

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 9 AUGUST 1892**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 9 August, 1892.

Auditor-General's Report.—Motion for Adjournment: Local financial separation; Supply of *Government Gazette* to local authorities.—Assent to Bills.—Motion for Adjournment: Resumed.—Petition: Case of Henry Walker.—Formal Motion.—Courts of Conciliation Bill: First reading.—Adjournment.—Friday Sitting.—Factors Bill: Second reading.—Queensland Constitution Bill: Second reading; Resumption of debate.—Adjournment.

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

### AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a letter from the Auditor-General, forwarding, in compliance with the Audit Act, the Treasury statements of the receipts and expenditure for the financial year ending on 30th June, 1892, with his report thereon, showing the public debt, and other information in connection with the public accounts.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith), the papers were ordered to be printed.

### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

LOCAL FINANCIAL SEPARATION—SUPPLY OF "GOVERNMENT GAZETTE" TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Mr. PLUNKETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I have a matter of some importance to bring before the House, and I shall conclude with the usual motion. The first question I wish to refer to is that of financial separation in divisional boards. I was under the impression that the different

subdivisions struck their own rates, and got the endowment upon those rates, and that after paying their fair share of the general expenditure the balance of the rates and endowment were to be expended in such subdivisions. I have had occasion to bring the matter under the notice of the Secretary for Works; but there seems to be some doubt as to whether there is such a thing as financial separation. In some boards a majority vote has overridden financial separation, and that has resulted in the rates collected in one subdivision being spent in another subdivision. I shall be glad to hear the opinion of the Secretary for Works upon the question. If there is not financial separation, I hope the hon. gentleman will introduce a Bill to make provision for it. Another matter I wish to refer to is the statement made in the *Courier* of Thursday last that the *Government Gazette* was no longer to be supplied free of charge to the various divisional boards. If that is correct it is a petty economy of the worst sort. No hon. member is more anxious for economy in the working of the Government departments than myself; but there are only 115 divisional boards in the whole colony; and as the cost of supplying a copy of the *Gazette* to each board is only £2 per annum, the saving is not very great. Looking at the immense amount of good work done by the members of the divisional boards, and at the fact that they give their time and even their money and get no return—except abuse, sometimes—I think the Government might continue to supply the *Gazette*. They have been told that in future they will have to pay 10s. a quarter if they wish to have it. I hope the Government will reconsider this. I move the adjournment of the House.

The SECRETARY FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Tozer) said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall take the last matter first. The Government Printer has

made a report to me upon the large number of free copies of the *Gazette* that are issued, and upon inquiry it has been found that they are seldom opened. When any matter appears in the *Gazette* affecting any divisional board, the board is always supplied with several copies. As the number of free copies was very large, I made a rule applicable not only to divisional boards, but to all similar cases, that he should curtail the number. The rule I have laid down is that if a divisional board particularly desires that the *Gazette* should be sent, and makes a request to that effect to the Government Printer, it shall be sent as heretofore; but I do not think there will be many requests. They can get it for nothing if they want it, and I practically have made no fresh rule upon the subject. With regard to financial separation in the various divisional boards and municipalities, that is one of the first subjects that came under my notice after I came into office. No doubt there has been an impression that the Local Government Act provided that, as the accounts for the various subdivisions should be kept separate, there was no power given to the general body to spend those rates in other subdivisions. I have before me a short summary of the matter, giving the opinion of the legal adviser of the Government, which will make it clearer to the House than any remarks of mine, and which will assist the divisional boards meeting in conference. On the 30th September, 1891, this letter was written to the legal adviser of the Government—

“Sir,

“I have the honour by direction to request that you will ask the Solicitor-General to be good enough to favour the Colonial Secretary with his opinion as to what action should be taken in regard to divisional boards in cases where the rates received by one subdivision have been appropriated for expenditure in another subdivision, contrary to the wishes of the ratepayers in the subdivision in which these rates have been raised.

“Although financial separation is supposed to exist between subdivisions, disputes are frequent as to misappropriation of moneys by the stronger subdivision.

