

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 7 APRIL 1892**

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.***Thursday, 7 April, 1892.*

Question Without Notice: Chinese on Ravenswood Gold Field.—Questions.—Formal Motions.—Small Debts Court Act of 1887 Amendment Bill: Second reading.—Relationship between Judge and Counsel: Resumption of debate.—Merchandise Act Amendment Bill: Committee.—Message from the Legislative Council: Supreme Court Bill: First reading.—Pacific Island Labourers (Extension) Bill.—Adjournment.

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

**QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.****CHINESE ON RAVENSWOOD GOLD FIELD.**

Mr. SAYERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to ask the Secretary for Mines a question without notice, if he will kindly answer it—Have any steps been taken to still further extend the Act so as to prevent the influx of Chinese on the Ravenswood Gold Field?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. W. O. Hodgkinson) said: Mr. Speaker,—No appeal has been made by the parties interested or official notice received of the fact.

**QUESTIONS.**

Mr. CADELL asked the Secretary for Public Works—

Is it the intention of the Government to invite tenders for the erection of a post and telegraph office at Gayndah at an early date?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. Tozer) replied—

Whenever money is available for this work tenders will be invited.

Mr. RYAN asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. Are free railway passes issued at Rockhampton to Barcaldine, Longreach, and other places?

2. To what persons, and on whose responsibility, and on what grounds are such free railway passes granted?

3. Is the demand for labourers in the Central districts too great to be met by local men?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. Tozer) replied—

1. Yes.
2. To destitute persons who satisfy the police magistrate or officer in charge of the local labour bureau that they have obtained *bonâ fide* work by their own exertions, but have not the means of reaching it. To destitute persons of known good character desirous of seeking work and willing to accept it when offered. To discharged prisoners returning to the locality from which they were convicted, in accordance with the established rule in such cases. Eight of such passes have been issued within the last three months. To destitute hospital patients returning to their homes after recovery or relief. To persons engaged on public duty.
3. From the fact that large numbers of men so assisted obtain employment, the demand is evidently not met by local men.

Mr. ALAND asked the Secretary for Public Works—

When he expects to be able to call for tenders for the erection of the addition to the asylum for the insane at Toowoomba?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS replied—

The plans are ready, but there being at present no money available for the permanent addition, I cannot state positively when tenders will be invited for the work.

Mr. GRIMES asked the Secretary for Railways—

What amount has been paid, or agreed to be paid, to Messrs. Robb and Co., contractors for the Cairns Railway, for interest and costs over and above their claim on account of the contract?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. T. O. Unmack) replied—

The amount that has been paid for interest and costs is £3,240 12s. 6d.

#### FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By Mr. SAYERS—

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

1. The earnings for the year ended 31st December, 1891, of the following telegraph stations:—Brisbane, Charters Towers, Rockhampton, Townsville, and Cooktown.
2. The number of the respective staff in each of the above offices.

By Mr. MORGAN—

That there be laid upon the table of this House a return showing—

1. The amount expended during the year ended 31st December, 1891, for hay, chaff, and maize supplied to the various Government departments.
2. Particulars of the contracts entered into by the several departments, or branches of departments, for the supply of such fodder, stating whether tenders were called publicly or privately, giving copies of conditions, names of successful tenderers, and schedules of prices in each case.

By Mr. LISSNER—

That there be laid on the table of this House a return showing the amounts of dividend tax received from each of the various mining companies in Queensland since the Act came into operation.

#### SMALL DEBTS COURT ACT OF 1867 AMENDMENT BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

Mr. POWERS said: Mr. Speaker,—In moving the second reading of this Bill, I would in the first place draw the attention of hon. members to the measure which was brought forward in this House in the year 1889. The proposal contained in that Bill was intended to simplify proceedings in the smaller courts, and to provide machinery in those courts so that persons who now go into the more expensive court—the Supreme Court—might be compelled to take advantage of the smaller

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courts—namely, the District Courts and the small debts courts. The whole object of the measure was to make proceedings in the District Courts and the small debts courts so easy as to give suitors speedy remedy in those courts, and to take away any excuse there might have been previously to go into the Supreme Court. Since then a District Courts Act has been passed which gives facilities for the larger cases exceeding £30 to be heard in that court, and so avoid going into the Supreme Court. The Bill to which I refer contained so much that it had to be divided into two. The District Courts Bill was one very important portion, and this measure which I now submit to the House is another very important portion, affording facilities for the recovery of debts in the smaller courts. It forms the first and second parts of the Legal Reform Bill of 1889. If this measure becomes law, as I hope it will, it will then be time for us to step in and say that persons can fairly be compelled to take advantage of the smaller courts, and not go into the more expensive Supreme Court in cases which the smaller courts can deal with satisfactorily, and it is with that object that I now introduce the Bill. I shall endeavour to explain its provisions, and show where amendments are proposed, and I hope the Bill will be allowed to go into committee. I cannot of course anticipate all the objections that may be raised on the subject, and I should like to have an opportunity of answering in committee any objections that may be advanced. The 1st and 2nd clauses are innovations. They provide that police magistrates or stipendiary magistrates shall have power to deal with cases otherwise cognizable by a small debts court where the debt or demand does not exceed £100. I think that is an experiment which may very well be tried. It is not a wild experiment, but one which has been tried in South Australia for the past twenty-five years, and found to work so well that it is now proposed to increase the jurisdiction of small debts courts in that colony to £490. Of course, it would be only those magistrates appointed by the Governor in Council who would be entrusted with such matters—stipendiary or police magistrates, and not local justices; and the 2nd paragraph of the 1st clause provides that where a debt or demand exceeds £30, the decision of the police magistrate presiding at the hearing shall be the judgment of the court. We know that local justices sometimes go on the bench from friendly motives, and I think, therefore, that this increased jurisdiction should only be given to police magistrates. It has been found beneficial to give such increased jurisdiction to the small debts court in South Australia; and as we are a very similar community we might also try the experiment. The remedy in the small debts court is the speediest, and the expenses are less than they are in the higher courts. Whether the increased jurisdiction should be limited to cases of £50 or £100 may be a matter for discussion, but I believe that it would be beneficial to the public if the present jurisdiction were extended. There are small matters of goods sold and delivered and many other things which magistrates are as capable of trying as a District Court judge and a jury of four. They may be wrong sometimes on a question of law, but the appeal is so simple in such cases that this power may well be given them. With respect to clause 3, I suppose I shall be answered by the statement that the small debts courts have jurisdiction in these matters, but it has been held by police magistrates and District Court judges already that they have not. When judges have held certain things to be law that are not law it is better to formally declare the law in such cases to be the law, although it may be known to

be so. That was strongly urged by the Solicitor-General yesterday in another place. Where there is uncertainty on any point through the decisions of judges, it is better that the law should be declared as is here proposed, and thus save the expense of testing it. The same thing may be said with respect to clause 4. I know that at present we have tea merchants, book agents, and sewing-machine people sending agents all over the colony, and they come before the court here in Brisbane and say that certain goods have been sent to various places, and as it is not worth people's while to come down here to defend the actions these people are often enabled to jump verdicts. I think, therefore, that clause 4 contains a very good provision. Clause 5, which deals with the attachment of goods, is simply a copy of the District Courts Act clauses, and it will give plaintiffs an opportunity of preventing a debtor's goods being rushed away as soon as a summons is issued against him. Very often as soon as a summons is issued against a man, he puts his goods into an auctioneer's hands, and the things go, and the plaintiff has nothing to levy on. The District Courts Act now gives the plaintiff in such a case the right to come before the registrar, and get an order preventing goods being taken away, and I think the same right might well be given in connection with the police magistrates' courts. Clause 7 allows a person who has a claim against the person who sues him to put in his claim as a counter-claim or set-off, and so have the whole thing decided in one action instead of two, as has at present often to be done. That will prove another means for lessening the expense in such cases, and I am satisfied that it will effect an improvement in the proceedings in these smaller courts. Clauses 8, 9, and 10 act in this way: At present in cases in which no defence is filed, the plaintiffs have to come before the court and prove cases which are not defended at all. That is not considered necessary in many cases in the District Court, and I am satisfied it is not necessary in the small debts court. Why should a plaintiff be put to the extra expense of proving a case to which no defence is filed? These provisions will save a great amount of expense and delay to which many persons are at present subjected in trying to recover moneys due to them. Clause 11 is one of the most important clauses in the Bill, and there are other clauses following upon it. It provides that lands may be sold under execution of the small debts courts. It is always supposed that there is something very sacred about lands; but, so far as the power given in this Bill is concerned, it does not go into the vexed question of titles to land at all. It simply provides that if a man has lands he cannot have a bill of sale over them, and laugh at the people to whom he owes money. Under the present law if people want to attach land for a debt they are compelled to go into the expensive courts where the right is given. I am satisfied that this provision will greatly reduce the expense to which persons are put in recovering debts, as they will not be compelled to go to the expensive courts for a remedy. Under these provisions the registrar will be allowed to sell land, and of course if there is no land the police magistrate cannot give an order to sell it; but if there is land I think it should be in his power to order the sale of it to satisfy a judgment of his court. Clauses 12, 13, and 14 deal with these executions, and are similar to the clauses of the District Courts Act, with, of course, the necessary alterations consequent upon clause 11 of this Bill. Clause 15 is a new one, and deals with the exemption from execution of certain goods to the value of £10. Sometimes execution debtors are turned out of house, home, bed, and

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everything else, and that is not right. Under the District Courts Act it was thought necessary as well as reasonable and fair to make some such provision as this, and some such provision should be made to protect a man's wearing apparel, bedding, and certain goods, when an execution is made against him. This section will prevent a creditor who is anxious to force a thing too far from doing so. The next clause deals with a landlord's preferential claim to rent. Sometimes a judgment creditor is met with a preferential claim for a year's rent against his debtor, and he has to stand out. I think a year's rent should not be allowed in any case to be claimed. The Chief Secretary allowed an amendment in the District Courts Act, bringing it down to three months, and I propose here to bring it down to one month in the case of cases dealt with in the petty debts courts. This clause gives a landlord a preferential claim to one month's rent, and I think that ought to be sufficient. Clause 17 provides that bills of sale shall be void against executions unless registered within thirty days. It is a question whether unregistered bills of sale are not good if they are registered before the day of execution. I know they are not good if a man is made insolvent within six months of their registration, and the difficulty I wish to deal with might be met by making a debtor insolvent; but I think it would be very unfair to put a man to the unnecessary expense of doing that. This clause then proposes to get over the difficulty by making a bill of sale void as against an execution unless it has been registered within thirty days. Clauses 18, 19, and 20 deal with the procedure in cases where action is taken under clause 11, to which I have referred, and there is an additional provision in clause 21, that no lands shall be sold under any execution issued out of a small debts court until after the writ of execution shall have been registered in the proper office for the registration of dealings with the lands to be sold, and until after the expiration of fourteen days from the date on which the first notice of such intended sale shall have appeared in a newspaper published in or nearest to the town or district in which the land to be sold is situated, or where the execution debtor is known to reside. The next clause provides that the clerks of petty sessions shall be the registrars of small debts courts. That is put in to remove doubts, and I think the clerks of petty sessions ought to be the registrars in these matters. Clause 23 provides power to make rules. It is pretty well known in the profession that at present there is no power to make rules, and if the rules are tested, as they may be some day, they will be found to be *ultra vires*. It is absolutely necessary that rules should be made, and as we are dealing with these courts they ought to be given a legal right to make rules, so that the proceedings may be carried on properly and legally. I contend that though this matter may not appear important to the public and to some members of this House, it is really a matter of considerable importance to grant to the small debts courts facilities for doing this business. Not only the excuse, but the reason why members of the profession take cases into the Supreme Court, is because they cannot get a remedy in the small debts court, although the whole machinery is available if the powers proposed in this Bill were given to the magistrates presiding over these courts. The matter dealt with last session giving justices of the peace power to swear affidavits looked a very small matter, but it has resulted in an enormous saving to suitors and persons taking out administrations. Members of the profession could hardly convince the House of the great benefit that provision has been. The principles of this Bill are

part of the legal reform which I have constantly endeavoured, whenever I have had the opportunity, to get passed into law. Three-fourths of it was dealt with last session; and now I ask that this reform should be agreed to. This is one matter of importance still to be dealt with, and I hope the House will, at any rate, pass the principles of this measure. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think the House has paid very great attention to the hon. gentleman's speech, for which I am sorry, because there are some matters which are of very considerable importance to the public for good or evil—some I think for good, and others, if carried, I fear for evil—in this Bill. The first proposal the hon. gentleman makes is that, instead of suitors having the right as now, in a case where more than £30 is involved, to have the case tried before a competent judge and jury, it should be tried before a police magistrate without a jury. I do not think that is an improvement. I think a trial before a District Court judge and jury is better than a trial before a police magistrate without a jury.

Mr. POWERS: Only in some instances.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is possible to have very cheap and nasty law.

Mr. POWERS: And cheap and good law, too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, that may be possible, too. That change requires a great deal of consideration before we disturb the right of suitors to have cases tried before a jury. The right is, however, to be disturbed in certain parts of the colony only. It introduces an element of uncertainty; it will depend upon whether the case is tried in Brisbane, Rockhampton, or Townsville whether the defendant shall be entitled to have a jury or not. It will depend upon the caprice of the plaintiff, and upon where the defendant lives. That does not seem consistent with sound principles. It ought not to be dependent upon where a defendant lives, or upon the caprice of his opponent.

Mr. DONALDSON: Refer it to arbitrators.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I expect that will be the next proposal of the hon. member—with power to the arbitrators to fix their own fees without appeal. I call the attention of hon. members to this clause because I think so radical a change would work so unequally and uncertainly that it ought not to be passed without serious consideration. The 3rd clause proposes to say that the small debts court has certain powers. Nobody doubts that it has those powers already. The Supreme Court has solemnly decided that that is the law. The hon. member asks us to affirm it also. I do not think many people doubt it when the Supreme Court has solemnly decided that that is the law; but now the hon. gentleman asks Parliament to confirm the decision of the Supreme Court. The 4th section is a matter on which I should like to hear the opinion of mercantile members. With respect to the attachment of goods, I am very much disposed to doubt the wisdom of giving facilities to lay hold of goods when a very small amount is at stake. I do not think it is worth while if a man owes a trifling sum like £5, that the plaintiff should be allowed to lay hold of his goods before trial. I believe these small actions ought not to be encouraged; that they ought to be rather discouraged. There is nothing to be gained by encouraging litigation for small amounts. The next part of the Bill relates to a defendant's set-off or counter-claim, I think those clauses are

very good, and it is through only an accident that these provisions were not embodied in the existing law. At first sight it struck me that there is no limit, but on careful perusal I think there is.

Mr. POWERS: There is no limit.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, the hon. gentleman is right after all. That clause, I think, is good with that exception. Then "judgment to be given if notice of defence is not filed" is also good. The 9th and 10th clauses, unfortunately, are evidently drawn by entirely different hands. The preceding clauses are drawn in the modern, and these in the ancient style.

Mr. DRAKE: We want a parliamentary draftsman.

Mr. BARLOW: Is the 5th clause drawn in ancient style?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, I think it is. With respect to allowing bailiffs of the small debts court to sell land, I for one think it is not an improvement, and that it will be likely to give rise to a great deal of confusion and litigation. For the sake of £25 land may be sold almost without notice for an entirely nominal value. All sorts of questions may arise. Serious questions have arisen under the present system, and if we allow the sale of land under the small debts court jurisdiction litigation will be surely increased, and the burden imposed will be much greater than the benefit derived. As to the proposal that a bill of sale is to be registered within thirty days of execution, very sound reasons should be urged why the well-considered policy of Parliament last year should be departed from. The rule that registration should be operative to the validity of a bill of sale was well considered. This Bill introduces an uncertain system as to the amounts that may be recovered in different places, amounting to £30 in some parts of the colony, and £100 in other parts of the colony. It introduces a system of caprice. Those are the principal parts of the Bill. There are one or two clauses that I think are good; the others require careful scrutiny before the House would be justified in passing them.

Mr. JONES said: Mr. Speaker,—I have had some practice in the small debts courts, and there are many things that require amendment; but, except for one or two things in this Bill, I do not think any benefit would accrue to the general public. I do not believe for one moment that the power of selling land should be given to every small debts court bailiff. Some of them, I am sorry to say, do not perform the ordinary duties of their office with any strictness. I think it would be a very dangerous power to give. Nor do I believe we should allow police magistrates to decide alone in cases up to £100. I think the small debts court allows a landlord to get twelve months' arrears of rent if an execution is put in the house of which he is landlord, and I do not think that should be interfered with. As to the 16th clause, I think if we copied the 169th section of the District Courts Act it would make the law uniform. To have two laws on the same subject—one dealing with claims for rent under the District Court, and the other applying to the small debts court—would be embarrassing to the ordinary individual and also sometimes to the solicitor. I notice there is no right of appeal given from the decision of the magistrate in interpleader cases where the amount exceeds £10, or the value of the goods exceeds £10. It has been decided by District Court judges that they have no jurisdiction to entertain an appeal in an interpleader. Therefore I think that is a very necessary thing to put into the Bill. I also approve of the provision that wearing apparel, beds, tools, and

implements of trade of a defendant and his family, to the value of £10, shall not be liable to be levied upon under writs of execution. There is a similar provision in the District Courts Act. There is none in the Supreme Court Act of this colony, but there is in England to the extent of £5. If that clause is made to apply to all executions it would be a very good thing. It would be lamentable to allow a plaintiff to sell everything where the defendant has a wife and family. I also think it would be a dangerous thing to give power to sell land. On the whole I think that if a number of the clauses were eliminated, and one or two new provisions were inserted giving a right to appeal and restricting landlords' claims for rent, it will be a very good Bill. The Chief Secretary said just now that he anticipated the next Bill of the hon. member for Burrum would be to refer all claims to arbitration. In the Supreme Court Act passed last session there is a clause compelling a judge, whether he thinks it right or not, to refer certain matters to arbitration, and we have heard of several matters referred to arbitration which most certainly ought to have been tried before a judge and jury.

Mr. DRAKE said: Mr. Speaker.—There is quite enough that is good in this Bill to justify the House in passing the second reading of it. I am very glad that the hon. member for Burrum has taken one more step in his efforts to ensure some kind of legal reform. With regard to the extension of the jurisdiction of metropolitan petty sessions, I should be perfectly satisfied with that if metropolitan magistrates were in all cases professional men. If they were there could be no objection to extending this jurisdiction to them. But owing to the peculiar circumstances of the colony, and its large towns being so scattered, police magistrates are often appointed who have had no legal training, and very little experience in legal matters. There would be a certain amount of danger in extending this jurisdiction so far as they were concerned. I quite agree with the Chief Secretary that the matter referred to in clause 3 has already been settled by a somewhat recent decision of the Supreme Court. At present there can be no doubt about that. At the same time if it should appear, when we are discussing the Bill in committee, that there is any doubt about it, the retention of the clause would only mean a little more paper and printer's ink, and it would not do any harm to leave it there. Clauses 6 and 7 are perfectly right of course. No doubt, as has been said, a provision of that kind relating to set-offs and counter-claims was omitted from the present law by accident. There is little need to say much about the Bill at this stage. With regard to selling land, I cannot at present see, and never could see, why any distinction should be made between selling land and selling any other kind of property. I see nothing particularly sacred in the ownership of land. If evils may result from the selling of land under an execution warrant, it appears to me that at least as great evils are just as likely to arise from the selling of chattels, and I cannot see why land should not be sold under execution as well as any other kind of property. On the whole, I think the provisions of the Bill—most of them at any rate—will be an improvement on the present law, and therefore I shall vote for its second reading, which I presume will go through without opposition. If in committee it is necessary to call attention to any particular clause of the Bill, I will take the opportunity of doing so then.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker.—This Bill is more for lawyers than for laymen to discuss, but I wish to compliment the introducer

of it for an honest endeavour to do his best to bring about law reform. He has made several efforts in that direction, but he has not been very successful yet, although I hope he will be very soon. I want to illustrate the need for some kind of legal reform in the matter of executions. A business house a few years ago took out an execution against a debtor for some £20 or £30, and as soon as it was taken out the debtor changed his quarters to the New South Wales border, where he could laugh at his creditors. About a month ago that same debtor returned to the colony, and the creditors thought they had a chance of putting the execution into force. But, unfortunately, it was found that the execution was twelve months old, and a new writ had to be taken out, and before that could be done three days' notice had to be given to the debtor, thereby giving him an opportunity to clear out again before the writ could be put into execution. Such a state of things ought most certainly to be remedied. Why should three days' notice be given to a debtor before the writ can be renewed?

Mr. BARLOW: Why should the writ be renewed at all? A warrant for apprehension is not renewed.

Mr. MACFARLANE: Exactly; and I would ask the hon. member for Burrum whether he has ever thought of making any provision for such a case as that which I have mentioned? I could name several other cases of the kind which have come under my own notice. We seem to be behind all the other colonies in our law. Do we not all know of cases where the piling up of costs by the lawyers has swallowed up the whole estate. Our leading lawyers are certainly to blame for not attempting to get justice, especially for the poor. They do not get it under our present law.

Mr. HYNE: What do you think about clause 4?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said: Mr. Speaker.—The Chief Secretary has dealt with the legal portion of the Bill. I can see at a glance that the greater part of the clauses contained in the Bill have a legal aspect, which, perhaps, I am not able to deal with; but, as the Chief Secretary has said, section 4 is one which requires an expression of opinion from someone conversant with mercantile business. I shall therefore offer a few remarks upon that clause. I look upon section 4 as a most dangerous one, and as one under which a merchant doing business throughout this colony will never be able to recover his debts unless under great inconvenience, and certainly unless he incurs great expense. Let me take, for instance, the case of a mercantile firm who have a number of travellers on the road constantly. They proceed to the different parts of the colony and take orders from their customers. These orders are to be made up in Brisbane and taken away either by steamer or by rail, or whatever it may be, to the customer, and the customer takes receipt immediately the goods are despatched. Now, if the customer does not pay for the goods, he can be sued and got at in the Brisbane courts or the Rockhampton courts, or wherever the merchant is, and he gets his rights; but under this clause as it stands, the merchant would require to annoy and worry himself in the event of his customer refusing to honourably acquit himself of his honest debts. The merchant would then require either to proceed to Normanton or wherever his traveller had taken the order, to take out a summons; and he would require to take all his witnesses with him in order to prove his claim. I am sure that such an injustice to the mercantile community would never be

suffered, because it would really put an end to all business, because this section as it stands reads very extensively—

“A person ordering goods from, or otherwise contracting a debt with, a principal or with an agent of a principal in the district in which the person so ordering the goods or contracting resides, shall not be liable to be sued in a small debts court in another district in which the principal resides or carries on business unless a promise in writing to pay at any place within such district has been signed by the person sued.”

Now, it would be much easier for the customer who is sued to come to Brisbane, than it would be for the merchant to go, say, to Normanton with his staff, in order to prove delivery of the goods and all the rest of it.

Mr. POWERS: His agent could do it the next time he was there.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The agent could not prove the delivery of the goods.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The clause is one that would never work. I can assure the hon. gentleman that unless he will promise to amend that section I shall oppose it. The Bill was only placed in my hands this morning, and I have not had much of an opportunity of studying it closely yet; but this clause which refers to the commercial community very considerably I must offer my strongest opposition to, unless the hon. gentleman will consent to alter it so that summonses may be taken out in the place where the contract for delivery is made. If the goods are to be delivered in Brisbane, or Rockhampton, or wherever it may be, that is the place where the summons should be taken out.

Question—that the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

On the motion of Mr. POWERS, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

#### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JUDGE AND COUNSEL.

##### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the adjourned debate on Mr. Gannon's motion—“That, in the opinion of this House, no judge should sit alone in court or chambers in any matter in which his son acts as counsel”—which stood adjourned (under Sessional Order of 30th ultimo) at 7 o'clock p.m. on Thursday, the 31st March last,

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker. —I have already spoken on this matter, but I wish to ask the permission of the House to say a word or two in regard to it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Mackay was speaking when the question was last before the House, but he is not now present.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: With the permission of the House I wish to say a few words.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am sure that this House will not willingly do anything to interfere with the due administration of justice. I am sure it would not do anything that might be supposed to bear that aspect. Now, the discussion that took place here last Thursday was a matter of a serious character, and it could not be helped that it was associated by the public with proceedings that are actually going on. I am sure the House would not like to do anything that would be supposed to be intended to prejudice the trial of a case under consideration. Certain gentlemen, in the course of the discussion, had their conduct referred to, and it is

perfectly obvious that at the present time they cannot defend themselves without running the risk of the suspicion of impairing the impartial administration of justice. I think, therefore, that it would be very desirable that the further debate on this motion should stand over, say, for three or four weeks. I make that suggestion to the House, and I hope it will be accepted. I may say that in my position as the head of the Government, I have felt it to be consistent with my duty to communicate with the gentlemen most immediately attacked by the motion, and I think it is right to say that they indignantly repudiate any charges of unfair influence or improper conduct that may be made against them.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: What else could they do?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I say this is not the time to discuss the matter. I have also suggested to Mr. Edwyn Liley that in order to leave the matter unembarrassed at the present time as far as possible, he should refuse to take briefs before the Chief Justice in chambers, which he agreed to do. But I am also bound to say that there was a great reluctance on Mr. Liley's part to do so, for fear it might be supposed that his doing so might be taken as an admission that there was something wrong or improper in connection with his appearing before the Chief Justice. Under the circumstances, Sir, I think that the good sense of the House will see that it is desirable that the further discussion should stand over—I would suggest for a month.

