeezed out of the consumers of drink. If the Government bring forward a measure having that object in view they will have the hearty support on this side of the House. At any rate, if they will introduce a scheme to raise sufficient money by means of a tax on drink to pay a bonus on sugar grown by white labour, it will have my best support. I have shown, I think, that many of the speeches delivered in favour of black labour are a plagiarism on what has been said hundreds of years ago on the same subject. If the Government will not take wise counsels on this matter the industry cannot prosper as it should, but will become a thing of the past. Sugar, as well as other agricultural products, will have to be

produced by the farmer, and not by the exploiting capitalist. Let the capitalist employ his money in the manufacturing and commercial part of the business, and let the farmer cultivate the land and grow the cane. If the capitalist will do this, and give facilities for settling farmers on their lands, and use their sugar mills as central mills, I have no doubt that with a little judicious assistance from the Government the sugar industry will in the future prosper more than it has done in the past. Any measure that has for its object the encouragement of the sugar industry in the North, not involving the introduction of cheap coloured labour, will have my hearty support. As to the difficulty of getting agricultural labourers from the Continent of Europe, I would point out that good agricultural labourers are scarce in any country, and no country likes the best part of its population to go away. I do not say that the Germans or the Danes are better than the English, but I say that the Germans have earned the good name they bear because the population is chiefly composed of agricultural labourers. If the immigrants who come here from Great Britain were chiefly of that class they would be similarly spoken of. Agriculturists, as a rule, are the best citizens you can obtain in any country, and if the settlement of the land had not been so grievously retarded here by land-grabbers this colony would be in a far more prosperous condition than it is at the present time.

Mr. ADAMS said : Mr. Speaker,—In speaking to the amendment I may say that I was gratified with the speech delivered by the hon. member who has just sat down, for he sees, as some members on the hon. member's side do not see, that the sugar industry of Queensland will be swept out of existence unless something is done to assist it. The planters do not ask for pecuniary assistance. All they ask for is labour, reliable labour, and that labour is about to be stopped. It has been frequently stated in this House that the five years' extension of the period for the introduction of Polynesians which is asked for by the planters means really a longer period. I do not think it does. In a country like this the soil has to be prepared before machinery can be used in its cultivation, and for that work cheap, reliable manual labour is required, especially in the North. A few weeks ago the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan, in speaking on this question, said :—

"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 £5,000,000 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."

I say it does prove the importance of the industry. Why did not the hon. member, before he made that statement, refer to the evidence given before the Sugar Industry Commission by Mr. Munro, who declared that last year the shipping company he represented had lost no less than £20,000 through the failure of the sugar industry ? The fact that there was a great falling off in the shipping trade shows that failure of the sugar industry means disaster, not only to the shipping but to the working population of the colony. The Sugar Commissioners themselves have stated that no less than 10,000 people will be thrown out of employment if the industry collapses. But those figures do not represent the whole of the people who are interested in the industry, or are in some way

dependent upon it for employment. As I have shown, the loss to one shipping company last year was something like £20,000.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. ADAMS: I was pointing out that not only are these 10,000 men interested, but a great many others also. If 10,000 people are thrown out of employment in connection with this industry, who will employ those people? Many of them have families, and the number would be more like 16,000, but supposing only 10,000 are thrown out of employment, what will become of them? Those people, instead of increasing our population, will take the first opportunity of leaving the colony and going to some other colony where they can find employment. Now, what did it cost the colony to bring those 10,000 people out here, and who paid for their passages but the taxpayers?

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. ADAMS: Those 10,000 people have cost the colony of Queensland £160,000, and to sweep away this industry simply means that £160,000 will be lost to the colony. It is acknowledged that there are about 7,000 kanakas employed in the industry, and that there are over 16,000 white men employed. Therefore the bringing of those kanakas to the colony means work for the white man. I have a return in my hand which shows that it has not cost the country one solitary shilling to bring those kanakas here, who have actually made work for agriculturists and mechanics, and who have been the means of foundries being established, which would not have sprung up if the sugar industry had not been created by the supply in the first instance of reliable labour. I see by the return I hold in my hand that the Government at the present day had a balance on the 30th June, 1889, of £23,484 1s. 3d., and I think that proves pretty conclusively that we ought to do what we can towards fostering this industry. Now, the other day, when the hon. member for South Brisbane was speaking, he referred to the fact that if the central mill system was established, and the small farmers were to grow the cane, the system would be a success, and the Hon. the Minister for Lands interjected, "I think we tried it;" but the hon. member evaded the answer, and said, "I say that if the cane were grown by farmers, men who would do their own work, then, I believe, the central mills might be a success." I believe myself that if we could get the small farmers to grow the cane in that manner, they would meet with a certain amount of success; but it is impossible to get these men to grow cane. It may be that the locality is not suitable, and then you must consider that if the cane is grown and not taken to the mill within a certain time it becomes almost useless, and will not pay to crush. A great deal has been attempted to be made of the unfortunate mortality among the kanakas, but I think the same thing applies to Europeans. In many instances it has been proved by experience that in the North, and in the South also, where new ground is broken up, various noxious gases arise and breed fever and other complaints. Anyone who engages in agriculture and begins to break up new soil is liable to be visited by these noxious gases that bring with them fever, and in many cases, death. The hon. member for South Brisbane has quoted from the statistics of 1881, but I will quote from the statistics of 1879. I happened, some years ago, to have a friend come to the colony, and I was not aware he was here until I got a message from him that he was ill. I

made some inquiries, and found that sickness was very prevalent in the district in which he was located. When this matter cropped up the other day in debate, and when certain statistics were presented, to check my memory I looked up the date on which the sickness I refer to occurred. I found that the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, drew attention to the sickness which was prevalent on the Dalby and Roma railway line, so that it is not only in the North that sickness is prevalent when new ground is broken up for the first time, but in the South also. I will quote from vol. xxiii of *Hansard* for 1877, pages 25 and 26. I shall not take up time by quoting the whole of a speech which must be known to older members of the House, but I shall quote a portion of it, as it is not known to some members, nor is it known to the general public. I find the following:—

"Mr. Groom said he expected yesterday, when he asked the question of the honourable the Premier, with reference to the action the Government had taken, or intended to take, respecting the sickness and destitution existing on the Dalby railway works, that he would have more concisely alluded to it; and he now again called the attention of the Government and the House to that question. It was one of considerable public importance, and one which they should not allow to slip by without that due attention being paid to it that its importance demanded. He was a witness, even on Monday evening last, of one of the effects which attended this unfortunate sickness. When the train reached Ipswich on that evening, a sick man from the railway works near Dalby was carried by four persons from the carriage in which he was brought down, and placed in a chair on the railway platform. He appeared to have received a free pass from the police magistrate of Dalby to come down to Ipswich, but, on arriving there, there was no one to take charge of him or remove him to the hospital at that hour of the night—about half-past 10—and when he (Mr. Groom) left, at ten minutes to 11, the unfortunate man was still sitting in the chair where he had been placed. He (Mr. Groom) was quite aware that this difficulty was an unforeseen one, and no blame could be attributed to the Government in connection with it in any shape or form. It was one of those difficulties which had intervened, and could not have been anticipated. But he did contend, if the contractors had a duty to perform in rendering assistance to the men in their employ, that the Government had an equally important duty to discharge in taking steps to save human life; and he did not think sufficient means had been taken, up to the present time, to save those men from the ruin and misery to which they were now subjected. He knew from independent testimony, apart altogether from newspaper reports, that the amount of destitution and sickness existing on the line was something more than honourable members themselves could contemplate, and even if they only took the trouble to read what appeared in the *Courier* that morning, where a detailed account was given of the scenes witnessed by the writer in the various camps he visited, they would see that further measures must be taken by the Government to save human life. He did not think they were justified in paying to bring immigrants to the colony to be employed in the construction of their railway works, if, on the sudden appearance of an epidemic of this kind, they were to lie quietly by, and allow the unfortunate men to die, as it appeared they were dying at the present time."

There is proof that this occurs not only in the Northern part of the colony, but also in the South. I remember a few years ago, when we began to open up the plains around Bundaberg, we expected something of the kind would occur there, and within a week after we began, the first case of typhoid fever was reported, and the man was sent to the hospital. So that it is clear those arguments can be applied to the case of Europeans as well as to kanakas. To further confirm my statements I have here a telegram from the police magistrate at Dalby to the then Minister for Works, which reads:—

"Dalby 5-5-77.

"Have forwarded eighty-five fever patients to Toowoomba and twenty-one to Ipswich since 20th April. What am I to do with those now coming

"W. YALDWYN."

So that in ten days, no less than eighty-five persons were sent to the Toowoomba Hospital, and twenty-one to Ipswich. These are copies of documents which can at any time, upon application, be seen at the Colonial Secretary's Office. No hon. member who spoke on the question attempted to find out whether any of these people died or not; but we have it in the speech of the hon. member for Toowoomba, from which I quoted, that they were dying, and dying fast. They were sent to the surrounding hospitals until they were filled, and then they were sent on to other hospitals. It was not divulged how many of them died, because if it had been, it would have been 100 to 1 against the contractors for that line being able to secure the labour they required. If these men had been the poor unfortunate kanakas the whole country would have heard of it, and it would have been flashed on all the wires of the colony that 100 people were all within ten days sent to the hospitals, and the most would be made of it. I have here the following copy of another telegram that was sent from the Colonial Secretary on this subject from Dalby:—

"Dalby 30-5-77.

"What am I to do with the sick men daily arriving in town. Some of the worst cases have come down during the last three days. One man died on Monday

"W. YALDWIN."

And I will read to the House the following letter on the subject, which was addressed to the Colonial Secretary by the police magistrate of Dalby, on the 1st June, 1877. That gentleman says:—

"SIR,

"I have the honour to report that from the 20th of April till the 31st of May, I have issued free passes to 223 employes from the Roma Extension Railway Works. These people were all suffering from fever and ague, low fever, and dysentery. The passes have been issued principally for Toowoomba, Ipswich, and Brisbane. Very few of these people have been destitute, but all have been exceedingly ill and unfit for work of any kind. Up to the 31st of May, the amount of relief afforded by me to people actually distressed has not exceeded £12. From private advices, I understand that the people now on the railway works who are suffering from fever have it in a very violent form, and that although the numbers, of course, are few the disease is actually more virulent than ever. The hospital may be ready to receive patients in about a fortnight.

"I have, etc.,

"W. YALDWIN, P.M."

I think it will be conceded by all that the mortality amongst Europeans employed in opening new land is quite equal to the mortality amongst kanakas. The hon. member for South Brisbane referred the other day to the whole population—men, women, and children,—and that of course included very many who were not exposed to the vicissitudes of the climate like those engaged in agriculture. It cuts both ways. The land must be opened up. Someone must break it up, and bear the brunt of the battle. The hon. member for South Brisbane the other day said:—

"In this emergency I will take the liberty to suggest this: Let them sell their lands to small farmers, real *bona 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 know something about this question, and I know that 10s. a ton will pay the farmer well; but in many parts of the colony and in some seasons the cane is not of a density that will realise 10s. a ton. If the farmer can produce cane having a density of 10 degrees it will pay him, and it will also pay the mill-owner at 10s. a

ton; but I can assure the hon. gentleman that it cannot be realised. The hon. gentleman ought to know that, seeing that he has tried it himself and failed.

Mr. JORDAN: No.

Mr. ADAMS: The hon. gentleman tried it himself and he failed—I say that without fear of contradiction. The hon. gentleman is like the squatter who fails—he will do everything he possibly can against his fellow squatter who has succeeded. I happen to own a small plant myself, and before I erected that plant I went round to my neighbours, knowing I had not sufficient land to keep my plant going, and I asked them if they would grow cane and sell it to me in the event of my erecting a mill. I promised to pay them nothing less than 10s. a ton for a density of 10 degrees. They all jumped at the chance, but when the mill was on the ground the land rose in value. The consequence was that they all sold out to others. That has been the case in many instances that I could point out. The land has been actually offered at the paltry sum of 1d. per acre for rent, and people would not take it up to grow cane for the mill-owners. The hon. member for South Brisbane also said that the central mill system has not had a fair trial. Well, it has been four years at least upon trial, and it has been pretty clearly proved that it is an utter failure. The men who asked the Government to advance the money have distinctly declared that they will not grow cane, because they cannot grow it at a profit unless they can rely upon getting sufficient labour. When I first came to this colony agricultural labourers were paid the paltry sum of about £10 per annum, and surely we do not wish to see the colony go back to that. As a working man myself, I say that we do not want to bring European labour down to such a condition as it was in forty years ago. We should do all we can to have sufficient employment for the people in the colony, and to give them fair wages for that work. The hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, referred, when speaking upon this question, to some evidence given before the commission at Pialba. The part I refer to will be found on page 959 of *Hansard* of this session, and is as follows:—

"Then there is a German gentleman, of the name of Damm, who says:—

"If you like I will tell you the way I was treated with the first crop of sugar. The proprietor of the mill said he would take my first crop and crush it, and we agreed that I should have 13s. a ton for 10 per cent. density. I quite agreed to that. I knew that would pay me. He tested it with the saccharometer, but before doing so he used to mix the juice with rubbish, and so the saccharometer would not rise, and only showed 5 per cent. density. If he had allowed it to settle it would soon have shown more. I have seen it when settled show 5, 7, 8, and even 11 per cent. density. So he humbugged me altogether, and that is why I only averaged 7s. a ton."

I think that the hon. member for South Brisbane, seeing he was a planter himself for six years, will agree with me that the mill-owner did not humbug this man, but the man humbugged the members of the commission by placing that statement upon record. What rubbish, I would ask, could be put into the pans to reduce the density? Anyone who has any experience whatever with the growth and manufacture of sugar, will know perfectly well that nothing would reduce the density of the juice, unless perhaps it was water. Then what could this rubbish be which reduced the density of the juice? It must be water that was put in to reduce the density. I would ask, if a man was purchasing a crop of cane at 10s. per ton at 10 degrees density, what would be his profit if he got that cane at 5s. or 7s. 6d. a ton, as represented there, at 5 degrees density? Any man of any common

sense whatever must know that if the juice is reduced by water, the water will have to be evaporated before the juice can be got up to 10 degrees density again. And the labour and the fuel employed in the evaporation, and many other things, have to be taken into consideration. Instead of that man's evidence being reliable, it is most unreliable, because it would cost the planter something like one-third more to increase the density to 10 degrees. Every one who knows anything at all about sugar will agree with me that that is the case; there is no gainsaying it. It has also been stated by some hon. members that kanakas are very badly treated in the colony. No doubt they have been very badly treated, in the opinion of the hon. member for South Brisbane, who holds his hands up with holy horror when he speaks of it. But where do these complaints come from? I remember there was a missionary of the name of Paton. That gentleman made more noise in the colony than any other that I can remember, and on each and every occasion, where he has spoken or written on this subject, he has been refuted both by commissions and through the Press. I remember some years ago this gentleman made a big noise throughout the colony about one of his mission station boys being kidnapped from the station. He wrote to the Government of Queensland, and the Colonial Secretary of that day made inquiries as to the whereabouts of the boy. For a long time the boy was not to be found; but at length—about twelve months afterwards—he was found within about ten miles of Bundaberg. The police magistrate of Bundaberg was requested to inquire into the matter and report. He sent for the boy; the boy came down and was asked, "Why did you leave the station?" The only answer he got was, that the boy left the station simply because he could not stand the bastinado he got from the missionary; and not only he, but several others in the same position. That is a fact, and the boy left the station of his own free will. He could speak English almost as well as I can myself. After serving some two years and nine months with his employer, the employer engaged other Polynesians, among them a man and his wife. I am going to show that this boy was no fool. This boy took up with the other man's wife, and at the expiration of his three years he actually took the woman away in the middle of the night, went all over the town to try to get a clergyman to marry them according to the English law, and at last found one, and they were married. As to the morality of the kanakas, I maintain that the employers of kanaka labour throughout the colony do everything they possibly can for their moral welfare. At Bundaberg, a teacher is kept by the planters, who goes about from plantation to plantation night after night and the whole of Sunday, and every employer of Polynesian labour there contributes towards that teacher's support, and I am happy to say his labours have had a very good effect. I will not detain the House any longer. It is highly desirable that the Act should be extended for another five years. As I stated at the commencement of my remarks, a great deal can be done in five years. By the end of that time the land will be cleared, most of the stumps in the ground will have rotted, and the land will be fit to be cultivated. Therefore, I think that an extension of five years will not only be a benefit to the planters themselves, but a benefit to all classes of the community.

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has already spoken.

Mr. JORDAN: I take exception to a statement made by the hon. member for Bundaberg, and I want to know whether I may correct his misstatement.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member can do so with the permission of the House, but he cannot debate the question again, having already spoken.

Mr. JORDAN: I have before contradicted the misstatement which has been made in this House more than once. The hon. member says I failed at sugar-planting. I have denied that before distinctly. I said I did not make sugar-planting a success. So far from my having failed at sugar-planting, I sold my mill and plant for a sum which more than covered any loss I had when I was carrying it on myself, and I retain a large part of the property yet. I think the hon. gentleman should recall the statement he has made. I do not know whether you, Sir, think he ought to do so; but I have explained more than once in this House that I never failed at sugar-planting or any other business in which I have been engaged.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) said: Mr. Speaker,—I think this debate is going to finish without any practical result. It seems to be dragging its life out, like a man who is dying simply through old age, and before it dies I wish to say a few words. Hon. members who were in the House twelve or fourteen years ago will remember the debates that used to take place when the Polynesian or kanaka labour question was brought up, especially when Bills were introduced dealing with the subject; and it was something very amusing to see the sides which hon. gentlemen took, and the votes they gave on different phases of that question—members in this House who then took the position of leaders of what was called the "Liberal" side standing up in defence of certain phases of kanaka labour which the Government were trying to do away with, and members on what was called the "Conservative" side supporting the Government in trying to do away with the evils that existed in connection with the kanaka system. The same thing seems to exist still. They are still inconsistent. They were so inconsistent in those days that even leaders who denounced kanaka labour inside the House employed that labour outside the House. Inconsistency went so far as that.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: Who were they?

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: They sat beside the hon. gentleman when he was a Minister of the Crown.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: I have heard that stated before, but I never heard who they were.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: Shall I tell the hon. gentleman?