“The entire board strikes the rate, but under section 31 of the new Valuation and Rating Act the rates of each subdivision need not be the same, and, under section 34, when not the same, separate accounts must be kept, so that all moneys so received shall be credited to the same accounts as the rates for which they are respectively received.

“The intention is clearly to establish financial separation, but it appears to the Colonial Secretary that it is an intention only. Instead of adhering to the practice prescribed in the Act, divisional boards pay the moneys so received into one banking account, and when occasion for expenditure arises they sometimes take the money of one subdivision as a loan, or more frequently treat what is really a subdivisional or local expenditure as a general expenditure. Two outside subdivisions, represented by three members each, outvote a more populous subdivision, and appropriate its rates for such expenditure as they may think fit, without regard to the possibly more pressing requirements of the subdivision from which these rates have been received.

“The Colonial Secretary is desirous to put a stop to this practice, or to compel a refund of such misappropriations, and would be glad to learn the Solicitor-General's opinion as to whether he could avail himself for such purpose of any of the provisions of the sections of the Divisional Boards Act named in the margin; and, if so, what action should be taken under such provision or provisions.”

The sections referred to in the margin are 129, 230, 232, 235, 236, 237, 239, 240, 253, and 286 of the Divisional Boards Act of 1887. I caused that letter to be written when I first took office, in consequence of the many requests that were made by divisional boards for me to exercise a power of interference with regard to what they alleged was an unfair expenditure in one or other subdivision. The same matter has been prominently brought under my notice recently in connection with the city of Brisbane.

I know nothing of the merits of the case, but it has been pointed out that three subdivisions, which provide only a small portion of the revenue, actually swamp the other subdivisions which raise a considerably larger portion of the funds. I have frequently been invited to consider the question in other cases where similar allegations have been made. The opinion of the law adviser of the Crown on the subject is as follows:—

“In my opinion financial separation is a myth. All that the board is bound to do is to keep a distinct account of the rates levied in the respective subdivisions, but the money goes into one fund (see section 189, which fund is chargeable with all the expenditure of the board (section 190). There is nothing to prevent the boards from applying the moneys raised by general rates in one subdivision to the purposes of other subdivisions. It is otherwise with separate and special rates (see section 42, Valuation Act), which can only be applied for the purposes for which they are levied. The only section that would enable the Colonial Secretary to redress the grievance complained of in section 129, and probably a timely threat of interference under that section would act as a check in the most glaring cases. My own opinion, however, is that, if financial separation is to be anything more than a name, legislation is required.”

I have acted upon that advice in some most glaring cases, and have informed divisional boards that if the funds were taken from one purpose and applied to another, such expenditure would be prohibited by me under the authority conferred by the Act, and it has had the effect in many cases that the expenditure of the funds of one division in another has not been so large. With regard to the question whether further legislation is required, that is a matter to which an answer will probably be made by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government.

Mr. PAUL said: Mr. Speaker,—I remember a case in connection with the Duaringa Divisional Board, about which there was a very long correspondence with the Secretary for Works. Being under the impression that each subdivision had a right to have its own funds expended in the district in which they were raised, I acquiesced in an arrangement, which I thought was a very equitable one, by which a certain tract of country was added to that division. There was a large area of country which never raised any rates, and the Government divided it between the three divisions of Broadsound, Duaringa, and Gogango. The Duaringa board had carried out its work economically and to the satisfaction of the ratepayers, and they at first objected to this addition to their district, as they were afraid it would necessitate a large expenditure to put the roads of that part of the division in order. I give the Secretary for Works credit for the great interest he took in the matter. He thought it was a proper thing to divide Duaringa into three districts, and that each district should have the expenditure of its own funds; and the board were perfectly satisfied with that arrangement, but I am afraid that they will be up in arms again when they see the legal opinion which has just been read to the House.