Mr. GANNON said: Mr. Speaker,—Although I have no doubt that by speaking now I forfeit my right to reply, I must say that what the Chief Secretary has just said is not sufficiently strong, and I will tell hon. members why. I shall read to the House a certain paragraph which I have taken from the *Observer*. The paragraph is headed in rather large type, as follows:—

“FORESTALLING GANNON.

“CHIEF JUSTICE AND HIS SON.

“*Mr. E. M. Liley's Decision.*”

“On Saturday morning last the Attorney-General (Sir S. W. Griffith) had an interview with Mr. E. M. Liley, in reference to the position of the latter in accepting briefs to appear in chambers before the Chief Justice, his father, and which has caused some discussion in the House. After a long conversation Mr. E. M. Liley, entirely in deference to the expressed wish of the Attorney-General, and for no other reason, consented for the present to decline any briefs to appear before his father in chambers, reserving, however, the right to appear in any motion appertaining to the Grimley case and the Sandgate Pier case. The position agreed to by Mr. Liley has excited the keenest interest in legal circles.”

I may be allowed to tell the House that at the present time there is a certain measure in another place that entirely deals with this matter of practice in chambers. If that Bill passes—as it will pass I trust within the next week—there will be an end of chamber business, and therefore Mr. Liley is giving nothing to the country and nothing to us. I am very sorry that the Chief Secretary has allowed a certain amount of dust to be thrown into his eyes, and I hope that hon. members will not allow dust to be thrown into their eyes. My reason for speaking so strongly is obvious. If the Chief Secretary had come before the House and said Mr. Liley states that “after these cases are disposed of he is not going to appear before his father any more,” I would at once have withdrawn the motion in deference to the hon. gentleman.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: You can go on with the motion afterwards. I only asked you to allow it to stand over till after the cases I referred to are disposed of,

Mr. GANNON : There is another paragraph on the subject which appeared in the *Telegraph*. Both are evidently inspired, as they both appeared about the same hour on the same afternoon. The paragraph in the *Telegraph* is as follows :—

“FATHER AND SON.

“DECISION OF MR. LILLEY.

“*Declines to Practise Before the Chief Justice.*

“A statement is going the rounds of the solicitors that Mr. E. M. Lilley has decided not to accept briefs to appear in chambers before the Chief Justice. On inquiry we learn that the statement is in a measure correct. Mr. Lilley, in deference to the expressed suggestion of the Attorney-General (Sir Samuel Griffith, Q.C.), has decided not to accept any such briefs for the present.”

That is really too bad. This matter was before the House two years ago, and I was then twitted with being to a certain extent frightened to go on with the Bill I had introduced. Hon. members know very well that there was no fear or fright on my part. I am certainly not frightened, and I think it would be a mistake for me to withdraw this motion now after the position I have taken up.

The CHIEF SECRETARY : I did not ask you to withdraw it, but simply to postpone it, so as not to interfere with the administration of justice.

Mr. GANNON : I am, of course, entirely in the hands of the House, and if it is the wish of hon. members that I should postpone the matter for a month I shall do so.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

Mr. GANNON : But I am afraid that there will be great danger of it not coming before the House again if it is postponed. If, however, the Chief Secretary will tell me that he will give me time to bring it forward again within a month I will accept his suggestion, and, with the permission of the House, withdraw the motion.

The CHIEF SECRETARY : I did not suggest that you should withdraw the motion, but that the debate should be adjourned.

Mr. GANNON : If this resolution is carried it will not affect the administration of justice in any way. I feel that the position I have been placed in is an unpleasant one. I have come here this afternoon with the intention of having the matter settled, and I think it is only fair to the House and the country that it should be settled, seeing that it has been so long talked of. A postponement for a month is certainly not a very long one, but if we agree to that postponement we do not know whether there will be a chance of bringing the subject forward again this session. If the Chief Secretary will give the House his assurance that a postponement for a month is long enough, and that an opportunity will be given to bring the matter on again, then I have no objection to accept his suggestion.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD : Postpone it for a week.

The CHIEF SECRETARY : I will promise to give the hon. member an opportunity to bring the matter on again.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD : Postpone it from week to week.

The CHIEF SECRETARY : No, don't do that ; I think a month is a fair thing.

Mr. GANNON : I will defer to the Chief Secretary.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD : The House will not be sitting then.

The CHIEF SECRETARY : It will be sitting soon after.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD : There may be a new case commenced then under the same circumstances.

Mr. GANNON : I will ask the Chief Secretary to tell me whether I shall have the right to bring the matter on again, say, one month from now. I must have that assurance, because, as I have said, I have been twitted with being frightened to go on with the resolution. I am certainly not frightened ; I wish it settled, and I am here this afternoon to give further reasons why the resolution should be passed.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : Postpone it.

Mr. GANNON : If the Chief Secretary will give me an assurance that it will come on again in a month, I will postpone it for that time.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said : Mr. Speaker,—Of course I will not promise that the House will be sitting this day month, but I am quite sure that the session will not be over then. May I be permitted again to say that my suggestion is that this discussion should not go on at a time when cases are actually in progress, and under circumstances when the discussion might be supposed to be intended to influence the decision in those cases? And I further suggested the postponement of the matter for a time which will, I think, be sufficient to allow that difficulty to pass over. I undertake that the hon. member shall have an opportunity of bringing the matter on again. I do not think it should be kept hanging on indefinitely ; it ought to be disposed of.

Mr. DONALDSON said : Mr. Speaker,—I am perfectly aware that in saying anything now I forfeit my right to speak again on the motion, but I have not the slightest intention of speaking on the resolution at the present, further than to say that I think the hon. member for Toombul and the House will be acting right in consenting to postpone the discussion. I had intended to say something on the motion, but I know I have forfeited my right to do so by speaking now.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : No.

Mr. HYNE said : Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD said : Mr. Speaker,—Speaking to the question of the adjournment of the debate, I think the majority of hon. members will agree with the Chief Secretary who, I suppose, is speaking under authority. But were I in the position of the gentleman whose conduct is impugned I should have asked for a short shrift—to have the matter decided at once. However, as there seems to be an opinion that certain matters should be finished before we deal with the motion of the hon. member for Toombul, I think that, as the gentleman whose conduct is impugned does not object, the House should not, and therefore I shall support the Chief Secretary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said : Mr. Speaker,—Before the motion for the adjournment of the debate is put, I think it right to say that the proposal I have made I have made entirely of my own motion, and that I accept the full responsibility of it.

Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put and passed.

Mr. GANNON said : Mr. Speaker,—I move that the resumption of the debate be made an Order of the Day for this day four weeks.

Mr. MORGAN said : Mr. Speaker,—I should like to ask if Parliament is not sitting this day four weeks what will happen then?

The CHIEF SECRETARY : The matter will stand for the first sitting day.

Question put and passed.

MERCHANDISE ACT AMENDMENT  
BILL.

On the Order of the Day being read for the consideration in committee of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the law relating to fraudulent marks on merchandise.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that it is desirable to introduce a Bill to amend the law relating to fraudulent marks on merchandise.

Question put and passed.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE  
COUNCIL.

SUPREME COURT BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, forwarding a Bill to further amend the Supreme Court Acts of 1867 to 1889, for the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

FIRST READING.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that the Bill be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS (EXTEN-  
SION) BILL.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the adjourned debate on the Chief Secretary's motion—"That the Bill be now read a second time"—

Mr. CORFIELD said: Mr. Speaker,—Like other members of the House, I have to announce that I have changed my opinion on the subject of coloured labour. From the time when the motion moved by the present Secretary for Lands, who was then a private member, was discussed, I have felt that my opposition to coloured labour was based upon a wrong understanding of the subject; but as it appeared that those who were most interested in the matter were not disposed to bring it forward again, I did not feel it incumbent upon me to declare publicly my change of mind. The manifesto of the Chief Secretary has, however, now brought the subject forward as one of the most prominent of the day, and from it I have gained an idea upon the whole question such as I never dreamt of before. Having felt, as I have said, that my being opposed to coloured labour was not altogether in favour of the interests of the country, or at any rate of the Northern portion of it, I thought it my duty, before going contrary to my election opinions, to ascertain by personal examination and inquiry what are the real facts of the case, by whom was coloured labour asked for, was it required, and whether it was good or bad for the country and the kanaka. Before going any further I might refer to what I really said and did in my own electorate. I find on referring to my election address, as published in the *Winton Herald*, that I said, in reference to coloured labour—"I am opposed to the introduction or employment of black labour in these colonies, but at the same time I think the subject will not again come before Parliament." During my election I

addressed one meeting in the town of Winton, and others at neighbouring stations engaged in shearing, and at all I referred to the matter in the same strain, but not more definitely. All the same, I was at the time conscientiously opposed to coloured labour, but, like others, I have since learned by experience. As the result of my inquiries, I have arrived at the conclusion that coloured labour is absolutely necessary for sugar cultivation in the Northern part of Queensland, and that it is so required not only by the large planter, but by the small farmer also. The proprietors of two large plantations whom I met informed me that, given kanakas to work in the field, and for certain occupations within the mill, they could and would continue their plantations, and would extend them; and speaking of the planters as a whole, they made the same statement. Some of them expressed their intention, provided this Bill becomes law, to cut up their large estates into small areas to be leased to selectors, with the object of turning their attention wholly to the manufacture of sugar. But I was not so much concerned about the large planters as about the small selectors or farmers, and amongst them I found the same cry—"If we have kanaka labour to work in the canefield it is all we require, but that we must have, or we cannot continue." They said, and from personal experience I believe them, that it is impossible for white men to work for any time amongst the cane. They suggested that for a certain number of kanakas a proportionate number of whites should be employed; but I do not know in what way they could apply it. After a close study of the question, I am of opinion that the extension of the Polynesian Labour Act will confer an immense benefit on the country, and will give confidence to the small farmers now engaged in the sugar industry. It will encourage others to enter into it, and it will do away with the congested state of the labour market. I believe also that it will benefit the kanaka, for, at any rate, his condition on the plantations is an improvement upon what I have seen in many places out West, and although his wages are comparatively small, yet he is far from being in a state of slavery. Now, the most troublesome part of this question is this: Whether it is necessary to refer it to the country before deciding. Personally, I would be more inclined to favour that course. In fact, to have a pronounced opinion in favour of the extension I think would be best, but I am not disposed to give up my rights as a member of this House to vote on a question the expedition of which is immediately required—I repeat, immediately—because I am informed by the small agriculturists, who will eventually become the mainstay of Northern Queensland, that, unless this question is favourably considered within the next few months, the industry is doomed, as the land must go out of cultivation. That would, I consider, be a calamity; and it is to prevent this that, although against my own opinion of the expediency of referring the question to the electors, I intend to support the proposals of the Government. I do not see why, under stringent regulations, by which the kanaka can be employed in certain work, and the proper enforcement of those regulations, it may not be an easy matter to prevent them coming into competition with the whites; and that, Mr. Speaker, I regard as the gist of the whole question.

Mr. MURRAY said: Mr. Speaker,—I have only a few words to say on this very important subject, and upon the extraordinary change that has come over the opinion of this House. I have always been a consistent advocate for the employment of kanaka labour upon the canefields of this colony, believing thoroughly that

the work cannot be successfully and profitably carried out by white labour, not only that it cannot be carried out by white labour, but I think there is higher occupation for the white population of this country than being engaged in work that in all parts of the world is carried on by black labour. I remember when the Italian immigration vote was passing through the House two years ago I opposed it, and said then that I was perfectly satisfied that within a very short time public opinion would reverse, and there would soon be a greater desire throughout the colony for the restoration of the Polynesian Labour Act than there ever was. My prediction has come true, and my desire was that public opinion should be ripened and matured on this subject. I saw a change setting in, and was convinced that if time were only allowed to the constituencies before the general election came round, public opinion would have so changed on the subject that four-fifths of the people of this colony would have approved of kanaka labour at the general election. I am sorry, indeed, that the Government have taken this inopportune time to make their proposals, because it would have been much better to have allowed public opinion to have matured itself and put it to the constituencies at the general election, and I fear that the Government by their action have in some degree checked public opinion in this respect. I addressed a meeting of my constituents before I came down here, and although in the Central district we are not directly interested in the production of sugar—that is to say, we have no sugar country—yet the farmers there, and my constituents generally, while they were not opposed to the employment of kanaka labour upon the sugar plantations, were very much opposed to this Parliament dealing with the matter. I believe that I am not far out when I say that four-fifths of this House were pledged to oppose this measure; and I hardly think it wise, seeing that a general election is so close at hand, for the Government to have introduced this Bill. It would have been much better had it gone to the country. Viewing it from my standpoint I am much in favour of the employment of kanakas; but at the same time I am opposed to this Parliament dealing with it, and I do not feel myself justified in voting for the measure. I cannot vote against it, and therefore I shall not vote on the question at all. I should be very sorry indeed if anything should occur to prevent the employment of these people on our sugar plantations, because I am perfectly satisfied that instead of competing with white men they create work for them, and I think they raise them to a higher level by doing work which is beneath the dignity of intelligent white men. There are degrees of labour, I maintain, suited for all degrees and capacities of intelligence, and I think it is a loss of labour and intelligence to see our fellow-countrymen engaged in work that is carried on by black men throughout all parts of the world. With regard to the moral aspect of the question, I waive that altogether, because if it is wrong on the part of the settlers of Queensland to employ black labour, then the moral government of the whole earth is wrong, because I believe three-fourths of the population of the earth is black, and I believe that the white population of this colony, and of the earth generally, is benefited very materially by the labour of these people, and will continue to be benefited. I believe that the wealth and influence of England is very much made up by the labour of that class of people, and I am perfectly satisfied that our industries are in such a condition that we, for the first time in our history, are compelled to look to them for money to carry us on. It has been our custom

[Mr. MURRAY,

to live on borrowed money; but now we have to look to our industries to pay our way. It is only necessary to look around to see the condition our industries are in, and how necessary it is that everything should be done to foster and encourage them. And we cannot afford to lose one of them. The agricultural interest generally is in such a condition that it cannot pay with the employment of white labour alone. The pastoral interests are very little better off. Cattle are selling at such a low price that no one engaged in that business can afford to pay wages; while wool is falling so much in value that it will be very difficult indeed for the rate of wages that has hitherto prevailed in Queensland to be kept up. Therefore, now that we have only our industries to depend upon, every effort should be made to keep those industries in a vigorous and healthy condition. The country generally, and the working classes in particular, are dependent solely upon the success of those industries, and if the industries are not vigorous and prosperous the working classes will be unable to find employment. Some people have said, speaking on this question, "Rather than employ kanaka labour, let the sugar industry perish." That would be a great mistake. We cannot afford to let any one of our industries perish, and I believe myself that in time to come the sugar industry of Queensland will be one of the most prosperous and profitable industries in the colony. The possibilities of the sugar industry in this country are enormous; and if, by a little assistance, it can be carried on, it will in course of time, and not a very long time either, become the greatest producing industry we have got. I have not much more to say on the subject, but I will refer briefly to a statement made here the other night by the hon. member for Barcoo with reference to the rate of wages and the unemployed in the Western districts. That hon. member stated that there were some hundreds of men in those districts who would be perfectly willing to work for 10s. or 12s. a week. I can assure the hon. member that such is not the case. Only a very few weeks ago I was out there, and I could not get a man of any description to go to work for less than 30s. a week. And although that is the case, there are hundreds of men going about idle. Those men are not allowed by their unions to engage for less than 30s. a week; hence the country is flooded with the unemployed. I believe that if things were properly conducted there would not be any idle men in the colony. There is abundant work for all, if they are only prepared to take as remuneration that which the employers can afford to give them. As I said before, I regret very much that I cannot support the Bill. The subject is one that I have taken a very deep interest in. At the last general election I spoke in favour of it, and I have always advocated it. At the same time, I do not think the Government have acted wisely in bringing it forward at the present time, and I am reluctantly compelled to withhold my support.

Mr. SMITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I have not had an opportunity of expressing my opinions with regard to the Bill that has been brought in by the Government, and I rise now to express my hearty approval of it. I look upon the interference with the sugar industry, in not allowing it the use of kanaka labour, as one of the great causes of our present depression. That blow to the sugar industry was a great misfortune to the colony; in fact, through it every industry in the colony has suffered more or less. When the sugar industry was in full operation, the foundries, the shipping, and many other industries were kept fully employed; and when it was interfered with they were all more or less affected, some of them affected to an enormous

extent. There are foundries in Brisbane and Maryborough which at that time gave employment to 300 or 400 artisans; since then they have had to reduce their staffs to thirty, forty, or fifty. It is said that the introduction of kanaka labour is a blow to the white labourer. But it has been clearly demonstrated that the employment of kanakas has been the means of giving employment to some thousands of white people in the colony. It is said also that one kanaka has not yet been taken from the sugar-planters, and that, therefore, the sugar industry has not been affected by previous legislation. The sugar industry has been very much affected by the legislation that has taken place, because the planters have not had confidence that they would be in a position to carry on the industry, on account of the labour they required not being forthcoming. It was impossible to see where that labour was to come from. I give the Government credit for having tried, by every means in their power, to carry out the views of the white labourers of the colony by introducing labour from Europe, and excluding the black labour which the sugar-planters considered was absolutely necessary for them. They endeavoured to assist the industry by introducing other than black labour. But all their efforts have been futile, and the agitation, which commenced, I am glad to see, in the Southern part of the colony, has commenced there because the people in the South see perfectly clearly that the keeping from the sugar industry the labour which is necessary for it is affecting each and all of them in their various pursuits in life. It was said by the hon. member for Enoggera that it was not true there had been any change of opinion on this question. I think there is proof of it on all sides if we choose to read the signs of the times. Even at that hon. member's own meeting there was a very palpable proof that there had been a change of opinion amongst his own constituents. As I read the report of his meeting, some of his own constituents are in favour of the continuance of black labour. And there is no doubt that a change of opinion has occurred all over the colony. Then we are told that Australia should be for the white man, and not for a mixed race. Now, does anyone really believe that the kanaka, being allowed to assist the sugar-planter, will at all interfere with the social position of the white men of this colony? There is no labour that we have so much control over as over the Polynesians. They have no standing in the colony, and if the Government find that they are not required, and that it is advisable to send them home again, they can do so at a day's notice; so that it has complete control over this class of labourers. They can be removed at any moment when it is found that they are not necessary for the development of our industries. But I hold that the laws of nature here are such that there are portions in this colony that never will be brought under cultivation without the assistance of coloured labour. We cannot alter those laws. We may prate and say as much as we like about the white man being able to do anything under the sun; but he will not do it. He can do it, no doubt, but he will not. He chooses not to do it, because he can do better than going on to the plantations to work for the sugar-planter. The white man can do a great deal better than that, and it will not pay the sugar-planter to give the wages that the white man at present demands. In fact I look upon the coloured man or the Polynesian as an absolute necessity to bring into cultivation some portions, at any rate, of tropical Queensland. The argument is used that the kanaka enters into competition with white labour, but I think that falls to the

ground, because we know as an absolute fact that the more the kanaka is employed in developing the sugar industry the more white men are also employed; and I am rather surprised to see my hon. friend the member for Stanley so strongly opposing the introduction of this labour. I have not the slightest doubt that if that hon. gentleman only went on to the sugar plantations, and saw what he would see there, he would be so strongly impressed with the necessity for giving this class of labour to the sugar industry that there would be no stronger advocate for it than the hon. gentleman, for I am sure he is quite sensible enough to act according to his conscientious opinions. We have been long talking of protection, and there are a great many protectionists in this House, and in Australia. But here is an industry which was started without one penny being given from the public Treasury. It sprang up, as it were, spontaneously amongst us.

Mr. ALAND: There is an import duty of £5 a ton on sugar.

Mr. SMITH: That is nothing. We do not import any sugar.

Mr. ALAND: We did then.

Mr. SMITH: Well, we do not import any now. Those gentlemen who advocate protection should be the first to give the planter this protection which he requires. He only requires the labour which is necessary for him to have; and of all the industries in Australia I think the sugar industry is the gem, because it is an agricultural industry, and we know that the riches that are obtained from the land are those which set all the other industries at work. It is like the large fly-wheel in machinery, which sets all the smaller wheels in motion. This industry is the great industry which sets all the other industries at work, and gives them employment, and, of course, the means of subsistence. Now, it is absolutely necessary that something should be done in order to assist in keeping this industry alive. Some hon. members say that this question should be relegated to the constituencies, and that after the next general election it should be settled. Well, what does that mean? A number of sugar-planters have been making arrangements for closing their plantations in this colony, and to remove their machinery elsewhere, and unless something is done immediately which will give them confidence in the future, those men will close their operations in this colony, and will not be enticed here again. I say by all means keep the sugar industry going. Keep those gentlemen here who have spent so much money and who have the industry now in operation. Keep them when we have them here, and try to encourage as many more to begin the industry as we can. I shall not detain the House any further, but I have very much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to say a few words before this debate is brought to a close, although my few remarks ought rather to have been made during the debate on the Address in Reply, or on the amendment moved by the hon. member for Enoggera. However, I did not take advantage of either of those opportunities to speak, and perhaps I may be pardoned if what I have to say is not altogether upon the Bill as it is now before the House. I have listened attentively to the several speeches—I should not like to say that I have listened to all of them. However, I have listened to most of the speeches which have been delivered on either side of this House—or rather I should say on either side of this question—and I must say that regarded from the economic point of view those gentlemen who are in favour of this Bill appear to me to have had the best

of the arguments. I think the speech delivered by the hon. member for Mackay, from that point of view, last night, was altogether unanswerable. At all events no speaker that I have heard has been able to refute the hon. member's arguments, and nothing that I have read, either in official documents or in newspaper publications, has tended to confute those arguments. But I cannot agree with the remark made by the hon. member for Normanby just now when he said that he did not regard the moral aspect of this question at all.

Mr. MURRAY: I did not say that.

Mr. ALAND: I understood the hon. member to say that. Almost his last words were that the moral aspect did not weigh with him at all.

Mr. MURRAY: I said that if it was wrong in Queensland, it was wrong all over the world.

Mr. ALAND: I take exception to that remark. At all events the experience of the past has proved to my mind, and I think to the mind of the Chief Secretary, that the moral aspect of this question has been wrong in the past. Now, the question that arises in my mind now is, "Is this moral aspect going to be improved in the future?" I for one have very serious doubts on the question. I regret, of course, the correspondence which has taken place between Mr. Paton, Mr. Christensen, and other clergymen, some for and others against the proposal of the Government. But in the light of past experience I am sadly afraid that the abuses which crept into the system in the past will creep into the traffic in time to come; and if that is the case we cannot expect any blessing—commercial or any other—to rest upon the reintroduction of Polynesian labour. It has been said that this question came before the constituencies at the last two general elections. I think however, that the question of Polynesian labour did not come very prominently before the constituencies at the general election in 1883. There was no strong feeling against the kanaka at that time. A few years previous to that the kanaka was mentioned as coming into competition in labour that ought to be performed by white men and white women. But what was feared at the general election in 1883-4 was an inundation of hordes or multitudes of coolies from India. That was the fear which operated on the mind of the Chief Secretary, who was then leader of the Opposition, and operated on the minds of the electors to induce them to go so strongly as they did against coloured labour. At the general election in 1888 the black labour question was scarcely raised at all, and therefore while I am not going to apologise for those members who intend to vote for the Bill which is now before the House, I think there is something to be said in favour of hon. members who were really silent upon the subject when they were before their constituents in 1888. I know that in my own electorate the matter was looked upon as so thoroughly settled, both leaders agreeing on the question, that it was not considered that any effort would be made to reintroduce Polynesians, and it was passed over. On reading the electioneering speeches of candidates on either side I find that very little mention was made of the coloured labour question. Therefore I am not disposed to pour down abuse, as has been done, on those members in the House who see fit to vote for this Bill, nor can I bring myself to accuse them of broken pledges and all that sort of thing. I would accuse myself of a broken pledge if I voted for this Bill upon this occasion, but I cannot accuse others members who really kept silent on the subject at the last general election. At the last general election I was sent here by the constituency which returned me, or I was elected to come here—I prefer to put it in that

way—on the condition that I would not give my support to the introduction of coloured labour in any shape whatever. I listened to the remarks of the hon. member for Normanby, and I thought I detected a feeling throughout his speech which somewhat surprised me. I may be mistaken, and the hon. member will pardon me if a wrong impression is conveyed to my mind, but I heard the same thing given expression to outside this House. It is not so many weeks ago that when talking over this question in company with a number of gentlemen, I heard one of them say that certain lands on the Darling Downs would never be put to profitable use unless we could get coloured labour to work those lands. It struck me, on hearing the speech of the hon. member for Normanby, that he was getting the same idea into his head, that because cattle were sold at a less price than could be got for ducks and geese, therefore we must have coloured labour to work cattle and sheep farms.