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: You are welcome.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: Your late colleague, Mr. Dickson.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: I have heard him deny it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: He could not; the evidence was too ocular to be denied. He certainly did not own plantations, but he employed kanaka labour, and he was not the only one of the hon. gentleman's supporters who did so. This kanaka question is a troublesome one, and I am very glad, therefore, that it has been decided by legislative enactment to be finished. I think also, that it would have been very much better had it been finished in 1877, when the hon. gentleman

now at the head of the Opposition drafted a Bill—I believe he was the author of it, because he understood it better than the hon. gentleman who introduced it, and I know I fathered it on him at that time—I say it would have been very much better if at that time, when he was asked to abolish kanaka labour, to restrict it in such a way that it would die out in a few years, he had done so; because at that time a very small amount of capital had been embarked in sugar plantations—I allude to 1877. It could not have been more than a few hundred thousand pounds; but within a year or two after that, sugar plantations seemed to get a “boom,” the same as squatting stations did; and they went up to great values, and a tremendous amount of money was invested in them. I say it was a great misfortune that the restriction in kanaka labour did not take place before that, because it would have prevented a great deal of the waste of capital which has taken place, and which is still taking place. But, no matter about that; we must face the circumstances as we now find them. The hon. gentleman could not make up his mind in 1877. He distinctly refused to restrict that labour, and I heard him say that he could not see his way to allow his intimate friends to do it. If he had done so, a very large amount of the capital that has been invested in the sugar industry—which amounts to £6,000,000 or £7,000,000—would have been saved. I think that is a misfortune, but it is one that cannot be remedied by repealing the measure which prohibits the extension of kanaka labour beyond 1890. I do not think the remedy is to be got by that means, and I think it would be a great pity if this debate finished without any practical result, because we are all agreed that every industry in the colony should be encouraged if it can be encouraged legitimately. The motion of the hon. member for Herbert, Mr. Cowley, is very harmless as it stands, and I would be prepared to vote for it as it stands, but the hon. member has advocated it in a very different way from what appears on the paper. The means which he suggests for encouraging the sugar industry is the means which the Government have determined not to adopt. Their minds are made up upon that point. My mind has always been made up on that subject. Although I regard kanaka labour as being the least injurious to the colony of all the kinds of coloured labour we have had, still it is just as well, since the enactment prohibiting it was made in 1884, that it should not be repealed—that the question should not be reopened. Then, how are we to encourage the sugar industry? I think it would be a good thing if we could encourage it in any way without violating the principle of the law we have established, and without going back to the system we have determined not to encourage any more. The hon. member for Rosewood suggested that we should pay bonuses on the exportation of sugar; but I do not think that is a remedy likely to meet with the approval of the people of the colony.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why not?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I am not prepared to go into the economical aspect of the question at present, but I do not think it is a proposition that would meet with general approval. I should think seriously, and more than once, before I gave my adhesion to a Bill that would grant bonuses for the exportation of sugar. If the industry itself cannot stand the same as other industries do, with the protection that is given generally by law, I think it will have to go down. But there is another means of dealing with the question in my estimation—of course I may be mistaken—but I will give it to the House for the

purpose of preventing this debate from being a mere academical debate, because it would be a great waste of time if it finished without coming to some conclusion. The planters say that if they are not allowed kanakas they will not be able to carry on their plantations at a profit. I believe they will not be able to make much profit, if they make any. I am certain that those who have paid very high prices for their plantations will not be able to make any profit at all, but those who have acquired their properties at moderate rates may be able to carry on at a profit. But we must take the whole industry, not merely those who have been fortunate enough to secure their plantations at low rates. I do not think the cane-fields in the Northern part of the colony, especially in the extreme North, are places where white men will voluntarily work. When I say “white men,” I mean white men of our own race—belonging to the British race. I am certain that they will not work in the cane-fields of the North if they can get any other employment, and I should be very sorry to see them doing that kind of work. But, as I have said in this House before, there are other kinds of work which are more suitable and fitting to people of our race than the work to which I have referred. The planters say that they cannot get the labour they want amongst our own countrymen, although they have tried. The hon. the leader of the Opposition has said that they did not try sincerely or strongly enough, but if, as they say, they have tried to get labourers from Germany and Scandinavia without success, the question is what other source of the supply of labour is in existence? I think there is another source, and I will point it out. The Government of Germany and the Government of Denmark would not permit their subjects to come here under the regulations which were framed, and very properly so too, I think. Those Governments then tried their best, and in fact are trying their best now, to prevent the great emigration that is going on from those countries. But there is another country in Europe from which there is a great emigration going on in spite of the Government. The Government there are as anxious to prevent emigration as the Government of Germany have been; but in spite of the efforts of the Government an immense emigration is going on to South America. I refer to the Government of Italy. The Italians are an honest, industrious, patient, plodding race of people, so far as the agriculturists are concerned. I do not now speak of the people in towns, because the people in the towns of any country are not the immigrants that we should try to get here. I think that if the planters tried their best to get the real agriculturists who are now going from Italy in thousands to South America—to Brazil, Monte Video, and the Argentine Republic, but especially to Brazil—they would be successful. I do not know what inducements are held out to them, or what is the encouragement they get—I merely state the fact that thousands of Italians are leaving Italy at the present time, and settling in Brazil. I am quite certain that the Queensland climate is equally as good as the climate of Brazil, and that the Queensland planters can offer quite as good facilities, in fact better, and give more encouragement to those people than they get by going to Brazil; because, by going to Brazil, they are simply taking the place of the slaves there, who have been liberated by decree of the Emperor a few years before the time established by law. The slaves have wandered into the towns, and their places are being taken by the Italians. I would not advocate that the Italians should come here as mere labourers. I do not advocate that at all. In Italy there is a system of

tenancy, which most hon. members, I daresay, know something about, called the Metayer system, under which the tenant is interested in the land, and is in partnership with the owner of the land. If the season is a good one he prospers concurrently with the landlord, and if it is a bad season the landlord suffers proportionately with the tenant. I think that if the planters were to set their minds seriously to work, and determine to carry on their plantations on the central mill or a similar system, by giving these agriculturists from Italy a certain number of acres to cultivate, they would probably be able to carry on their plantations as successfully as they have done hitherto. It would be an experiment, of course, and they would have to be assisted by the Government in the same way as the Germans or Scandinavians would have been assisted by the Government if they had come, that is, by free passages. It may seem strange to some members that I should advocate this, believing as I do that the central mill system has been a failure—a tremendous failure. From the time it was established up to the present there has been no serious attempt made by those concerned to cultivate the land by white labour. The intention of the Government who passed the measure granting £50,000 for the central sugar mill system was to test whether sugar could be grown at a profit and manufactured by white labour alone. That has not been tested yet. I have got the report of the head of the Department of Agriculture for last year, and he says distinctly that both the mills established in the Mackay district it was intended to carry on for that year by black labour grown cane. The acreage of land planted this year is so small that it will not maintain these mills working one-seventh of their time. Therefore, in reality, the money which has been invested by the Government in those mills has been thrown away, and will never be recovered by us. The men who have started these mills are not satisfied; they want more money. Now they have got the mills they want more money from the Government to make tramways. At the same time, the Government have not got any security, as it was intended they should have, over the land. They have no security whatever. If, instead of trying to continue that system, of people of our own race growing sugar without any assistance from coloured labour of any kind, the planters would try the other plan I have suggested, and bring over people from Italy who are accustomed to work in the fields under a hot sun, I believe they would be successful. Italy is not a very cool country, it is pretty hot there in summer, and the agriculturists, I believe, would be willing, with the prospect of becoming owners of the land, to work under certain terms, if those terms were such that ultimately those people should become the owners of the soil, and the planters be simply the manufacturers of the sugar. We would then have the planters the owners of the machinery and manufacturers of sugar, and the tenants or owners of the land simply the producers of the cane. If the planters adopted that suggestion, and acted upon it, I, as one member of the Government, would be willing to assist them in the experiment. I have not consulted my colleagues on the subject, and cannot, of course, state what their opinions are, but I believe that the suggestion is a good one, and that if tried honestly and fairly, it would meet the difficulty we have to face with regard to Polynesian labour, and it would be a real solution of the difficulty. The extension of the Polynesian Act cannot be adopted. The Polynesian trade is practically gone. As to the motion and the amendments before the House, I will state shortly how I intend to deal with

them. The last amendment—the one proposed by the hon. member for Leichhardt, Mr. Paul—is, of course, out of the question, as it practically means the extension of Polynesian labour. The amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition is one which I shall vote against, and I will give my reason. The hon. gentleman proposed that amendment immediately after the head of the Government had stated distinctly that the Government did not intend to re-open the coloured labour question by extending the Polynesian Labourers Act. I consider that the hon. gentleman insulted the Government by moving that amendment after the intention of the Government had been so plainly stated. I do not think he had any right to move it, unless he intended to insult the Government by saying in effect, "You have said what you do not mean, and I put this forward as a test to see whether you really do mean it or not." For that reason I shall vote against the amendment. I shall also vote against the motion, not because I think it is a motion that should be voted against, but because, though the motion in itself is harmless, underneath it means, from the advocacy of the mover, that the Polynesian Act should be extended. I shall therefore vote against all—the motion and the amendments—and leave as my contribution to this debate the suggestion which I have made with regard to the introduction of Italian agriculturists.

Mr. PHILP said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to add a few words to this debate. I think it well to get an expression of opinion from some members on the other side of the House who were absent during the former debate, and who have said privately that they were not opposed to the kanaka question. There are hon. members on the other side who have said they are not opposed to it, and I think we should have their contribution to the debate. There is another contribution I should like to put in *Hansard*—a contribution from a gentleman who has visited the whole of North Queensland, and more especially the sugar centres, and who is a correspondent of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. That gentleman, in a few words, seems to me to sum up the whole matter. His letters, to my mind, are much more forcible than any speeches which have been delivered here. The gentleman's name is Mr. Gilbert Parker. I do not know him personally, but he has been visiting North Queensland for the last three months, and he says, writing from Bundaberg:—

"Mr. Phillips's hotel is a kind of planter's house, and I had the good fortune to meet not only a number of planters there, but also many principal citizens, and some members of the Chamber of Commerce, and an irrigation enthusiast, who is trying to bring the Chaffey Brothers to Bundaberg on a joint stock scheme, to revolutionise the district. He has many followers, and there is a company being formed, composed of many of the principal planters. The promoters think that, with irrigation, they can defy the rainfall, and secure even crops. Meanwhile, however, the Bundaberg planters are in better heart than those of Mackay. They have not suffered up to this year so severely from drought, and they have some advantages on their side which will favour them even in the decline of the industry. Should the planters of the North fail labour will drift southwards, and there will be plenty of white men and kanakas, too, to be had for from 10s. to 15s. a week 'and found.' Even now, about Townsville and Mackay, owing to the closing of mills and plantations, Europeans can be got for 15s. a week 'and found.' The small farmers are throwing up their places, and are pushing into the towns, willing, let it be said, as they are some of the best men in the country—not 'unemployed' loafers—to do anything for bread. But that must have an end, and the Bundaberg planter should be alive to the fact that the age of cheap European labour has passed, and that though men may take 15s. a week, they only do so until they get enough to take them into places still further south. If you want to know what wages are in any part of the colony, go to the European labourers on a plantation, or the

rouseabouts on a squatter's run. They have friends in all the colonies, and they are thoroughly posted as to the labour market and the rate of wages. It appears reasonable to conclude that the Bundaberg planter must suffer from the same causes that bring injury to the Johnstone River, Herbert River, or Mackay planter. Even the drought has caught him heavily. The rain came late this year. Last year with them was a good season. The output was 15,790 tons. It is expected that this year's output will not be over 6,000 tons. The value of last year's sugar was £308,422, and at the same rate the value of this year's sugar will be about £125,000. This means, of course, that there will be a great deal of cane which will not be cut at all, and the closing of some mills, reduction of the number of men employed on the plantations generally. The total value of the mills and plantations, rolling stock, and implements, is estimated to be about £810,830. To this should be added the value of R. Cran's refinery, which is set down at £150,000, and we have a capital invested of £960,830. Yet this is the industry of which some politicians have said 'Let it go,' and of the owners of which 'They are better out of the country; they are only nigger-drivers and money-bleeders, anyway.' Fortunately, there are those who know better, and there is no Australian but should resent slanders cast on as fine a class of men as I ever met; as hardworking a body of pioneers as ever turned over money in a country. And there is no industry from which more money is turned over. Labourers, mechanics, tradespeople, wharf-hands, shippers, sailors, steamship companies, and through them another array of breadwinners are affected. No Australian can afford to be indifferent to this state of affairs, to the progress of the industries of the North, because what affects one colony for weal or woe affects the others. No colony can suffer without the others getting some reflected misfortune; nor can any colony prosper without portioning out some of its good luck to its neighbours. But looked at from the highest standpoint—that of a national unity, of common interests of federation—the Australian must be concerned in the progress or decadence of the great industries of this torrid north. Approaching the colony with such a spirit, one feels soundly interested in every indication that passes before him of success or failure. There are thirty-eight plantations in the Bundaberg district, and it is impossible to travel over them without being struck with that sense of great possibilities that one feels when scanning a vast area of splendid timber land or a section of the prairie covered with square miles of waving wheat.

"OUT ON THE PLANTATIONS.

"It has been my good luck to have no wet weather in Queensland, and my journeyings in the Bundaberg district were of the happiest so far as weather is concerned. As soon as one leaves the town the sugar country is struck."

Then follows some descriptive matter, and he goes on to say:—

"It is charged against the Queensland planter that he occupies too large areas of land in proportion to the amount that is under cane or wealth-producing. There is perhaps some reason in the charge, but inquiry would not show this thing to be a weighty influence towards depression. I turn up some notes at random, and I find figures bearing on this subject such as these:—Pleystowe, in the Mackay district, represents 4,000 acres, with 600 acres under sugar-cane; River Estate has 2,624 acres, with 1,500 under cane; Ashburton has 4,800 acres, with 1,740 acres under cultivation; Homebush has 9,717 acres, with 3,350 under cultivation; Victoria has 2,000 acres, with 900 under cultivation. In the Bundaberg district, Fairymead has 3,200 acres, with 1,252 under cultivation; Kalbar covers 1,008 acres, with 330 under cultivation; Bingera represents 2,658 acres, with 1,168 under cultivation. But, again, I find that there are plantations in both districts that are worked quite fully. In the Mackay region, however, there are very few, and the very large majority have not more than one-third of the land they occupy under cultivation, many of them not more than one-fifth, and several one-tenth, and less. The estates generally in the Bundaberg district are smaller than at Mackay, and the percentage of the occupied land under cultivation is much greater. For instance, there is no estate at Mackay so worked up to the hilt as the Hummock, which, out of 820 acres, has over 600 under cane. Charles Faulkner, of the Woodlands, has 350 acres, out of a total area of 372, under cane. Mr. A. P. Barton, of Mon Repos, on a six year old estate, has 490 acres, out of a total of 950, under cane and other agricultural products; and James Crane, of Duneraggan, has the very large number of 1,125 out of 1,287 acres under the plough. There can be no doubt that, generally speaking, the Bundaberg planters have profited by taking up and

attempting to work smaller estates than the Mackay men. It must be remembered, however, that all the land taken up in the Mackay district is not capable of being put under the plough. The country is hilly, and Bundaberg is one great plain. The interest on the capital put into this hilly land must not be calculated as upon the value of the land capable of producing cane. Talks with the Mackay and Bundaberg planters upon this theme went far to dissipate any undue importance being attached to this charge, though no doubt reckoning must be made with it. Besides, the planters took up land in large areas in the hope that they would be able to get it all under cane as years went on. That is quite natural. Men in agriculture and in pastoral pursuits do that the world over. Men take up a thousand acres of land, and work during the first five years perhaps not more than one-tenth of it. After a common sense fashion they take up land when it is to be had cheap and easily, and look forward to a yearly increase in cultivation.

"There is another phase of the question, however, which bears upon this matter just treated. It is held by those who criticise the planters that they have erected most expensive mills, put up the most expensive machinery, and generally secured a plant entirely out of proportion to the amount of land under cultivation, or to the pioneer conditions under which they work. There is force in this objection which cannot, it appears to me, be repelled by the arguments of the advocates of the planters. I spoke of the Racecourse central mill in my last article as an instance of this. There are mills closed in the Mackay, Bundaberg, and Maryborough districts, owing to the lack of cane to supply them. It would seem that, with the best intentions in the world, the planters of Queensland have determined to begin with the most modern and developed of machinery in a country the most undeveloped, in order to produce the best refined sugar, and so compete with the best productions in any part of the world. If the judgment of a layman may be taken for anything at all, I should say that an error has been made here, and that it had better paid the planters to have done as the planters in the Barbadoes are still doing—that is, producing raw sugar, and sending it to the refineries in the North. In talking yesterday with Mr. Anthony Musgrave, the late deputy-commissioner of New Guinea, and at present the secretary to the Government at Port Moresby, this matter was turned over. Mr. Musgrave, who in 1883 was in the Barbadoes and Jamaica, said that the planters there were working with windmills instead of steam power, and were producing coarse sugar, with coloured labour also, after primitive but paying methods. Visiting Halifax, Nova Scotia, in that year, he said there were in that port steamers bringing coarse sugar from China and Java—that is 15,000 miles—for refining. Against this the planters urge that it costs them just as much to ship coarse sugar as refined sugar, and that it pays them to refine their own sugar if they get enough cane, and so compete with the best sugars of the world. That is the rub: if enough can be grown, and if there are no droughts to ruin the crops. But this is just what the planters have had to contend with, and they have suffered accordingly. In the Bundaberg district the planters have grasped this principle to a certain extent. Many of them have refineries of their own, but there are others who send their cane-juice in to R. Cran's refinery in the town, and get their pay directly for it. This comes very near the central mill system. There are pipes laid down from the refinery seven miles east and south-east to the plantations, and the juice is pumped in. One can see how a refinery can stand with a number of large plantations at its back. There is the wise division of labour and responsibility, and the interest on machinery is divided among many; for, of course, all the planters indirectly share the cost of the plant through manufacturing with the refiner. This refinery turned out nearly 7,000 tons of sugar last year, or about half what was produced in the district, and about 250,000 gallons of molasses. Wages were paid to the extent of £10,584, and in 1887 about £15,000 wages were paid.