The SECRETARY FOR WORKS: The Duaringa board are aware of that opinion, and are quite satisfied.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think anything can be added to the information which has been given by the Secretary for Works on this subject. From the very starting of divisional boards the matter mentioned by the hon. member for Albert has been a grievance. Mr. Kellett and myself got elected for two different subdivisions in one of the divisions in our district, with the view of assisting to make the Divisional Boards Act a success, if possible. I was not a week on the board before complaints were made that the strongest subdivision was

robbing the other two subdivisions; and there was nothing in the Act to enforce the keeping of separate accounts for each of the three subdivisions. We had to put the revenue raised by the three subdivisions into one fund; the weaker subdivisions were entirely ignored, and the money was laid out in only one division or in two. There was not very much heard of this for the first year; but the further we went the stronger the feeling became, and at present there is not a division in the colony in which the complaint brought forward by the hon. member for Albert is not raised. As advised by the Crown Law Officers, legislation is certainly required to meet the difficulty; but a Bill of one clause, providing that separate accounts shall be kept for each subdivision, and that the moneys raised in each subdivision should be expended in the subdivisions in which they have been raised, is all that will be required.

Mr. GLASSEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I have taken some interest in local government, and in my opinion the greatest weakness of our present system is the subdivision of the divisions. Certain subdivisions complain that they do not get a fair share of the money raised in the division generally. Suppose a division is divided into three subdivisions, one of them may contain very valuable property, whereas the others may have only very poor property, upon which little or no money could be raised by taxation. The people of the poorer subdivisions may be put to considerable expense in making and repairing roads actually leading to the wealthy subdivisions; and in such a case how is it possible for the poorer subdivisions to raise money to carry out the improvements in the shape of roads and bridges for themselves?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The repairing of public roads is common to the three subdivisions.

Mr. GLASSEY: That may be; but what is now being urged is distinct financial separation for the three subdivisions, and if that is conceded, what is to become of the poor subdivisions in which scarcely any money can be raised? It is, of course, unfair for the members of a divisional board to appropriate money to an excessive extent for a particular subdivision; but that is a matter for the ratepayers to look to, and they can rectify it by the election of impartial men who will hold the balance fairly between subdivision and subdivision. I think the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Albert a great mistake; I would prefer an amendment providing rather for the consolidation of divisions at present subdivided. Inasmuch as the Government subsidise the boards, I think there should be some Government supervision over the expenditure in the various subdivisions. In England boards of health and other public bodies get endowment only upon actual moneys spent on improvements; for moneys simply raised for the purpose of being expended otherwise than on improvements no subsidy is paid. That ought to be the case here; and until a change is made by which the subsidy will be paid only upon money expended upon substantial improvements, the Act will be defective in that respect. I think it would be a calamity to adopt, in addition to the present subdivision of divisions, the amendment for financial separation of subdivisions suggested by the hon. member for Albert and supported by the hon. member for Stanley.

#### ASSENT TO BILLS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Governor, intimating that His Excellency had, on behalf of Her Majesty, assented to the Copyright (Fine Arts) Registration Bill, the Elections Bill, and the Sale of Bread Regulation (Amendment) Bill.

#### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

RESUMED.

Mr. PLUNKETT said: Mr. Speaker,—With the permission of the House, I will withdraw my motion.

Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn.

#### PETITION.

CASE OF HENRY WALKER.

Mr. MACFARLANE presented a petition from Henry Walker, lately a clerk in the Government service, praying for relief in the premises.

Petition read and received.

#### FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By the CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith)—

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision for the establishment of courts of conciliation.

#### COURTS OF CONCILIATION BILL.

FIRST READING.

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

Question put and passed; and second reading made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The CHIEF SECRETARY, in moving—

That this House, at its rising, do adjourn till Thursday next—

said: Mr. Speaker,—I understand the hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Nelson) called "not formal" to this motion. The reason why the House is asked to adjourn until Thursday is because in previous years, when attempts have been made to do work on the day of the opening of the great Brisbane show, those attempts have been unsuccessful. In one or two years we met in the evening, but that was found very unsatisfactory also.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: There never was any work done.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There never was any work done, and for the last two or three years it was not proposed. I think it is a convenient practice to adjourn until Thursday, and we ask the House to sit on Friday instead—that is, if on Thursday it appears necessary to do so.

Mr. NELSON: Only for this one Friday?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. That is to make up for losing to-morrow.

Mr. NELSON: That is all I want to know.