Mr. MURRAY: No, no!

Mr. ALAND: If the impression is getting abroad that industries which at the present time are not paying as they ought to pay in order to be remunerative to those persons who are carrying them on, and that, in order to make those industries pay, we must introduce a cheap kind of labour, it will be a great mistake for the country. Something has also been said in reference to the feeling which has come over the country regarding this coloured labour. I am not going to say that a change of opinion is not coming over the public mind, but I think I may tell the Chief Secretary that the opinion in favour of his manifesto is not so strong as he has been led to suppose. But we know, Sir, that we get our impressions from the company we keep. There is no doubt about that. I am quite sure that the company the hon. member for Barcoo keeps is not the company that will impress upon him that there is a change of opinion going on among the public in reference to this matter, and I am quite sure that the company the Chief Secretary keeps has impressed upon his mind that there is really a great change coming over the people of Queensland upon this subject.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: You are mistaken about that.

Mr. ALAND: I believe there is a change. I know that in my own electorate many valued friends and constituents of mine, who hitherto were pronounced in their opposition to coloured labour, are really coming over to the Chief Secretary's views, but, at the same time, I know that there is a very large number who have not conformed to that view as yet. Whether they will be educated up to it or not, I cannot say just at present. However, I want just to explain the position in which I stand in regard to this question. I have already said that the economic aspect of the question is really settled in my mind. I am convinced of what has been said in this House over and over again: That in order that sugar may be produced at a profitable rate it must be produced at a less cost than the planters can afford to pay for white labour, unless white labourers will accept the wages which the hon. member for Barcoo mentioned the other evening—namely, from 10s. to 12s. per week and their rations. I have not the faith in the workers of the colony that the hon. member for Barcoo has, to think that from any patriotic motives they are going to work for the sugar-planters at any such wages. Further, I believe that the constitution of white men does not fit them for work in the canefields of this colony, whatever may be the case down about the Tweed or Clarence Rivers. I am convinced of that from all I have heard or read,

From my visits to the North, which have been made in the winter time, I can really form no conception of what the heat of the tropical parts of this colony is in the summer months. I know what the heat of the tropical parts of this colony is in the winter months, and I am quite sure that the work of the cane-fields would not be carried on by white labour even in the winter months. I have to oppose this Bill, and I make no excuse for opposing it, because I promised my constituents I would vote against the introduction of coloured labour, and I am bound to keep that promise unless I am told by them to vote in the contrary way.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: You are a pure delegate.

Mr. ALAND: I am not a pure delegate.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Well, you are a delegate. I won't say "pure."

Mr. ALAND: If my constituents, in public meeting assembled, had requested me to vote—

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Given you absolutism like.

Mr. ALAND: If they had requested me to vote in favour of the Bill I should not have availed myself of the opportunity of doing so, holding as I do very strong feelings on the moral view of the question. I cannot myself believe that this traffic is going to be carried on without some of those gross abuses we have heard of from time to time as connected with it. There is another thing I want to say, and the Chief Secretary must pardon me for saying it. I like to say anything I have to say about the Chief Secretary before the hon. gentleman's face. That is what I like to do, and I tell him now that I think he has made a very great mistake, and has destroyed the confidence which the people of this colony have had in him by not submitting this manifesto of his to the people and getting their verdict upon it. I believe that from the bottom of my heart. It is all nonsense to say we have not the time before us to do this thing. Why, Sir, had that been done at once, by this time, since the manifesto was issued, we might have been in the turmoil of a general election. It was within the province of the Government, I presume, with the consent of His Excellency, to dissolve Parliament at any time; and I maintain that Parliament should have been dissolved, and this matter should have been placed before the electors, seeing that it is such an utter reversal of the policy upon which this Parliament was elected. The whole manifesto, with its reference also to the Chief Secretary's change of mind upon the question of land-grant railways, is such an utter reversal of the policy he has ever maintained that it should, for his own credit and honour, have been referred to the country, and I would have had much greater confidence in the hon. gentleman's wisdom if he had done that. Of course I shall have to oppose the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. SALKELD said: Mr. Speaker,—I desire to make a few remarks upon the question before it goes to a vote. I shall not detain the House with any array of figures, or with any attempt to go over the ground which has been gone over before. Various views and figures have been put before the House by other hon. members, and I shall not go into that part of the subject. I have already expressed myself as of opinion that this question ought to be referred to the constituencies, and I shall now content myself with dealing with this argument against the Bill. I should like to say in reference to this matter, and the arguments in the Chief Secretary's manifesto for taking the course he has taken, that so far as I can learn, substantially the whole of the facts

we know now with regard to the necessity or alleged necessity for Kanaka labour in the cultivation of sugar-cane were known not only in 1889, when we had a debate upon the motion of the present Secretary for Lands, but they were known before the general election of 1888. Perhaps fresh light may have been thrown upon the subject by the work of the Sugar Commission; but I do not know that there is anything of substantial importance connected with the matter that was not known before the general election of 1888. Under the circumstances I cannot understand how the Chief Secretary has been so long in making up his mind upon this question. If the arguments which have led him to take up his present course are correct, they were correct eighteen months, two years, and pretty well four years ago. The hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black, and some other hon. members have spoken very strongly in regard to the abuses that took place in connection with this traffic previous to 1885. They have denounced them in very strong terms indeed. Of course we all disagree with that kind of thing; but I was very glad to hear them speak out so openly and emphatically in condemning the abuses that have taken place. But, Sir, they tell us that there are no abuses now, and I should like to ask those hon. gentlemen if, when the abuses in connection with the recruiting of this labour—I am referring to the recruiting in this matter as I wish to keep the two matters of the recruiting and the treatment of the islanders in Queensland distinct—I would like to ask them if, when the abuses connected with the recruiting took place previous to 1885, they were aware of them? If they were aware of them why did they not report them to the proper persons to put a stop to them? As good citizens they ought to have done so. I believe myself that the hon. member for Mackay, the leader of the Opposition, and other hon. members who have spoken so strongly against these abuses were not aware of them until they were brought before the public in a court of law.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: That is more than I do.

Mr. SALKELD: I believe that; and, assuming that they were not, I ask: What weight can be placed upon their statements that there are no abuses now? They were not aware of the flagrant cases of kidnapping and murder that occurred previous to 1885, and what guarantee have we under the circumstances that they are in a position to say that there are no abuses now?

Mr. HYNE: They did not understand the business of recruiting at that time.

Mr. SALKELD: There may be something in that, but we all heard that there were abuses going on, and the persons who said so were hooted down. They were forced down and denounced very strongly indeed. Men who had no connection with Queensland pointed out that there were abuses connected with the traffic, and in some cases in which inquiries were made into their statements they were not able to procure witnesses to substantiate their case. People are sometimes misled in these matters, and come to the conclusion that because the persons making such charges are not able to sheet them home when inquiries of that kind are made into them, they must be misleading the public and wilfully perverting the truth. I would point out that people should wait a little before they come to conclusions of that kind. We know it is a matter of difficulty to get evidence in those cases. Perhaps the witnesses may be scattered goodness knows where; and although a man may have good grounds for making a statement, when an inquiry is held he may not be able to sheet a charge home. I have heard the Chief Secretary say that he had very

strong evidence indeed that convinced him that certain abuses existed, but as a lawyer he knew he could not prove them legally. These abuses were known to many people, including the missionaries who have been so strongly spoken against. It is a most difficult thing to sheet home such cases. I remember over twenty years ago, up in the North, I stayed at an hotel with some men who were engaged in the labour trade. They were seamen. One was second mate, and two of them were very badly wounded with poisoned arrows. I did not understand much about it then, but I could hear from the conversation that was going on that some very rough work had taken place. I believe if I had laid an information in that case I would have been made out a slanderer. Why? Because I could never make out a case, although I felt morally certain that those men received their wounds in connection with kidnapping. Of course I would have failed. I could not sheet the matter home. The parties would have denied the charge, and there I would have been. That is the case with the missionaries. I was sorry to hear some remarks about the missionaries being traders, and that their objection to the traffic arose through that fact. I do not believe it for a moment. There may be an isolated case, but I do not think the great body of the missionaries would be actuated by any such motive. I have a far different opinion of them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: One of the missionaries at Cooktown sold the blacks.

Mr. SALKELD: There may be one case, but one swallow does not make a summer. If we were to tell the Colonial Secretary what some members of his profession have done he would not like to be blamed for their offences. If the man referred to did wrong he was punished; if not, he ought to have been. I think that case happened in Queensland. It was not in the islands?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. SALKELD: Because someone murders someone else in Africa, how does that affect anyone here? The hon. member for Mackay has given some reasons why people are opposed to the trade. One reason was that the missionaries lost their trade. It did no credit to the hon. gentleman to impute those motives. Another was that it was going to interfere with white labour. Now, I know that there have been in the past evils in connection with recruiting. The hon. gentleman did not allude to one very strong objection, and I have not heard a single speaker allude to it. It escaped their notice. I am told, "Why do you dwell upon this? Never mind, they are only kanakas." I do not allude to the evils of recruiting. I hope that the bulk of these are done away with, and that they will never be repeated. I am not quite certain that everything is carried on as it should be even now. I have very grave doubts about it. I believe it is a kind of a traffic that cannot be properly controlled. That is my conviction.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There are just as many evils connected with the immigration of whites.

Mr. SALKELD: The two cases are quite different, because there is no such discrepancy between the persons who are making the bargains as there is in the case of the engagement of islanders. One essential element in a proper bargain or contract is, that both persons shall be in a position to understand what they are doing, and know the terms and conditions, and be so well seized of the particular facts of the case that they can make a bargain. We all know that we recognise that when a man is intoxicated and helpless, he is not in a position to make a bargain.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Not always.

Mr. SALKELD: As a rule, you would not buy a horse from a man who was intoxicated. We recognise that it is not fair to make a bargain with a child, and these kanakas are very much like children. I do not think they understand the terms of their contracts. They do not understand what working for three years in a canefield for £6 a year and rations means.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They come back here.

Mr. SALKELD: Some of them, of course, come back, and a great many go away and never come back. However, my principal objection to the reintroduction of kanaka labour is to a matter that I cannot see how the Government are going to remedy. It is a matter that is an essential evil in connection with the trade, and that is the terrible mortality of the kanakas while in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is not so great as the mortality of the New Zealanders on the first Gilbert rush.

Mr. SALKELD: The hon. gentleman's own common sense will tell him that that is no argument. There is no comparison. The two cases are not on a level. A lot of diggers go on a new rush; they may not have proper food or water, and a disease may break out which kills them very rapidly. If anyone else used such an argument, the hon. gentleman would be the very first to point out the error. We are dealing not with a temporary case. If only the first shipload of kanakas died off very rapidly, and some extraordinary cause was given, we could understand it. We could say, "That is the first case, and it will not occur again"; but this excessive mortality always exists. I have all the figures, but I shall not trouble the House with them. The facts are taken from the last six years' returns of the Registrar-General, that the death-rate among the kanakas amounted to nearly 66 per 1,000. I have had sent to me some writings of the late Mr. Jordan, who was for seven years Registrar-General. He shows that the death-rate of the European population in Queensland of the same ages as the kanakas was less than 6 per 1,000; thus showing that the death-rate among the kanakas is eleven times as great as amongst the Europeans of the same age. That is a most outrageous thing. And when I read statements that white people cannot stand the work in canefields, I say, neither can the kanakas. It is a surprising thing to read in the report of the Royal Commission, whenever questions were asked of planters if their kanakas were healthy, that they always answered "Yes," as if it were the healthiest employment going. But the returns of the Registrar-General tell a different tale. I see that the death-rate of the present year is higher than that of last year. The death-rate varies; sometimes it goes a little down, and then it goes a great deal up. There has been evidently no improvement in the death-rate during the last six or seven years. That being so, is it just, is it right, is it humane to sanction and approve of steps being taken to carry on a traffic of this kind, which results in such a terrible mortality amongst those poor people?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The mortality is greater on their own islands.

Mr. SALKELD: I have searched in every way to ascertain that, but I have not come across any statistics bearing on the subject. I met a gentleman who was once a member of this House, and who has resided in those islands a considerable time. I thought he might be able to tell me something about it. I said to him, "I

suppose the death-rate of kanakas in their islands is a great deal higher than the death-rate of white people in Queensland?" He replied, "I do not think so; I doubt it very much." I said, "They are evidently not increasing, as the white races are doing." He said, "That may be so, but it may be partly owing to the low birth-rate, which again is partly owing to the traffic in kanakas, and to other causes." It is hardly fair to presume that the death-rate of kanakas is so tremendous in their islands. On this question I will read a short extract from the report of a Government official who has evidently studied the subject. He says—

"The death-rate (of the kanaka) is abnormal, as in all cases where coloured races are exposed to sudden change. The kanaka removed from the equable temperature of his native isle and subjected to the violent alternations of Australia, fed on a strange diet, copious though it be, clothed, and changing from the close atmosphere of a grass hut to the chill morning dews of plantation field work, debarred from all but depraved sexual association, falls an easy victim to pulmonary and venereal disease, however anxious his employers may be to promote his physical welfare."

That is from a report made on the 4th May, 1886, by the present Secretary for Mines, who was not then a member of the House, but who was appointed to inquire into certain matters connected with kanaka labour; and his report agrees with the reports of other Government officials on the same question—namely, that the kanaka cannot stand the Queensland climate. We are told that it is an impertinence on the part of white people to come here and debar coloured people from working in their own land. But as far as the first occupants are concerned, this is the land of the aboriginal blackfellow, and it has never even been proposed to prevent him from working in his own land. I never heard that anybody had any objection to his working; the chief objection I have heard against him is that he will not work. I am only showing what a lot of bad arguments have been put forward to mislead the public mind. Many people who read statements of that kind have no time to look into them. This is not the native home of the kanaka. He is taken away from his native home and brought to a quite different country, where he has to lead quite a different life, and where he has to labour from morning till night. I do not mean to say that the planters work them more than they ought, but the conditions under which they labour on plantations are so completely different from their native style of living that there is no wonder the death-rate is considerably higher here than it is on the islands.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: But it is not.

Mr. SALKELD: If the death-rate were the same on the islands as it is here, the South Sea Islands would have been depopulated years ago. I find, from the Registrar-General's returns from 1885 to 1890, inclusive, that the number of islanders in the colony, each year added together, made a total of 55,077, and that during those six years, 3,689 of those men died, or at the rate of 66 per 1,000.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: During that time there was a visitation of measles.

Mr. SALKELD: I am not including the year when there was a visitation of measles. I have left out that year intentionally and the year before it. In that year the death-rate was 147 per 1,000; in the year before it was 75 per 1,000; and in the year before that it was 82 per 1,000. I do not want to give an unfair average. The Colonial Secretary is quite wrong in making a statement of that kind. No doubt one reason for the decrease of population on the islands is our continually bringing away such a number

of them—principally men between the ages of sixteen and forty—and that is bound to reduce the birth-rate and diminish the population. The heavy death-rate in Queensland is also an important factor in the question. The contention of the planters has always been, "We have to compete with cane sugar grown by cheap labour, and we want cheap labour to be in a position to compete with it." If we were to take up that position we should have to allow them to have labour to compete with the cheapest labour employed in growing cane; for that is what it amounts to. In the Dutch East Indies, for instance, there is a system of slavery where over 200,000 families are compelled to work at 6d. a day. If that is their contention—and it has been all along—we cannot comply with it, and we are not going to comply with it. In taking part in this debate I wish to bring forward a view of the case that I feel ought to be put before this House; and I will try to explain my views and feelings as concisely as I can, but without in any way wishing to obtrude my own opinions upon hon. members. We have heard a great deal during this debate about the interests of those engaged in the sugar industry. We have heard a great deal about the interests of the capitalists who have spent some millions of money in it. We are told of the losses they have sustained, and of the necessity for carrying on the industry, and of the reasonableness and right of giving them an opportunity of, at any rate, avoiding suffering as great a loss as they would do if this kanaka labour were not introduced. But I have not heard any hon. member who has spoken yet, although I have not heard all the speeches that have been delivered, as I have not been in the Chamber during the whole debate, but I certainly have not heard any prominence given to the rights of the Polynesians themselves. We are told again and again that white men cannot stand the work of cultivating the cane. That has been said all over the colony, repeatedly by the Press, and it has been repeated in this House times without number. We have been told about the unhealthiness of the work, and that white people cannot stand it, but what do the figures show? They are not the figures published by those who are opposed to kanaka labour, neither are they the figures published by the planters. The impartial evidence of the Government statistics shows that the kanaka cannot stand this labour. They cannot endure it. I do not know that white men can stand working in the sun. I am not going to take up the position of saying that there is no difference between the climate of the coast sugar lands in North Queensland and this portion of the colony. I have been in both places. I was in the canefields over twenty years ago, and I have been back several times since, and I know perfectly well that it is exceedingly hot there. It is exceedingly hot anywhere on an ordinary summer's day in the North. It is very hot here, too. It is very hot in a maizefield also, yet white men can grow maize. I would point out that while the other advocates of this labour say that white men cannot do the work the Chief Secretary thinks differently. The evidence of the managers of the plantations, the mill-owners, and the planters, and those interested in this industry, before the Royal Commission, as a general rule, was that white men cannot do the work. Then we have the evidence of other men who have been working their own land, and who were engaged in the cultivation of cane. Now, while the sugar-planters and their advocates say that white men cannot do the work, the Chief Secretary, in the manifesto which he has put before the country, is of opinion that they can do the work.

We gather from his manifesto itself that he still believes in Australia being a country for white men, and I believe in that. I am not carried away by any race feelings or anything of that kind. I do not despise a coloured man or look down upon him; I would not ill-treat him, or treat him improperly in any way. The objection I have to any of the coloured races coming here is on the ground of State policy. I believe that it is bad to allow a race of men here who cannot take part in our government. We never saw any stability, any good government, any happiness, or real solid prosperity in a country where both races are combined. I believe they are not intended to mix together in any way; the differences are so great. I do not know what may be the circumstances in the future, but I do not think it is a good thing either for the white or the coloured race that they should be mixed together. I believe that if the coloured races are kept to their native lands they will be better off. We know perfectly well that the right white people have in this country is that they will make better use of it than the aborigines did, and that is about the best title that we can have. Certainly the kanakas have done nothing. They have been brought here to work in gangs under the direction of others, and the most humane policy is to keep them out altogether. If we had never allowed them here the country would have been all the better for it, and a great deal of injustice and cruelty and hardship would have been avoided if that had been done. When I say that, I want to show how completely at variance the Chief Secretary is with the bulk of the advocates from the planters' side. They maintain that white people cannot do it, but sometimes they make a slip and say that by-and-by, when there are more white people, they may be able to grow sugar by white labour. I want to point out that there is no reason to think there will be any change in another ten years' time. The climate will not change, and if these large estates are cut up into ten-acre blocks it will be just as hot as before. That is really the contention that is taken up; that although the white men cannot stand the heat on a large estate of, say, 1,000 acres, they will be able to stand it when that estate is cut up into small blocks. That is perfectly absurd.

Mr. LITTLE: Do you mean to say it is as hot in a small paddock as in a big scrub?

Mr. SALKELD: If the hon. member would listen, he would not make such mistakes. I said that if you cut up a 1,000-acre paddock into ten-acre blocks it would be as hot there as before. We know the heat would be just the same, and how much better off are we likely to be at the end of ten years? I do not know that we will be any better off; but I believe there will be just as great a cry for kanaka labour at the end of five or ten years as there is now. I believe they will use all the same arguments, and put forward the same pleas as they do now. I can understand the contention of the sugar-planters; and I can also understand the arguments of such advocates as the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black, who says that white men cannot do the work, and that the planters ought to have kanakas; but it is my belief that if they require them now they will always require them. We often hear the £ s. d. aspect of the question put before us; and I feel sure that if it had not been for the great depression that has existed in the colony for some time, this policy would not have been ventured upon. It is simply an appeal to people in their extremity and distress to reverse a policy which they would not otherwise be asked to reverse. I believe this Polynesian immigration system is one that the

Government cannot control efficiently. Whatever regulations they may make, I do not think they will be able to prevent abuses. And I may here remark that the enormous sacrifice of life among the Polynesians has been left out of the calculation completely. That is a point which may be left out in connection with financial institutions; but we, as the representatives of the people, cannot leave it out. I believe we all recognise that we have something higher than £ s. d. to consider, whatever may be our views on moral or religious questions; yet the whole of this agitation has been an appeal to the pockets of the people in a time of distress. I can see that in every direction; and I say that it is wrong to attempt to sway people in a time of distress in a direction which our consciences tell us is wrong. Those who have opposed kanaka labour hitherto have done so principally on moral grounds; and I do not know how they can have been induced to alter their opinions. As far as I am concerned, without being uncharitable towards the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government or those hon. gentlemen who are supporting this Bill, and without attributing motives to anyone, I can only say that whatever may be the consequence, I will not have it on my conscience during the rest of my life that I have done anything in any way to renew a traffic of this kind. Even supposing there is no kidnapping and no murder, what reason have we to expect that the traffic will be better conducted than it has been during the last seven years? We know what heart the Chief Secretary put into his work when he set about putting a stop to the abuses which the colony cried out about some years ago; and we cannot suppose that he has been neglecting his duty for the last six or seven years, and that he is going to do better in the future. I shall not detain the House any longer. I do not intend to go into figures on this question. I am convinced that the Government are taking a mistaken course. I leave those hon. members who consider that it is in the interests of the islanders to bring them here to settle with their consciences the question whether they are not in some way responsible for the tremendous sacrifice of life that has taken place, and which I feel morally certain will take place. For my part I will have neither part nor lot in the matter. I would rather retire from public life for ever than be responsible for a traffic of this kind.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—One would imagine, by the strenuous opposition to this Bill, that it was proposed to introduce some new legislation by which kanakas would be brought in in large numbers, whereas it is simply intended to continue the system which has been in force many years, but under greater restrictions, because in the proposed Bill the planters will not be allowed to compete with the farmers in the production of maize, as kanakas will not be allowed to engage in that industry. Certain hon. members have no doubt given pledges, and those who have made definite promises to their constituents are bound in honour to keep those promises. There are also hon. members in this House who state that because this is the last year of the present Parliament, therefore they should not vote according to their conscience—their conscientious convictions—on the question, but should wait and take the opinion of their constituents, after a dissolution of Parliament, before doing anything. In my opinion that is cowardice; it simply means, "We shall shortly have to face the music," and therefore we are afraid to express our conscientious convictions now; but we will wait till we ascertain our constituents' sentiments on the question, and forthwith undertake to advocate those sentiments, provided they elect us, even if we conscientiously

disbelieve in those views. It has been explained clearly that if there is any delay, such as would occur through having a general election, that would cause immense loss to the planters, because if the planting is not finished within a few months the whole season will be lost. Various objections have been urged against this Bill, but there is no doubt that the majority of hon. members wish to do that which they think best in the interests of the country. We must endeavour to divest ourselves of all prejudice on one side and on the other, and carefully weigh the objections to kanaka labour and its advantages. One objection is on the ground of mortality, but I have been told that on the islands the mortality is as great among the kanakas as in Queensland, and the mortality is always greater among the kanakas, both here and on the islands, than it is among white men. I believe that dysentery and pneumonia are the two affections which carry them off. The mortality argument would apply with just as much force to many other industries which are carried on in this country. The mortality is sometimes terrible on some of the goldfields in the far North, but I have never yet heard that put forward as a reason that people should not be encouraged to work on goldfields. Neither have I heard it advocated that railways should not be made in the far West on account of the great mortality which we know has occurred among the navvies who made those railways. The Rev. Mr. Paton has urged some objections against the proposal to continue the introduction of kanakas, and as great weight is attached to those objections by the opponents of this measure, I shall take some notice of them. Mr. Paton says the traffic—

"Has blunted, if not destroyed, the best feelings of their nature, and also of the Queensland public, as seen in their taking upon themselves, by the largest petition said to have been ever signed and presented in your colony, to condone the crimes and murders of the crew of the 'Hopeful,' in clamouring for their release from all punishment, till they were set at liberty as good members of society, though their hands were dripping with the blood of many islanders they had murdered."