"Now, let us take one estate at random from my notes. There is about £130,000 invested in the River Estate, Mackay, and 450 tons of sugar were crushed and refined last year. That is, a plant of the best machinery was used to crush 450 tons of sugar. Up to a certain point there must be an expense in machinery which is common to the large or small mill, and it is in this that the small mills suffer. It is impressed on one very strongly that planters, if they go in for refining, must, if they expect to succeed, either have a very large area under cultivation, or else they must first crush and send their cane-juice to a central refinery, as at Bundaberg. But it may appear that I have departed somewhat from the conclusions I put in my first article on this subject,

when I stated that the drought and the fall in the price of sugar appeared to be the greatest factors in the present depression. In the main that still is true, for despite the great amount of money invested in machinery, and the heavy interest paid on borrowed capital invested in the good seasons, the planters make money even out of the comparatively small areas under cane. I must in justice say here that some planters, like Mr. Long and Mr. Robertson, of Habana, told me that in a good season they had all they could do to crush the cane and refine the sugar in the season, keeping open, as they did, their works night and day. I pick out a half-dozen of the largest planters, and I find put opposite their names such as this: '1888, no interest on money, but loss equal to 5 per cent. on the capital invested,' '1888, no interest, and not half the working expenses,' '1888, returned no interest,' 'for 1888, loss £1,400,' 'A loss of £8,000 on a capital of £35,000 in 1888.' I find very few planters being able to say, like Mr. Farquhar, of the Hummock: 'The plantation returned 8 per cent. of its value in 1888,' or as Andrew Gibson, of Bingera, 'on £73,000 capital invested there was interest of 8½ per cent. and 5 per cent. for depreciation in 1888.' These are the conspicuous exceptions to the run of planters both at Mackay and Bundaberg. It is notable in this connection that both these planters work their estates quite fully, and that Bingera has tramways and the most perfect English and Scottish machinery. The crushing machinery at the Hummock was manufactured at Maryborough.

"I was greatly impressed with Mr. Farquhar, of the Hummock. The whole place bore evidence of thrift, prudence, and economy; not that improvidence was observed at any of the plantations that I visited. While considering the success of these two planters in a season which was bad in Mackay and partially bad at Bundaberg, it must be set down that the Hummock sugar is sent to the Millaquin Refinery, while the Bingera sugar is refined on the estate. There were 300 acres of cane crushed at the Hummock and 766 at Bingera. These things are apt to throw into confusion a good many theories if we do not take them as instances and as relative in their significance, not absolute. They go, however, to show that either under the central refinery or under the local refinery system success can be obtained under normal circumstances.

"Every plantation that I have visited in Queensland bears tokens of thrift and endeavour. Through no shiftlessness or lack of intelligent management have planters come to grief. Mistakes they may have made, but they are mistakes that all men, all organisations, make in a young country, in which they must learn by experience the best way to develop it. And experience is a costly and merciless master. If our Governments of the past could be punished for their mistakes, what a holocaust of politicians there would be. Now, the Queensland planter, if he has here and there invested too much capital in machinery at the start, if he has taken up too much land, if he has attempted to force development and trade, he has done so with the best of intentions. To get rich? Yes. But few men work for anything else. Men, however, who get honestly rich in legitimate enterprise, and pay their workmen well at the same time, are doing their duty to their country, and are developing the resources of the country. And no man does more for his country than the agriculturist. He is not like the miner, who takes out the gold and coal and leaves a hole in the ground, and a hole only. The hole that he makes is filled up again, and it produces its atom of the general wealth again and again, that atom growing as the years go on. It may be said that the planter, more than any other agriculturist, exhausts the soil. That is quite true. I have seen vast tracts of land in the Southern United States completely sapped of their vitality—drained of their life. They had been planted with cane year after year and generation after generation, until the heart of the country was dried up. In those districts in Louisiana, for instance, where the land has not become exhausted, rotation of crops has been employed, and the land has been allowed to rest, or it has been let lie fallow for a time. I was told the same thing at Spreckles' plantation at Maui, in the Sandwich Islands, and at some other plantations on the Island of Hawaii. It might be told some of the enemies of the planters of Queensland that there is as much danger in cultivating a whole estate year after year up to the hilt as in carrying too big an estate and plant. There is no danger to be apprehended if a planter is seen to be only using two-thirds of his estate, provided he is reserving the land for cultivation while he lets the remainder rest. Now I shall go further, and say in defence of the planters here that many of them do just that, and are pursuing the policy of conservation of strength, while they are being rebuked in Parliament for reckless extravagance and locking up the resources

of the country. Foolish talk is that of locking up the resources of the country in the face of the vast areas of land lying unselected, unworked, in the light of the knowledge that all down the coast there are selections by the thousand upon which the conditions set by the Government have been performed by proxy, and that done the lands have been let lie unworked, untouched, by the hand of the settler or the agriculturist. That, if you please, is dangerous, is deadly to the progress of a country. A country never was killed by mistakes made in the course of a fair and honest development. In that course, I believe, the planter has trod, and it is impossible to have sympathy with those who cry 'Crucify them, crucify them.' The same tumult was raised against the western squatter of New South Wales. He was said to be a soured, greedy, undeserving land-grabbing citizen. He was said to misrepresent his position and exaggerate his wrongs. Yet he has been heard at last, and his claims have been to some extent met. So with the planter. I venture to say that those who read the report of the commission appointed to inquire into the state of the sugar industry last year with anything like fairness and research, must come to the conclusion that the planters deserve at least consideration; moreover, that they should be helped and not discouraged in this critical time. For if the industry dies, Queensland will receive such a blow as will stagger it for many a year. There is nothing yet to take its place. When one mine pegs out another is started, and capital is only transferred; but ruin to the sugar industry means ruin altogether, and a clean elimination. But will the planters be ruined, and are they being ruined, by any action of the Government?

"That is a question which is in debate now. The planters say that if they are denied kanaka labour they must close their plantations; the supporters of Sir Samuel Griffith say they need not do so, and even if that must be, it is better so than to have kanaka labour."

Mr. HODGKINSON: The present Government also say so.

Mr. PHILP: The writer goes on to say:—

"The Commissioners have said that the evidence of the planters has gone to show that they must have coloured labour, and they recognise the reasonableness of the planters' claim; but the chairman, Mr. W. H. Groom, dismisses the question thus: 'The question of coloured labour, so far as legislation is concerned, may be said to be practically closed. The people have already pronounced an authoritative opinion upon it, and the principal public men have, whenever opportunity has occurred, more or less emphatically declared that they are not disposed to re-open the subject.' Aside from the wisdom or unwisdom of having coloured labour, it must be seen that Mr. Groom's conclusions will not stand scrutiny. The Royal Commission was appointed to make a thorough inquiry into the condition of the sugar industry, that the Parliament and the people might be educated. In 1885, at the ballot box coloured labour was declared against on the ground of 'Queensland for the Queenslanders' and the importation of Polynesian labour was prohibited after the 31st of December, 1890. That was a matter of sentiment. But since then there has been much agitation, much discussion arising from the planters' protests. From these protests sprang the Royal Commission. Can the subject be then said to be 'practically closed'? Is it not now, after the report is published, that it should be discussed through the land? The public have their lesson; they must learn it before they are prepared to make definition of what should be—not of what must be. They have pronounced their 'must be'; the other is to be settled now. Because free-trade is declared for at the polls at one election, that is not always taken as the final declaration of the people. A country has veered round completely in three years from a policy that it declared for by large majorities. No question is ever finally closed in a young country so far as the opinion of the people is concerned. New circumstances, new lights, open up old questions, and the 'yes' of yesterday becomes the 'nay' of to-day; the 'depart' of to-day becomes the 'return' of to-morrow. If ever the coloured labour question should be discussed it is now when a mass of evidence lies before the people regarding it. That Parliament recognises this may be known from the fact that the question is being carried over from this session to the next in spite of the determined efforts of Sir Samuel Griffith to close it a couple of weeks ago.

"Whatever course the Parliament of Queensland pursues regarding this question, one must believe in ultimate justice to the planters, and the triumph of the

good sense of the people. The great trouble is at present that the mining community is arrayed against the agricultural community. The miners have no sympathy, no feeling with the tillers of the soil. Besides, they are combined, and they have the strength of combination. But in North Queensland I was told by those deeply interested in the separation movement that it was not so much the miner himself, not so much the ordinary member of the trades unions that caused antagonism, but the would-be leaders or demagogues. The *bond fide* leaders have been won over to see things in a certain light; but the would-be leaders, finding therein their opportunity for usurpation, straightway have stirred up trouble. There can be little doubt that the separation movement would have been much stronger if it had not been for rival leaders in the trades unions. And now let me sum up broadly the black details of the sugar industry in Queensland. At Cairns I heard of the Weary Bay plantation, once valued at £100,000, being closed. The Hop Wah plantation at Cairns is abandoned; and the mortgage on the Pyramid plantation has been foreclosed after an expenditure of £130,000 upon it. On the Herbert River the Garloch plantation has been closed; Hamleigh has been sold for one-tenth of its cost; and Macnorth for one-fourth of its cost. On the Burdekin Delta one of the largest plantations has been closed. The Pandora mill and the Yepoon plantation have gone down in the Rockhampton district. At Maryborough there is £50,000 worth of machinery lying idle, and that which is in use is worked at a loss. Against these ominous things we can only set down the fact that in the good seasons money was made in Mackay and Bundaberg, and that at these places and at Cairns, on the Johnstone River, and in some small districts on the Logan plantations are holding their own. Planters say that, given reciprocity with the other colonies and cheap labour, they can yet succeed, because the worst is over with them so far as experience and a knowledge of economical working is concerned. They are sure that they can, being granted these concessions, make the industry more than it has ever been to the country. This is reasonable. One looks with horror at the thought of the decline and fall of the industry. There is a feeling among some thinking men of the North that the labour question could be mastered by the importation of Europeans, Germans for instance, who should be given outright a selection of land after they had cultivated it for three or four years. They could sell their cane to the big planters or to the central mills. This is a scheme in the right direction, but would it succeed? We know where we are, but we know not where we may be. It could be tried, but it is not an entire solution of the difficulty. The planters have encouraged this small settlement and would be glad of it. They have not taken up such large areas of land that there is not plenty of room yet for the selector and prospective freeholder."

At 7 o'clock,

The SPEAKER said: In compliance with the Sessional Order the House will now proceed with the Government business.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

DAY DAWN FREEHOLD GOLD-MINING COMPANY'S RAILWAY BILL.

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

SUPREME COURT BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he had given notice of a new clause to follow clause 13, and one to follow clause 14. The two clauses of which he had given notice were merely re-enactments of clauses already in the Act of 1874, both referring to the Northern Supreme Court, and he had proposed to insert them in the Bill, because it would be more convenient to have them in the same measure, and so save reference having to be made to two statutes. The hon. member for Burrum, however, had

given notice of his intention to propose a new clause which was an improvement on the one he had intended to propose to follow clause 14, and on that account he (Sir S. W. Griffith) would not move his clause. He moved that the following new clause be inserted, to follow clause 13:—

The Governor in Council may from time to time appoint, for the purposes of the Northern court, such and so many duly qualified persons as may be requisite to perform within the Northern district the duties of sheriff, prothonotary, and registrar, and the duties of such other officers as may be necessary. And the officers so appointed shall have and perform within such district the like duties to those performed by the corresponding officers at Brisbane.

The officers already appointed for the purposes of the district assigned to the Northern judge shall be deemed to have been appointed for the purposes of the Northern court as hereby defined.

New clause put and passed.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH moved the insertion of the following new clause to follow the new clause last passed:—

Any matters depending in the Supreme Court at Brisbane may be transferred to the Northern court, and any matters depending in the Northern court may be transferred to the Supreme Court at Brisbane, in such manner as may be prescribed by rules of court.

Question put and passed.

Clause 14—"Construction of Acts"—passed as printed.

The HON. C. POWERS moved the insertion of the following new clause, to follow clause 14:—

Any writ or other process issued out of the office of the Northern court, or by any commissioner residing within the Northern district, shall be returnable in the office of the Northern court, but shall have full force and effect and may be enforced at any place within the colony: Provided that no petition for adjudication of insolvency against any debtor whose usual residence is not within the Northern district shall be made returnable elsewhere than at Brisbane."

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, clause 15 was amended to read as follows:—

"In the event of the illness or absence of any Northern judge, any other judge of the court may exercise the jurisdiction, powers, and authority of such Northern judge in any cause, matter, or proceeding depending in the Northern court."

On clause 16, as follows:—

"It shall be lawful for the judges of the court, or a majority of them, of whom the Chief Justice shall be one, from time to time to make all such rules of court as shall be necessary for regulating the forms of process, mode of pleading, and practice of the Northern court in all its various departments, and the duties of the officers thereof, and the costs of the proceedings therein, and such rules from time to time to repeal, vary, or alter, as occasion may require:

"Provided that any rules of court which at the commencement of this Act were in force within the Northern district, and which are not inconsistent with this Act or with any rules of court, may continue to be used and practised in such and the like cases, and for such and the like purposes as those to which they would have been applicable if this Act had not passed:

"Provided also that the Northern judges shall have full power and authority from time to time to make all such rules of court as may be necessary for regulating the sittings of the Northern court at Townsville, and the Northern judges in chambers, and of any circuit court holden within the Northern district, in such manner as they may agree, and, in the event of a difference between them, in such manner as the senior Northern judge may determine, and such rules from time to time to repeal, vary, or alter, as occasion may require."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that as the clause related to the making of rules for the conduct of proceedings in the Northern court, he thought it would be as well to provide that

one of the judges should be a judge of the Northern court. If there was any objection to an amendment to that effect he would not move it.

The PREMIER said the amendment suggested would be a distinct improvement. He moved that the words "and one of the Northern judges" be inserted after "Chief Justice."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause agreed to with consequential amendment.

On clause 17, as follows:—

"Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to restrain the authority or limit the jurisdiction of the court or of the judges thereof to make rules of court or otherwise regulate and dispose of the business therein."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said section 21 of the Act of 1874 was not repealed by the Bill. That section provided that—

"Subject to the provisions of this Act, the court holden before the Northern judge shall, so far as may be necessary, be deemed to be the Supreme Court of Queensland."

That provision seemed to stand alone, and should either be repealed or repealed and re-enacted. He did not think there was any necessity to re-enact it.

The HON. C. POWERS said there was no need to re-enact that section, and it could be repealed in the schedule. He moved that clause 17 be amended by inserting the words "the last preceding section of" after the word "in" in the 1st line. There were parts of the Bill which might restrain the authority of the court, and it was only intended that the clause should apply to the "last preceding section."

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

The schedule was passed, with a verbal consequential amendment.

The preamble was passed as printed.

The PREMIER moved that the Chairman leave the chair, and report the Bill to the House, with amendments.

Question put and passed.

RE-COMMITTAL.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to reconsider clauses 2 and 3, and to consider the introduction of a new clause.

On the motion of the PREMIER, clause 2 was amended to read as follows:—

"This Act, except any provision thereof which is declared to take effect from and after the passing thereof, shall commence and come into operation on the first day of December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine."

On clause 3, as follows:—

"In the construction of this Act, unless there is anything in the subject or context repugnant thereto, the several words and expressions hereinafter mentioned shall have and include the meanings following, that is to say—

'The Court' shall mean the Supreme Court of Queensland;

'The former Northern Judge' shall mean the Northern Judge for the time being appointed under the provisions of the Supreme Court Act of 1874;

'The Northern District' shall mean the district which has, at the commencement of this Act, been assigned to the former Northern Judge under the provisions of the Supreme Court Act of 1874, or such district as may from time to time be assigned by the Governor in Council as and to be the Northern District;

'The Northern Court' shall mean the Court holden within the Northern District;

'Rules of Court' shall include forms."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he had thought over the definition of the term "Northern court," and he was satisfied it was not satisfactory. He would not renew his arguments about the word "branch." He thought that was the best word, but perhaps this definition would be an improvement: "The Northern court' shall mean the court holden before the Northern judges as provided by this Act." He believed the use of the word "branch" would be a still greater improvement, but he would not press it. He therefore proposed the omission of the word "within," and the insertion of the word "before."

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH, the clause was further amended, by the omission of the word "district," and the insertion of the words "judges as provided by this Act."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The PREMIER moved the insertion, after clause 12, of the following new clause:—

If at any time upon the hearing of an appeal from the decision of the Northern court, the Supreme Court is holden before two judges only, and the judges are divided in opinion as to the decision to be given on any point, then, if the Northern judges are not divided in opinion on that point, the decision appealed from shall be affirmed.

Mr. HODGKINSON said it was rather difficult for a layman to speak on that subject, but he thought the Bill to a certain extent made the Northern court subordinate to the Southern branch. He knew that late amendments had tended to correct that; but presuming that there were two judges in Brisbane acting as the court of appeal, if one of those judges differed from the Chief Justice he was in a minority, and the appeal from the Northern to the Southern court would be virtually an appeal to the Chief Justice only. Neither of the Northern judges would have a word to say. He would suggest, with all deference to the legal gentleman in charge of the measure, that there should be as much possible perfect accord of opinion between the two branches of the Supreme Court. That was, that it consisted primarily of three judges in the South and two in the North, and in the event of any appeal from the North one of the Northern judges should come down South to take part in the hearing of the appeal—not the judge from whose decision the appeal was made, but his fellow judge. By doing that the court in Brisbane would be fully seized of the circumstances of the appeal, and the Northern judges would be kept in accord with what was going on in legal matters down South. The positions of those two gentlemen, isolated as the Northern judges would be, would be rendered much more advantageous to the Public Service if they had the opportunity of going to Brisbane and taking part in those appeals, and it would be a recognition that the Northern Supreme Court was not only a Northern Supreme Court, but still remained a part and parcel of the supreme judicature of the colony, and had an active interest in the decisions of the court as a whole. By the proposed system it seemed to him that in the event of a difference between the Chief Justice and one of the judges sitting in Brisbane, practically the whole matter would rest with the Chief Justice, because in the event of a difference the ruling must be that of the Chief Justice. They knew very well that one of the judges was going home directly, and there would practically only be two judges here, unless it was contemplated by the Government to appoint an acting judge. He hoped the Government would see the object he had in mind, and he thought it would commend itself to

them. What he maintained was, that there should be facilities for an interchange of opinion among the five judges. There would be many advantages derivable from an occasional meeting of the Northern court with the full court down South that would entirely outweigh the travelling expenses that would be incurred. Judges had the appointment of their own sittings. They sat about four times a year he believed, and the cost of a judge coming down from the North would be very trifling. The number of appeal cases to be heard were not many. Look at the cases heard lately. In one very great case an appeal was made to the court sitting as a full court—and it only occupied a week. It was very rarely that the sittings took a week. He hoped he had made himself clear to the hon. gentleman.

The HON. C. POWERS said the hon. gentleman had made himself perfectly clear. The first point was as to the Chief Justice overruling the decision of the two Northern judges. The clause proposed would get rid of that, because if the clause was not inserted and an appeal did come from the Northern courts, although the two judges might have been unanimous and the Chief Justice and one judge might differ, yet the Chief Justice could overrule the two Northern judges and one Southern judge. By the proposed amendment that difficulty would be got over. If the Chief Justice and the other judges disagreed, if that clause was passed, then the Northern court's decision was confirmed. That was that it was not interfered with so that the Chief Justice or any one judge could not overrule the judges of the North if they did not differ themselves. The opinion of the two Northern judges held good against the opinion of the judges down here. If the Northern judges were unanimous they overruled the decision given down here. A difficulty might of course arise if there were two judges trying the appeal in Brisbane, one not being the Chief Justice. The senior judge would overrule the other judge and the two Northern judges. The new clause got over that difficulty altogether, and if the judges in the North were unanimous their decision would stand, unless the judges here were unanimous also.

Mr. HODGKINSON: What would happen if the appeal was only from the decision of one judge in the North, and the judges here were divided in opinion?

The HON. C. POWERS said he presumed that the opinion of the Chief Justice, if there were only two judges here, would override the opinion of the others.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: No.

The HON. C. POWERS said that if the two judges here differed, the decision of the Chief Justice would override the others under the Act of 1874. The new clause got over the difficulty of one judge here overriding two judges in the North. With respect to the other question, the Government were anxious to see whether the courts could not be amalgamated in the way suggested by the hon. gentleman, by a judge from the North coming down here to sit in the appeal court. That was not altogether a question of expense, however. They would have to fix courts every three months or six months, as the case might be, and if a matter was to be held over until a Northern judge could come down here to sit in the appeal court it would give rise to a great deal of delay, and persons might take advantage of the delay to appeal. It was found it would not be practicable to do that without very greatly delaying the business of the North.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the new clause remedied a defect in the Bill which he had not seen yesterday. The effect of it would be that if the Northern judges sat together as an appeal court to decide a case and agreed, and then one of the parties appealed to Brisbane, it would take two judges here to overrule their decision. If the appeal was from the Northern court to three judges in Brisbane, the three judges would prevail. If the appeal was from a single Northern judge, and the court in Brisbane consisted of two judges only, and they were divided in opinion, then under the provisions of the Supreme Court Act of 1874 the decision appealed from would be affirmed, unless in certain cases which could not occur in this connection. One was if the judge whose decision was appealed from was one of the two judges exercising the appellate jurisdiction, and the other was, if the judge appealed from desired that the matter should be determined without reference to the fact that he had given the decision. The new clause put the two branches of the court as nearly as possible on precisely the same footing.

Mr. HODGKINSON said the hon. gentleman had hardly got at what he wanted. He wanted if possible to see a court of appeal in every case of three judges irrespective of the judge whose decision was appealed from, so that the case might be re-heard by a thoroughly impartial tribunal. The hon. gentleman had himself pointed out that to appeal against a man's decision and let him sit as one of the judges to whom the appeal was made would be to put him in a very peculiar position. If he gave way he would be a man whose opinion was easily upset, and if he was an obstinate man he would be of the same opinion still. It would be far more desirable, if it was possible, to arrange that any appeal should be heard before three judges, excluding the one from whom the party appealed.

The HON. C. POWERS said that by the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition yesterday, it had been provided that the appeal should be to the judges here, and they would have had nothing to do with the original hearing of the case. In some cases it might be a great advantage to have one of the Northern judges come down here for the purpose of placing his views before the court, but the difficulty was that they were so far only appointing two judges to the Northern court, and if one of them was brought down here on an appeal, it would take one judge away from Townsville, and at the same time the other judge might be away upon circuit. The proposal of the Bill was really that there should be always one judge at Townsville, and another on circuit in the North, so as not to interfere with business. So that unless there were three judges appointed to the Northern court, the idea of the hon. member for Burke, which was a very good one, seemed impracticable.

Mr. COWLEY said the matter was far from satisfactory, so far as it had yet been explained. What would be the result supposing there was an appeal from the court at Townsville, on a matter on which both Northern judges were agreed, and it was brought to Brisbane to be tried before three judges, and then suppose the majority of those three, of which the Chief Justice was not one, decided against the Northern judges? They would be in this position: They would have three judges, of whom the Chief Justice was one, having to submit to the ruling of two judges. That would be a strange position, and a very unsatisfactory one. He would much rather see an appeal from a decision in which the Northern judges were unanimous, made direct to the Privy Council. It was a

strange position to get into to have the Chief Justice and two Northern judges overruled by two judges in Brisbane.

New clause put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the report was adopted, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. W. Pattison) said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to further consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—This is the first opportunity since the return was laid on the table with respect to the revenue and expenditure of Queensland, apportioned in accordance with the proposed Decentralisation Bill, that I have had of referring to it; and it is a matter of such importance, that I feel bound to call attention to it on the first opportunity. I believe most members of the House are aware that the scheme of the Decentralisation Bill, which has been read a first time, is the same at that of the one which was read a first time last year, and which, so far as this matter is concerned, is practically the same Bill as was read a second time in the year 1887. The accounts of the different districts are kept in such a way as to show the general revenue of the whole colony and the receipts on account of the different districts on the one hand; and on the other the general expenditure relating to the whole colony and the expenditure relating to the different districts; so that instead of there being only one balance-sheet relating to the whole colony, there are four—one relating to the general account and three to the different districts. The accounts have been kept in that way though the Bill has not yet become law, and the result of the year's transactions under that scheme has been embodied in this return. This return shows some very extraordinary things, which are of importance to every part of the colony, to the South as much as to the North; and I think it is important that the colony should know what was the actual result of the financial transactions of last year, assuming the principles laid down by that Bill were fair. This return shows the revenue of the colony under the heads of general revenue, and under the heads of local revenue. The heads of general revenue are stamp duty, postage, electric telegraph receipts, marine board, graving dock, escort fees, fees of office, fines and forfeitures, and miscellaneous receipts, amounting altogether to £587,000. All the other receipts are treated as local; and the local revenue for the Southern district amounted to £1,792,000; that for the Central district amounted to £455,000, and that for the Northern district amounted to £780,000, making a total of £3,615,000. The expenditure is apportioned in the same way. The general expenditure came to £940,000; the expenditure for the Southern district to £1,580,000; that for the Central district to £402,000; and that for the Northern district to £575,000, making a total of £3,498,000. The net surplus on the whole transactions of the colony was £116,800. But on comparing the general receipts with the general expenditure, and the local revenue with the local expenditure, we get a very surprising result. It will be observed that the general revenue was less than the general expenditure. The general revenue was £587,000

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and the general expenditure was £940,000. By the conditions of the Bill, any deficiency in the general revenue must be made up by contributions from the different districts, according to the proportions specified in section 11 of the Bill. Last year there was a deficiency on general account of £353,000, which had to be made up by the different districts in the proportions specified; the sum of £209,000 was to be contributed by the Southern district, £53,000 by the Central district, and £91,000 by the Northern district. Table VI. of the return shows how the accounts stand after this has been done. Last year the revenue of the Southern district was £1,792,000, and the local expenditure was £1,580,000, showing a local surplus of £212,000. The proportion of deficiency on general account to be contributed by the Southern district was £209,000, leaving a surplus on the year's transactions of the Southern district of about £3,000. With reference to the Central district, the local revenue was £455,000, and the local expenditure £402,000, showing a local surplus of £53,500. Their proportion of deficiency on general account was £53,096, showing on the year's transactions a surplus on the accounts of the Central district of £407. When we look at the Northern district we find that local revenue was £780,000, the local expenditure £575,000, leaving a local surplus of £205,000. Their proportion of deficiency on general account was £91,000, showing a surplus contributed by the Northern district of £113,700. So that the net surplus of £116,000 odd on the year's transactions is made up of £2,719 contributed by the South, £407 contributed by the Central districts, and £113,720 contributed by the Northern district. That is a most unsatisfactory state of things for every part of the colony, for the South as well as for the North. It is unsatisfactory for the North, because it appears that the surplus revenue, which, according to the scheme of the Bill, properly belonged to them, has been absorbed in paying the general liabilities of the colony. It is most unsatisfactory to the South, because any action which will result in doing injustice to the North can only have the effect of embittering the feeling of one portion of the colony towards another, and intensifying the irritation that has for some time existed. We desire to do what is right and fair; and I do not believe there is a man in the South who desires to take a single farthing from the North. It is most important that we should know how these things stand. The next inquiry is: "How is this £113,720 made up?" And the answer is still more surprising. I find by the return laid on the table of the House on the 17th September, on the motion of the hon. member for Herbert, that during the same twelve months land was sold by auction in the Northern division of the colony to the extent of £127,000. The largest items are £44,000 in Cairns, £21,000 in Normanton, £31,000 in Townsville, and £5,000 in Cooktown—the total being £127,000. The total revenue from auction sales received in cash last year was £132,000, the total sales amounting to £190,000; so that the greater part of this enormous revenue from land sales was realised from the sale of land in the North. I am, of course, aware that the whole of this £127,000 was not paid in cash, but a very large portion of it was. And this is where this great surplus of £116,000 came from. Out of that £116,000 no less than £113,700 was derived from the North, and the greater part of that was obtained from the excessive forced sales of land in that part of the colony. I maintain that there is no one in this colony who desires that our accounts should be put straight by forced sales of land in the North,

or, in fact, in any part of the colony, but it is especially unfair to make such forced sales in the North. This money is paid into the Treasury, and then the Government turn round and say, "What splendid financiers we are! We have only been in office for twelve months, and we have already reduced the deficiency in the general revenue of the colony by £116,000." But how have they done it? By forced sales of land in the North—which is highly improper in principle; but it is especially unfair, as they have taken away that money from that part of the colony. If this is a specimen of the financial ability of the Government, they have shown their utter incompetence to conduct the finances of the colony.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. J. Donaldson): What about the last Government?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: A previous Government endeavoured to reduce a deficit, and to clear off the liabilities of the colony by a similar process. They borrowed nearly £400,000, and paid that into the Treasury, and called that financing, and the balance was made up by forced sales of land in the same way as the present Government have done. It seems this is the only resource of the Government—to raise revenue from forced sales of land. It is apparent from this that the tariff has had nothing whatever to do with the surplus. The tariff has done nothing to relieve the revenue. If it had not been for these forced land sales in the colony, the expenditure for the year would have been about equal to the revenue. I am perfectly aware—and so are all those who take the trouble to consider the matter a little more in detail—that the case is really worse than it appears by this return, because in the return all the Customs revenue collected in the Southern division of the colony—including the Customs revenue paid here on goods re-exported coastwise to the North—is credited to the South. Of course we do not know exactly how much of that should be credited to the North.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: That always has been done.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: The amount is not known, because there is no law providing for the ascertainment of how much should be credited to the different districts. I believe, however, that the amount which is credited to the South is diminishing year by year, because direct imports in the North are increasing; but still it is quite certain that it is a considerable amount, so that really the only advance which has been made on last year's financial transactions has been derived entirely from the improper dealings by the Government with the estate of the colony, and especially that of the North. Apart from that, there has been no improvement in the financial condition of the colony. This shows, to my mind, that it is quite time the financial position of the colony was seriously considered, and considered a great deal more seriously than it has apparently been by the Government during either last year or the present.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Or for the last five years.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Not altogether during the last five years. I am more and more impressed with the necessity of considering the finances of the colony, when I see what is going on. It is time that the matter should be taken in hand. It is quite evident that we have been drifting during the last twelve months.

Mr. PHILP: For twelve years.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I am speaking especially of the last twelve months. It

is no use saying "you are another." That kind of argument will not do. The people of this country do not want to listen to recriminations of "It is your fault," or "It is someone else's fault." If things are done wrong, they want them to be put right, and they do not care who puts them right. I am afraid the Minister for Lands—who seems to be the great financier of the Government, judging by this return—is not the man to put things right. I should be sorry to say it seriously, but if a person were inclined to impute evil motives to him, one might think that the Minister for Lands, who is known to be a great advocate of separation, had been deliberately forging a weapon for the hands of the separationists. I do not seriously impute that to the hon. gentleman, because I believe he has been compelled by his colleagues, by some means or other, to bring money in so as to make an apparent surplus, on the probability that the people would not take much trouble to inquire where the surplus came from, so long as there was a surplus, because there is no doubt that a great many people do not trouble themselves about details. They merely look at the result, and if that shows a surplus, they think the Government are accomplished financiers. In the interests of all parts of the colony alike, it is very important that this state of things should not be continued. I do not believe in separation at the present time, and looking at the situation from the point of view of one opposed to separation, I object in the strongest manner to this kind of unfair dealing, because we are forging weapons, whether intentionally or not, in favour of separation. Some hon. members may like it, and be quite willing to see injustice done if it supplies them with arms; but that is not the feeling among members generally, or of the country as a whole. If we are to part, I hope we shall part good friends, and not with any rankling feeling of injustice, and therefore I deprecate anything like injustice being done, and certainly injustice has been done. I have called attention to this matter because I consider it is of very great importance, and I do it at the very earliest opportunity. I do it principally with the intention of insisting upon the necessity for a revision of our financial position. Now that it has been practically recognised that there should be some sort of proportion between the contributions of the different parts of the colony and the expenditure within those districts—it is, I think, generally recognised all round this House, although there may be a difference of opinion as to the precise mode of finding that proportion, that there should be some proportion between the revenue received from the different parts of the colony and the money expended in those districts—it is the duty of the Government and of the Colonial Treasurer, who has charge of the finances of the Government, to keep within their grasp the manner in which the money has been raised and the way in which it is expended, so that no injustice of this kind may be done. If that is not done we shall certainly increase very seriously the difficulties between the different parts of the colony, and we shall decrease the good feeling which, I think, generally exists at present. From the point of view of those who do not believe in separation we are doing the very worst thing which can be done by those who wish that this colony should continue one and undivided.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. W. Pattison) said: Mr. Speaker,—It is not at all astonishing that the leader of the Opposition should be somewhat startled by the

returns laid on the table of the House. When first the tables were placed in my hands I was very much astonished also with them, and, as I informed the leader of the Opposition previously, they were of such a startling nature that I placed them in the hands of the Audit Office that they might be gone through carefully to find whether there were any errors in them or not. That was the cause of the delay, otherwise the tables would have been furnished to hon. members at all events two or three weeks before they actually were. In going through the tables, which I have done casually, I can fully understand the objection of many Northern members that the North was being pilfered for the benefit of the South. To some extent I have always believed that they paid more than their fair proportion of the taxation of the colony. We know very well that they are the largest consumers of dutiable goods. This table does not, I contend, properly represent the amount they have contributed to the revenue of the colony. If we had the means of showing accurately what they have contributed, I am sure the balance would be very much more in their favour than it is. The large quantity of goods that goes North, on which Customs duty is paid in Brisbane, is not taken into consideration at all; Brisbane gets the full benefit of that. The tables, so far as they go, are a truthful statement, as far as the Treasury can furnish it, to enable hon. members to compare the contributions to revenue and expenditure of the Northern, Central, and Southern districts. Whether they may have the effect of furthering the cause of separation or not, I will not offer an opinion upon. No doubt they will furnish a very powerful argument to Northern members who are in favour of it, and I have no doubt they will also use the tables supplied by the leader of the Opposition himself with similar force and effect. It will certainly carry conviction to the minds of the people in the North that their statement is not altogether without foundation that they are contributing unduly to support the South in its expenditure on account of its policy of centralisation. It is one of those evils that the Decentralisation Bill, if carried into law, would remedy. It is a matter of regret that that Bill was not pushed through this session, but, without further going into the matter, hon. members will see the utter impossibility of making such an effort this session. So far as the sales of land are concerned, the late Treasurer, I think, in framing his Estimates, calculated upon receiving £100,000 from the sale of land. We have exceeded that amount by £39,000—not a large sum, considering the success of some of those sales. Possibly, if the sales had been carried out under the old system, the £100,000 would not have been exceeded. It would possibly not have been reached. But on the new terms of payment given by the present Minister for Lands, the lands sold—notably at Cairns and other Northern towns—have realised prices far in excess of what they would otherwise have done. The same quantity of land sold under the old system would have realised a great deal less money. And yet the hon. gentleman accuses the Government of squandering the public estate for the purpose of, what? Getting a revenue. The state the hon. gentleman left the Treasury in was such that the Government had to cast about and get revenue from some source; and if the hon. gentleman will only look plain facts in the face, he must admit that the policy of alienation of land will give effect to his long-cherished idea of a land tax coming into force. Until we alienate considerably more land than we have already alienated, a land tax is an utter impossibility, and would be a farce. That is my opinion, whether right or wrong. The utmost the hon.