Here is a wholesale slander of the people of Queensland, particularly of the 28,000 persons who signed that petition. Mr. Paton says that their feelings are blunted, and that they sympathised with murders. I was one of the persons who supported the release of the "Hopeful" prisoners. If I believed that they were guilty I would have given them short shrift, but on reading the evidence I saw that they were convicted on evidence of kanakas filtered through the interpreter—one man "Cago," who is now recognised as a thorough scoundrel. I believe he has been since hanged, or is now in gaol for some offence. Those persons who put Mr. Paton forward as a paragon of truth and reliability really agree with him in his slander of the 28,000 people who signed the petition for the release of the "Hopeful" prisoners. I will quote the opinion of some gentlemen of his own cloth regarding his statements on the subject of kanaka labour. Among those who have replied to Mr. Paton is the Rev. A. C. Smith, convener of the heathen committee of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. His letter is that of a Christian gentleman, and he has a better knowledge of how the kanakas are treated, as he visited several places where they are employed—Mackay, Bundaberg, and other places; and the result of his investigations is a complete refutation of the statements made by Mr. Paton. Let me here give some extracts regarding other charges made by Mr. Paton, and the verdict on them, so that the public may be able to assess the value of his charges. As his slander of the people of Queensland has been quoted, I will give the antidote to the poison.

In the *Brisbane Courier* of the 5th April there is an article headed "Dr. Paton's Facts." It states that in December, 1881—

"Mr. Paton published a long letter in the *Argus* which contained charges so grave that Captain Bridge, of H.M.S. 'Espiegle,' was instructed by Sir Arthur Gordon to investigate them. Three of the principal charges, together with the official report on them, were printed in the *Argus* as follows:—

"Dr. Paton's charge (No. 1)—'That a Queensland vessel, with a Government agent on board, sent two lads on shore; that the men called out to a little boy to come to them; that the boy's father held the lad's arm and prevented him, and that the crews then opened fire and killed the natives.'

"The official report says—'That these men wished to join a labour vessel, but were prevented by the other natives; that on one of them attempting to reach a boat the natives opened fire and struck the inner boat, whereupon the covering boat fired on the natives.'

"Dr. Paton's charge (No. 2)—'A labour vessel decoyed a Christian native teacher on board. Word was sent to the young men and boys of the school that their teacher wanted to see them. So soon as 100 were collected the vessel sailed away.'

"The official report says—'A native teacher left by a labour vessel, but he went voluntarily. He was not decoyed. Word was not sent to collect the scholars. None were entrapped. There was no such kidnapping incident.'

"Dr. Paton's charge (No. 3)—'That two tribes that were fighting placed their women and children on a reef. That a labour vessel stole in, got the women and children into the boats, and sailed away, despite the firing of the men and the pleading of the women.'

No children are allowed to come to Queensland, so that that fairy tale about the babies is manifestly absurd.

"Official report—'The Revs. Messrs. Watt and Neilson have been long on Tanna, and both say that they never heard of any such thing occurring on that island.'

"Upon these charges and the reports a Melbourne paper said that Dr. Paton 'appears to combine enthusiasm in a good cause with a perfect genius for scandal-mongering and the imputation of bad motives.'

"The *Courier* at the time, commenting on the matter, said, 'To most of our readers this will appear rather mild censure on an individual who, though a minister of the gospel, persists in spreading calumnies of which the falsehood has been demonstrated.'

The Rev. W. Faulkner, a Primitive Methodist minister, in a letter to the *Bundaberg Mail*, says—

"Sir,—Having been requested by the Workers' Political Organisation of this town to express my 'opinions and convictions' re Dr. Paton's appeal against the proposed ten years' extension of the Polynesian Labourers Act, with your permission I avail myself of the columns of your paper to respond. In doing so, it must be distinctly understood that I am writing in my individual capacity, and not as the representative of the church or denomination with which I am identified. During three years' residence in Mackay and five years in this town I have tried to form an independent and unbiased opinion. I cannot, however, attempt to express my views at length, but must confine myself to a very brief summary.

"1. I am quite aware of the fact, and deeply pained by it, that many serious abuses have been connected with the traffic, and these I most strongly deprecate and condemn; but I accept the assurance of Sir Samuel Griffith that these abuses have been reduced almost to a minimum.

"2. My own observations as a resident for eight years in two principal centres of the sugar industry in Queensland do not confirm the assertions of Dr. Paton respecting the inhuman treatment of the kanakas on the plantations and their consequent dissatisfaction with their employers and their work. And, for reasons which to my mind are satisfactory, I cannot accept the conclusion that 'deception and cruel oppression to the islander' are unnecessarily connected with this traffic.

"3. As it is my profound conviction, after careful thought and observation, that to prohibit the employment of these men in the present condition of things will decrease instead of increase the demand for white labour, I favour the proposed extension, believing it to be as much to the interests of the labouring classes as of the planters. I am nevertheless strongly opposed

to any attempt on the part of the present Government to force this measure upon the country, as such a course is a violation of my most cherished principles as a member of a democratic community.

"4. I deeply sympathise with the working classes in what seems to me a just cause of complaint through the frequent attempts of the employers of Polynesians to utilise them for purposes foreign to the intention of the Act, and I think stringent measures should be used to prevent any such violations of the law. I am, however, fully persuaded that under proper restrictions this labour creates employment for the white working classes instead of coming into competition with them.

"This, in brief, is an expression of my unbiased and unprejudiced opinions on this question, viewed from the broad standpoint of the general prosperity of the colony. I am aware that it will be disappointing to the party who seek it, but though I am a democrat, and my strongest sympathies are with the masses, I cannot honestly express any other, and I trust they will give me credit at least for sincerity.

"In conclusion, I may say that could I persuade myself to believe that the recruiting and employment of these men are necessarily associated with the deception, cruel oppression, immorality, and crime attributed thereto, no political or commercial considerations would induce me to favour the traffic."

The *Bundaberg Mail* states that—

"The Rev. Mr. Eustace, of the Kanaka Mission, characterises Dr. Paton as a sort of mad enthusiast with a hobby, and his charges, where legitimate, are grossly exaggerated, and are otherwise entirely unfounded, and a base libel on Kanaka morality."

Those are the opinions held by his brethren of the cloth who have lived for years among Kanakas where they are employed, and whose statements, therefore, should have great weight. One objection strongly urged is that these men do not understand the nature of their engagements. There are 10,000 of them in the colony, and they understand English. The men on the islands understand English fairly well now, and it would be impossible to get recruits without their understanding the nature of their engagements. There is a Government agent on board each ship, and there is the additional precaution that directly the ships arrive at any port in Queensland a Government official is sent to them whose business it is to interrogate every islander; and if he ascertains that the Government agent has imported any of them without their being made aware of the nature of their agreement, that Government agent has a very short shrift. Another objection urged is that we will be unable to confine these men to the cultivation of sugar; and if I thought that was so I would consider it a very grave objection to this Bill. But hitherto they have been practically confined to the industry. That has been shown by the census returns laid on the table to day. We find that there are 10,000 islanders in the colony, and of that number there are only 800 who are not at present engaged in the cultivation of sugar, though it does not follow that they are employed in other occupations, as many of them may be taking a spell for a month or two after fulfilling their engagements, just as white men sometimes do. The member for Enoggera laboriously attempted to show from the vital statistics that there are between 2,000 and 3,000 employed in other occupations, and to prove that the census returns were wrong; but he must remember that the census returns deal with facts, while the vital statistics contain many assumptions. We have made another experiment lately, out of which great capital is sought to be made. Some 316 Italians were introduced to work on the plantations, and about 100 of them have left, twenty-five of whom, I understand, have gone to grow rice at Cairns. Nearly 100 are, therefore, competing with other white men. But that is only a grain of sand in the ocean of 78,000 adult males in this colony, and as their importation has not

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been considered a success it is not intended to introduce any more of them. The hon. member for Bundanba said last night that one-third of the sugar produced in Queensland was produced by white labour.

Mr. GLASSEY: Hear, hear! And I repeat it to-night.

Mr. HAMILTON: That statement was conclusively shown by the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black, to be without foundation. That gentleman showed that only in the Brisbane, Ipswich, and Logan districts was sugar grown by white labour, and that throughout the rest of the colony sugar is produced by white and black labour, because on none of the plantations is sugar produced by black labour alone. The planters do not want black labour alone, and they never proposed to produce sugar exclusively by black labour. The hon. member also told us that there was more sugar produced in the year 1890-91 than in the previous year. That is so, but there was comparatively very little more land under cultivation last year than in the preceding year, and the greater number of tons last year was mainly owing to a greater yield per acre of sugar. The year before last the cane only yielded a ton per acre, but last year it yielded about one and three-quarter tons per acre.

Mr. WIMBLE: Besides what was left over.

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes, besides what was left over from the previous year. In the year before last there were 31,230 acres under cultivation, which produced 44,411 tons of sugar, and last year 39,435 acres produced nearly 70,000 tons of sugar. It has also been said and reiterated, and great capital is made out of the statement, that the small farmers are growing sugar with white labour alone. I am informed by good authorities in the House that such is not the case, and that all these small farmers employ a certain proportion of Kanaka labour. When the Secretary for Mines, during a tour some time ago, went to Ingham, the small farmers there wanted a mill, and when he offered them a mill, provided they carried on the industry without black labour, they honestly told him that though they wanted a mill, and would be ruined without one, they could not carry on the industry exclusively with white labour.

Mr. GLASSEY: That was to say that they could not compete with black labour. That is the meaning of it.

Mr. HAMILTON: The price obtained for sugar, which is regulated by the markets of the world, would not pay them if they had to produce it solely by white labour. But they have learnt, as I stated throughout, that a certain proportion of black labour is required. It has never been contended in this House that sugar can be produced solely by black labour, and the small farmers require for its production a certain proportion of black labour, just as the planters require a certain proportion of black labour to produce sugar. The hon. member for Bundanba also stated that as land at Bundaberg was worth from £30 to £40 an acre, those taking it up required to make very great profits to make the cultivation of sugar pay.

Mr. GLASSEY: I said they were making less profit in consequence of the dear land.

Mr. HAMILTON: The argument is that they required to make more money in order to make a profit on the industry, but there are thousands and thousands of acres of splendid land which can be got in the North for £1 an acre, and those taking it up cannot make the production of sugar pay with white labour alone. We have been told also that it is as hot on the Richmond and Tweed

Rivers as in the Northern portion of Queensland. Why, there is a greater difference between the latitudes of the North of Queensland and the Richmond and Tweed Rivers than there is between Brisbane and Victoria, and will anyone say that it is as cold here as it is in Victoria? The hon. member for Fassifern said this evening that the supporters of this Bill always appealed to the pockets of the people. I think I might fairly retaliate by stating that those who oppose this measure appeal to the prejudices of the people, and it is far better for their comfort that we should appeal to their pockets than to their prejudices. The hon. member for Bundamba asked last night, "Why, if the industry can be extended, have we had to wait all these years for the extension? There has been no want of black labour and there is no want of it now." Until a few years since the sugar industry was making giant strides; thousands of acres of fresh land were every year being brought under cultivation; the foundries at Maryborough, Rockhampton, and Brisbane were in full blast, not only during the daytime but at night; and everyone was benefiting directly or indirectly by the progress of the industry. But when the edict went forth that in a few years the planters were to have no more kanaka labour, the extension of the industry suddenly ceased. Men were not going to spend large sums of money in machinery or in clearing land when they found that after a time they would be deprived of the kind of labour which their experience proved was necessary to make the industry pay. Directly that edict went forth all improvements and further outlay in machinery ceased, and from that time no extension of any note has taken place. It has been said that white men can work in the fields. Of course they can, but it would be unreasonable to expect them to do such oppressive work, except at white men's wages. But no industry can pay more than it produces, and we know that sugar in all other parts of the world is produced by cheap labour. Therefore, it would be perfectly impossible for us to produce it by dear labour and compete with other sugar-producers in the markets of the world. That argument alone simply proves that it is perfectly impossible for us to give high wages for the production of sugar, seeing that we have to compete with other countries which produce their sugar by low wages. One would not like to see thousands of our fellow-countrymen working among the cane rows, not a leaf stirring, sweltering under the fierce rays of a tropical sun for kanakas' wages, doing just as hard work as our countrymen alongside of them on the Northern goldfields are doing for £3 to £3 10s. a week, because those are the wages that miners get in Northern Queensland. No surer way of reducing wages on the goldfields could occur than to see thousands of their countrymen working alongside of them at low wages at such an industry. What drew the Italians a few weeks since from the canefields into Charters Towers? Simply because they were told they could get £3 a week, and where they were working they were only getting small wages. Therefore, no greater blow could be struck at the miners or the men receiving good wages in Northern Queensland than to engage thousands of men to work in the sugar industry at a price that planters would have to engage them at to make the industry pay. Now, if it can be shown that the introduction of kanakas for the sole purpose of growing sugar will induce the expenditure of capital, give employment to workmen at good wages, and increase the value of our investments and stimulate industries all round, then I think no sane man can oppose their introduction. The investment of capital

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will be encouraged by their introduction, as has been proved that directly after Sir Samuel Griffith's manifesto went forth one of the foundries of Maryborough received an order representing thousands of pounds for the purpose of duplicating machinery. At Victoria plantation, at Ingham, it had been definitely decided that in October next year the mill was to be shifted to Fiji, where labour can be obtained. That machinery and plant cost over £100,000. Over 120 white men are engaged on that plantation, and but for this manifesto the machinery would have been shifted; those 120 men would have gone out of employment, and would have entered into competition with other white men. Not only that, but there are many small farmers there who, with the assistance of a few kanakas, make a good living, and they would have had to go to the wall because they would have no mill to crush their cane if the Victoria plantation had shifted their machinery. The figures of the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black, should make a great impression on everyone. He said that last year Queensland produced 70,000 tons of sugar at a cost of £10 a ton. It therefore cost £700,000 to produce 70,000 tons sugar, and this was exclusive of the interest on machinery or on capital. £100,000 of that amount went to kanakas, and £600,000 was distributed away for wages, coal, machinery, repairs, etc., to Europeans. There is no getting away from such facts, and no one has attempted to controvert them. Is it not better that £100,000 should be expended on kanakas if by that expenditure £600,000 can go into the pockets of white people? Now, the introduction of these people, and the knowledge by the planters that they would be introduced would give a general stimulus to all kinds of employment. It would increase the value of our lands. For these reasons the measure should be passed. Should it be opposed in the interests of the wharf labourers? Last year we had 70,000 tons of sugar and 1,500 tons of molasses, produced from farmers to the plantations and from other sources, which all went through the hands of the lumpers. If this industry is crushed they will be deprived of that work, whereas if this Bill is passed, and the industry is encouraged, the work for those men will be greatly increased. Would it be in the interests of the foundry men to suppress this industry? I think not, when we remember that the foundries are languishing for want of work, and that if this Bill becomes law they will again be working night and day throughout the colony. Will it be in the interests of the carpenters, the cabinmen, the bricklayers, or the miners? There are men in this House large investors in mining out of the profits they made out of sugar-growing. Will it be in the interests of the farmers? The hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, said if we increase the productive powers of the country, what are we to do with the produce? That is our present position. The agricultural industry is the industry above all others which we ought to foster, because by doing so we increase the value of the public estate. We raise a healthy population, and we settle people on the soil. The great cry is to settle people on the soil, and what better way is there of doing so than by creating customers for the farmers in the shape of the planters? They have proved good customers, and here is an opportunity of creating more customers. I have never heard any alternative proposal. I have not heard one of the opponents of this measure propose what to do with the thousands of white men who will be thrown out of work if this industry fails. I have not heard a proposal from those men as to what shall be done to give employment to those who are seeking

for employment at present. There is one gentleman, a member representing a farming constituency, whose opinion on this question I should much like to hear, not only because he is one of the oldest representatives in the House, but because he was one of the Royal Commission who was sent up to the North specially to make a report on this question, and who received £500 for doing so. I think the House is entitled to hear his opinion on the subject, especially as I have heard, and it has been currently reported, that when he came down after having been in the North he was strongly in favour of the reintroduction of kanakas. I am informed that he expressed that opinion. If he is silent, we can only form the conclusion that he also is a convert. Before he went on that mission he was such a strong opponent of kanaka labour that it was thought nothing could convert him.

Mr. LITTLE said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to make a few remarks on this very important measure. Several objections have been made to the Bill, and I want to give my views upon it. I will first of all refer to the change in public opinion. The other evening the hon. member for Enoggera occupied an hour in explaining to the House that public opinion on this question has not changed. I differ from the hon. member. The hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hoolan, said the Press of the colony was no expression of public opinion. I differ from that hon. member also. I have travelled a good deal about the country, and have conversed on the subject with all sorts and conditions of men. I have talked with pioneers who were here when Queensland was a penal settlement, and who, when they pass away, will be long held in remembrance; and the general remark I heard in every quarter was that though they were opposed to coloured labour in 1883, they now, in the altered conditions of the colony, intended to support it. I see on the Treasury bench one hon. gentleman who was formerly one of the most persistent opponents of the introduction of coloured labour, and who is now supporting this Bill. I maintain that the public opinion of the colony generally has entirely changed on this subject during the last few months. An hon. member of this House told me he did not believe this Bill would create the prosperity that is anticipated. Perhaps it will not, but that is not the fault of the Bill. If men will pitch their expectations too high it is not the fault of the Bill. My opinion of the Bill is that it is a stepping-stone to that avenue of prosperity which every man in the colony is anxious to see. More than one hon. member has said during the debate that this Bill will not establish confidence in the colony. I maintain that it has done that already, and I will prove it before I sit down. Last session the Colonial Treasurer issued £500,000 worth of debentures. The colony was in a terrible state; money must be procured, and the only resource left open to the Colonial Treasurer was to issue those debentures. What do we find? We find one colonist stepping in and taking £200,000 worth; we find another taking £100,000 worth, and we find the Scottish Widows' Fund in the sister colony taking £50,000 worth, with an understanding that it will take more. But the important fact is, that these applications for our debentures were all sent in after the Chief Secretary's manifesto appeared. Is not that establishing confidence in the colony? When I heard that Mr. Tyson had applied for £200,000 worth of our debentures, the thought struck me, What will they say in England when they see that our trouble is over? We have got the money in the colony; and yet hon. members get up and say that this Bill will not restore confidence in the

colony. I say that confidence is established, and no one who looks at the matter as I do can say that it is not. It is not the sugar industry alone that is in question. I dare say the English capitalists know more about this Bill than I do. It is their business to watch the progress of legislation in every Australasian colony. The colonies are the greatest outlet England has got for her spare money, and she would sooner lend it to us than to America or to any European powers. The English capitalists will not only invest their money in our sugar industry, but they will invest it in other resources we possess; and our resources are enormous. We have mineral resources second to none in the world, and our pastoral resources rule the wool market in England to-day. I remember the disastrous period the colony went through in 1866. The colony was in a terrible state. At that time, if my memory serves me right, Mr. Herbert was the Colonial Secretary, and Mr. R. R. Mackenzie was the Colonial Treasurer. Gurney's bank had failed, the Queensland Bank had failed, and money was not to be obtained in the colony. The Government of the day issued Treasury notes called "greenbacks." I never could understand the difference between those greenbacks and our present debentures; they were to be issued for the purpose of enabling the Treasurer to procure means. There were some very wealthy men in the colony in 1866, though not so many as we have now, and there was not the depression that exists now. For every man out of employment in 1866, I am sorry to say there are five out of employment in 1892. But I never heard of any colonist going to Mr. R. R. Mackenzie and offering to buy £100,000 or £50,000 worth of his greenbacks. In fact the Treasurer got no help from any source until Gympie was discovered the following year. The men who have applied for these debentures now know what they are doing. Is it likely that they would apply for those large amounts if they had not confidence in the colony—if they had not confidence that the colony could pay them 4½ per cent. per annum and redeem the debentures in four years? If they had not had that confidence they would have kept their money in their pockets. So much for the assertion that this Bill has not created confidence. We have heard a great deal about the existing depression, and certainly since we possessed responsible Government there has never been a colony in the group that has passed through greater disasters than Queensland has done in the space of two years. First of all came the terrible floods—and no one can tell what they cost the colony in destruction of property, crops, and stock, and loss of human life. Then, just as we were recovering from that blow, the terrible labour trouble came upon us—which I sincerely trust will never be renewed—and that was followed by the failure of our loan in the English market. These were three crushing disasters that befel the colony in the small space of two years. The labour troubles affected the whole of Australia, but Queensland suffered more from them than all the other colonies combined. Every man, woman, and child in the colony suffered through them, but the working men were those who had to suffer the most. I know that is a fact. Speak to the mechanics and working men of every description. Speak to the capitalists—the men whose pockets are affected, but who do not feel it to the same extent as the men of my caste. Those are the men who have had to suffer the most. I know the cause of the trouble, but I am not fool enough to attempt to explain it here. As the hon. member for Barcoo remarked the other night, let bygones be bygones. I am positive that every man in the colony endorses that

remark. I know that I do, and I sincerely hope that the whole trouble is now over. I am not going to stand here for one or two hours; but if all the eloquence in the colony had me baled up in a corner and impressed upon me, it would not move me from my intention to vote for this Bill. I am here in my position as one of the representatives of the people of the colony, to legislate for the welfare of the colony, and if the late Right Hon. Wm. Bede Dalley and Sir Henry Parkes—two of the most eloquent men Australia has ever seen—were here to attempt to change my opinion they would not be able to do so. I have a certain amount of responsibility upon my shoulders, just as the Chief Secretary and the hon. gentleman sitting on that bench have to legislate for the success of the colony, and I intend to assist the Government in passing the Bill. If I did not sincerely believe that it will prove of benefit to the colony I should oppose it as strongly as the hon. member for Bundanba. This measure is not brought in upon party lines. You can see the leader of the Opposition and his colleagues on that bench, the rank and file on that side, and the rank and file on this side standing by the Chief Secretary, because we are all satisfied that he will lift the colony into the position she is entitled to occupy—the leading colony of the Australian group. I am only going to refer to one or two other matters. One matter is this: We heard the Chief Secretary on the opening day of the session state that we were called together at this unusually early period of the year because the colony was in such a terrible state that something must be done, and done immediately. Now, we all know that. We have heard what another hon. gentleman has said on the other side, whose views always carry a great deal of weight with me, and I am positive with nearly every man in the colony, particularly in regard to the sugar industry. I refer to Mr. Hume Black, the hon. member for Mackay. I am not alone in paying attention and respect to the opinions of that hon. gentleman. We know that the hon. gentleman visited the Alice River settlement, and went among the bush workers and interviewed those who were settling on the land and making a fresh departure in land settlement. The hon. member for Mackay went there and advised them to adopt certain measures and to do certain things, and they did so, with, I am very pleased to see through the columns of the Press, a reasonable amount of success. Now, we have heard other hon. members say that the colony has no right to introduce this labour. The hon. member for Mackay told us that if we did not give them this labour now, by the time the next election takes place it will be too late to plant the cane, even if the Bill is then passed, and that the delay would only mean a loss of the industry for two years. But I ask any reasonable man—any man who considers for a moment—can this colony stand in the position she is in to-day for another two years?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LITTLE: I say most decidedly "No." I do not care who says that the colony can stand it, I say most decidedly that it can not. Something must be done, and here is the course to pursue. The hon. member for Bundanba, and those associated with him, for whom I have all respect, come here and abuse this Bill. I give them every credit for doing it with the best intentions; but why have they not done something since the Chief Secretary's manifesto was published? It is strange to me that those gentlemen have not issued a counter manifesto showing what other course should be adopted, and then every hon. member could have weighed their manifesto in the scale