gentleman expected to get from his land tax, in making his Financial Statement, was £100,000, or a little more.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I gave £100,000 as a rough estimate.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: How far would that have gone to make up the revenue required to carry on the Government of the country? It would have been almost a drop in the bucket. We have only a surplus of £116,000; still it is the first time for years that we have had a surplus, and but for our scheme of taxation and the land sales we should have had a further deficit, so far as my memory serves me, of about £190,000. Therefore I say our altered policy of finance has simply increased the revenue to the extent of about £320,000. Perhaps we ought to have done more, but we did the best we possibly could in a moment of emergency. We found that the finances of the country were in such a state that they required very careful handling; and although our scheme of taxation may be ridiculed and laughed at, still I would like to see what other scheme the leader of the Opposition could have proposed that would have led to the result we have attained. We have turned what would have been a deficit of nearly £200,000 into a surplus of £116,000. That is doing something; and we could only carry it out through the Customs or by the sale of land in moderate quantities, not in large quantities. It is not the large amount of land we have sold, but the largely increased prices we have obtained through the liberal terms offered, that have swollen the land revenue. That deals with that part of the hon. gentleman's objection. It is not necessary that I should go into it at great length. I daresay that nothing the present Ministry might do would be entirely satisfactory to the hon. gentleman, and I suppose the reverse would be the case supposing we were criticising his financial policy. Certainly we have seen nothing in his past financial management to lead us to follow the example he set us. We have endeavoured, as far as we possibly could, to widely depart from his scheme of finance, and I suppose the same feeling that actuated us in the past will actuate us in the future. If the hon. gentleman can show us in what way we have made our mistakes, and what road we should follow to better our position, I am sure I should return him my best thanks. But hitherto the hon. gentleman has not appeared at his best as a financier; and although we may not have done the best we possibly could—I will admit that for argument sake—we have endeavoured to do so, and certainly I claim this for the Government, that we have done a great deal better than the hon. gentleman could have done, supposing he had had our position.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad the hon. gentleman has called attention to this return. It would have been the duty of some one to have done so—some Northern member, perhaps—but as the hon. gentleman has taken it upon himself, there seems no doubt that the discussion upon it will occupy the rest of the evening. There is certainly a very strong case made out. I just want to say a few words about separation and decentralisation, which the hon. gentleman has spoken of. I am an advocate for separation, as well as the Minister for Lands. That is a well-known fact; I do not disguise it. I believe the only remedy for maladministration of revenue, especially in the North, is separation. It does not matter what Government is in power, as long as the present system of Government prevails, there must be a maladministration of revenue,

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: It was never so bad as it has been this year.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: The hon. gentleman assumes a position which he has no right to assume. It has been as bad as this every year for fifteen or twenty years past in proportion to population.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: No.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: Yes; and as the population increases, so does the injustice to the North increase.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I know the contrary.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: The hon. gentleman does not know much about this question, but I am glad to see he is beginning to learn.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I learned a good deal about it while I was at the Treasury.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: The hon. gentleman is now learning still more. The case stands actually a great deal worse than these figures show. The hon. gentleman seems to be under the impression that because there are direct shipments to the North, therefore the amount of duty that is paid in the South for goods consumed in the North has been less. But that is not the case. The population of the North has increased; shipments have increased, and the coasting trade has increased in proportion to the trade of the British India Company. Not a single vessel in the coasting trade has been put off; they have increased in number and shipments have increased in value, and I maintain, and will maintain until the accounts prove to the contrary, that the North is entitled to at least 20 per cent. more of Customs duty than it receives credit for. Therefore there is a credit balance of £188,000 due to the North on the year just passed. I say I am an advocate for separation, but I do not believe separation will be obtained easily or immediately; therefore I am also a strong advocate for decentralisation. The only chance the North has of obtaining fair administration in matters of finance until separation takes place is through the Decentralisation Bill which has been introduced, and which I hope will pass next session. I know there are some members of this House who do not believe in decentralisation. They are under the illusion that separation can be obtained very easily, but I think the debate that took place last night was quite sufficient to show the contrary. The North will never get separation until it is united, and until it gets rid of the foolish and insane jealousy which exists with regard to Townsville. Whether Townsville is deserving of the jealousy that exists in the North against it or not, it is a fact that there will be no separation until there is unison, and there will be no unison while that jealousy prevails. Is Townsville, for the purpose of doing away with this jealousy, to wipe itself out of existence—the existence which the hon. member for Charters Towers, Hon. A. Rutledge, said last night it should never have come into. Townsville has done all it could to try and drive away that spirit of jealousy. That jealousy arises in connection with the question of the seat of government for the new colony, and I, as a representative of Townsville, and as the first public man who mooted the question of separation, declare that the seat of government of the new colony should be in none of the existing towns in the Northern part of the colony. It should be selected in some place away from the coast, the same as the American Government selected Washington, and as many of the States there also selected as the seat

of government not the largest or the most important commercial towns in the State. I advocated that in the presence of my constituents. I told them distinctly that I would never advocate Townsville being the capital of the new colony, and they agreed with me. They gave me full permission to advocate that in any way I liked. What more can the people of Townsville do? They gave me full liberty in that respect, in the face of the jealousy which I am sorry to say exists against them in the North. I say that separation, in my estimation, cannot be obtained easily or soon, and I think the next best thing to do is to decentralise as much as possible in the meantime—until separation can be obtained. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Opposition is not acting fairly when he says that probably the Minister for Lands is working insidiously in favour of separation.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I did not say so; I disclaimed it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: The hon. gentleman should not have put it hypothetically as he did. I know his disclaimer very well. I could say many things with a disclaimer which I do not wish to say. It was an unfair thing to say in any case. There is no member of the Government working insidiously for separation, but there is no member of the Government working against it; that is, no member of it who does not believe in separation. I am certain that we shall all work sincerely and honestly together in trying to obtain decentralisation early next session.

MR. O'SULLIVAN: I am sure you won't.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: The hon. member for Stanley may try his best to prevent it, but he will have to get a few members to help him before he is able to do so. As to the question of selling lands, I do not think I ever heard anything so cool in this House as the hon. the leader of the Opposition to get up and talk about selling the public lands, and then say there must be no recrimination. He said in effect: "I must be allowed to criminate, but you must not recriminate." Did not the late Government sell all the lands they could put their hands on, even to the land at the railway station, which we have been obliged to buy back?

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: How often have we heard that?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: How often have we heard the other story? As often as the one story is told so often must the other story be told also. I am not going back to the Roma land sales, but refer only to the railway station land in Roma street, which the hon. gentleman sold when he could get no more land to sell; and to the fact that his Minister for Lands told us that if the Treasurer had told him to sell the Botanical Gardens he would have done it.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Do you hold me responsible for that?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I think the hon. gentleman should hold his tongue about selling land. I know he has got into his head some doctrinaire ideas about a land tax and land nationalisation, but he should keep fads of that kind to himself. They are not practicable at present; when they are practicable it will be quite time enough for him to introduce them into this House. Until then he might just as well get rid of those doctrinaire notions which may do very well for discussion in debating societies or schools of art. I am certain that the great majority of the Northern members in this Chamber will assist

the Government in trying to pass the Decentralisation Bill early next session. There may be one or two members who feel themselves pledged so much to separation—as the hon. member for Stanley feels himself—that they will not vote for that measure; but I hope that every Northern member will vote for it, and that the Southern members will assist them; because, although I do not give the whole of the South the same credit as the hon. gentleman does for not doing anything to injure the North, still I think they are better pleased if the balance is against the North than if it is against the South. I feel quite confident of that, and as they have had that feeling so long I believe there will be trouble in getting some of them to give it up; but I hope there will be enough spirit of justice in members on both sides to assist the Government in forcing that Bill through early next session, so as to remedy as far as possible the grievances arising from mal-administration of the finances which exist, owing to our present system of government. That measure will not be much good unless the second part is carried out, and I do not know whether the hon. the leader of the Opposition favours that or not. That is the system of giving the members for the district power to apportion the expenditure according to the revenue. If that is not carried the Bill will be useless. It will be simply keeping the accounts without Northern members having any more power than they have now. But if the Bill pass with the second part complete, as I hope it will, then members for the Northern, Central, and Southern districts will be able to say when they have a surplus in their respective districts, how it is to be apportioned, and if they have a deficit they must stand the consequences and work it out. I am glad the hon. gentleman raised this question, because it is a most important one. The Bill would have gone on this session only for the ill health of the hon. member for North Brisbane, Sir Thomas McLlwraith, who had the measure in hand. At most periods during the early part of the session he was not in sufficiently good health to go on with the measure, especially after putting through the Brisbane Water Supply Bill, and I think most hon. members will agree with me that it would scarcely be fair to ask the Government, after he left, and with only such short notice, to go on with the Bill. But the House may rest assured that there will be no delay next session in bringing forward the Bill.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I think that never from the time I came into this House until this hour have I heard so confounding or misleading a speech as that which I have just heard from the Minister for Mines and Works. I am awfully sorry that I have not got the ability to follow the hon. gentleman. Certainly he was drawn out by the leader of the Opposition, but I believe that they are both, if I am not unparliamentary in using the words, humbugs. At any rate their speeches are misleading. I can faithfully promise both hon. gentlemen that if I should live to be here next session there is not a single clause of the Decentralisation Bill that I will not oppose. I believe that it is conceived in—well, I cannot trust myself to brand it as it should be branded without being unparliamentary, and probably I had better leave it alone. It was suggested by the honest, open, manly demand made by the North for separation. What is the demand made by the North for separation to-day, but the demand that we made ourselves when Queensland was separated from New South Wales? There is no question ever comes before this House, but it is said that the North is deceived and overridden by the South; the South takes away all their money, and this,

that, and the other thing. From the day that I came into this House and heard that, I was prepared to let the North go. The Decentralisation Bill, this adjustment of accounts between the three districts of the colony, is simply a blind for the North, and possibly for the South also. Why this kind of decentralisation took place once in New Zealand, and was a complete failure, and it always will be a complete failure. Is it not as clear as daylight that the North at the present moment is ripe for separation? And why should not the North get separation? Let it go about its business. When a member of a family arrives at a certain age—twenty-one years—he goes about his business, and why should not the North go about its business? I cannot follow the figures of the leader of the Opposition, but I think he should leave those figures to the very able gentleman who sits at the back of him. The hon. gentleman gets into a mess, an awful mess, when he goes into figures, and I never could understand his figures. Figures are not his hobby, are not in his line, and the consequence is that he so confuses us when he handles them, that we cannot follow him. I know I have not the intellect to follow him, but I think there are gentlemen not far from him whose figures I could follow splendidly. However, I only rose for the purpose of giving the Minister for Mines and Works warning beforehand, that there is not a single clause of the Decentralisation Bill which I shall not oppose if I live to see it introduced into the House.

Mr. HODGKINSON said: Mr. Speaker,—We have had a financial debate this evening, and it is evident to this House that both sides of the House are now anxious to assure the North of their sympathy, and to recognise that the contention of the Northern members for the last sixteen years is not altogether unfounded. The Minister for Mines and Works stated very clearly that he is in favour of the decentralisation measure, and always has been, but owing to one of those unfortunate accidents which always appear to occur whenever the North is in question, except at the period of a general election, when both sides are only too ardent in their professions of affection for her, this Decentralisation Bill has been postponed till next session. The evil day is put off, probably it will be over and over again, until it has become a matter of urgent necessity. I do not accept the excuse made by the Minister for Mines and Works in the least degree. It would be very desirable that a statesman of the calibre of the hon. member for North Brisbane, Sir Thomas McLlwraith, should introduce a measure of that kind, which commends itself to the support of a great many members of the Assembly, but I hold that there is no man more fitted to bring forward such a Bill than the Minister for Mines and Works. The hon. gentleman is infinitely better fitted to deal with such a Bill than the late Vice-President of the Executive Council. In the first place, the abilities of the hon. gentleman are such that he need not fear competition with those of any other member of this Assembly; in the second place, his knowledge of the North is greater than that, perhaps, of nine-tenths of the members of the Assembly; and, in the third place, he is recognised in the North as the leading representative of the one portion of the North which has retarded separation through its gross selfishness, and its desire to obtain for itself more than its share, in comparison with the rest of the North. I will tell the House why I object to the Decentralisation Bill. But, before I do that, I would ask how is it that the consideration of this Bill did not come on at an early period of the session? The House was prepared to discuss it; the whole of the North was waiting

for the discussion, and it was never dreamt for one moment that the session would pass and such an important matter be left in abeyance till next session. It is simply a repetition of the old game that has been played by both parties, without any difference, from the very year in which I first had the honour of a seat in this House. At one time the North has been told that "Short is your friend," and at the next "Codlin is your friend," and between Short and Codlin the North has fallen to the ground. We have a great many sympathisers in this House, but there are also a great many members who, whenever we attempt to raise our voices for the North, receive our remarks with sneers, and taunt us with making perpetual references to the North; and during all this session, in spite of the financial condition of the colony, we have been passing larger sums of money for expenditure in other parts of the colony than are recognised, even now, as fair to the North. It is simply a shadow, without any body or substance in it. The idea is, in the first place, the instituting of what we are thoroughly sick of—a new system of accounts. We all know perfectly well that if you only get a sufficiently able actuary, you can make figures prove anything you like. I have no more belief in those figures, although they speak in favour of the North, than if I were blindfolded and drew them up at haphazard. They simply recognise, because it is impossible to deny, to a certain extent, the claims the Northern members always set out. But they are not the whole truth. I do not pretend to be qualified to act as an actuary, but even on looking at them with merely a glance or two, I see statements that I know to be incorrect. I can see amounts credited to general revenue that ought to be credited to Northern receipts. But it is just this: Make up the accounts how you like, after all they are nothing but accounts. The North is none the richer because you show a balance of £116,000 to her credit, and she never will be richer for all the balances you ever choose to show on a piece of official paper printed at the Government Printing Office. What we want is to have the cash in our own hands and spend it as we think best for the requirements of our own territory, and pay no more than a fair proportion towards the general expenditure of the colony. If you want to make a united colony treat us in this way, and we will meet you on every subject. What is the great remedy in this Bill? It is the formation of grand committees, and what are these grand committees? Has anybody studied the Bill? Are they anything but an attempt to relieve the Government of the trouble of making a statement of division of the revenue? Before that statement is adopted, after all, it will have to go to the vote of the House. There are equally ardent supporters of the North sitting on either side of the House, and we are only separated by little petty points of political dissension that should sink into insignificance before the great cause we are all here to advocate. The same troubles will arise, the matter will have to go to the vote, and in a vote the North must always get the worst of it. I say it without intending any stigma upon any hon. gentleman, but out of the body of this House of seventy-two members, there is a solid phalanx of sixteen members who virtually represent the city of Brisbane. I do not say it in the way of unjust criticism; but it is to their interest, and it is their duty in all matters affecting the city of Brisbane, to vote together, and they are recruited by large numbers of other members who, although they do not represent the city of Brisbane or its suburbs, have interests in Brisbane, which lead them in any case in which Brisbane is concerned to vote on the side of those hon. gentlemen. Now, it is simply occupying the time of this

House to no purpose even to briefly allude to the large items that have been voted most cheerfully by both sides of the House at various times for expenditure in the Southern part of the colony. The other day we passed without dissent a vote of nearly £300,000 for the Brisbane Waterworks. We know perfectly well before those works are completed, that that expenditure will have mounted up to very close upon a million of money, because the reason which made many members vote in support of that resolution, was simply this—the capability of the extension of those works to the suburbs of Brisbane, and each suburb to which those works are extended, means additional expenditure. Why should we support that? Because we wish to show these people that we have no petty jealousy. We have broad and liberal ideas, and we are not attempting to make a bargain with those hon. members; but we, to a certain extent, throw ourselves upon their honour. We say, "We have done this, now you treat us with common justice in our requirements in the North." But this is no time to discuss the Decentralisation Bill. I have only just barely intimated what I consider the bad points in which it has utterly failed to carry out the purposes which it is intended to effect. But on the question of separation, we have had no field night on the question of separation yet. I do not know why. The sugar debate has been very dreary, with the exception of one or two able speeches from the chairman of the Commission, the hon. member for Herbert, and from the hon. junior member for Townsville, and one or two others; but certainly that subject has occupied a great deal of the time of this House, and did not lead to the question of separation. Now, the reason why the colony is divided upon the question of separation is simply this: that there are many members of this House who would welcome separation if separation could be agreed upon with certain restrictions. We shall never expect separation so long as it is accompanied by any doubt upon the question of the employment of black labour. That is the point at issue between the two sides of opinion. Now, we know perfectly well, and I mention it again simply as an historical fact, and not as a matter of reproach, that the representatives of the north-eastern coast, that is to say of that portion of the colony which is devoted to tropical agriculture, and the representatives of the great commercial outlets which depend upon commerce, and upon the sugar industry for a great portion of their commerce—are distinctly in favour of the employment of black labour, and we know perfectly well that their fidelity to the present Government never received such a shock as when the Government carried out their election pledge against black labour. I admire the Government for that. I expected nothing else from them, and I was sorry to see the debate prolonged after that declaration had been made, because it could not be expected that the opinion of the Government would change or fluctuate like the wind. But we are frightened of any separation of the colony under the auspices of the Separation League, bred in Townsville, nourished in Townsville, and composed of Townsville people. We are frightened of the black labour question—of raising a second Brisbane slavery scare—for slavery it is, neither more nor less. If it is not taking these islanders from their homes by force, it is by decoying them under false pretences. There was a reference made by a gentleman I have a great respect for, the hon. member for Herbert, who said, "If you are so certain that you have a majority in the North upon this question, why do you hesitate in accepting separation?" That hon. gentleman must not forget that other people have voices in this question besides Northern

members. The whole of Australia has a voice in this question, and the whole of Australia has a right to determine whether any portion of this soil shall be defiled by the taint of black labour, and that at this time the question is very critical. We know perfectly well how bigoted these people are. Although a large number of persons go about under the guise of piety and decency, they really worship but one God, and that is the god Mammon. We know perfectly well that their advocates on the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Melbourne Argus* are skilled and able writers, who write up the interests of the planters, and decry anybody who says one word against interference with the sugar industry. There is not a single correspondence letter or leading article written on the subject but what is written distinctly in the interests of these men, padded by references to the leader of the Opposition, who appears in their eyes to be responsible for all these evils. They forget that the Government sit there solely by virtue of their declarations, that they never would have black labour again. Had they gone back upon that decision, they never would have mounted to those benches against the public outcry. As I have said, if you read the *Townsville Press*, and a very able Press it is, you will find that the whole of it is taken up with abuse of the leader of the Opposition, and praise for every member who is an advocate of Polynesian labour. You will never see a reference to any man in this House except a reference of abuse of the leader of the Opposition. The Ministry have simply carried out the pledges they made at the late general election, that this Polynesian business should go no further.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Some of them.

MR. HODGKINSON: My hon. friend says, "some of them." Well, I do not propose to separate the individuality of the hon. gentlemen. I take them in their aggregate character as a Ministry, and those gentlemen who boldly avow their belief in Polynesian labour, and who yet contrive to swallow their faith, I simply treat as being in favour of the general policy of the Government. The question is settled. When Townsville will show in action what she professes in words—that she has no desire to be the capital, and no desire to aggrandise herself at the expense of the rest of the North, then I shall listen to her voice. I happen to know the ceaseless efforts that have been made in every direction to extend the radii of Townsville influence into all parts of the North. They are trying to tap the trade of the Gulf country and the Etheridge Gold Field in spite of the fact that nature has indicated the line the railway should travel, and yet they are cherishing the hope that they will tap that country and draw all its trade down to their own little port to the detriment of the North. I sat last night admiring the courage of the hon. member for Bowen, and the noble struggle he was making against overwhelming odds. I found it impossible to vote in his favour, but at the same time I was not cruel enough to vote against him. I could not vote in his favour simply because of the energy of those Townsville people who have created a city that is a credit to them. It is one of the greatest examples I know of conquering natural obstacles and making a city which, as my hon. friend the member for Charters Towers said last night, should never have existed. On this question of separation, as I have said, we are prepared at once to advocate that policy as the only policy left open to the North, provided the Northern members who wish to combine with that policy the question of

Polynesian or coloured labour of any kind will abrogate that part of the business. We know very well that if the North was separated to-morrow, Townsville would have an enormous advantage. It has capital at its back, great influence and capable, intelligent men, and every inducement would be put in operation in order to give it the preponderating influence. I think I only speak the feeling of the community when I say that until the question I have referred to is decided, separation cannot come. We must remember that there is a large area of Northern territory now gradually being put on the same footing and in the same category as the rest of Australia, and by those people whose only god is Mammon, and who look upon this earth as an investment returning so much per cent. to the capitalist—if those people seriously propose to the Government of England that they shall have separation coupled with Polynesian labour, in what has hitherto been known as a white colony, and one of the most energetic portions of Australia, they will not get separation. As far as I am concerned, I am not afraid at any time or in any place, not even excluding Townsville, to declare myself as in favour of white *versus* black labour, even if there were to be a general election to-morrow.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. H. Black) said: Mr. Speaker,—I am not clear from the speech that the hon. member for Burke has just delivered, whether he is a separationist, or whether he is not. At times one is led to believe he is, at other times he appears not to be. There is something vague in his utterances, and he seems to prefer them to be vague, so that he can pose in whatever capacity he likes. The subject of the sugar industry, or the subject of coloured labour, is not the question at issue, and I think perhaps he might have more appropriately delivered his speech on that to-morrow, when that subject will be renewed. Now, the leader of the Opposition, I think, very rightly drew attention to a certain financial statement in the hands of hon. members, showing the apportionment of the revenue and expenditure of the colony during the last financial year, based on the Decentralisation Bill which that hon. gentleman himself, I believe, was originally the father of. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me how many red herrings hon. members may drag across the track. The subject which we are discussing at present is the revenue and expenditure of the different parts of the colony as disclosed in that statement, and nothing else. If we are going to discuss the separation question, let us have a clear night for it. If we are going to have a further discussion on the sugar industry, there will, no doubt, be an opportunity for that. The subject which we have to discuss now is that referred to by the leader of the Opposition, contained in the return showing the revenue and expenditure of Queensland for the financial year just ended, and I must say, Mr. Speaker, that that return discloses some very remarkable facts. I believe that that return has been made up honestly and faithfully, although the hon. member for Burke says that figures can be made to prove anything. There is no doubt they can; but I would point out that the same system in making up this return was pursued by the hon. the leader of the Opposition himself in order to fortify himself against the separation petition which I had the honour of taking to England. Now, it was alleged then by the advocates of separation that the North had been in the past unjustly treated in the way of expenditure. It was contended by those who were in favour of that movement at the time, that the North had for years passed been robbed of the proper proportion of the

expenditure of the colony, while she was contributing far more than a proper proportion of the revenue of the colony. That statement was undoubtedly controverted by the leader of the Opposition, not only in the statement published in the colony, but during his visit to England. I think the hon. gentleman will admit that he was under the impression that the statements made by the separationists were not justified by facts. I am very pleased to find that the statement laid on the table this session, showing the revenue and expenditure for the last twelve months, does justify the contention held by separationists that the North has been in the past unfairly treated, and undoubtedly during the last twelve months that has been further verified.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Further verified? How can the fact that you went wrong prove that your predecessors went wrong?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: "The fact that I went wrong"? I do not say that I went wrong at all.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Your Government. If you make mistakes it does not prove that the last Government did so; if it did they would have a great deal to answer for.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have not the slightest doubt that when the hon. member is dealing with a witness in the witness-box of the Supreme Court, where he can bamboozle him to the full extent of his undoubted ability he will come out best, but he cannot do that sort of thing in this House. Matters of fact cannot be upset by the hon. member's legal quibbles here, as hon. members understand the difference between a barrister in the Supreme Court and members speaking in this House. This statement undoubtedly discloses some remarkable facts. I will say it was not the intention of any hon. member on this side to have referred to this matter to-night had not the leader of the Opposition himself referred to it. This statement discloses the very significant fact that out of the whole of the surplus revenue last year, amounting to £117,000, the North contributed no less than £114,000, as against £3,000 only from the Central and Southern parts of the colony. But that does not disclose the whole of the facts. The Minister for Mines and Works has already referred to the matter, which is contained in a very little but significant paragraph at the bottom of the first page of this statement, which states—

"The Customs return shows the collection at the ports only, there being at the present time no means of ascertaining the amount of duty which has been paid on goods carried coastwise from one district to another."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I called attention to that.

Mr. HODGKINSON: I pointed that out in 1874.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am glad to find that the leader of the Opposition is convinced, and that he, for the first time I have heard him in this House, has admitted that the North has been suffering, at all events during the past year, from financial injustice. Now, as is stated in this little paragraph, we cannot ascertain what that further amount is which is properly due to the North from Customs duties which are paid in Brisbane on goods afterwards consumed in the North, and which should properly be credited to the North. The Minister for Mines and Works estimated it at 20 per cent.; but I believe that instead of £114,000 being due to the North on last year's revenue, we may safely say that £200,000 is actually due to the North on the year's transactions, if the accounts were properly adjusted. The leader of the Opposition dealt with this matter, and though he did not

say distinctly that he thought I with my known inclinations and connection with the Northern interest had anything to do with this, he was almost persuaded that I possibly might have unintentionally done something to bring this about by the land sales, to which the greater part of the increase of revenue from the North is attributable. I do not think the hon. gentleman would really give me credit for having by underhand means attempted to bring such a thing about.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Of course not. I said so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; the hon. gentleman said so, and I can only say that no one was more surprised than myself at the results of the land sales in the North. Believing as I did, bad as the season was, and impoverished as I believed the people were, I did really not think such an amount of prosperity could be evinced as was shown by the success of the Northern land sales. That success was a surprise to me and to every member of the Cabinet, and I believe also to every member of this House. The Cairns land in one sale realised something like £45,000, and I hope that those who showed their confidence in the future North will find that confidence justified, and will do well out of the land they purchased. We must bear in mind that Cairns has one of the most magnificent harbours on the coast, and there is a large expenditure of money going on there—an enormous sum of money approximating something like £1,000,000 sterling before that railway is carried from Cairns to Herberton.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: Nearly £2,000,000.

Mr. TOZER: I hope you will have a surplus of revenue there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Minister for Mines and Works says it will be nearly £2,000,000, so that there is a huge expenditure going on in that district. At Cooktown, again, where the land sales were equally successful—£11,000 worth of land being sold last year—a lot of Government expenditure is going on. They also have there a fine harbour, as many members know, and I believe the people of the North have thorough confidence in the future prosperity of the North, no matter by what means it is brought about. I also believe that the people of the North, notwithstanding all that has been said in this House, do believe that the future prosperity of the North will be dependent upon a white population in the North; and that those gentlemen who for party purposes have got up this cry of coloured labour, are making a great mistake. I have never disguised my opinions on the subject, and I have no hesitation in saying now that I believe the more rapid development of the great industry of the North will be brought about by a judicious mixture of the two races. I say that, and I believe that; but I do bow and yield to what I believe is the opinion of the majority of the people of the North. I believe that opinion will carry weight, and however much I may be anxious for another system, I shall have to yield. I recognise that fact, and I sink my personal opinions for the general prosperity of the Northern part of the colony. At the same time, as long as I occupy the honourable position I do, it shall never be said that I did anything in any way detrimental to the general prosperity of the whole colony of Queensland. Another place where the success of the land sales last year was undoubted is Normanton. There we have another port which is going to be a great port, and a great town in the future development of the colony. A large expenditure is going on in railway construction, and the people there have undoubted confidence

in the resources of that district. But why do we find there is such confidence in the North as is shown by the confidence of those who have expended so much money in purchasing land there? What is the reason for it? The real reason is that they know that, so surely as the sun rises and sets, the day of separation will inevitably come, and when it does those who are first in the field, and who took advantage of the opportunity to purchase land in these places, which will undoubtedly be places of vast importance in the future, will realise handsomely from their investment. There is no other reason for it. It is not that trade is developing there to any great extent; it is not that industries in the Northern part of the colony are developing to a greater extent than elsewhere, but because the people are imbued with the firm belief that, notwithstanding how many red herrings political carpet-baggers sent there for the purpose may draw across the trail, separation is merely a matter of time, and I have not the least doubt about it myself. I hope when that time does come that the friendly feelings that now exist in this House will be perpetuated; and I am satisfied that it will be for the benefit of the South as well as the North, because the colony is too great to be administered from the south-eastern corner. No matter how well-intentioned a Ministry may be, it is practically impossible to administer the affairs of this enormous territory from the south-eastern corner. Let the North once become united, let the people of the North see that the red herrings drawn across the trail by interested politicians are merely bubbles in the air, and let the whole of the Northern members show a united front in favour of separation, and I have no hesitation in saying that, when that time comes, no Government will be able to carry on unless separation is granted to the North. I am not advocating the tactics which have been carried on in other parts of the world. I prefer to see public opinion brought to bear on this important question, and that the people of the colony generally shall be brought to admit that what was beneficial when Queensland was connected with New South Wales will also be beneficial when the time comes for the separation of the Northern part of the colony. It often strikes me in the administration of my department, that for one complaint that I receive from the North there are thirty or forty from the people round about Brisbane.

Mr. BARLOW: Because there is more *bonâ fide* settlement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: *Bonâ fide* settlement! Don't talk to me about *bonâ fide* settlement. The hon. gentleman must understand that I was not born quite yesterday. There is a great deal of *bonâ fide* settlement in the South, but there is a great deal in the North too; and the hon. gentleman must not suppose that the whole of Queensland is centred about Ipswich. Were there any land available in the South to sell, the people in the South would be only too glad to get it, and I will give them credit for not paying £1 an acre if they can get land for 2s. 6d. an acre. They are glad to get land for 2s. 6d. an acre in the South, not for settlement, but for the purpose of getting the freehold and then selling it as soon as they can to make money. The people in the South are just as wide awake as the people in the North—they are not children either. I have stated briefly, the reason why the surplus shown to the credit of the North was very much larger last year than it was in the South. It was, undoubtedly, owing chiefly to land sales; and it will continue to be so, for the reason that there is more land to sell in the North than in the South. Nearly all the good land round

the centres of population in the South has already been sold, and the people who want land for the purpose of settlement, must necessarily go to the North, where there are millions of acres of rich agricultural lands. I do not say that the whole of those lands are immediately available for profitable occupation; but they will become available as the population in the North increases. The population there at the present time is 74,814; and notwithstanding the fact that the bulk of the immigrants come to the South, the increase of population in the North is quite as rapid as it is in the South, and it will be greater in the North in the future, because there is a greater scope in that part of the colony for the development of profitable industries. The analysis of the return amounts to this, that the North has contributed one-fifth of the whole revenue of the colony, while the expenditure there has been one-sixth of the whole expenditure of the colony. And that is almost the same as it was when the separation petition was framed. It was stated then that the figures were incorrect; but this return proves their correctness.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: What was asserted at that time to be true turned out to be untrue.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I say that the figures which proved to be true last year were also true at that time, and that they apply equally to the transactions for some years back.

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE: Why did you not make an alteration?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: He did make an alteration in another direction.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I made no alteration; I made the statement, but the hon. gentleman doubted it, though he did not deny it. I did not anticipate this debate, or I would have had the whole of the separation petitions handy, so as to see what he said. But I think he said the allegations of the separationists were unfounded, that figures could be made to prove anything, and that he would have figures prepared which would show a different aspect of the case. There is no reason to doubt the figures contained in this return, and no one was more astonished than the Colonial Treasurer at the results shown by these figures; and the reason why there was so much delay in putting them on the table was because it was considered advisable to have them thoroughly verified, before laying them on the table. Another red herring drawn across the trail has been the cry about Townsville influence. It suits some hon. gentlemen, who are not sincere in the separation cause, to draw this red herring about the influence of Townsville. Others say it is the black labour question, quite forgetting that if the movement ever achieves success, as I sincerely believe it will, the voice of the people will be just as plainly heard then as it is now. We are not going to do away with universal suffrage, and the influence of the mining centres of population, whose voting power preponderates at present, will be just as powerful then to prevail against the black labour bogey as it is now. The other bogey is the Townsville influence. It has been said, over and over again, that Townsville will be one of the commercial capitals of the new colony, but will not necessarily be the political capital. Some hon. gentlemen say it will be, but it remains for the voice of the people to decide that. And what will be the practical effect of delaying the time when the movement takes place? The effect will be that every year Townsville will become more and more powerful. And if it is powerful now, what will be the case in four or five years?

If it is true that no place receives so much attention at the present time as Townsville, every year the separation movement is delayed the influence of Townsville will become more powerful.

Mr. BARLOW: And more obnoxious to the rest of the North.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is a mistake. There was a time when the Ipswich people thought that Ipswich was the hub of the universe, but I am glad to see that that wretched Ipswich influence is losing ground every year, and that Ipswich is no longer the hub of the universe, but merely a little outside place connected with Brisbane by rail. It has not that political influence which it once had, and which the people there thought they were always going to maintain. Ipswich is not going to boss the colony any more. I think, on the whole, that the leader of the Opposition deserves the thanks of the House—and certainly of the North—for having directed attention to this subject. Whether his sudden conversion to Northern interests will be considered genuine by the people of the North is, of course, quite another question.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I brought that Bill in two years ago, and it might have been and would have been passed had you supported it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not quite so certain about the Bill becoming law, as there is great difficulty in dividing the colony into three portions. It seems to me that the people of the Central district, if they understand their own interests, will be rather opposed to it.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Are you opposing the Bill now?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not opposing it, but I think the hon. gentleman was probably very cunning in the way he drafted that Bill, and that he foresaw the rock on which the Bill would split. I am glad we have had this short debate. At all events, it has given some hon. members an opportunity of expressing their opinions, and I only hope that the prosperity of the Northern part of the colony during the coming and succeeding years will be quite as marked as it has been during the year for which the returns have been laid on the table of the House.

Mr. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not rise for the purpose of getting up any altercation with the Minister for Lands, as to the question of Ipswich interests or influence. I wish to point out to the hon. gentleman that the position of Townsville is entirely distinct and different from any position Ipswich ever had or ever can have. We have in the case of Townsville a constantly increasing quantity, and the longer the cause of separation is delayed in the North so much the stronger will Townsville become, and so much the stronger will become its claims to be the future capital of the North. The hon. gentleman said that he had in his office as Minister for Lands more complaints from the South than from the North. Is that at all to be wondered at when the population of the South according to this return is 266,000, while the population of the Central district is 46,000, and that of the Northern district 74,000. Then we must take into account that the population of the North largely consists of gold miners, who are a very excellent and reliable class of the community, but who are not a class who are attached to the soil up to the present. It is no wonder, therefore, that the hon. gentleman should make the statement that a very large proportion of the complaints in the Lands Department come

from the South. Now, what are the facts connected with these financial matters? I must say that I never could understand how the disintegration of the colony can possibly produce the prosperity the hon. gentleman says it will. I could never understand why the location of the legislature in any particular place should produce all this prosperity, and rise in the value of property. I would far rather see the capital of Queensland removed to some more central position, and abandon this House in which we sit, and upon which expenditure is being lavished. I would rather see the whole thing abandoned, and have the colony kept united. What are the facts of the figures quoted? By the returns furnished on my motion, in the early part of the session, the net increase through the operations of the tariff was £256,558, and the amount of the deficit paid off was £116,000, the land sales in the North furnishing more than the whole of that surplus, as they amounted to something like £120,000. I propose to go back now to Table I, and by that table I contend, notwithstanding the contention of the late Vice-President of the Executive Council, that the real reduction in the deficit was only £28,000, and therefore the deficit on the 30th of June last was £573,757. I am not going into all the figures now, but if there was any reduction at all, it was only to the extent of £28,000. Whatever the leader of the Opposition may have done cannot be helped. As that hon. gentleman very properly stated, the line of saying "You're another" is not of the slightest use; but I contend that if these figures submitted to the House prove anything, they prove so long as our railways are not paying, and are running to the bad at the rate of £400,000 a year, there are only two ways of getting out of the difficulty—either directly by profuse sales of land or by some radical amendment in the way taxation is levied. I do not think any reasonable man can see any other way out of it. All others are mere expedients. I shall not criticise the remarks made by the Minister for Lands any further. I can only say that Ipswich has no desire to tyrannise over anyone. I may mention that at the time when the legislature consisted of twenty-eight members Ipswich and West Moreton returned six, and now out of seventy-two it has only seven, so that it is not to be wondered at if its influence has waned; but there is no parallel whatever between the cases of Ipswich and Townsville, and as long as separation is delayed so much stronger will Townsville be in putting forward its claim to be the future capital of the North. I look to the fixing of the capital as the salvation of the colony. Separation will never be really strong unless, as an hon. member on the other side of the House put it, the North agrees to solidify all its differences and go solid; but that will never be, so long as Townsville has its preponderating influence. In a leading article in a paper I was just reading, it is stated that they would prefer to be scorched by Queen street rather than be burned up entirely by Townsville, and that is the feeling of many people in the North. I am not going to criticise the composition of the Ministry, though I may have something to say about that on a future occasion beyond this—that the hon. member for Mackay, the Minister for Lands, is a separationist, and to a certain extent a black labour advocate held in check. Then there is the Minister for Mines and Works, who represents another phase of politics, and as a last accession to their ranks the Government have a gentleman who, on the 9th July last, delivered a speech as strongly in favour of black labour as anyone could make it. That speech was as able a speech as any ever delivered in this House.