against that of the Chief Secretary. I ask is it not possible and probable that, had they done that, many hon. members might have supported the scheme brought forward by those hon. gentlemen? But they only say, "No, we shall oppose the Bill to the end. You can do what you like. On you be the responsibility of passing it." I am very much pleased to see so many hon. members supporting the measure. There is another matter I wish to refer to. On the day that the House met I was sitting alongside the hon. member for Maryborough when he was moving the adoption of the Address in Reply. The hon. member used some words with regard to the Rev. Dr. Paton. I did not catch the words, but I read them in *Hansard*. I also heard other hon. members refer to that gentleman. Now, I can assure hon. members and those outside the Chamber that there is no man in Australia—and that is a big word—who respects the ministers of the gospel more than I do? I do not care whether they may be Roman Catholic priests, clergymen of the Church of England, or whether they are Wesleyan or Presbyterian ministers, or what Church they belong to, any gentleman who wears the cloth is entitled to my respect; and I tender it in the manner that is most acceptable to them and pleasing to myself. But I do object to these gentlemen interfering in politics, and I will tell you, Sir, the reason why. What are politics? Politics are the history of the country, and we are the men who have got to build it. The electors of the colony send us here to do that, and that is our mission. Their mission is to preach and pray; and I am positive that if those gentlemen will leave the history of Queensland to men with harder heads, and harder hearts probably, and harder hands, it will be beneficial to each and every one of us. Let those gentlemen keep to their missions, I say. We cannot do without them. They are as necessary in the community as a Government or an Opposition in Parliament. They are here to perform a certain work, and I say that there is no part of the world in which ministers of the gospel are more highly respected or better treated than they are in Queensland. I sincerely hope that Dr. Paton will leave us alone. I am not a very church-going man, but I am a God-fearing man, and the father of a family, whom I am trying to bring up in the right way. I will take my chance, and I suppose I will go where most men go. I may say that I did not get up with any intention of saying a word to offend any man. I am here carrying out my duties, and I am quite prepared to take the responsibility on my own back. I shall probably have to face a very intelligent committee when I go from here. I shall have to face men far cleverer than myself, and I shall give an explanation of my actions to them. They have sent me here, and if they are not satisfied with my actions in this House there are plenty of men in my electorate who can come here, who are much better men than I am. I have nothing more to say, but probably other hon. members wish to speak, though if all speak as long as some hon. members it will be Christmas Day before we are through. Still, I would like to hear what the hon. member for Toowoomba has to say. He is the father of the House, and an old statesman, and a man who understands the question; and I should like to hear his objections to the Bill, although if he talked from now till doomsday he would not shift the member for Woothakata.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ISAMBERT said: Mr. Speaker,—I am afraid that those interested in the sugar industry will have to cry, "Save me from my friends!" for I think their friends have overstated the effects of an extension of the kanaka labour. It

is claimed that the cessation of this labour has been a great cause of our present depression. Now, it is evident from all the information I can gather that the sugar industry has never been short of coloured labour for one single day. In fact I have satisfactory information that the sugar plantations are chock full of black labour, and white men are going about seeking employment there, and also in the towns near them. Then, if there has never been any scarcity of cheap black labour, how is it possible that such ruin and injury has been done to that industry as to interfere with the whole business of the colony and cause all this misery? It is stated now that an extension of kanaka labour will prove such a benefit that it will be a cure for all our depression and give employment all round, and that the farmers will be able to procure a better price for their corn and cattle and produce by sending it up North. They have spread the report that by the magic of this Bill the former condition of things, when £5,000,000 were poured into the colony, will be restored. The Chief Secretary went up North, and when he came back he was satisfied that capital flowed into the North for investment faster than it could be absorbed almost. In the early days the price of sugar was high and the profits were large, and money was spent lavishly. Land was dear and expensive mills were erected, and a good deal of money was not even wisely spent. Naturally the expenditure of so much money in so short a space of time created a fictitious prosperity. I remember a contractor telling me that during the erection of the buildings on a plantation he alone employed 140 men, and when the work was finished there were only ten or twenty white people employed, and the rest were kanakas. Very soon afterwards the mill was shut up because the money was lavishly laid out and the plantation was badly managed. Therefore the whole concern came to grief, not for lack of black labour, but through unwise expenditure. I have had the testimony of several planters that it was not so much the want of cheap reliable labour as bad seasons and the low price of sugar through the competition of the beetroot sugar, that caused the decline of the industry. When the manufacture of sugar was first started, the art of sugar-making and the management of the fields was not in the high state of perfection in which it is now, and when there was a drop in the price they could not stand it. If those plantations had been well managed at first they might have suited themselves to the new condition and survived, because at the present time I believe the industry is as far advanced in Queensland as in any other country; but it is foolish to attribute our depression to the interference with coloured labour. Fine white loaf sugar can be landed in Melbourne for 17s. per ton freight. That the cause of the decline is not attributable to want of coloured labour we have also the testimony recorded in *Hansard* of a former member of this House whose absence we must all regret; I refer to the former member for Barcoo, Mr. Murphy. When the hon. member for Balonne was Premier, and Mr. Murphy sat on the same side of the House, and all were blaming the present Chief Secretary for the injury that had been done to the sugar industry, Mr. Murphy stood up and said it was not true that it was the want of cheap labour that caused the ruin of the industry, but the competition with the beetroot sugar on the Continent. That gentleman said he could speak feelingly on the subject, because he was sorry to say that he was largely interested in a plantation at Mackay, and they had plenty of black labour; but it did not pay, so they resolved to shut up the place, sending the time-

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expired boys back to their islands and distributing the others to other plantations, just keeping a few hands on as caretakers. But the following season was propitious, and they got a splendid crop of cane without doing anything to it, and they received over £5,000 by selling it to the central mills. That brings me to a point which the planters know very well, and which has not yet been stated, but I noticed it by my own observation at the Bundaberg show lately. That is, that sugar is a very exhausting crop, and driving through an estate you can distinctly see the cane planted in a newly felled scrub is a dark rich green colour, and the growth is far more prolific than on land where it has been planted a second and a third time; so that as the land becomes exhausted the crop becomes poorer; but black labour cannot make good the exhaustion of the soil. Hon. members are expected to give a vote on this subject which has agitated the public mind for the last twenty years. There never was a question which has more keenly exercised the minds of the people and has better served for a landmark for political parties than this black labour question. At the last two general elections the majority of the people were entirely opposed to black labour, and now all at once we are asked to change our minds and vote for the reintroduction of coloured labour. It is maintained that the public mind has completely changed. I admit that the public mind has changed on the subject, but not a great deal. It was declared in the last Polynesian Labourers Act that the introduction of kanaka labour should cease at the end of the year 1890, and the question was then looked upon as settled. But now, when the colony is in a depressed state, and men are apt to grasp at any straw, black labour is again advocated in some of the papers, and people are asked to believe that the introduction of kanaka labour will again put us on the high road to prosperity. If the £10,000,000 loan, together with our splendid mineral discoveries and fertile seasons have not established permanent prosperity in the colony, I fail to see how the introduction of kanakas will establish permanent prosperity. As the hon. member for Fortitude Valley told a meeting of his electors, since the year 1884 we have been going from bad to worse. That proves that the colony has been governed from its start on a wrong policy; and all these makeshifts cannot rescue the colony from its downward course. I predicted in 1884, when the £10,000,000 loan was passed, that if the policy of see-saw was continued there would be a deficit and bad times. The policy that governed the colony was a policy of foreign interest. The introduction of foreign capital has been all along considered, and the true interests of the people have been neglected. It is an inviolable law that you lose by grasping at too much; and if the money question had been kept out of sight, and the welfare of the people had been kept prominently in view, the people would have prospered. There is an old proverb—Seek first the kingdom of God, and all the rest will follow. Parliament should seek first the happiness of the people, and prosperity would follow as a natural consequence. When I addressed the electors of Rosewood recently, I found that they were not so much opposed as before to the introduction of kanakas. A good many were actually in favour of their employment, and a good many were as much opposed as ever. Though I advocated the temporary reintroduction of coloured labour, I am of opinion that the question should be referred to the people. There is plenty of labour at present in the colony, and the industry would not be endangered by postponing the question for another twelve months. There will be no lack of labour, because the working men are now

finding out their foolishness in dictating to employers a rate of wages which an industry cannot pay. So far as the strike is concerned, I do not believe that it caused the amount of depression which has been attributed to it. If anything, the labour difficulty should have given confidence to the capitalist, because it proved that if the men are foolish and despotic the sympathy of the public is against them, and that no class of society can go beyond reasonable lines. The hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black, in his anxiety to prove the importance, and also the necessity of black labour, overstated his case. When he combated the assertion of the hon. member of Bundamba that one-third of the sugar was the product of white labour, he said that white labour produced barely 5 per cent. I believe that what the hon. member for Bundamba meant to say was that, considering all the white men employed in the industry, about one-third of the sugar produced was produced by white labour, and that he did not intend his remark to be construed as meaning that one-third was produced by white labour exclusively. The hon. member for Mackay also dwelt largely on the importance of the sugar industry to the colony, and there is no doubt that it is an important industry. What do the figures in our list of exports tell us on this subject? The exports from the mining industry amount to £2,500,000; the exports from pastoral industry, including hides, wool, tallow, and meat, to about £4,750,000; and the exports from the sugar industry last year, when the yield was good and the price of sugar pretty fair, amounted to about £750,000. Those three items include nearly the whole of our exports, as the rest of the exports only amount to a little more than £500,000. This shows us that even if the sugar industry was only worth £750,000 a year we cannot afford to lose it. We must treat it with consideration, and be reasonable, and although I cannot hide from myself the fact that the traffic in Polynesian labour is not what it should be; that it is bad, and will be bad to the end of the chapter, I also recognise that white labour is not properly treated. It was this fact which evoked the sympathy of the Chief Secretary when he wrote his "Wealth and Want." I believe that, if the introduction of coloured labour is not continued, many of the large estates will have to shut up; and since we cannot afford to lose that industry, we should seek a way out of the difficulty. But that way is not the way proposed by the Government—an indefinite extension of coloured labour. The adoption of such a proposal will throw the apple of discord among the people again; at the next election the old battle will be fought out on false issues, and what security will the capitalist have that another restrictive measure will not be passed at an early date? I believe the Government would do far better if they amended the 11th section of the Act of 1885, so that instead of 31st December, 1890, being fixed as the date after which no more licenses to recruit islanders should be issued it should read 31st December, 1893 or 1894. If that were done the public mind would not be exercised on the matter, and it would really be only carrying out the intention of the legislature when it fixed the date of its termination at the 31st December, 1890. The Chief Secretary, when he introduced the measure which was intended to terminate the introduction of coloured labour, correctly interpreted the desire of the people to be not to injure or ruin the sugar industry, but to cause the large estates to be dismembered and converted into small sugar farms; and to give practical expression to his purpose and intention, he also got the sanction of the legislature to advance £50,000 for the erection of central mills. The hon. gentleman was very anxious to carry out his object, but to settle the land in the

North is not so easy as to settle land in the South. The tropical heat is, no doubt, a great drawback. But there is really no work in the cane-field which a white man cannot do, and will not do, if he owns the land himself and can choose his own time for the work. But while saying that, I also recognise that no white man will work for any length of time in large gangs, particularly at low wages; and that is where the difficulty comes in. There is no remedy for that but to dismember the larger estates and place them in the hands of small settlers. I have been assured by farmers in the North, who have been cultivating cane on their own account, that all the work can be done by white labour; and the wife of one settler informed me that though she had not been brought up on a farm, but was the daughter of a storekeeper and had been brought up in town, she took to the work, and she and her children went into the cane and thrashed it, quite as well as a South Sea Islander. Of course they did not stand in the broiling sun in the middle of the day; they chose their own time, and so long as the farmer is his own master and can choose his own time, he can do all the work in the cane-field. Although I have been elected on the understanding that the black labour question was solved, I will go so far as to support an amendment continuing the introduction of kanaka labour up to the end of 1893 or 1894. This Parliament must not be too arrogant, and assume to itself all the wisdom of knowing what is good for the country. This House will show its wisdom by a temporary extension of the introduction of Polynesians, which will, in fact, be carrying out the intention of the legislature when it passed the Polynesian Act of 1885. If the next Parliament that is elected finds it necessary to still further extend the period during which Polynesians may be introduced, they will be better able then to know what is required than we are at the present time. Many things might happen in the meantime, of which we have no conception now. The whole civilised world is in a state of ferment, and we do not know how soon Great Britain may be thrown into the turmoil of a revolution. Great Britain, in the attempt to maintain her industries and commercial supremacy, is trying to exploit every civilised country, but one after another of those countries are shutting their doors against that exploitation; and when they have all done so, what is Great Britain to do? There are rumblings in every direction; the working classes there are dissatisfied and cannot see the cause of their troubles, and, sooner than we imagine, Great Britain may be involved in a revolution the like of which she has never known before. Then we shall be compelled to rely all the more upon our own resources, and I say that if the Government will accept a temporary extension they will be doing the sugar industry greater service than they will do it by the proposal in this Bill. We can rely upon it that the future Parliament will not be so suicidal as to destroy the industry when they well know that we cannot afford to do it. Great fault has been found with the Chief Secretary as being the cause of all the trouble, and the hon. member for Stanley told us that all the hon. gentleman's legislation has been bad. There is a great deal of force in the statement, because our whole policy is wrong; the result proves it, and all the hon. gentleman's efforts, so far, to correct it have only been like putting a new patch on an old garment, with a greater rent as the result. If the Government would only go in for a thorough revision of the tariff, and encourage all our industries, we might then soon be in a position to say, "Perish the sugar industry, which is worth three-quarters of a million

sterling to the colony," but by this piecemeal legislation we only prove that our whole policy is a mistake. I was reading a speech made last year by the Secretary for Agriculture in Victoria, and he stated that the agricultural produce of that colony amounted to £11,000,000. In all this controversy we hear nothing of our other agricultural products, and it is the neglect of them and the mischievous interference of the Secretary for Railways and his Commissioners that have brought us into the position we are in now. It has been said that the employment of five kanakas gives employment to one white man; and, admitting that there are 10,000 kanakas employed, that would mean employment for 2,000 white men. We have heard from the hon. member for Barcoo that in his district alone there are 3,000 men employed in pastoral pursuits.

Mr. RYAN: There are many of them unemployed now.

Mr. ISAMBERT: I am sorry to hear it. I know there are a good many unemployed in the sugar districts also; and I mention this to show that we should not overrate the importance of the sugar industry. I am not so much concerned about the sugar industry as it is; and if it was a question whether it should flourish or not as it is, I would rather see it perish. There is no man in the country, however, who is more anxious than I am to see the desirable process now going on in the dismemberment of the large sugar estates, and the growing of cane by small farmers continued. That alone is worth all our efforts, not only because it will preserve the sugar industry, but because it is a means to the chief end we should have in view—the settlement of the people upon those lands. To do that we may, I think, trespass upon our consciences to vote for a temporary extension of this labour, trusting to the wisdom of the future Parliament to deal with its permanent extension or termination. I cannot vote for the proposition now before the House, and, as I said, I shall be prepared to move an amendment on the Bill when we get into committee to provide for a temporary extension as I have suggested. As our trespassing upon our consciences, is not the present state of misery in the colony a violation of our consciences and a proof of the gross neglect of our duties? Were we not elected to manage the affairs of the colony and not to mismanage them, and is not the present state of things a condemnation of the whole of our policy in the past?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS (Hon. A. S. Cowley) said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to say a few words upon this subject, which is of great importance, not only to the welfare of the sugar industry itself, but also to the welfare of a great many industries dependent upon it. The question has been asked: "What is the necessity for immediate legislation?" I know the sugar industry, and the state of things existing in connection with it, and I maintain that the Government has taken the proper course in legislating immediately upon the subject. There are a great many mills in the colony at the present time which will be closed if an extension of the Act is not granted. The reason for this determination is that the proprietors know by past experience that it is utterly impossible to cultivate sugar-cane in the North, especially at a profit, with white labour. More than that, past experience has also proved to them that not only can they not do it, but that the small farmers cannot do it, and never have done it yet in North Queensland at a profit. Giving them a fair price for their cane, and allowing the mill-owner to make his profit, they have found that it could not be done in the past, and are convinced that it cannot be done in the future.

It has been said several times in this House that one of the very large mills in the district I have the honour to represent has determined to close. Well, that is a fact, because last year the general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company issued a circular to every grower that he would only crush cane up to the end of October next, and then the mill would be dismantled and removed. After the Chief Secretary's manifesto was issued, the abovenamed manager sent another circular to the farmers and said that he was prepared, in the event of the Bill to extend the introduction of Polynesians being passed, to enter into an agreement for a term of five or ten years, and, in addition to the two thousand acres of land which had been cultivated, he was prepared to let the whole estate to small growers on the most reasonable terms. He would enter into a contract to purchase the whole of their cane. He would give them an advance when the cane was planted, a further advance when it was six months' old, and also an advance when it was nine months' old, paying them for the crop immediately it was cut. He would give them further advantages than these. He would give the land either on a long lease, or on a lease with the right of purchase, so much in cash, or he was prepared to take a portion in the cane grown. Now, what was the result? Immediately it was made known a number of the farmers and residents in the Ingham district applied for fourteen hundred acres of land. I maintain that if its effect was only to retain that mill in our midst, and give those men who are willing to take up the land an opportunity of cultivating and growing cane, it is worth our while to take the step we are taking. Last year that mill circulated £12,000 in cash among the small growers, and if it was only for the purpose of continuing that state of affairs, we should be justified in taking steps to legislate upon the matter. That is one case. To-day I received a letter from a resident on the Herbert River, Mr. Arthur Neame. He states in his letter that out of a number of Italians whom he engaged eleven of them have contracted to cultivate 150 acres. They have taken up the land at a rental of 5s. per acre, with a fixed price for all cane grown.

Mr. DRAKE: What is the price of cane?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: I have not got that; he does not tell me, but he says the men are satisfied. I presume the price would be about 12s. a ton, cut and placed on the trucks. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company have given 12s. to 13s. a ton, cut and placed on the trucks. He also states that three residents have taken up another 100 acres and engaged to go in for the cultivation of cane, and he concludes his letter in this way—

"I hope there will be no delay in passing the Bill, as if it is shelved for another session it will throw everything back again, and the people who have applied to lease land will withdraw their applications."

Mr. DRAKE: How did he know that?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: Simply because they told him so. That is a case in point, and it shows the absolute necessity for immediate legislation. The hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black, who is a practical man, explained last night that, unless the cane is planted within a certain limited time, there will be no crop next year. As a general rule, the cane should be planted before the end of November; if it is not there will be no crop, and if there is no crop of course there is no profit to the owners of the land. Now, I have received another letter from Young Bros., of Kalamia. They say, in answer to a question—

"There are no small men growing cane for the mills in this district at present, and until the Chief Secretary's manifesto appeared things were hanging fire.

Since its publication, however, John Drysdale tells me that seven farmers outside the Pioneer Estate are getting ready to grow cane for that mill for the 1893 crushing, and hope to have 250 acres ready. He also thinks that, as soon as he can see his way to extend the Pioneer tramway system about three miles, twenty more farmers will at once go in for cane-growing. Within the last few days we have placed under offer to a farmer, who has both money and horses, 120 acres of newly-cleared land on this estate for cane-growing for the Kalamia mill. He has ordered harness and breaking-up ploughs, so I suppose he means to take it. We have also had inquiries for land to be taken over immediately after next crushing."

So that you see, Mr. Speaker, the farmers in the North generally are anxiously waiting for this measure to commence operations. I may say in the district which I represent there are some fifteen or twenty men—the farmers alluded to by the hon. member for Cook, who said they refused to accept a central mill unless they were allowed to grow sugar in their own way—who have been growing cane for the last eight or nine years. They tried hard to grow it with the assistance of white labour, but they found it was utterly impossible, and those men have done very well in the past. They have made a fair living. They have cleared and planted some hundreds of acres which were scrub, and last year their total product of cane represented £12,000. Those men are dependent on the Colonial Sugar Company, and if the mill is removed, beggary stares them in the face. Besides these mills, I may tell you that the owners of Macknade had determined to close within two years. They had made all arrangements to close. They knew very well that they could not carry on successfully, and determined to close; and besides that, I know for a positive fact that four other large mills had made arrangements to close at the end of 1894, when the crop was taken off. That, therefore, shows the necessity for legislation on this subject, and the necessity for immediate legislation, because now the white men—both farmers and others—not engaged in farming pursuits know they can make very good wages by growing cane, and are anxious to engage in the occupation provided they can get the labour. Now I wish to refer to the remarks of some hon. members, and I will do so as briefly as I can. There are some members who have said this industry is of very little importance. I am alluding now more particularly to a speech made by the hon. member for Barcoo, Mr. Ryan. He is reported to have said he knew very little about the sugar industry, and did not care much about it; that he would rather see it perish than that kanakas should be introduced. Very well. What does that mean—the perishing of the sugar industry? Does the hon. member know what it means?

Mr. RYAN: I think so.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: I do not think he does. I believe the hon. member is conscientious, and has an ardent desire to serve the working classes. I will show him what the perishing of the industry means in the districts where sugar is grown. I will take, in the first instance, the Johnstone River. In that district the sugar exports for the year ended the 30th June, 1891, were £76,228; all other exports were only £8,206. The population of the district was 1,889. So that if you remove the sugar industry you take away the livelihood of 1,427 people who are entirely dependent for their daily bread on that industry. I will next take the Ingham district. The sugar exports for the same period were £66,025. All other exports were £16,766. The population of the Ingham district is 3,435, and if you take away the sugar industry 2,740 people will be deprived of their means of livelihood. I will next take Mackay. The sugar exports from Mackay during

the same period were £278,344; all other exports were £51,296. The population of Mackay is 10,538. Therefore, if you remove the sugar industry from Mackay, you immediately deprive 8,900 people of the means of earning an honest living. That is what the sugar industry is to the colony. It means that in those three districts alone 13,067 people, or more than eight-tenths of the whole population, will, immediately it is done away with, come South to obtain employment.

Mr. DRAKE: Suppose you substitute white labour for black, what will be the result?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: More white men will be employed. The hon. member speaks as if we had never tried white labour. It has been tried over and over again.

Mr. DRAKE: The question is whether white labour has been honestly tried or not?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: It has been honestly tried, as the hon. member will see if he turns to the report of the Sugar Commission. In the evidence given at the Victoria plantation it was distinctly stated that white labour had been tried and had failed.

Mr. DRAKE: Who stated it?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: It was stated by the manager of Victoria; and the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, will bear me out that it was distinctly stated in evidence there, and in several other places which I cannot remember. I know where it has been tried myself, not only by large men but by small men, and I can tell him that it has failed in every instance I have known, and I have known a good many. We have been driven to do it at times by the scarcity of labour. On one plantation 120 kanakas were taken away after the inquiry by the Royal Commission, at the very instant of crushing. The manager did his utmost to get men to work at cutting cane. He was in this position: That unless he could reap the crop the whole of it would be lost, and he was therefore able to offer a much higher wage than would have been offered under ordinary circumstances. He wanted to save his crop, and he was prepared to offer a much higher price for the work. Some worked for a time and gave it up; others said they would not do the work at any price; and the result was that the crop rotted.

Mr. DRAKE: Why did he not re-engage the kanakas?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: They were removed by the Government. The hon. member seems to think that kanakas are treated as slaves. Surely there are two parties to an agreement. You could not force those men to re-engage. That never was attempted.

Mr. DRAKE: You did not explain that those were the kidnapped boys.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: Of course I did not, because they were not kidnapped, and the hon. member will not get me to admit that they were. I have shown that in those three districts the sugar exports last year were £420,597, and all other exports £76,088 only; and that, out of a total population of 15,802, 13,067 were dependent on the sugar industry. But that is not all. Those are only the people who are dependent on the industry until the sugar leaves the mill. All the rest of the work afterwards is done by white men. You can trace it through all its ramifications, and half as many again as the number I have given may be said to get their living out of it. I should like to refer now to a remark which fell from the hon. member for Enoggera, who objected that the Bill did not extend the term for ten years. He asked why we did not fix a limit. I think it is only a fair thing that this Parliament should deal with

matters as it finds them, and leave succeeding Parliaments to deal with things as they find them. I do not think it would be fair to fix a limit of ten years. Another Parliament coming in would be under a moral obligation to keep it going for ten years. The question will be settled to the satisfaction of the hon. member and of every other member long before the end of ten years. The question will settle itself; there is not the slightest doubt about that; and I cannot see why he, above all other men, should object to legislation for this in the way we propose. I think it is the fairest thing both for this Parliament and for any future Parliament. The hon. member said a great deal about kanakas coming into competition with white men. Papers were circulated amongst hon. members this morning based on the census returns of 1891, showing the number of kanakas in the colony and how they are employed. The hon. member quoted certain figures from the manuscript return laid on the table on Tuesday, but since then additional light has been thrown on the question. He gave the correct number of men engaged in sugar as 7,311.

Mr. DRAKE: Not including those working in cane-mills illegally.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: The hon. member runs away with the idea that those men are employed illegally. The hon. member for Mackay said last night that it was distinctly stated in the Act—

Mr. DRAKE: That does not satisfy me.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: That the Act distinctly states that kanakas may be employed on cane and certain other crops "and rendering the product thereof marketable." When the hon. member gave this as the number of kanakas engaged in tropical agriculture in North Queensland, I interjected "What about fruit-growing?" And the hon. member asked, "Are there any fruit-growers?" From the figures before hon. members it will be seen that the number engaged in fruit-growing is 997.