I cannot help saying that the criticisms of the leader of the Opposition are exceedingly well-founded, and that the reduction in the deficit has been effected by the sales of land and in no other way. The sales of land under the late administration were less than they were previously, and they were becoming less and less year after year. If the deficit increased, it was because we could not both have our cake and eat it. All that could possibly be done was done to keep the deficit down, and at the same time save the lands of the colony. There is no doubt that the excellent operation of the Land Act of 1884 was the immediate cause of that. That is palpable, and cannot be denied. I believe the statements made by the leader of the Opposition are perfectly true, and no one was more surprised than I was when I saw the return, although it may be said that in calling for it this side of the House has put another weapon into the hands of the North; but that does not matter. The truth must be told, and the truth is that the great reduction in the deficit of £116,000—which I maintain is £28,000 less on the authority of Table I—has been mainly brought about by the sale of land in the Northern district.

MR. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I think this is the proper time to refer to anything that may have taken place during the former part of this session. I am very pleased to think that the leader of the Opposition has initiated this debate on the return showing the expenditure in the different districts of the colony. It will show the people of the North, what I think the majority of them knew long ago, that members representing Southern constituencies have no other desire than to do them justice. The Minister for Lands has stated this evening that we should not, in speaking on the question of separation, refer to the question of black labour in any way whatever. But whenever the question of separation has been introduced in this House, it has always been allied with the question of black labour. The Minister for Lands made a most inapt remark when he referred to the carpet-baggers who went before the constituencies at election times. Who are the carpet-bag politicians? We know who they are, and we have read their speeches. I have made several speeches in this House with reference to the sugar industry, and I have stated that under the regulations introduced by the leader of the Opposition it was beneficial to the colony to employ those men in the growing of sugar. But what have we done since then? The last Parliament passed an Act almost unanimously that Polynesian labour should cease in 1890. At the last general election, when Sir Thomas McIlwraith began his campaign, he told the people in his speech at the Exhibition building, in Brisbane, that the question of black labour was definitely settled, that it would not be reintroduced by him or those who were elected to support him, and that he would not continue in any way to countenance the introduction of black labour into Queensland. Everyone of his supporters, with one exception, Mr. Adams, who was candid enough to say openly to the electors of Bundaberg that he was in favour of black labour, made a statement to the same effect. I now come to the hon. member for Burrum—I do not know exactly how to designate him—but I suppose he may be properly designated as the seventh wheel of the Ministerial coach. I am very glad to see the hon. gentleman occupying the position he does. On my travels I read his long speech in *Hansard*, and also in a newspaper, where it was stated that the hon. gentleman took three hours to deliver himself on the subject of obtaining cheap law for everybody, and that at the close of his address he created a profound impression. Where is the practical

result of the speech of the hon. member for Burrum? Where is the practical result of the speech of the hon. member for Herbert? In both cases it was a cheap advertisement for the hon. members at the expense of the country. I can call it nothing else. The hon. member for Burrum, in his speech on the sugar industry, spoke as follows:—

“MR. POWERS: The man who said in Maryborough that he would support the extension of the provisions of the Polynesian Act headed the poll at the last elections.

“MR. HUNTER: That is mere assertion.

“MR. POWERS: That is a fact. Mr. Annear has always said that, and he has always headed the poll more on account of that statement than anything else.”

The question of Polynesian labour was not mentioned at the last Maryborough election, because they believed, like the hon. member himself, judging from his speeches to the electors of Burrum, that the question was definitely settled. I have been favourable to the planters, as a class in this country, and I am favourable to them now. But how have the planters treated this question, and how have they treated this colony? Why, when the leader of the Opposition tried to find a remedy for the sugar planters, they issued a pamphlet and circulated it throughout Europe, blackening the fame of Queensland in every way, and preventing a class of people coming to this colony, who would have somewhat relieved their necessities had black labour not been continued. What is their cry now? I have always thought it was time enough to shake hands with the “old gentleman” when we met him. Their cry is that Sir Samuel Griffith and his party have stopped Polynesian labour. It has never come into the country better than at the present time, and they never got it cheaper than at the present time. The abuses that existed before those regulations were issued by Sir Samuel Griffith have been entirely wiped away, and the fair fame of the colony has been restored. Such being the case, I think the sugar planters should conduct themselves a little better than they have done. It is to their interest to do so now. The state of things they complain about would never have occurred but for their own perversity. I state emphatically, and I am sure my constituents will bear me out, that the extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act for a further term of five years was not mentioned at the Maryborough election. Such a question was never put to me. We all were agreed, seeing what the leader of the opposite party and all his followers, with one exception, had said, that the question was definitely settled. I may say that before I would give a vote for the extension of the term during which Polynesians may be introduced into the colony, I should seriously consult my constituents upon it. It is a question of public policy, although hitherto it has been a question of party. I am sure the planters must be greatly disappointed at the present Ministry giving them the cold shoulder as they have done. Let it be a question of policy, and let it be put fairly before the country, and then the people will decide whether there shall be a continuation of Polynesian labour or not. I hope the time is not far distant when the question of separation will be definitely settled. I believe it is costing the colony a great deal of money. People outside are looking upon Queensland as a disunited colony, and when we become united I am sure that we shall stand in the money markets of the world in the same position that Victoria does at the present time.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to detain the House at any length, because the discussion has become very digressive; it has gone into so many branches that really the point raised by the hon. the leader of the Opposition has hardly been touched upon.

We have heard a great deal about black labour, and separation, but neither of those questions was dealt with by the leader of the Opposition. With regard to this table, it shows this certainly: That the North has during the year 1888-9 contributed more to the revenue proportionately than the rest of the colony; and possibly that money should have been expended there; but, Sir, it must be borne in mind that this return is one that was furnished under exceptional circumstances. I believe if the hon. gentleman had been in power, and such a return had been moved for, he would not have given it. But I say the Government were only too glad to furnish this return; they are only too glad to show the exact state of affairs, so far as the Southern, Central, and Northern portions of the colony are concerned. I can assure this House that one of the first measures the Government will bring forward next session will be the Decentralisation Bill, which, unfortunately, circumstances have prevented being advanced further than it has been this session. The intentions of the Government are to do all they can to prevent separation, by doing equal justice to all portions of the colony. I am no advocate for separation. My hon. colleague, the Minister for Lands, said the time will come eventually when separation will take place, but I hope that that time will be further delayed. I hope by the introduction of remedial measures to hold this great colony together until we have a federated Australia. I should be very sorry indeed if by any mismanagement in the affairs of the country, no matter whether it is by this party or that, any rupture in the colony should take place; and I think the whole of our legislation should be in a direction to prevent that. This table shows that nearly £114,000 more has been contributed by the North than the South, due to a great extent to sales of land in the North, particularly in the district represented by the hon. member for Cairns. I do not say that much of the money for the purchase of that land came from outside the colony. It may have done so, but the fact remains that the North is entitled to credit for that. I do not see that any great discredit should attach to the Government for selling land where there was a demand for it. The surplus of course stands to the credit of the North, and it will be so regarded by the Government who will in the meantime—until a Decentralisation Bill is passed—dispose of that excess of contribution in the North. We are determined to hold the colony together if we can; and I say, and say it distinctly, that I would not like to see in this House any united body of men to be called, "the Northern party," who would act as a third party, whose influence and weight would be worked so as to govern the rest of the colony at their own sweet will. I think it is a very bad thing indeed when we hear of any section of this House combining in that way. I am glad to see that we have Northern members on both sides of the House. I hope it will long continue so. I hope the united feeling which I am sure exists, notwithstanding what we may hear to the contrary, between the sensible men of the North and the sensible men of the South will continue for many years to come, and that we shall not hear a "Northern party" talked about, to be, as it were, a factor to do what they like with the rest of the colony. I am sure that may be avoided by proper legislation. The Government intend to legislate in that direction, and I hope, with the assistance of the House, with success.

Mr. HUNTER said: Mr. Speaker,—All hon. members who have spoken have expressed surprise at the figures in the statement moved for

by the leader of the Opposition, but the greatest surprise was expressed by two members of the present Government. That is a most extraordinary thing. During the last general election the separation party was at its highest. They strained every nerve and stuck at nothing to accomplish their one end at that time—namely, to return a solid body of separationists to this House; but after the Ministry was formed, and they found they had two Northern members in it, the separation cry was considerably kept down. Now, what do we find that those two Northern Ministers have done for the North? They have actually given us less than has been given by any previous Ministry. We find that the balance due to the North was greater last year than ever it has been, proportionately speaking; and yet the North is better treated in one respect, inasmuch as it has two members on the Treasury benches. Is it not natural that we should express surprise, knowing that the North is so well represented in the Ministry, that we have not been far better looked after than we have been. Can we not safely turn round and say, "What have you been doing to allow this to go on for two years?" The Ministry tell us they are surprised to find how the money has been spent. Is it right for Ministers to come here and say they have done their duty, and tell us in the same breath that they are surprised to find how sums of money due to the district they represent has been spent? I say it is enough to stir up any party in any part of the colony to try and send a combined body to work in this House against the South, because, even if the South have not willingly worked in a combined body against the North, the influence is always against the North. We are told that the balance is due to the North, and should have been spent there, but that is all we ever get—the knowledge that it is due to us. That is not going to make the North unanimous with the South. Just before the general election the Hon. the Minister for Works travelled throughout the Northern portion of the colony. I believe his mission was separation and black labour. I do not say that he advocated black labour, but I believe those were his two missions, and he treated the two questions very cleverly. I give him credit for one speech I heard him make, in which he promised to do all in his power to prevent the introduction of black labour, and of course he showed that its introduction was due entirely to the Griffith administration, and not to the McIlwraith administration. The next item was separation. He urged upon the people the necessity of fighting for separation, and told us that we had a most valuable colony—speaking of the North. He spoke of our immense wealth and what we could do for ourselves if separation was granted. Then he told us what a cheap Government Northern Queensland might have, and—I think I have told the story before—how we could be governed by three Ministers. But to-night we find that North Queensland is really more important than South Queensland, so that these statements are not consistent. Then the Minister for Lands travelled through Northern Queensland. His mission was purely separation. I was present at the largest meeting ever held in North Queensland in connection with that question, a combined meeting of the Charters Towers and Townsville Separation Leagues held at Charters Towers. The principal separationists in the North were present at that meeting, and wonderful preparations were made for it. A great platform was erected, two pianos were placed on the platform, and Charles Harding, the operatic singer, was engaged to sing the Separation Ode. What occurred? The chairman got up to introduce the first speaker,

and all he said was "Gentlemen." The meeting was so obnoxious to the people of Charters Towers, and the speakers on the platform were such strong advocates of black labour, that the chairman never got beyond the word "gentlemen." When the promoters of the meeting found it impossible to introduce any of the speakers, they tried to pacify the crowd by bringing forward a man who was very popular and loved by the miners of Charters Towers, the member for Kennedy. But though he had never before been refused a hearing in that constituency, they would not listen to him, because he was associated with the advocates of black labour who were on the platform. However, the separation party were not to be put down because the numbers were against them. They applied for police protection, and carried their people to the School of Arts. Constables were stationed at each side of the door, and no man was allowed to enter who did not wear a separation ribbon, which cost a guinea. A very small number of people went into the hall; there was no rush to get admission. And what occurred inside? Money was required, and tickets for a concert which was to be held that night, and at which the separation ode was to be sung, were sold at from £2 2s. to £60. It is not the people generally who can pay such a price. It was simply the capitalists of the North who did that, and although they are not very flourishing in funds just now, that is what occurred in Charters Towers, under the great excitement I have described. But the general feeling in the North is not in favour of separation. In all the large centres of population one has only to tell a crowd that they must go in for separation, and there will be a row, and you will have to separate from that crowd. We have been told to-night, and I believe it is quite true, that it is ridiculous to think of trying to move the capital of Queensland at the present time, as vested interests are too strong. We all admit that the capital is in the wrong place, and we all admit that it cannot be moved. If Townsville were made the capital of North Queensland the same argument of vested interests would apply to it. If the Townsville people are so much against Townsville being made the capital, why do they not give way on that point in asking for separation and enter into a stipulation that the capital shall not be at Townsville, and also make a stipulation which cannot be broken that no black labour shall be introduced into the North? We are told to-night that we should never connect the separation and black labour questions; that the two are entirely distinct. It is a very strange thing, but I maintain that if you asked two men in North Queensland to write down, the one the names of the leading advocates of black labour and the other the names of the leading separationists, the list would be the same; yet, in the face of that, some gentlemen wonder why the two questions are connected together. The division last night on the question of the removal of the Supreme Court to Townsville shows the same thing, and all these circumstances put together naturally make people rise up against separation. They prefer the bad treatment they receive under the present state of affairs to chancing what they would receive under a Northern Government if separation were granted to-morrow. We have heard a great deal about the Decentralisation Bill. It is a long time now since the matter was first introduced. It was to have been passed last session, but something cropped up and stopped it. Now the excuse made for not going on with it early this session is the ill-health of the late Vice-President of the Executive Council. That is no excuse, because there are members of the Ministry better able to

take the matter in hand than that hon. gentleman, and from what we have seen his health has been in such a state that nothing the Government considered of very great importance should have been left to him. It was because his health could not be depended upon that the reins of Government were handed over to the present Premier. Why, then, was the measure not brought forward sooner? It has been delayed until the tail end of the session in order that the Government might feel what was the opinion of the House on the subject, and they have found that a certain number of members are opposed to the Bill. The members of the Central division are opposed to it, possibly because their district is in a poor way just now, and its revenue is not sufficient to keep things going. Why not divide the colony into two districts? I am sure the North would be quite willing to have one half of the Central district tacked on to their district, and the South the other half. If that division is not agreeable then divide the colony into four districts. The Minister for Lands referred to the sale of land in North Queensland, and stated that he was really very much surprised at the enormous sum that land in the Northern part of the colony realised. Then he goes on and says because the land has brought a great deal more than it was supposed it would bring, they must sell more. When the eyes are picked out of the North, and our best lands are sold, and we find things are going to the bad, we are to have separation. We all know that separation is inevitable; it will come in time. It is not to be supposed that this colony is going to remain the size it is now for ever; and I think it is a very bad policy to sell more land there because we have obtained high prices for it in the past. I think this debate has been very well placed, and that the people of the North will find out who are their friends. They will find out whether all that was expected from the present Government has been realised or not. The separationists complain that they have not had a field day this session. They cannot have the whole of the session for the discussion of black labour and separation as well. I think if they had had a day for separation it would have done a great deal of good, because it would have clearly shown that the Northern part of the colony first wanted to test the decentralisation scheme, which they believe will be all they require, and the separationists would have found themselves in a very great minority. I am quite sure that if the separationists wish to make a field day next session, which no doubt they will, they will find themselves in a great minority.

Mr. PHILP said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend travelling over the ground taken up by Northern members generally; but there is one remark made by the junior member for Burke just now, which I wish to reply to. He said this return proves how much less the Government now in power spend in the North than the previous Government. If he looks at Table M he will find that in the electorate he represents there was a greater amount spent last year than by the previous Government. In another electorate represented by another hon. member on the Opposition side, the hon. member for Cairns, there was £215,000 spent last year, as against £150,000 spent by the previous Government. At all events, the Government are not only good to their friends, but they have done more for their foes than for their friends. I find also that in the cormorant electorate of Townsville—as it has been called—£25,000 was spent last year, against £48,000 spent during the previous year by the last Government. It is not only once, but dozens of times, that hon. members opposite have talked about obnoxious Townsville. The hon. member

for Burke talked about this cormorant town absorbing the whole of the North. I would like to know what money has been spent in Townsville; can the hon. member tell me what has been spent there? I can assure that hon. member that two years' Customs revenue of Townsville would more than cover every shilling spent there. Time after time we have been told that there has been a great deal more money spent upon Townsville harbour than upon any other harbour in the colony. Up to the present there has been £155,000 spent upon it, and the Customs' revenue was £163,000 for last year. As to the railway, that has not been any cost, because it has paid more than 4 per cent. The hon. member for Burke also said Townsville was trying to grasp the trade of Georgetown from its natural port. He could tell the hon. gentleman that Townsville did more than half the trade of Georgetown, and that hon. member must know, as well as any other hon. member, that on several occasions I have advocated the Croydon-Georgetown line. I am here to repel the statements that Townsville is trying to take possession of everything about the place. Townsville has hitherto been the most unselfish town in the Northern part of the colony. I say so, and nobody can deny it. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that seven or eight years ago Townsville would have made advances to secure the Supreme Court being removed to there from Bowen; but the people said, "No; we will raise no disunion in the Northern towns, we will work and quietly push the separation question." We are now met by all sorts of bitter invective; we are told that separation is only a Townsville cry, and that Townsville is to be the capital, and black labour is to be introduced, and it will be the Brisbane of the North. I can assure you that in future, if I represent Townsville, I shall advocate the claims of Townsville, and let hon. members from other Northern electorates press their own claims, after what has taken place. Touching the return that the leader of the Opposition has brought in, I think it would have been far better if the hon. gentleman had left the matter over until to-morrow, when we would have had a free night to go into the matter fully, instead of taking up the time of the Government. This had nothing to do with the black labour question; but we have gone into that question and into the separation question in connection with that return. It has not surprised me one bit to find that the return is so much in favour of the Northern part of the colony, because we have always contended that the North never received its fair share of the revenue it contributed. That is an argument that has been brought in every session for the last eight years. It is said that this surplus is owing to large land sales that have taken place in the North. If we look at the five years when the leader of the Opposition was in power, we shall find that the total amount of sales averaged quite as much as the land sales last year in the North.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: You are quite wrong.