Mr. DRAKE: They are not fruit-growers; you know that very well.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: The hon. member does not know anything at all about this subject. I happen to know a good deal about it. I claim, and I think hon. members will agree with me, that I do know a great deal about this subject. Before I saw this return I interjected, "How many are growing fruit?" because I know that there are many growing fruit, and I can tell the hon. gentleman the places if he likes.

Mr. DRAKE: That is what I want. How many kanakas are growing fruit?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: Well, the number is 997.

Mr. DRAKE: Rubbish.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: That is the number, according to this return. The hon. member's contention was that there were 2,900 competing with white men.

Mr. DRAKE: My statement was 2,500.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: Now, according to the census—and we must take the census returns as being correct—

Mr. DRAKE: No, they are not.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: Of course the hon. member will deny anything that suits himself.

Mr. DRAKE: How about the 3,200 who are missing?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: Now, there were 7,311 who are engaged in sugar-growing; 997 engaged in tropical agriculture;

children at home, 173; wives, 31; inmates of gaols and penal establishments, 22; inmates of hospitals, 17; attending day school, 10; fruit growers—that is, on their own account—4; attending private school, but not denominational, 4; schoolmasters, 3; engaged in other agriculture, 3; and other small numbers. Thus the sum total engaged in tropical agriculture and who are engaged in pursuits appertaining to tropical agriculture, or who are children, or attending school, etc., amounts to 8,534. Now, the total number in the colony is 9,379, that is, according to the census; leaving 795 to be accounted for. Now, the Chief Secretary laid a return on the table of the House giving the number of exemptions—that is, the number of men who are exempted under previous Acts, and who have tickets to enable them to work at any occupation they like to engage in, and the number of those men is 716. That leaves the total number of those who are coming into competition with white men, according to the hon. member for Enoggera, at seventy-nine. And Parliament has actually approved and sanctioned their doing so.

Mr. DRAKE: Those figures are absolutely wrong as you quoted them.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: But even these seventy-nine are not all competing with white men, because the return giving the number of exemption boys is up to date, whereas the census was taken a year ago; and since the census was taken a good many have returned home, and a good many have died. At any rate, there are 1,200 less in the colony than there were when the census was taken. I think I have most effectually disposed of the arguments of the hon. member for Enoggera about the kanakas entering into competition with white men.

Mr. DRAKE: I do not think you have touched it.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: I should like to say a few words in regard to some of the statements of the hon. member for Barcoo; and I do so because he spoke with such an air of sincerity that he appeared to thoroughly believe what he was saying. He was labouring under a great mistake when he said that men were making 30s. a day. In the first instance, I hardly need refer to the fact that men do not cut and load twelve tons a day. I know that four or five tons a day is really a good day's work, and in the North we pay from 3s. to 3s. 6d. a ton. If men could only earn such wages as the hon. member states, and could cut and load twelve tons a day at 2s. 6d. a ton, then away go all the unemployed at once. I am positive that I could find employment for 700 or 800 men in cutting cane at 2s. 6d. a ton. I know what is done in New South Wales, however, because I have been there myself, and I have let contracts myself. I know that I could find employment for 700 or 800 men during the next sugar season at the rates referred to, and the work would be done very cheaply. I have known 3s. 6d. offered to white men to cut and load cane, and they have refused. On one place on the Johnstone last year a contract was given to white men—I can give the name, Inishowen—but the white contractors would not cut the cane themselves, though they were willing to load it; and they employed Javanese to cut the cane, the white men and Javanese working side by side. That was tried as an experiment, but it would not pay. It was about 1s. 6d. or 1s. 8d. as against 9d.; and therefore it was utterly impossible that they could afford to pay that rate. Now, if the hon. member for Barcoo can get 500 or 600 men to cut cane at 2s. 6d. a ton, I should be very happy to hear from him during the next sugar season.

Then the hon. member quoted from *Sugar Cane* of January last, and said that beet and sorghum were driving out the cane.

Mr. RYAN: I read it from the *Agriculturist*, too.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: The hon. member quoted *Sugar Cane*. Now, I am a constant reader of *Sugar Cane*, and that statement had escaped my notice; so I read through the January numbers and I found the facts to be just the contrary.

Mr. RYAN: Have you read the *American Agriculturist*?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: No; because you referred me to *Sugar Cane*. I read it carefully, and if I am wrong in what I say the hon. gentleman can correct me. It is a well-known fact to all engaged in the sugar industry that the production of cane sugar is increasing in a much greater ratio than beet or sorghum. I shall take the island of Cuba as an example. There the production from cane last year was 750,000 tons, being an increase of 120,000 tons on the previous year, and an increase of 190,000 tons on the year before that again. Then in Barbadoes there has been a similar large increase. I shall now quote from *Sugar Cane*—

"Noteworthy facts in connection with the sugar-producing countries are, firstly, the large increase of the out-turn in Cuba, which has this year reached the figure of 750,000 tons. This is nearly 120,000 tons more than in 1890, and 190,000 tons more than in 1889. In 1886 the production reached 731,000 tons; in 1875, 718,000; in 1873, 775,000. It is confidently believed that a much greater production is possible. As is well known, nearly the whole of this sugar goes to the United States. In Queensland, owing to difficulties with the labour question, the production has fallen off; but if the new departure of shipping to London continues to prove so profitable as at present, some arrangement will surely be made, and the capability of increased production is very great."

*Sugar Cane* then says—

"As regards the United States, to which attention is now being so much attracted under the new circumstances created by the McKinley Act of 1891, the Government is energetically pursuing what appears to it the best means of promoting the home production of sugar. As a natural consequence of the new departure, there has been a great amount of more or less exaggerated statements respecting the supply, in the near future, of all the United States requirements by home grown sugar. A mere glance at the figures of consumption and supply is sufficient to enable us to adequately discount those very characteristic statements."

"Louisiana's present capacity may average 200,000 tons. Sorghum sugar production is estimated at present at 600 tons, and that of beet sugar may be put at 6,000."

These are the things the hon. gentleman referred to, whilst on the other hand the import of sugar into the United States in twelve months was 1,555,123 tons. It goes on to say—

"It is as yet doubtful how far the bounty now granted under the McKinley Act will increase the production of cane sugar, but it may be assumed that it will have this effect. It is exceedingly probable that Mr. Wiley's new alcohol process will result in successful production of large quantities of sorghum sugar, and the government and local bounties will undoubtedly largely increase the output of beet sugar, but there is a tremendous margin to fill up before America can supply her own needs."

Then a German newspaper, referring to the numerous experiments with beet-growing now being made in various quarters, sagely observes—

"It is not the capability of producing good beets, but the possibility of obtaining a regular and sufficient supply of proper agricultural labour, which is the determining factor in the question of beet sugar manufacture. On the whole we think our colonial planters may quietly await developments."

That shows the opinion of this journal. Now, there is an article in the same paper on the production of sorghum. I need not read the whole

article, but it says there is a new process by which a much greater quantity may be obtained from sorghum than at present, and it sums up in this way—

"It is believed that the results of the work of the chemical division in this respect will be of such a nature as to encourage capital to investment in sorghum sugar manufactured with the assurance of a profitable return of the money invested, provided the other features relating to geographical limitations, improved varieties, careful culture, and adequate manufacturing facilities insisted on in my previous reports be observed."

"The Department of Internal Revenue (according to the New York *Merchants Review*) states that only three factories have made sorghum sugar this season under the bounty provisions, all in Kansas. The factory at Fort Scott produced 458,200 lb., the one at Topika 114,961 lb., and the one at Medicine Lodge, still working, will produce about 700,000 lb., say, total production of sorghum sugar in the United States this season 1,273,161 lb., or 568 tons."

That is how sorghum and beet sugar are going to run with cane sugar. I do not think the hon. member when he was speaking attached sufficient weight to this.

Mr. RYAN: I read more extracts than you did then.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: You did not read one.

Mr. RYAN: Your statement admits that this is going to be a profitable industry, which is what I said.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: You said that there was no use legislating for kanakas, because sorghum would drive out cane sugar. That is how the hon. member applied his argument. I know that the hon. member was sincere, and I draw attention to this to let him and others know that he has miscalculated, and that there is not the slightest fear that either beet or sorghum will increase in a greater ratio in the future than in the past. In fact, owing to the abolition of bounties on the Continent, and the demand for higher wages by the agricultural population of Europe, the tendency is to crush out beet sugar. Now, there is one point which has been overlooked in this debate, and I think it is the most important feature in the whole Bill—namely, that this is simply a stepping-stone to something better. There is no doubt that the planters are one and all desirous of disposing of their plantations to the small farmers who are willing to take them, and to carry on the work of manufacturing only. I honestly believe that, if this Bill becomes law, before the expiration of the term of ten years that the hon. member for Enoggera asked for—

Mr. DRAKE: I said a limit should be placed.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: I believe that before very long the whole of the sugar produced in the colony will be grown by small men supplying the large mills. There is not the least doubt about that in my mind, and I can tell hon. members that I have written upon this question to all the planters, and one and all have affirmed their desire to give up growing entirely and purchase the cane and crush it. There is no crop that will pay the farmers better, provided that they can get a few coloured labourers to assist them, than sugar-cane. I should like the small farmers to consider this. Sugar-cane growing has more advantage than any other product in Queensland at present, and one great advantage is this: That directly the farmers produce their crop they receive cash for it. There are no commission agents, no intermediary system at all. And more than that, they get paid before the crop is actually produced. Directly they plant it, and the inspector of the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company, or other mill-owners, sees that it is properly planted, they advance £2 or

£3 per acre, so that if a man puts in forty or fifty acres he can draw from £100 to £150. Then when the cane is six months old—according to quality—he can draw half or two-thirds of the value of the cane as it stands, the mill-owner retaining a lien over the whole property. I say that there is a great field open for the farmers in this colony if they will only go North. If the men who are spoken of by the hon. member for Barcoo and the hon. member for Enoggera and the hon. member for Bundanba will go North, and put their hands to the plough with a determination to succeed, they will find dozens of planters who will help them and advance money to them, and teams, and buy the whole crop which they can produce at a fair price. What is more, they are prepared, if there is any advance in the price of sugar in the next few years, to let them have the benefit of that rise. As the price of sugar is now, they can only offer a certain amount, but as it rises that amount will be enhanced.

Mr. RYAN : They are very generous.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS : They are generous, and perhaps their generosity exceeds the patriotism of the men whose cause the hon. member advocates. I say there is a great future in store for the sugar industry if the men who want work and are desirous of bettering their position will only take advantage of the offers made them. But there is another question to be looked at, and that is that before long federation may be accomplished. It may not be for three or four or five years, but it will come.

Mr. DRAKE : This will not help it.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS : Federation will destroy the black labour. There is no doubt of that; and it will extend our markets. If our market is extended to the other colonies, and a protective duty is put on other sugar of £4 or £5 per ton, that amount will be distributed amongst the growers and the manufacturers. The manufacturers in New South Wales can give a higher price for cane that is grown in Queensland, simply because there is a protective duty. The Colonial Sugar Refinery Company can afford to give 15s. per ton in New South Wales, while they only give 12s. here. With federation our markets will be enlarged, and we shall be able to give a higher price to the grower; and if the Federal Parliament of Australia says that no black men shall be allowed in Queensland, the manufacturers will still be able to pay at least 5s. or 6s. per ton more than the farmers are receiving now. This is a question of very great importance to the welfare of North Queensland, because if the industry should cease many thousands of white men with their wives and families will be thrown out of work, while we all know that if it is carried on the number who derive a living from it now will be very largely increased, and the price of the cane will soon be doubled or trebled. Look at Cuba; its area is 74,000 square miles; it could be put into some of our electoral districts, yet it produces 750,000 tons of sugar. Look at Mauritius! With an area of 705 square miles of country, it produces £2,500,000 worth of sugar annually. That shows what can be done here if we have the labour. In a portion of the district I represent—from Cairns to the Johnstone, and from the Johnstone westward to Herberton, and then along the northern line down to the parallel of Cairns—in that portion of the district there are 2,500 square miles of scrub land untouched; so that there is a wonderful future for agriculture in North Queensland, if the labour can only be procured. I feel sure that by the establishment of our central mills, and by giving the farmers assistance

in the shape of coloured labour for a few years, having in view the enhanced price which will surely come, a greater proportion of sugar than that mentioned by the hon. member for Bundanba will, before ten years are over, be grown exclusively by white men.

Mr. ADAMS said : Mr. Speaker,—I must say that there is a great difference between the speech we have just heard and that delivered by the hon. member for Rosewood. The hon. member for Rosewood said that the labour ought to be restricted to the year 1894, and the hon. member for Enoggera then suggested that it should be 1893. It is evident to me that those two hon. members know very little about the subject. It was also suggested that the time should be extended for twelve months only. What confidence would be created by an extension of twelve months?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER : There could then be an appeal to the country without interfering with the supply of labour.

Mr. ADAMS : Very likely many who are here now will not be in the next Parliament; but I maintain that the sooner this Bill becomes law the better it will be for the colony, because I am certain that until confidence is restored business will not thrive. A great many extracts have been read from what has been written to the papers by clergymen and others with respect to all manner of things that have been done in connection with obtaining and employing kanakas. I respect a clergyman of any denomination as long as I know he is a truth-loving man and honest in his intentions, and I will just read from the *Bundaberg Star* part of a letter written by the Rev. W. Morris, incumbent of Christ Church, Bundaberg. He shows plainly that the kanakas who come to the colony are such slaves that a great number of our own countrymen would be very glad to be slaves to the same extent. This is written at the request of the Labour Political Organisation. The reverend gentleman says—

"Having had my attention directed by the executive of the Worker's Political Organisation to the protest and appeal of the venerable Dr. Paton, and being also requested by them to give the expression of my opinions on the subject, I take one of the ways they have suggested, and ask you kindly to afford me space in your columns. I do this as a matter of courtesy to the organisation. As a rule, while I claim for every minister the right of private judgment on all political matters, yet I think and act up to the thought that it is wiser for him to refrain from taking any public part in them; and I must also wish it to be understood that my reply is that only of an individual, and not of the Church of which I am a minister.

"Before receiving the request, I had read with much amazement Dr. Paton's protest. If one-tenth of the charges brought against Queensland in it were true to-day in respect of kanaka recruiting and treatment here, every Christian man and woman in the colony would cry out against it. We know how guarded is the recruiting now, and we know how much better fed, clothed, and housed these men are now than they would be on their own islands. Hundreds of them have from £5 to £100 in the banks."

I think our own countrymen would like to save money like that. When a kanaka has been here for about a year he is able to put £5 into the savings bank, and after he has been here for some years he probably has £100 to his credit. It is only a month ago that one kanaka lifted no less than £200 out of the bank to take home with him. The writer goes on to say—

"There are thousands in the mother country not half so well off as these islanders. Week day and Sunday they meet for instruction, singing and praying, and many return to their own islands Christian communicants, join the native churches, and make themselves useful there. I have had classes of these men and women thirteen years, and know the astonishing changes that have taken place in many of them. There are some 1,400 under Christian instruction

in this district, and very many of them are teetotallers. Many who returned to their islands again come to Queensland; they would hardly do this were they treated as Dr. Paton represents. Nor is the mortality statement now correct. There is no doubt that almost everywhere the coloured races are dying out; witness the Maoris and the Sandwich Islanders. There is no doubt the changes in climate, food, clothing, etc., cause some deaths here; but medical men know better now how to treat them, and a far less number die.

"Then with regard to the mingling of the white and black races, I should think no one ever really believed that there was any danger of the black intermarrying with the white, settling down upon the land, and pushing the white men out of the field. Surely we belong to a race that has ever held its own against all-comers, and we are not yet so effeminate or incompetent as to fear the South Sea Islanders or any other coloured race should supersede us. 'Australia for the white man' seems not only an unmeaning cry, but seems to reflect ignominiously on those who use it.

"With regard to the present depression, I do not think it is entirely owing to the threatened withdrawal of Polynesian labour, nor do I think that the restoration of the labour will prove a panacea for all the evils that exist. But this is surely patent to all: that from the time of the introduction of the Labour Restriction Act, capital ceased to flow into the colony as it did before, and the sugar industry, upon which so much of our revenue depends, began to decline. Wages and rents fell, and artisans in crowds left the colony. On the other hand, no sooner is the Premier's manifesto published than things at once look brighter; threatened sales are stopped, and a tide of life flowed over the colony. We know well that the pastoral and mining interests cannot support us; we are too small for any great manufacturing industry, and, therefore, very much must depend upon the agricultural. And when we see that these colonies spend more than £3,000,000 a year in sugar, whilst we who could supply all that is wanted are not supplying the half, it does seem strange that any Queenslander should put obstacles in the way of what would give years of work to every class of artisan. I have shown that morally the Polynesian gains by coming here, and therefore there is no moral difficulty in the way of the commercial and industrial gain.

"Our own neighbourhood affords a striking contrast marking the advantage of sugar over maize. Contrast Doobbi and Childers with Cordalba and the district around it. With the prospect of a mill at Doobbi maize disappeared, and with it the debts, and following the sugar came the buggy and the piano, with many comforts, and the means for educating the children. The owner of the selection became an employer of labour, and is now beginning to provide for the rainy day. Whilst in the other district are men, hard-working men, of real grit, toiling hard amongst the maize and hardly earning sufficient to pay for rations. One can hardly wonder that as a man gets land of his own worth cultivating and near a sugar mill, his objection to black labour very much disappears. There is no doubt it would be a grand thing to see a number of prosperous families round some central mill; it would be better for the revenue, the stores, the churches, and this is illustrated in Gooburrum, South Kolan, Childers, etc. But even for these coloured labour is an advantage. The *Times* states—

"The abolition of South Sea Island labour on plantations has killed enterprise among small planters, driven usefully employed labour away, and discouraged the investment of capital in the colony."

I think that conclusively proves that there is very little in what has been said with reference to kidnapping and slavery. As to the effect the proposal to reintroduce kanaka labour is having upon the colony, I can only speak of my own electorate. I leave other members to speak of their own districts. Two years ago this month two plantations were forced into the market because the proprietors could not get any assistance from the monetary institutions of the colony, and one-third of their cost was fixed as the reserve price. They were advertised throughout the colony, and yet when they were put up for sale not a solitary bid could be got for them. It is only a short time ago, about a week or a fortnight before the manifesto of the Chief Secretary was issued, that a plantation in the Bundaberg district, called Seaview, was put

up for auction. The gentleman who owned it bought it about twelve months previously for, I believe, something like £3,600. The plantation was honestly worth £5,000; it cost more than that. The purchaser bought it just as the crop was about to be taken off, and he had the misfortune that year to make £1,700 or £1,800. He then thought that he was big enough to go in for a large manufacturing plant. He was not satisfied with a mill with one set of rollers but must go in for a double set of rollers and all the other things necessary for a manufacturing plant. The consequence was that he spent the £1,700 or £1,800 he had made and nearly as much more, expecting when he was making those improvements that he would be able to get accommodation from the banks to assist him to carry on; but when he had spent the money, the bank finding that he had been spending money lavishly, turned round and said, "You have spent more money than we intended to advance, and we will lend no more." The mortgagee then foreclosed, but gave the proprietor the option of selling the property himself. The estate was advertised all over the colony, but when it was offered at auction not one solitary bid was received. If the man could have got £4,000 for it he would have accepted it. About nine days afterwards the Chief Secretary's manifesto appeared in the Press, and the plantation was again offered for sale, and seven or eight days later was sold for £4,550 cash. That is the effect the manifesto has had in my district. Not only did it bring for that plantation a purchaser who was a perfect stranger to the district, but the owners of the other plantations which were offered previously, would not sell them at all. It was only the confidence that that manifesto created that gave that gentleman courage to go into the industry. I have been told that he was in it before up North, but he would not have gone into it again but for the confidence the manifesto gave. I am assured of that on very good authority. I believe that if this Bill is put through the House at an early date, it will create a vast amount of confidence, which will bring capital into this colony, and be the cause of great benefit to the community.

Mr. CADELL said: Mr. Speaker,—I have a few words to say upon this subject before the question goes to a vote. I consider this question of black labour one of the most important that has ever been before the people of Queensland, and I think it should be put before the electors of the country at the present time. They have had no opportunity of expressing their views upon it, and I think an appeal should be made to them upon the question. It has been stated in this House by many members that, so far as the cultivation of sugar-cane goes, white men cannot do the work. I believe that wherever a black man can work a white man can.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: But he will not.

Mr. CADELL: I think that if the planters in the North of Queensland were to grow sugar as it is grown in the Southern portion of the colony—planting the cane further apart and using horse-hoes and ploughs—they could get the work done by white labour. The price of sugar now is higher than it has been for the last five years, and that proves that the industry is not going down so far as the price is concerned, and as compared with other agricultural products of the colony. The price of some other agricultural products has in the same time fallen more than 100 per cent., and I think some effort should be made to assist in some way those engaged in agriculture other than the cultivation of sugar-cane. I would like to see white labour have a fair trial upon the plantations. I do not think it has so far had a

fair trial, though the Secretary for Lands told us to-night that it has been tried on one plantation.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It has been tried on a dozen plantations.

Mr. CADELL: The Secretary for Mines says it has been tried on a dozen plantations. Well, I do not think it has had a fair trial. I think white labour could be employed in the sugar industry, and I would like to see the work done by white men.

Mr. WIMBLE said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to support this Bill, but I do not intend to give a silent vote upon it. As I represent Cairns, which is a sugar district, I may say that it is in favour of this Bill, and it always has been in favour of kanaka labour for the sugar plantations. I am therefore at perfect liberty to give my vote for this Bill, with the knowledge that I shall please my constituents by so doing; but in any case I must say that, considering the present circumstances of the colony, I should use my own judgment at the present time, and vote for this Bill because I can see it will be for the benefit of the colony. The sugar industry is a great factor in the commercial importance and prosperity of this colony, and Queensland is the only colony in Australasia in which sugar can be grown successfully. That kanaka labour will assist the industry has been proved by many members. In fact the House has been so delayed with conclusive proofs that kanaka labour is absolutely necessary for the industry, that I do not intend to delay the House by going into the matter further. The statement has been made that public opinion is not in favour of the proposed extension of kanaka labour.

Mr. GLASSEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. WIMBLE: Well, Lord Palmerston used to say that if you wished to ascertain public opinion you had only to ride outside an omnibus; and if you mingled with the masses in that way you would hear public opinion very distinctly expressed. I think that anyone who has looked into this matter impartially, and free from prejudice or bigotry, I might term it, must know that there has been a universal change of opinion upon this subject not only in Brisbane, but throughout Queensland. It is now universally expressed in the colony that kanaka labour will be of advantage to the working classes. I have conversed with the working classes, and some whom I knew to be opposed to coloured labour have admitted that they have changed their views, and that they would like to see its introduction continued to bring about the prosperity that existed six or seven years ago. I regard this Bill with approval, and I trust it will be passed, and will assist in bringing about a time of prosperity, as it is intended to do.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think it is necessary to say very much more upon this subject, as it has been very well thrashed out. I think that all that is necessary to say has been said by the Secretary for Lands to-night, and by the hon. member for Mackay last night. I am not going to detain the House at this late hour, but, like the speaker who preceded me, I do not wish to give a silent vote. We have heard a great deal about the hardship and injury that was done to these kanakas. We have heard it said by the opponents of the Bill that there is no wish that the sugar industry should cease. They are anxious that the industry should flourish, but they are utterly opposed to the introduction of South Sea Islanders. Now, scarcely one of the speakers opposed to the measure attempted to show how this is to be done,

with the exception of the hon. member for Rosewood. He thought that the large plantations ought to be cut up into small farms, and thereby the cane would be cultivated with white labour, but he also wishes to have the black labour extended for two years. This Bill says it may be extended for any period. If white labour can be so easily employed, I presume that as soon as the planter finds sufficient labour to cultivate his fields he will at once cease to import black labour. I am sure there is not a member of this House who wishes to see Queensland made a colony for black races; that every hon. member desires that Queensland should be kept for the white races; but we have here staring us in the face the fact that the sugar industry will go down and eventually die out if some assistance is not rendered to it at present. There is no denying the fact that those who have invested their capital and found they cannot get a return for it are determined, if some assistance is not offered to them, that they will remove their plant from the colony. Well, the question with me is: Can we afford, in the present state of affairs, to lose any industry? I do not think so. I do not think we can afford to allow any industry to die out, particularly one that returns such a large amount as sugar cultivation does. We are told by the opponents of this measure that the sugar industry is quite as prosperous this year as it has ever been. We all agree upon that. No one denies that as much sugar has been produced last season as ever has been produced in Queensland, but surely those gentlemen are not blind to the fact that what the planters are complaining of is the prospect ahead of the industry two or three years hence. Any man who knows anything about agriculture knows that the farmer must sow his field at a certain season of the year. If he does not, he cannot expect to reap a harvest. Therefore the planters say, "If we are not sure of having labour two years hence we will not plant our fields this year; we will simply keep our machinery going as long as we can, and then we will remove it." Well, I think it is necessary that some steps should be taken one way or the other to enable these men to have confidence. Now, I am utterly opposed to the introduction of Italian labour. I opposed that from the commencement. I must say that all through I could see that the planters had a great difficulty to contend against—the want of reliable labour at a given time; and they find when that time comes if they depended upon white labour it was either not forthcoming, or if it was they could not depend upon it remaining. Various opinions have been expressed as to the ability of white men to work in the canefields. I have heard a great number of working men who have been in the North say that they cannot work in a canefield, or if they did work in it they only did so for a certain time, until they could raise a few pounds, so that they could go elsewhere. The planter complains that he cannot rely on white labour to do the work, and as the Secretary for Lands has pointed out, the cane must be cut at a certain time, or the crop is lost for the season. Now, I am not an advocate for cheap labour or low wages in any form, if I can possibly help it, but we must be regulated by the demand for labour, and I am quite sure the difficulty the planters have experienced in getting the labour they require has put thousands of white men out of employment. In fact, I know from my experience, and from the communications I have had with others, and conversations with many working men, that they are beginning to see a mistake was made in the cry raised against South Sea Island labour. I do not think the Chief Secretary, in issuing his manifesto, has in any way changed the opinions

he expressed years ago. Carefully reading the manifesto, anyone will observe that he still has the same hopes he had years ago of settling small farmers on the land to cultivate cane—he still thinks that time will come. He still hopes to see the colony populated solely by white people able and willing to grow cane. No doubt there have been great abuses in the past in connection with the traffic.

Mr. GLASSEY: There will be again.

Mr. McMASTER: It must be admitted that we have heard of very few abuses for the past three or four years. It is a question whether there were any abuses in 1890. There are abuses in our white immigration. We have had to pay very dearly for some of the white immigrants we have brought from the old country, and we are paying for them to-day very dearly. None of the abuses which were so frequent in the South Sea Islands eight or nine years ago have taken place during the last three or four years. The determined stand taken by the Government at that time to put down those abuses is a sufficient guarantee that they will not be repeated in the future. Besides, it has been clearly stated during this debate that if the planters or the recruiters are not more careful in the future than they have been in the past, the country will rise as one man and abolish the labour altogether. I believe, with the hon. member for Rosewood, that the real solution of the sugar difficulty is to cut up the plantations into small farms of thirty, forty, or fifty acres, on which cane could be grown with very little black labour. The cane would, with perhaps a little assistance, be produced by the farmer and his family, who will work just as they please, without being tied to work from a certain hour in the morning to a certain hour in the afternoon; and I believe they will work those small farms with advantage to themselves. I have no doubt that was exactly what the Chief Secretary intended should be done when he issued his manifesto. I have had many conversations with my own constituents—I live and move amongst them—on this question, and I know fairly well what their opinions are upon it. There are, I may say, hundreds of men who some years ago were opposed to the introduction of kanakas, but who are now strong advocates for the retention of coloured labour in order to prevent the total annihilation of the sugar industry. I am certain that this Bill has been hailed by thousands in the colony who were opposed to kanaka labour four or five years ago, believing that white labourers could be got to do the work which they have since refused to do. It is no use talking about confidence, and to say that if you pay the wages you will get the work done. All confidence is gone. No man who has any money will spend it on improvements or invest it in anything that is not a Government security, or something of that kind. Confidence is gone, and the working men know it, and know it to their cost, and they are beginning to see that it is better to retrace the steps they took some years ago. It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill. I need not say more about it. The subject has been very well debated during this week and last week, and I know that some hon. members are opposing it simply because they feel in honour bound to stand by the pledges they have given. Fortunately I have given no pledge. I was not sent here as a delegate, but to do the best I can for my constituency, and for the colony as a whole. If this Parliament is not capable of dealing with this question, I fail to see how the next Parliament will be more capable.

Mr. GLASSEY: This Parliament is pledged against black labour.

Mr. McMASTER: I for one am not pledged against it. I take things as they come. Things change very much in five years. Things we intended to do four years ago we now find to be impossible, because circumstances have altered. The hon. member for Bundamba, who knows very well the condition the colony is in, wants us to go to a general election. To go to a general election just now would be almost adding insult to injury. Hundreds of working men are walking about now without employment, owing to the want of confidence which prevails. Many of them, certainly, go about looking for work and hoping they will not find it; but there are hundreds of honest, hard-working men looking for work and unable to obtain it. I dare say the hon. member for Bundamba would like a general election every six months. I think he will find that three years are quite enough. If we are not capable of dealing with this question because it is the last year of Parliament, what sort of legislation shall we have when the triennial system comes into operation? It will take the next Parliament twelve months before it gets properly down to work.

Mr. HOOLAN: Nonsense!

Mr. McMASTER: Every man cannot, like the junior member for Burke, speak for five hours, and roll it out as if he had a roll of cotton. It takes a Ministry a whole session before they can put before the House a settled programme. Perhaps the hon. member will alter all that when he gets a Ministerial portfolio, although I do not think he will ever arrive at that position.

Mr. HOOLAN: I am quite sure he will.

Mr. McMASTER: If we are not capable of dealing with this question after we have had four years' experience, how will the next Parliament deal with it, which will have only one session practically in which to do work for the colony? I maintain that this Parliament is quite as capable of dealing with this or any other question as the Parliament which will succeed it. I intend to support the Bill.

Mr. GLASSEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I have purposely refrained from rising earlier in the evening, so as to give other hon. members an opportunity of talking; but seeing that the question is likely to be put without any other hon. member speaking, of course I must take this opportunity of saying what I have to say. I do not wish to be told afterwards that I rise at this particular hour so that I cannot be replied to.

Mr. BLACK: I hope your health is all right to-night.

Mr. GLASSEY: I hope it is. Now, the speeches made this evening, like the speeches previously delivered on this question, imply that a large amount of the depression which prevails in the colony is owing to the want of black labour. That has been answered again and again; it has been shown that there has been no want of black labour, but on the contrary, that there has been abundance and to spare. I am not going to argue it any further, because it has been demonstrated so often. The speech of the Secretary for Lands in particular implied that our present condition is owing to the injury which the sugar industry has suffered in consequence of the want of black labour. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, of course, touched upon a very important question, and that is that it may suffer in the future when black labour ceases. But it will not entirely cease. There is more black labour in the colony now than can be employed.

Mr. PHILP: That is not so.

Mr. GLASSEY: Let me refer to a paragraph which appeared in the *Bundaberg Star* of 9th February.

Mr. PHILP: That is not the whole colony.

Mr. GLASSEY: It is a very important sugar centre. This report exactly proves what I have said, and I presume the report is correct.

Mr. DRAKE: It is a black labour paper now.

Mr. GLASSEY: On the 9th of February, this year—that is, before the publication of the famous manifesto—this paper says, referring to the agitation which was then growing in favour of the continuation of black labour—

"A petition is in course of signature in Brisbane addressed to the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in which the petitioners state 'they believe much of the serious condition of affairs referred to may be attributed to that legislation which has deprived the Northern portions of Queensland of coloured labour, and nearly annihilated an industry which at one time afforded employment for many hundreds of skilled workmen, and led to large investments of capital in various parts of the colony.' It is a striking commentary on this line of argument which is going to bring back this previous prosperity when we state that the industry has not been deprived of coloured labour yet. There are more Polynesians in this district than ever there were. The plantations are full to overflowing in anticipation of the stoppage of the traffic. Further, there are numbers of kanakas walking the main streets, fishing on the riverside, or sitting in and about the kanaka shops, having no employment. We are informed that 200 might be hired at once if they could find employment; but evidently no one wants them; at least no one engaged in cane cultivation or sugar manufacture. Or is it because they ask 5s. or 6s. a week, whereas the new-chum boys can be had for less."

And then it goes on to say that in the Maryborough district large numbers of kanakas can be engaged, as they were going about idle. That is a report which appears in one of the papers in the Bundaberg district, which is noted for this industry. In talking on this subject last evening I stated that one-third of the total product of sugar was produced by white labour. That statement was challenged.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: Contradicted.

Mr. GLASSEY: Well, contradicted; but I am going to repeat the statement, and I am going to prove it.

Mr. PATTISON: And you will be contradicted again.

Mr. GLASSEY: I am going to prove it from an official source. I did not say that one-third of the total product was produced exclusively for the market by white men; but I repeat that one-third of the total product of sugar in this colony is produced by white labour.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: That is against your own argument.

Mr. GLASSEY: That is not against my own argument.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: We will see about that.

Mr. GLASSEY: I say that white labour can and does perform the work, both in the cultivation and the cutting of cane in some respects, and in helping to manufacture it and put it into a marketable condition. Now, on referring to the report of the Royal Commission, the members of which were Mr. King, the present Secretary for Lands (Mr. Cowley), and the late Speaker (Mr. Groom), which will be found in vol. iv., "Votes and Proceedings" for the year 1889, page 62, Messrs. King and Cowley say in their report—and I take their statement because, of course, they were more favourable to the planters' side of the question than the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, was

—they say in their report that about 6,000 kanakas were engaged in the sugar industry, and according to later returns there are more than that now; and in the same report it says that the number of Europeans permanently employed in the sugar industry cannot be less than from 2,000 to 3,000 persons. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether from 2,000 to 3,000 will not be fully one-third of the 6,000 which are mentioned as being kanakas. I think the late Secretary for Lands, Mr. Black, was a little hasty when he said that persons who argue in this way show a gross amount of ignorance in talking as they do.

Mr. BLACK: You are making it worse now. Your contention was that one-third of the sugar was grown by white labour exclusively.

Mr. GLASSEY: It was not. I am not going to be trapped in that way. I refer the hon. member to my remarks in *Hansard*. I repeat that one-third of the total product of sugar in Queensland is produced by white labour, and I can prove it from official documents now before this Chamber. I deny that it is exclusively grown by kanakas, and I am supported in my statement by the manifesto issued by the Chief Secretary, which says that white labour has performed its work with conspicuous success, notably on the Herbert River and in the Bundaberg district, and at Mackay. I say that if there was not a single kanaka or coloured labourer in Queensland to-morrow, sugar would be grown by white labour. Bundaberg was my first home when I came here, and I went carefully into the matter and travelled the fields over and over again, and I have visited the district many times since. I have seen sugar produced from the time it was planted until it was manufactured and bagged. This work can all be performed by white labour; it is purely a question of pay.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It could not be carried on at a profit.

Mr. GLASSEY: That is another matter. Now, I have no fault to find with the advocates of this particular kind of labour. They have a perfect right to do as they are doing. I oppose them honestly, and have no doubt they are acting honestly also. It is just a question of wages. If the sugar industry cannot afford to pay wages that a white man can live upon, what is the real worth of it to white people? If it will not allow them to keep themselves and their families in the ordinary comforts of life, it is not much use so far as they are concerned. Of course it may be argued on the other hand, with a certain amount of truth, that half a loaf is better than no bread; but can it be argued from that, that if we had not the sugar industry there would be no bread for a large number?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: How about the engineers?

Mr. GLASSEY: I have heard a good deal about those engineers employed in the manufacture of sugar machinery, and before this Bill has passed through this House we will have an opportunity of going more fully into that matter, and there will be some testimony to show that many of the statements we have heard in regard to the machinery will not bear strict scrutiny or a thorough investigation. Then we are told that there are very few kanakas coming into competition with white men. There is a considerable amount of competition even now in the Bundaberg district, and, in support of my statement, I will now quote a letter written to the *Bundaberg Star* of 5th April, by Mr. G. J.

Hall, who is referring to a meeting lately held by Mr. Adams, the member for the district. He says—

"I offer the following to Mr. Adams, and request him to make all the use of it he feels disposed. I hear on reliable information from three parties within two days that already the proprietors of Rubyns plantation are effecting a change on their plantation—namely, extending the industry, the staff consisting of the manager, one overseer, one fitter, and thirty kanakas. The latter are principally engaged in taking to pieces the machinery, loading and carting it to the river, clearing bricks, and, in fact, doing work that should in all fairness be done by white labour—work that some white men have applied for and have been refused, while the kanakas are kept fully employed. I am given to understand that tenders had been called for this work. The firms which tendered would, of course, have employed white labour, and tendered accordingly. Every tender was over high and declined, the owners averring they could do it cheaper by day labour. They are now doing the work with the kanakas, as I before stated. Is this tropical agriculture? Mr. Adams will perhaps tell us if this is within the law? And does it increase work for white men other than cause them to make out tenders at considerable cost for work that is only intended to be done by kanakas? Many people ask, Where is the Government inspector?"

We are told this Bill will prevent a repetition of that. If so, we must have fresh administrators of the law. So long as we have magistrates of the territory in these sugar-growing districts, and any abuses come before them, they will receive scant justice. I go further and say that if this Bill is to have that effect we must have new functionaries and more vigour and determination. It is clear that these abuses are going on even now in the presence of certain persons whose duty it is to put them down. And as long as persons engaged in an industry where abuses may arise occupy positions as magistrates, is it likely that they are going to put down these abuses while they bring them a profit? A large number of them are doing this at the present time. It is only reasonable to suppose that planters as well as other people will get their work done as cheaply as possible. And if we pass as many Bills as will flood the table of the House, the abuses connected with the employment of kanakas cannot be put down. No doubt the Government have the very best intentions, but they will not be able to prevent abuses, because circumstances are too strong for them. It is not my intention at this late hour to take up much time; but I believe there is a strong feeling in the minds of a considerable number of members that the feeling of the electors should be tested, and in order that the opinion of the electors may be ascertained I will move the addition of these words at the end of the motion: "And then referred to the electors of the colony."

The SPEAKER: I cannot accept the hon. member's amendment. According to the rules of the House, an amendment on a motion for the second reading for the omission of words having been negatived, no other amendment can be put. In May's "Parliamentary Practice," at page 321, it is stated that—

"In the case of a second reading or other stage of a Bill, however, it is not allowable to add words to the question after the House has decided that words proposed to be left out should stand part of that question. Every stage of a Bill, being founded upon a previous order of the House, is passed by means of a recognised formula, and may be postponed or arrested by acknowledged forms of amendment, but when any such amendment has been negatived, no other amendment by way of addition to the question can be proposed, which is not, in some degree, inconsistent with the previous determination of the House; and it has, therefore, never been permitted."

Mr. GLASSEY: I should be the last to question your ruling, Mr. Speaker. My object was to give hon. members an opportunity of declaring their votes in favour of referring the question to the constituencies. If they decide in favour of the reintroduction of black labour,

I as a citizen will bow to their decision; but in the meantime I believe that the feeling of the people is against the proposal. Every day this debate goes on confirms me in the belief that such is the case, and only to-day I received a wire from Charleville, stating that it was declared at an enthusiastic meeting that, inasmuch as the country has already pronounced judgment against the continuation of the traffic, it is necessary that the electors should be consulted on the question. In fact, that is the general feeling; and I say it is not wise for the Government to force this question through because they have a strong majority at their back. I have other reasons for opposing this Bill, but my strongest reason is that this House is pledged up to the hilt against the continuance of the traffic, and the people of the colony have not had an opportunity of expressing their opinion upon it.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member is exceedingly anxious apparently to obtain the opinion of the people of the colony on this question. I remember that in the course of this Parliament the salary of members of Parliament was raised from £200 to £300. I do not think the people of the colony were consulted in that matter; but the hon. member, in conjunction with other hon. members, has accepted that sum. Some people would probably think that the hon. member for Bundanba and the hon. member for Enoggera have been got at by the capitalists of the colony. There have been a good many charges made against people with regard to being at the beck and call of the capitalist. The Press of the colony has been charged with being a capitalistic Press; but I say that such a charge as I have stated might equally well be made against those two hon. members. What is it they are attempting to do? To take the bread out of the mouths of 25,000 people—to reduce a large number of people to poverty.

Mr. DRAKE: Don't talk nonsense.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I am not in the habit of talking nonsense. I leave that to a supporter of the hon. member who interrupted me—whose long address which he delivered yesterday was termed "balderdash" by the Press of the colony. When I speak I do not talk balderdash, at any rate. I say that the direct effect of seriously interfering with the sugar industry must be to increase poverty, distress, and depression in the colony. If I were a representative of the planters—which I emphatically deny—then the policy of those two hon. members would meet with my support. But I am no more the representative of the planters of the colony than the hon. member for Bundanba is the representative of the coal-owners of the colony. I represent the people of Mackay, and in the capacity of their representative I speak. I say that from the beginning of this debate to the present time the hon. members have never met the contentions of the Chief Secretary. The hon. member for Bundanba has said that the arguments brought forward by that hon. gentleman were weak, flimsy, and poor; but he never attempted to show that they were so. And the hon. member for Enoggera—a member of a learned profession, who knows the canons of proof and disproof—he contented himself, in a cheap manner, by saying that the arguments of the Chief Secretary were illogical. Is that the way the hon. gentleman deals with a case in court? Does he say, "Your Honour the Chief Justice,—All I have to remark is that the contention of the opposing counsel and the facts that are brought against me are unsubstantial and illogical?" Does he suppose he can get a verdict on that? If these matters are required in the courts of the

realm, if facts are required to be met with facts and proof, if arguments are required to be met with disproof, why is it? It is because the courts of the colony want the truth. And if it is important for the courts in the case of a single individual to get the truth, is it not important in this tribunal that the truth shall be put forward? I say that from the very beginning of this discussion the contentions of the Chief Secretary have never been met. What are those contentions?

Mr. DRAKE: You contradicted them.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: Contradictions are very cheap, indeed. We want proof, we want facts given to show the reasons why those contradictions are made, and this House, I have no doubt, will attach due importance to them. But it is no use to make empty assertions like those made by the hon. member for Bundanba. How are we to regard the statements of an hon. member who praises a speech which the Press of the colony has denounced as wind, describing the hon. member who delivered it as a windbag? And yet the hon. member for Bundanba talks of that speech as a most able and eloquent one! The Press of the colony, I presume, are impartial, or at any rate they are a judge of English.

Mr. GLASSEY: Are they?

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I am very glad to find that I am exciting interruptions. I like to see a rebound myself, because I know by it that I have hit somebody; I believe I have turned a stone beneath which are the insects of falsehood, and the insects are squirming. I believe that when an hon. member admires a speech which the Press of the colony calls "rhodomontade," it is a compliment to the Chief Secretary when that member says the arguments of the hon. gentleman are flimsy. The hon. member does not know what a good argument is; he does not know what a bad argument is; he does not know what common sense is; he does not know what the Press call "balderdash" is. Therefore I have no reliance on his judgment. It is quite possible, as I believe the Chief Secretary said on one occasion, to pour wisdom into people's heads, but if there is nothing to receive that wisdom it will have no effect, and they will not care. I am very glad that hon. members over there are excited. I am very glad to have an opportunity of saying a few words with regard to what the hon. member for Bundanba says, and which he usually says at an hour of the evening when, out of deference to the House, I do not care to address you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. GLASSEY: Why did not you address the House when the question was going to be put? The question was about to be put when I spoke.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: The more excitement there is on that cross-bench the better I am satisfied; it shows that my shots are going home; it is something like the interlude in the battle of Prague, which they call the cries of the wounded. Who is it that oppose the measures of the Chief Secretary? Those who profess that they represent the working men of the colony, and yet they want to destroy one of the chief sources of employment—for whatever they mean to do I know what the effect of their actions will be if successful. There are plenty of people who attempt to do good, and succeed in doing more harm than if they attempted to do harm; they err from ignorance. I believe that it is quite possible for people who attempt to do good to the working men of the colony to do the greatest amount of evil to them. I do not charge the men who have upset the industries of the colony with attempting to do harm, but their ignorance led them to do the greatest harm to those whose interests they pro-

fessed to advance. That is a notorious fact. And with regard to the sugar industry I say that the men who make the most noise about it, and tell us that it is degrading and so forth to employ kanaka labour, know least about that industry. There is the hon. member for Enoggera. I do not suppose he ever worked in a sugar-mill or grew cane.

Mr. DRAKE: Did you?

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I have grown cane, and I have put money into a sugar-mill and lost by it. The hon. member really and truly knows nothing whatever about the subject. I believe the hon. member is a very good lawyer. I sincerely hope he is; but if his knowledge of law is to be measured by his knowledge of sugar, Heaven help his clients. What does the hon. member for Bundanba know about sugar? He certainly travels over the colony in pursuit of his business. He has been in a cotton factory, I remember he told us, on one occasion. He has been in a coal mine on one occasion, and he has pursued other avocations, and knows everything about every matter. He reminds me of an observation a gentleman once made about Lord Macaulay, when he said that he wished he was as certain of any one thing in the universe as Lord Macaulay was of everything. I only wish I knew a tenth part of what the hon. member professes to know about everything. The hon. member for Barcoo, Mr. Ryan, says that his constituents are opposed to black labour, and intend to resist tooth and nail the measures proposed by the Chief Secretary. Do they know anything at all about the matter? I think they remember—and I have no doubt that is the source of their prejudice—that years ago, under totally different conditions, and before the Government interfered, and prior to the passing of any restrictive measures in reference to the labour trade, at the time Captain Towns began a plantation, kanakas spread over the colony, went out West, and were employed on some of the stations. That I deplore. But that is not a reason for objecting to the introduction of Polynesians now. It does not show that the constituents of the hon. member have any knowledge of the question before the House. They are not brought into contact with Polynesians, and, therefore, so far as their opinion is concerned, it is worth practically nothing as compared with the opinions of constituents such as I represent, who are brought into contact with Polynesians continually, who are perfectly able to judge as to the injury they do the colony, and who are also perfectly able to judge as to the benefit they do the colony. If the constituents of the Hon. the Secretary for Lands, the constituents of the hon. member for Townsville, and the constituents of other hon. members who know all about these matters, say, as my constituents urge in the petitions which they have sent to the House—and they are not petitions from planters, but farmers, settlers, and working men—that the greatest disasters will accrue to them if Polynesians are not allowed to be introduced, I should like hon. members who interfere to gain some knowledge of the subject, and not, in their zeal to represent their constituents, do a deep and deadly injury to the constituents of other hon. members. Another objection has been taken this evening, and I must admit that it is a perfectly sound and valid objection on the face of it. But a good many objections which, on the face of them, are sound, bear a different aspect on examination, as perhaps hon. members have often found out in taking money which looks sound, and which you may think to be sound until you ring it. An objection has been taken by hon. members, in good faith, I do not doubt, on moral grounds. A good

many members, who apparently had no other objection to fall back upon, raised themselves on to a pinnacle about as high as the Eiffel Tower, and from that looked down with complacency on other mortals from their high moral ground. The moral grounds in this particular case are sound enough, grounds which I respect myself. They say the mortality amongst Polynesians is abnormal as compared with the mortality of Europeans in this colony. That is undoubtedly true, and if it could be shown that this abnormal mortality amongst Polynesians in this colony is the result of ill-treatment in anyway, then I say that the interests of my constituents would not induce me to vote for any such measure as this. But, Sir, every precaution is taken by the Government that they should receive careful treatment. They have inspectors and can report to their inspectors, and their reports will be taken notice of; in case any of them should be sick arrangements are made by which doctors visit their plantations, and hospitals are built for them. I unhesitatingly say that no neglect whatever of the Polynesians can be found, and they receive more medical attendance in time of sickness than hundreds of men out West receive, or than I have received myself many a time. It is, nevertheless, true, and it requires explanation, that the death-rate amongst Polynesians in the colony is great as compared with the death-rate amongst Europeans. But as I have observed myself before now, and as I think the hon. member for Logan told the House, if you are going to make a comparison at all you should compare things on the same plane. It is perfectly ridiculous to go and compare the death-rate amongst Polynesians in this colony with the death-rate amongst Europeans, unless you can show that the death-rate of Polynesians under normal conditions, when they are in their own islands, is the same as the death-rate amongst Europeans in this colony. Well, that cannot be shown because it is not so. The death-rate of Polynesians from some circumstances—it may be the will of God, and ultimately, I presume, it must be—is in their own islands obviously enormously in excess of the death-rate amongst Europeans in this colony. I will just give you a few facts which I think are of use, and which I think should be placed in the possession of the House to enable hon. members to come to a proper decision upon this view of the question. I assert that there is no neglect of the Polynesians in this colony, and I assert that the death-rate amongst them is excessive as compared with that amongst Europeans, whether they come here or remain in their own country. In Tonga in 1847 there were some 40,000 or 50,000 people; now there are 10,000. If that had been a European population it would probably now be 150,000; it is 10,000. In the Society Islands in Captain Cook's time the population was about 68,000; the population there now is 9,000. There are no planters there; I believe there are missionaries. In the Marquesas Islands in 1870 there were 50,000 natives, in 1879 there were 4,000. Then at Aniëtam, in the New Hebrides, there were 12,000 people some twenty-five years ago. There is no recruiting in any of these places; there are missionaries there, and at Aniëtam the population is now 2,000. Take the Sandwich Islands and the natives there; or take the Maories of New Zealand, they are a declining race. I do not know to what this can be attributed.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Rum.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I do not know that there is as much rum in those islands as there is in the electorate of the hon. member who interrupts me. Here, in their islands—where the conditions are normal and favourable; where