Mr. PHILP: Look at the rents of homesteads and conditional purchases. For the year 1882-3 the amount was £241,998. I have no hesitation in saying that three-fourths of that money came from the north of Cape Palmerston. In the year 1883-4, the amount was £246,599, and the bulk of that money came from the selection of sugar lands; there is not the least doubt of that, and none of it was sold under 15s. per acre. In the first year of the McIlwraith Administration, the sugar lands were closed from selection

for three or four months, and the price was raised from 5s. to 15s. and 20s. per acre. Not one single acre of the Johnstone River lands was sold at under 20s. per acre. On the Herbert River, the Johnstone, the Daintree, and at Mackay, enormous quantities of land were taken up, and that land represents the bulk of the money in these items. I have no hesitation in saying that. In the Southern part of the colony nearly the whole of the Darling Downs was taken up at 5s. an acre. All the land on the Burnett was taken up in 5,000, 8,000, and 10,000-acre blocks, and nearly the whole of that land is unimproved to-day. There is more land improved in the North than in the South compared with the quantity taken up. Now, though these returns seem satisfactory to me, they do not represent anything like the quantity of money that the North is entitled to. I have not had time to go into the matter minutely, but the first item here is Customs collections in Brisbane, £616,867. It has been contended that 20 per cent. of the money collected in Brisbane ought to belong to the North. That would make £123,000 at least. I find that in the items, local revenue and proportion of general revenue, we are charged on the population basis, which is a fair basis. It is a fair basis on which to charge local revenue and local expenditure. We find in Table IV. that the proportion of general revenue is in the South, with a population of 266,059, £403,178; in the Central district, with a population of 46,590, £70,601; and in the North, with a population of 74,814, £113,371. On Table VI. we find the local surplus in the South is £211,629, and the proportion of deficiency on general account, £208,910. How are those figures arrived at? I find according to the table that that is at the rate of 16s. per head. Going further North, we find that the proportion of deficiency on general account, in the Central district, is £53,096, or at the rate of 23s. per head, and going further North again, we find we are charged £90,944 as proportion of deficiency in general account, or at the rate of 24s. 6d. per head. Now, averaging those charges, I find the fair rate would be 18s. per head, and if that was charged to the North, it would leave a further surplus of £24,000, making a total of about £260,000. Going into the items of revenue, we find that the electric telegraph and postage receipts are general revenue, but what about the expenditure? We find the North is charged £28,000 for post and telegraph business, and £19,000 for the conveyance of mails. Well, if it is a fair thing to charge these items locally, it would be a fair thing to give credit locally for the money received. There are some items, of course, against the North. Now, Mr. Speaker, when the question is decentralisation against territorial separation, I am in favour of the latter. I always have been and always will be, but as it is a question of decentralisation or no decentralisation and a continued robbing of the North by the South, then we must accept decentralisation in preference to being robbed. I do not take it as a permanent solution of the difficulty. I consider it is better for us that we should accept the Bill until we can get territorial separation. We tried the question of separation three years ago, and, out of a House of sixty members, we had nine who voted for territorial separation—nine men all belonging to the North; not one single Southern member supported us.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I was not in the House then.

Mr. PHILP: I am quite willing to test the sincerity of members of this House. I have got in my hand a letter, addressed to Lord Knutsford, in elaborate language, detailing our grievances in the North. I am willing to place it on

the table, and accept the signatures of any Southern members, if they are sincere in their desire to grant separation; but the Northern members themselves are not unanimous; and how can we expect them to be so after such a speech as that delivered by the hon. member for Burke, who sets up one portion of the North against the other. He knows, as well as I do, why the debate on separation was not brought before the House this session. We were waiting for the Decentralisation Bill to come forward; we were prepared to discuss it, and accept it, with such amendments as we thought necessary. We would not have sought to render the South any injustice; all we want is a fair thing. We want a fair proportion of the revenue of the North expended there. I think, after the imputation which has been levelled against one of the principal towns of the North, it would not be a fair thing for me, as representative of that town, to sit silent and listen to such assertions. A great deal has been said about the mismanagement of the present Government and their want of financial knowledge, and what a great mess they have made of things. It is said that only £116,000 of the deficit has been wiped out. But if hon. gentlemen will look at the probable ways and means they will find that the amount of money received during the year 1887-8 was £3,177,518. Well, had not the present Government brought in the tariff they did, a tariff which was most obnoxious to the North, but which was the best that could be got out of the House at the time—I say that if the tariff had not been passed, there would have been a still larger deficit. We find that before that tariff was brought in the revenue was £3,177,518, and we find last year under the new tariff that it amounts to £3,614,000, or an increase of about £355,000. If that tariff had not been passed, what a state we would have been in! We should have added something like £250,000 to the deficit, which would have stood at £750,000 altogether. That would be a nice state of things for the finances of the colony to be in. I desire, Mr. Speaker, to say a word with regard to taxation. If the land tax which the leader of the Opposition speaks about is introduced, I think it will bring ruin upon the country. I would like to see an income tax. I cannot see how any sane man could have proposed to levy a land tax through the general government, and also a land tax through the divisional boards. The latter have all the machinery for collecting a land tax, while the Government have not. The leader of the Opposition only proposed to levy £100,000, and I venture to say it would cost, say, £50,000 to initiate a scheme for collecting it. I am sorry that this debate has degenerated as it has done. It would have been far better to have left it until to-morrow. As for the continual references which are made to Townsville, I must protest against them, and, as often as the hon. member for Burke gets up and talks about Townsville in the way he has done, so often will I get up and defend that town. When the Estimates for the department of Public Instruction were going through, I spoke of the inequalities existing between the positions of Northern and Southern teachers, and I was at once chided for bringing up another Northern grievance, but as a matter of fact, more Northern grievances have been brought forward from the opposite side this session than from this side. I am prepared always to fairly debate the Northern question, but I am not going to do so simply for the sake of obstructing the business of the House.

Mr. UNMACK said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. leader of the Opposition introduced this discussion to night, I am quite sure, simply for

the purpose of drawing attention to what he and many other members of this party consider weaknesses in the financial management of the present Ministry. I think he was perfectly justified in doing so. Somehow or other the discussion seems to have merged into one upon the question of separation, which has nothing whatever to do with this matter. At any rate, it was the intention of the leader of the Opposition to discuss the question as to whether the present Ministry are doing what they should do in accordance with his views of the management of the financial affairs of the colony. The late Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, was elected to the position of Premier of the colony with a great flourish of trumpets, after having distinctly pledged himself that no extra taxation would require to be placed on the people, and that the condition of the colony simply required administration to adjust our finances. After that, the result before us in the Estimates, and the Financial Statement, is certainly most disappointing. We have had one of the most obnoxious tariffs placed upon the shoulders of the people that was ever imposed—a tariff which inflicts a burden of 10s. 10d. upon every head of the population, whilst the general taxation now imposed amounts to 13s. 4d. per head. And what has been the result? I am afraid the one real point we ought to have discussed to-night has not been touched upon at all. I allude to what I call the extravagant management of the present Government. Why, during the last year, as against the last year of the term of office of the Griffith Ministry, they actually spent £320,000 more than their predecessors. I am quite sure a great deal of that need not have been spent, and might have been saved, and thus have obviated the alleged necessity for heavy taxation, especially by a Ministry that went into power for the express purpose of administering with the view of avoiding increased taxation. There was surely no occasion in their first year of office to have expended over £300,000 in excess of that expended by their predecessors.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: How much of that was for the loan?

Mr. UNMACK: I have not the figures with me, but there was not much of it due to the loan. To show the absurdity of the thing, the tariff in itself produced £256,000 for extra taxation, and all other sources of revenue produced an excess of £180,500, a total receipt in excess of £436,000, of which only £116,000 remains, and therefore £320,000 has gone, over and above the expenditure of the previous Ministry, in administration and general management. Then, in reference to the land, what do we find? The same policy of the party now in power has been continued as before; and that is the policy of selling the land. That has always been the policy of that party, and they have been true to their principles. They have continued the same system, and to all appearance are going to be worse in that respect in the future than they have been in the past. I find that during the last year of office the Griffith Ministry sold £62,000 worth of land, while the present Ministry during their first year of office sold land to the value of £190,000. It is true that, according to the table placed before us, a very large portion of this land has been sold in the Northern district, and the North seems to have contributed a considerably disproportionate share towards clearing off the deficiency. I must say I believe in a Decentralisation Bill, but I do not believe in the Bill placed before this House, and which is not to be carried through this session, because I say that Bill is not framed upon proper lines, and it is neither just to the North nor to the South. The basis of the Bill, and the division of revenue

under it is altogether wrong. I will mention one item which is altogether wrong, and unjust to the South, at all events. The Minister for Lands referred to the matter incidentally to-night when he said that all the best lands in the South had been sold, and they had to sell the lands in the North now. Very well; all the best lands in the South have been sold, but what has been done with the money? The money has been used for the purposes of general expenditure up to to-day, and this money, which has been derived from the sale of the lands in the South, has been partly expended to improve the position and value of the land and property in the North. We have heard, then, that all the best lands in the South have been sold, and here we find a proposal in the Decentralisation Bill that in future all moneys levied from the sale of land shall not be considered general, but local revenue. Therefore we in the South have been done out of the money derived from the sale of our lands, which has been spent, to a large extent, in improving property in the North, and in future the revenue derived from land is to be allotted to the districts in which that land is sold. I do not think that is a fair proposal at all. There are other proposals in that Bill which are simply based upon theory. They are based upon theories which are absolutely impossible to carry out in practice. There is not a man in the colony, and never will be one, who will be able to carry one of the provisions in reference to Customs duties into practice, as it will be impossible to get at the results. When the Bill comes before us next session, I shall be able to go more fully into that. In reference to this question of separation, the Minister for Mines and Works says that separation cannot take place so long as other portions of the North will display the jealousy they are now displaying towards Townsville. I say the remark the hon. gentleman himself made is one that is seriously calculated to prevent unanimity of feeling upon the question of separation in the North. He discloses a very dog-in-the-manger policy. He says he himself always advocated that Townsville should not be the capital of the new colony, but he says also, "If we cannot have the bone nobody else shall have it." He says that not one of the Northern towns shall be the capital, and that they ought to create a new city altogether. He advocates the creation of a new city, so that not one of the present existing towns may be the capital. If that is the feeling of the Townsville people, how can they expect others to join with them in advocating separation? All I can say is, speaking as a Southern member, that provided one condition is fulfilled, I should be quite willing to vote for separation to-morrow.

Mr. PHILP: What is the condition?

Mr. UNMACK: The condition is this, that they shall accept a constitution which will debar them from employing black labour in the colony, because, as the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hodgkinson, has very properly said, it is not a question solely for the North, but a question for the whole continent of Australia. Provided that that condition is accepted, and that the constitution, in which that is included, cannot be altered, as the constitution in America cannot be altered, I shall be ready to let them go by all means, if they are strong enough, and unanimous in asking for it. I shall be quite ready to let them try their fortunes, but, so long as black labour stands in the way, I do not see that Southern members would be justified in voting for separation. It has been said over and over again that the feeling of the people in the South is changing; but if it is changing at all, it is strengthening in intensity against black labour. The people in

the South insist on the exclusion of black labour, and they will not allow it in the North either. If the people in the North could show by a plebiscite, or in some other way, that they were unanimous, it would be a different question; but in the meantime a house divided against itself cannot stand. I do not believe that the feeling in the South is opposed to separation on certain conditions, though, of course, we prefer that the North should not be separated. I believe that if a Decentralisation Bill, based on proper lines, is passed it will satisfy the general population of the North.

Mr. LITTLE: No.

Mr. UNMACK: Of course there are some people whom nothing will satisfy; but we know that the minority at all times have to bow to the majority. Though an evening has apparently been wasted, I do not think the time has really been wasted, because the attention drawn by the leader of the Opposition to the want of financial management on the part of the Ministry—though it is not acknowledged to-night—will bear good fruit, and will, I trust, lead to the exercise of greater economy in the future management of the finances of the colony.

Mr. COWLEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall not enter into the question raised by the leader of the Opposition, because I wish to keep what I have to say on that subject till the Loan Estimates come up for consideration, so that my remarks may lead to some practical good, which I am afraid they would not, if I were to speak on the question to-night. But I cannot help replying to a few remarks which fell from the hon. member for Toowong, who accused the Minister for Mines and Works of advocating a dog-in-the-manger policy. What could be a fairer policy for the whole of the people of the North than the one advocated by the Minister for Mines and Works, that is, the establishment of the future capital in some central place where no land has been alienated by the Crown, and where the future proceeds of the land can be turned to account in the erection of the public buildings necessary for carrying on the work of the capital? After accusing the Minister for Mines and Works of advocating a dog-in-the-manger policy, the hon. member for Toowong gave utterance to a far more dog-in-the-manger policy when he said, "We cannot have black labour in the South, and you shall not have it in the North." He said it was a matter concerning the whole of the colonies. It is all very well to say that now, when the people in the South don't want black labour; but they never raised that cry when they were benefiting by the employment of it. The other colonies have never done anything to interfere with the employment of black labour in Queensland; and the members representing Southern constituencies would be the first to resent any interference on the part of the southern colonies with the legislation of this colony. And if they did not rise and fight the people in the southern colonies, in the event of such interference, they would be unworthy of the trust reposed in them by their constituents. We have to consider the interests of our own colony, and not the interests of other colonies. The same argument was used by the senior member for Burke, but the next moment he said that the black labour question was being written up in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, thus indicating that some portions of the thinking people in the southern colonies were in favour of black labour. The proprietors of that journal have no interest in the black labour question and no capital invested in Queensland. The journal is owned by the relatives or friends of

Congregational ministers, and is edited by a Wesleyan minister, and they do not publish their articles simply for filthy lucre.

Mr. HODGKINSON : Wesleyan ministers in the United States defended slavery.

Mr. COWLEY : We are now speaking of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The hon. gentleman could hardly have used a worse argument when speaking of the opinions of the southern people, because the proprietors of that paper, which is the leading journal in New South Wales, has been openly advocating the employment of coloured labour in Queensland.

Mr. HODGKINSON : No. The articles are written by a correspondent.

Mr. COWLEY : The writer is a special correspondent, sent by the proprietors of the paper to give an impartial opinion on the question. They have confidence in his judgment, and publish the letters he writes; and those letters show that it is a suicidal policy to give up coloured labour in Queensland. Papers in Victoria also advocate this question. The *Argus* advocates it very strongly indeed. The first part of the speech delivered by the hon. member for Burke was about the strongest separationist speech I have ever heard.

Mr. HODGKINSON : Hear, hear !

Mr. COWLEY : And then, fearing he had gone too far, he said, "But there is this black labour question." There are probably about a hundred employers of black labour in the North. Are those thousands of miners and others in the North afraid that these hundred employers of black labour will subvert their liberties? If the hon. member is sincere in his desire for separation, this ought to be no stumbling block in his way whatever, because it is impossible that those hundred men can sway the destinies of the future colony against the wills of the bulk of the inhabitants. Therefore his argument is utterly worthless; and it simply shows that he raises the separation cry from impure motives, and nothing else. If he were sincere, he would say, "We will have separation first, and we will settle those matters of internal policy afterwards." The hon. member for Burke issued a challenge, and I accept that challenge—and that was, that he is willing to go to any constituency in the North.

Mr. HODGKINSON : No.

The PREMIER : Yes, you did.

Mr. COWLEY : The hon. gentleman said he would meet any man upon any platform in any constituency in the North with any member on either side, and he would advocate the abolition of black labour. Well, I shall accept his challenge, and am perfectly willing to meet him in my electorate as soon as the session is over, and contest it with him upon that question. In accepting that challenge I am doing a very courageous thing, because the hon. gentleman is one of the most able men in this House, and one of the most astute politicians; but I am perfectly satisfied to do it and abide by the result. I hold the hon. gentleman to his challenge. It is very easy to make a challenge, but I shall be very much obliged to the hon. gentleman if he will consent to meet me on this ground.

Mr. HODGKINSON : Hear, hear !

Mr. COWLEY : The hon. member also said—and I am very sorry that he entered into this question, because hon. members say that the advocates of black labour have wasted a great deal of time this session. Yet the hon. gentleman would not speak when we were discussing the black labour question, but he speaks upon it on this off night, and I am forced to reply to his arguments.

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Mr. HODGKINSON : Speak to-morrow night on the question.

Mr. COWLEY : The hon. gentleman spoke about decoying the kanakas from their islands and keeping them in slavery. Surely he knows in his heart of hearts that is all bunkum. No man knows that better than the hon. gentleman, and no man has studied the question more. He knows that these men are only too willing and anxious to come to this country, and that they come over and over again. At the present time there are some here who are serving their fourth term of service. Does that look like decoying them from their homes. We know that the influence of the missionaries is used to keep them from coming to the colony—that they are doing their utmost to keep them from coming; and yet, in spite of the influence of the missionaries, the desire in these men's hearts is so strong to come that it overcomes all the influence of the missionaries. They come amongst us, and they also induce their friends to come. The hon. member, I believe, has been amongst the sugar plantations, and I ask him to answer fairly and honestly whether he ever saw this slavery? Is it any more slavery than it is for any white men employed at the same work?

Mr. ISAMBERT : It is slavery.

Mr. COWLEY : I did not refer to the hon. member for Rosewood, because, as the hon. member for Carpentaria once said, that hon. member was born in sin and cradled in iniquity, and therefore I did not refer to him. I am now asking an hon. gentleman, who I believe is capable of taking a fair and honest view of this question, if he ever saw anything which could possibly be construed to be slavery. The Polynesians are well treated and enjoy themselves while they are here, and they are only too willing and happy to come back again. I also wish to say a few words in reply to what fell from the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear. I really do not know why that hon. gentleman, who has just come back to this House after a long absence, should attack the hon. member for Burrum and myself for what we have done during his absence. I know that for many years there was no stronger advocate of coloured labour in this House than the hon. member for Maryborough, and I can go further and say that before the last general election I met the hon. gentleman in Townsville, and he distinctly told me that if the Hon. Sir Samuel Griffith were returned to power again, he would grant an extension for five years of the Polynesian Labourers Act. But to come back to the question at issue: One question raised was that of selling land in the North. I sincerely hope that the Government will not sell much more land in the North until the Decentralisation Bill is passed, and the North gets full credit for these sales. At the present time the Government can sell as much land as they please, and we are simply credited with it in the books, but we get no tangible results from it. It all goes into the general revenue, and is swallowed up. When we pass the Decentralisation Bill—as I trust we may early next session—we shall get the full benefit of the revenue obtained from the North; but at the present time the Government could sell £500,000 worth of land in the North, and it would be all swallowed up in the general revenue. The sooner we get this Bill passed the better the North will be satisfied. They will not be completely satisfied, because nothing but separation will eventually satisfy the North. It will be a crying shame if the Government sell vast tracts of land in the North before the Decentralisation Bill is passed. I sincerely trust that the Government will bring it forward early next session, so that we may have an opportunity of passing it.

Mr. BARLOW said : Mr. Speaker,—I wish to make a personal explanation. I understood the hon. member for Townsville to say that I used the expression “obnoxious Townsville.” Now I am not aware that I made use of that expression, but if I did, I used it in the sense that Townsville was obnoxious to the rest of the North. There is no gentleman in this House who is more courteous than the senior member for Townsville, and I should be very sorry to say an unkind word against him or against the constituency he represents.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed ; the CHAIRMAN reported no progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

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