they have missionaries; where they have no violent wars and no recruiting—instead of increasing, as Europeans would do, these people are declining. That should make any reasonable man hesitate before he comes to the conclusion that the mere fact of bringing them here increases the death-rate amongst them abnormally. I do not think that any such thing can be alleged or can be supported by a particle of proof if it is alleged. As I have said before, whatever the cause of the high death-rate may be, it cannot be attributed to any neglect of the islanders here. Assuming that the mere fact of these people coming here produces the high death-rate, I would say that Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotchmen, and Europeans generally, go to India and to the West Coast of Africa, where certainly the mortality amongst them is greater than at home. No doubt amongst the Saxons who swarmed over from the Elbe and came to Britain, and amongst the Normans who came over from France, the death-rate was greater than it would have been amongst them if they had remained at home. I have no doubt that when America was stocked by the Pilgrim Fathers, and when Virginia was settled, the mortality amongst those people was greater than it would have been if they had stopped at home. It may be that the extension of civilisation is wrong when it involves an increased death-rate. I do not know that that should stop progress in other respects. If the loss of any human life is to be a bar to all progress, the sooner we tear up our railways and do away with our coalpits the better. I believe that on the whole it is advantageous to the islanders to bring them here. It is possible that it may be disadvantageous to the missionaries, some of whom, I believe, desire to pay their way. They have cocoanut plantations, and they want labour. If labour is cheap here, it is far cheaper to the missionaries. Again, and this is a point I wish the House to pay some attention to—people talk about the ships being sent to the South Sea Islands to take away "boys." They do not go there to take away boys any more than the "Arrawatta" goes to Sydney to take away people from Sydney and bring them here. Men simply take a vessel down to the islands, and if any of the islanders choose to take a trip to Queensland they can do so. No one makes them come; they come voluntarily, and are protected if they do, though in some cases the people brought here from Sydney do not want to come, and are brought here very much against their will. The islanders come here of their own will as voluntary passengers. Some of the matters referred to by the Rev. Mr. Paton, I remember, as they were brought forward a session or two ago. This is one of the cases inquired into by the High Commissioner, who came to the same conclusion upon it, after inquiry, as I came to after reading Dr. Paton's statement of it. He said that two boys were taken away by a ship, but the facts were that he declined to allow them to go. They cleared out from the missionary, probably thinking that, no matter what advantages he offered them hereafter, he did not offer sufficient in the meantime. They left the missionary, and followed the boat along the coast for a mile or two. They hailed the boat, and as those in it would not put back for them they swam out to the boat; and this sort of thing is called "a kanaka outrage." Now, that shows this: that the Polynesians are certainly anxious to come to this colony. Therefore, I say, to go and make the objection to the traffic on the ground that these "boys" are taken away is monstrously unjust. I believe at the present time, from a report which I saw to-day in the *Courier* or *Observer*, the captain of a vessel tells us that the "boys" know that

free passages which they could get some time ago were suspended, and they are exceedingly anxious to obtain the benefit of those free passages again. As I have been induced to speak I think I may run over several of the statements which were made by the Chief Secretary, and which I say no one who has opposed the measure of the Government has ever attempted to deal with. Here is the first one. When the Chief Secretary brings forward a series of propositions and founds certain conclusions upon them, it is the duty of any intelligent person to understand the propositions in the first place, or find fault with the reasoning if it is not true or is materially incorrect. Hon. members have avoided that task for some reason which is probably satisfactory to themselves. The Chief Secretary is entrenched in his citadel. Probably those hon. gentlemen may imagine that the days of miracles have not yet ceased, and like the children of Israel they walk round the city of Jericho and blow loudly. I do not know that hon. members have done much else, but the citadel has not fallen, and it will require a different class of attack to make it fall. It is said by the Chief Secretary that the sugar industry offers a field for the settlement of numberless families on the land. Can anyone doubt that? The field is large and the labourers are few. The hon. member for Bundamba told us that the planters in the North had hundreds of thousands of acres in their hands, which is a statement the result of an interview by a representative of the hon. member for Toowoomba who was sent to inquire. There were hundreds of thousands of acres in the hands of the planters, and he came to that conclusion because a certain amount of land had been taken up. But it does not in the least follow it was taken up by the planters. And he also stated that Mr. Duffy, a gentleman who lives in Bundaberg, had attributed the failure of the planters to the fact that they had bought land at £1 an acre which was now worth £40 an acre, while land to grow maize was only worth £2 an acre. If the planters had got that quantity of land, that would simply be the means by which they could have snapped their fingers at the industry. They held the land, it is said. If they got it for £1 an acre and it was worth £40 an acre, they need not trouble much about the sugar industry. They would be able to retire upon the £40 an acre. These lands are untilled at present, firstly, owing to the fact that it would be unprofitable to till them, and the hon. member wants to make the expense still greater, and the loss still greater, to prevent any profit being made. He is, in fact, assisting to keep these thousands of acres idle and in a state of jungle, whereas they might be cultivated and covered with a thriving population. The hon. member wishes to take away all interest in these lands, to increase the cost of production, and to render the work of settlers profitless. I say the first proposition of the Chief Secretary has not been shaken. Then we are told there is an illimitable field for the settlement of families on the land. There are 400,000 people in the colony—a colony as big as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. The next proposition that the Chief Secretary publishes in his manifesto is this: "It is proved that Europeans cannot engage in work of this class until certain preliminary work has been done." That, I hold, is perfectly true. So far as I know it is the contention of some of those hon. members, and therefore they cannot possibly find fault with that proposition. "In many cases it has not been done." That also is perfectly true, because there appear to be thousands of acres, and no one is doing anything with them. Some of the land is

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in the hands of the State, and the State is doing about as much as a good many others are doing—it is doing nothing. "In many cases it has not been done, because the necessary labour is not here." Does not everyone know that that is perfectly true? Acres of the richest soil, with the most favourable climatic conditions, remain untilled. The Chief Secretary then shows that the necessary labour is not here and cannot for some time be brought here. That is quite evident. In the first place, there would be an objection on the part of the House to import labour, and the immigration system has properly been discontinued. There is not the slightest prospect of the labour coming to this colony to settle on that soil and cultivate it. The hon. member for Barcoo talks about the probable supercession of cane by beet sugar, but that has been contradicted by the Secretary for Lands; but I hope he will remember that even if cane sugar is driven out of the market by beet sugar, it will be in spite of the fact that cane sugar cannot compete with beet sugar without the cane sugar being handicapped. There is a big bonus given on beet sugar. Any one who grows beet can go and lose £4 a ton, and the Government give him £8 a ton. Consequently, he makes £4 a ton. The same thing takes place in America. They get a very big bonus, but it may happen that the bonus will be dropped; it may happen that there will be a European war. The Chief Secretary then says, very properly, that before the labour can be brought here—before the industry can be extended—there is a great danger that this means of employment will to a great extent have disappeared. That is the position at present. It is quite possible that in the future sugar produced from cane will be able to compete with sugar produced from beet. It would be so were it not for the artificial conditions. It may be so if we get what the Europeans and Americans get—if we get a bonus to make up for the use of white labour exclusively. But in the meantime the industry is seriously depressed; mills are continuing to be thrown out of gear, and if the cane cultivation is abandoned, and the country resolves into a wilderness again, it will be as difficult to restore the industry as it was to commence it. In endeavouring to sanction for a time the continuation of the introduction of coloured labour, the Chief Secretary is doing his best to prevent a serious loss to the colony, and to prevent the industry from becoming so restricted that a great loss would fall upon the working men of the colony. Not only would loss fall upon the working men, but future prospects of great magnitude which were visible would be altogether blighted. At a crisis of this sort it is the duty of all who have the good of the colony at heart to do all in their power to avert consequences which may be disastrous. I do not know what pledges the Chief Secretary may have given; but I believe that whatever pledges he has given he will conscientiously adhere to; but this I say: that when a man sees that the consequences of carrying out the pledges he has given will be disastrous to other people, he will be a better man if he will boldly face the position, and say, "I will break my pledge, and trust myself to the intelligence of my constituents," rather than keep his pledge and have the satisfaction of saying, "What a consistent man I am, and you will have to pay for it." As far as I am concerned, in supporting this measure I am doing my duty to my constituents. When mining interests are concerned here we do not interfere in matters with respect to which the mining members are better informed than we are. We do not tell them how they are to work their mines; we do not place restrictions

in the way of working their mines. We assume that in matters with which they are familiar they are better authorities than we are. And it is not too much to say that in matters affecting our own constituencies we are better authorities and better judges than anybody else can be. Whatever reputation may attach to a constituency in which Polynesians are employed, I do not know that the hon. member, Mr. Black, or myself are degraded men or bad men, any more than the representatives of great mining constituencies in the far North, or of agricultural electorates of the South. At any rate, we are far better judges upon matters connected with those Polynesians than persons who come here with very little knowledge of the subject, and who seem to be solely animated with a desire to be consistent. But anybody can be consistent. Consistency is often but another word for stupidity. A man who holds the same opinions from childhood to old age, and never dreams of revising them, may be a consistent man, but he is a man whom I should like to know at a great distance. Seeing the lateness of the hour, and knowing that I shall have plenty of opportunities of dealing with this matter afterwards, I shall content myself now by refuting one more statement of the hon. member for Bundanba. That hon. member referred to a statement made by the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Philp, that the town of Mackay had declined and decreased in population. The hon. member for Bundanba, with that facility for obtaining figures which is a feature of his character, and with that extraordinary inability to draw correct conclusions which is also a feature of his character, discovered that by comparing the census returns of 1880 with those of 1890, there was very little difference, and therefore he said the population had not decreased. If the hon. member was familiar with goldfields, he would know that at one time there was nobody there, that at another time there was 10,000 people on the spot, and that probably a year afterwards the place was again desolate. Would the hon. member infer that there had never been anybody there. I know of my own knowledge that in 1885—there were no census returns that year—when the sugar industry was prosperous, the population of Mackay was far greater than it is now. I grant that the population in 1880 and in 1890 may have been much about the same, but that does not prove that in 1890 Mackay was prosperous. We want to know what was the increase in the population of Mackay during the ten years preceding 1880. Speaking off-hand, I say there was an enormous increase during those ten years. Although the population of Mackay in 1880 and in 1890 may have been about the same, the hon. member loses sight of the fact that in the former year the proportion of adults was far greater. Since that date men had gone away in search of work, leaving their families behind them; and families may go on increasing while the wage-earners decrease. So far as Mackay is concerned, the population, in spite of the development of a few diggings in the neighbourhood, is less by 1,500 than it was when the sugar industry was in a more prosperous state. The hon. member may just as well maintain that because the population of Brisbane was greater in 1890 than it was in 1880, therefore Brisbane is prosperous. It is just as true that Brisbane is prosperous as that Mackay is prosperous. If a man is to be executed to-morrow, however fat he may be, and however well fed he may be, he could not be accounted a prosperous man. It was said by one hon. member that there are 2,000 Polynesians in the colony who cannot get employment. That, of course, was refuted by the Secretary for Lands. I had the figures myself, and I

intended to refute the statement had the hon. gentleman not done so. However, assuming that there were 2,000 Polynesians disengaged, the reason for that—assuming that they had presented themselves for employment—would be very largely because people could not see the future. Is a man, I should like to know, going to engage men to develop the workings of a mine when he knows perfectly well that it will “peter” out in a fortnight? Is a man going to invest large sums of money in conducting a business when he knows that it will come to an end from the want of some material factor in a very short time? Whatever the hon. member may say, I claim to be as well able to judge accurately as the hon. member for Bundanba. I do not think that is an unreasonable claim to make; and whatever he may say, I contend that some of the want of employment in the colony is owing to the want of ability to see the future of the sugar industry. Men will not expend money; men will not put up buildings; men will not even do more than repair and hang on from day to day, if they believe that the end of the industry is close at hand. Now, I shall have opportunities to say more on this subject. I have got a great many of the statements of the hon. member for Bundanba which I am desirous of contradicting; but I shall have an opportunity of talking again, so I shall not trespass upon the good-nature of the House any further. I can assure the House that it is with a very considerable amount of reluctance that I have spoken at this late hour of the evening. Nothing but a sense of duty and a feeling that statements are made in this House from day to day which are not contradicted, and which should be contradicted, have led me to occupy your time, Sir, and that of the House during the last, probably, thirty minutes.

Mr. HOOLAN said: Mr. Speaker,—By this time we are quite lost in a labyrinth of accusations and arguments, of truth and falsehood. Presumably it is useless to offer any further opposition to the Bill, and it is not my intention to do so. It appears to be, as the very wise hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Dalrymple, said useless to utter any more from the side of ignorance. Well, we will keep our ignorance bottled up for the country, and try and infect the people with a little of the ignorance that we bring into this Chamber. We will also give the hon. member for Mackay an opportunity of bestowing some of that precious fount of wisdom which kind nature has so freely bestowed upon him, upon the electors of the colony. We shall see which of us will come off best when the proper time arrives. There is one thing I have learned from the hon. member for Mackay, and that is the source from whence the inspiration that has led the Chief Secretary to issue his famous manifesto has sprung. It has been a mystery to us whence the inspiration came, and what led to the remarkable change of front which the Chief Secretary has proclaimed to the world in his precious manifesto. We now know that it is from this gentleman who claims to be the guardian angel not only of this Assembly but of the Parliament—the hon. member for Mackay. He proclaims the fact himself. I have neither feeling of love nor hatred towards the hon. gentleman, and I really would not impute either proper or improper motives, either wise or unwise motives, to the hon. gentleman. He is a perfect stranger to me; but from what I hear in this House, he sets himself up to be not only the guardian angel of this House, and of all our laws, but also of all the white races and the black races of the colony also. We will accept him as a prophet—as someone inspired, as a seer, as someone endowed with more than human

knowledge, as a man endowed with superhuman powers. We will also accept his teachings, and also, so far as they concern the hon. member for Bundanba, we will accept his statements, and look upon that hon. member as a vile thief, as a notorious rogue who works for evil ends, and who carries his evil opinions in his coat pocket; who carries them home to his wife and family, into the sanctity of his own home, and who distributes them broadcast over the country. We will freely acknowledge that the hon. member for Mackay is the angel of all good. We will also return him our sincerest thanks for putting us on the right track with regard to the Chief Secretary and his manifesto. The hon. gentleman referred to us as the children of Israel who blew their trumpets around the walls of a certain city, and he hopes that the walls will fall and crush us and not those inside the citadel. I do not know whether he takes his inspiration from our personal appearance or not; but I should certainly say that if there is any member who personifies the long lost tribes in this Assembly it is the hon. member himself. Certainly that illustration might very well go home to himself, for we at least can boast that whatever there may be against us—there may be a great deal of the fiend about us, or there may be something inhuman in us, or something diabolical, or even murderous in our aspect—still we proudly claim that there is none of the Jew. If the hon. member for Mackay could say as much, it would be a very proud day for him. We have no sinister motives. If the working men of the colony do not like to believe in our arguments, which are sincere, let them believe the other thing. It is not from motives of cupidity that we take up the stand we do, and try to argue against this black labour. It is from the very highest and purest motives that could actuate any man. The hon. member's arguments presumably are based on the side of gain, whilst our arguments are based on the social side of life. His is, how much the sugar the country can put out yearly; how much can be made out of it; how much will the white man get; how much will the colony get? The whole of the arguments on the other side are based upon £ s. d., whilst on our side it is an argument of flesh and blood. I do not care whether I get jeered at, or ridiculed, or snubbed in this Assembly, or by the Press, for the statement, but I say those who do not like it can lump it. We take that stand, and we intend to rigidly continue that stand, notwithstanding all the hon. member for Mackay may say. Presumably we have got the same title to come here and bray that he has. I do not think we bray any longer than he has done, and I can safely say that our braying is done in a far more honourable and straightforward way. He never commences until the hon. member for Bundanba has finished, whether the hon. gentleman is sick or well. If it is braying on the one side, it is braying on the other. If hon. members on the one side have strong lungs and the powerful jaw that betokens a certain animal with a cross on its back, the other side are the same. To use the expression of the hon. member for Woothakata, "We are all on the job." We are all about the same. Some may have choicer language, or may use keener arguments; but it all amounts to the same thing in the long run. We are all fairly on a level. No one can claim any distinction over the other, except the very modest members who sit back and do no braying at all. I should be very sorry to cast any imputation upon them, for they never trouble the House. I do not intend to enter into any dissertation about the growth of sugar-cane and the mortality

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amongst the kanakas; but I merely wish to assert, without intending to be offensive, that it is worthy of remark that the hon. member for Mackay is constantly waiting until the hon. member for Bundanba has finished speaking, and then he jumps up and attacks him. In the future it is open warfare between us, and we will pay a little more attention to the hon. member for Mackay, and attack him with his own weapons. I wish to refer to a question which has cropped up this evening and last evening concerning a statement made by the hon. member for Barcoo as to wages. I can see that there has been concerted action here, and an attempt to damn him in the eyes of his electors, and to ruin his political life. I told the hon. member to beware of that, and to beware of smiles and congratulations and condolences at the hands of this Assembly. I do not think any one can say I have ever looked for that since I have been here; but I am willing to put up with all the sneers and snubs I may receive. The hon. member for Barcoo made a statement to the effect that there are men in the country willing to work for 10s. or 12s. a week to tide the colony over a bad time, and I am sure there are also. I myself am willing to assist all I can. I am willing to work during the whole of the recess. The hon. member said that, and his statement has been distorted and then telegraphed all over the length and breadth of the colony. It is a good thing that the hon. member has a very sound party with him, amongst whom there are none of the political Jews referred to by the hon. member for Mackay.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. HOOLAN: I have considered the matter and have come to the conclusion that the words were twisted and distorted to injure that hon. member, and we intend to stick to him whatever may happen to him in this Assembly or in the Press. It is very easy to make a slip here, and have it picked up to one's disadvantage. Some exception was taken to my talking so long here yesterday; but I will appeal to you, Sir, as the proper tribunal, whether I transgressed the rules of the House. I always wait patiently, not wishing to speak until everybody else has had a chance, and I waited yesterday without any intention of monopolising the time; but I was met with all sorts of insulting remarks about the "jawbone of an ass" for being so gentle and self-sacrificing. I hope I shall never take up more than the proper time when I have anything to say.

Mr. RYAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I had no intention of speaking to-night, because I feel rather unwell; but as the debate is drawing to a close I think I may as well offer a few remarks. I have exhausted all my knowledge on the sugar question; but I wish to remove a misapprehension that has occurred in connection with a speech I delivered a few nights ago. I was not here when the hon. member for Normanby referred to the subject the hon. member for Burke has dealt with. It makes no difference to me what I may have said, or how my remarks may have been distorted. I think nearly every hon. member clearly understood what I intended to convey. I thought I enunciated my views clearly and lucidly, and I shall now repeat as shortly as I can what I actually meant. The hon. member for Mackay would have clearly understood what I meant when I spoke about the unemployed if he had looked through *Hansard*. I said that if the Government had told the unemployed in the colony that Queensland was on the verge of a national calamity, and

was about to be annihilated, those men would have stepped in to repair the breach. I say, from my personal experience in many parts of Queensland, that those men would have come forward and worked for 10s., 12s., or 15s. per week to tide Queensland over its present difficulties and keep out kanaka labour. The Secretary for Lands promised us a veritable paradise in the sugar-growing districts, provided the federation of the colonies is achieved. The planters have had large numbers of kanakas for a good many years, and I ask why they have not made a paradise before? I fail to see that the promises he makes are going to be fulfilled in such a short time. He says that in two or three years the country will be cut up into small blocks, and that white men will grow the cane and have everything required to make life happy. In fact, there will be no more troubles for them to encounter, and we shall be entering upon a socialistic state, and shall not require even a Parliament. The hon. member for Bowen, Mr. Smith, appeared to speak in favour of the introduction of black labour, but I do not know whether it will do any good to Bowen. I have seen kanakas working on several stations in the Bowen district, but I do not know of any sugar plantations there. The hon. member said that the sugar industry was the gem industry of the colony. He entirely ignores the pastoral industry, and the mining industry. If the sugar industry does fail it does not follow that all the other industries must fail also; and even if the mills were closed, and 25,000 white people were thrown out of employment, I do not see that the country would be in a worse position than it is now, because surely we are not going to be in this position for three years.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What would those people do?

Mr. RYAN: They would have to turn their attention to other industries. They would have to go to work.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: And reduce the rate of wages.

Mr. RYAN: Even so; would it not be far better if the rate of wages were reduced so that the people made Queensland a prosperous country again. It does not follow that wages would continue to be reduced when the country again reached a state of prosperity. The worst of it is that though it is a most common thing for employers to reduce wages, I never yet knew of wages being raised unless the men asked that they should be raised.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: I know of cases.

Mr. RYAN: Perhaps in exceptional instances, but as a general rule they are not raised unless the workmen ask for an increase. Everybody must know that nearly all the strikes and labour disturbances have been caused through reductions in wages. While on this subject I may as well refer to the statement made by several hon. members that plantations on the Richmond and Clarence Rivers are being worked by 400 or 500 kanakas who have gone across from Queensland. I saw a letter from the overseer of Broadwater plantation, owned by the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company. He states that there are 100 white men and two kanakas on that plantation; that one of the kanakas is driving the engine, and the other is an offsider—an assistant; seventy are doing contract work at 10s. a day and found in board and lodging; the weekly men are getting 25s. a week and found, and in the slack times not less than £1 a week and found. Then this gentleman states that these are the general rates paid by the planters and the small sugar-growers on the Clarence and the Richmond; and it is a strange thing to me that

if they can conduct the industry there almost exclusively with white labour, it cannot be done here also. I do not wish it to go forth that I am declaiming against the planters, and saying that they would rather employ black labour than white. I simply say that the only motive that actuates them is the desire to obtain the cheapest labour they can get, and I know that the cheapest labour they can obtain, which is the nearest approach to slavery that I know of, is kanaka labour. It is certain that this Bill will pass, and I hope that the most stringent measures will be adopted to prevent anything like a recurrence of the atrocities that were committed heretofore. I am speaking now almost as if the Bill were passed, because I know that it is inevitable. I think it is our duty to make Queensland not a country to be shunned, but a country to be desired, and to do nothing that will retard federation. I have seen several strong letters in the Southern papers and from the trades and labour councils protesting against the reintroduction of kanaka labour into this colony. I believe a motion was brought forward in one of the Parliaments objecting to Queensland being admitted to the federation when it is brought about, on the ground that we are introducing the slave trade again; but whether that motion was taken any notice of I do not know. As I said before, I think if we all combine to pass a measure which will prevent the recurrence of the atrocities that have taken place previously, we shall do something that at all events will not be a disgrace. I consider that every Government agent, and the captain of every vessel which will be engaged in recruiting should be well known. Taking everything into consideration I think that we who are opposed to this measure must bow to the inevitable, and take our defeat kindly. I have done my best according to my abilities to oppose the Bill, and my friends have done the same. I can sit down with a clear conscience, and in doing so I would simply add that my ambition as an Australian native is to see Australia the home of the white man; and I do not care what may become of the blacks.

Mr. AGNEW said: Mr. Speaker,—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Question, question!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Look at the time; it is past 12 o'clock.

Mr. AGNEW: I like that very much indeed.

The SPEAKER said: If the hon. member proposes to continue the discussion I shall have to leave the chair for a short time. Of course I do not wish to prevent the hon. member from speaking.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Let us go to a division.

Mr. AGNEW: Out of deference to you, Sir, and to the evident wish of the House, I will not proceed with the remarks I had intended to make.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 39.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Cowley, Hodgkinson, Unmack, Crombie, Pattison, Jones, Black, Morehead, Grimes, Annear, Casey, Plunkett, Battersby, Powers, Smith, Adams, Corfield, Lissner, Dunsmore, Philp, Callan, Agnew, Nelson, Dalrymple, Little, Luya, Hamilton, Wimbles, McMaster, Stevenson, Hyne, Tozer, Jessop, Rutledge, Donaldson, Morry, and Morgan.

NOES, 13.

Messrs. Gannon, Cadell, O'Sullivan, Hoolan, Drake, Ryan, Isambert, Salkeld, Glassey, Groom, Macfarlane, Barlow, and Sayers.

PAIRS.

For—Mr. Campbell and Mr. Stephens.  
Against—Mr. Aland and Mr. Mellor.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for a later hour of the day.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-one minutes past 12 o'clock.