Question put and passed.

#### FRIDAY SITTING.

The CHIEF SECRETARY, in moving—

That on Friday, the 12th of August, Government business do take precedence of all other business—

said: Mr. Speaker,—The motion is merely intended to take Friday instead of to-morrow, but if on Thursday evening it is found not necessary to sit on Friday we shall not do so.

Mr. MURRAY said: Mr. Speaker,—I hope the Chief Secretary will see the necessity of beginning Friday sittings. I am one of those who come here at great inconvenience and expense to myself, and it is a great loss of time for members to come here and only sit for three days in the week. I hope the Chief Secretary will see the absolute necessity, considering the inconvenience members are at present put to, of getting on with business by sitting four nights in the week.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: You would not get home a bit sooner.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—In answer to the hon. member I would say the Government always endeavour to consult the convenience of hon. members generally. It is no particular pleasure to the Government to prolong the session. It is a question when it is desirable to begin Friday sittings. I have been thinking that the time has very nearly arrived, but it is a question of what is most convenient to hon. members. In the course of a week or two at most I expect to ask the House to sit on Fridays.

Question put and passed.

### FACTORS BILL.

#### SECOND READING.

On this Order of the Day being read,

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill proposes, as will be seen by the 15th clause, to repeal sections 8 to 19, inclusive, of the Mercantile Act, and it substitutes for those provisions others of a much simpler nature. Those sections deal with what is called the law of factors; the term is continued because it is a term which has been used for a long time. The sections proposed to be repealed in the Mercantile Act deal with the pledging of bond warrants, bills of lading, and instruments of that sort. Hon. members who are acquainted with mercantile affairs know that it is a very common practice to borrow money on the security of those instruments. Of course the security of the persons who lend the money depends on the title of the persons who pledge the documents. It is a well-known mercantile usage, and a great deal of business is transacted, not only here but in every other city where there are such things, on the security of those instruments. The law in Queensland at present is supposed to be the same as the law in England, or rather as the law was in England up to last year, when an Act, of which this Bill is a transcript, was passed to consolidate and amend that law. The law of England up to that time depended on two Acts, one passed in the sixth year of George IV., and the other in the fifth and sixth of the reign of Her Majesty. The Act passed in the reign of George IV. was never formally adopted in this colony. It may or may not have been in force here by virtue of its existence in the ninth year of George IV., but it was never formally placed on the statute book. In the fifth year of Her Majesty's reign another Act was passed amending that Act very considerably, and correcting various defects which had been found in the working of it, and which had given rise to uncertainty with regard to the security of loans advanced on the security of those documents. When the laws of Queensland were being consolidated in 1867, the commission who undertook that duty introduced into the Mercantile Act the enactments of both those Acts—the Act of George IV. and the Act of Victoria—but evidently lost sight of the fact that the Act of Victoria was passed to amend the Act of George IV., and contained various expressions qualifying that Act. In the arrangement of our Mercantile Act the sections got transposed, and we have sections of the earlier Act printed subsequently to the sections of the later Act, the result being that in some instances the law, instead of being the same as that of England is something quite different, and is in a peculiarly unsatisfactory condition. But even the English law was found capable of amendment in the form of making it less ambiguous and complicated, and last year or the year before they passed another Act consolidating and amending the law. This Bill adopts those improvements, and will have the

effect of removing any doubts which exist as to advances on the security of those documents, and enables us to take advantage of any decisions given by the English courts on the amended Act. I move that the Bill be read a second time.

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

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

### QUEENSLAND CONSTITUTION BILL.

#### SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On this Order of the Day being read,

Mr. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—When this debate took a new phase by the withdrawal of the amendment of the hon. member for Bulloo, it became evident to every hon. member that the question of the second reading of the Bill was one which required the most serious consideration of the House. There is in all politics a rule that we should endeavour to do things before we are driven to do them. It must be apparent to everyone that this question of the autonomy of the Northern and Central portions of the colony is one of those questions which should not be got rid of by delay or by side issues. I think that, reflecting on the debates which took place last year, and those which took place before I had the pleasure of a seat in the House, the members representing the Northern part of the colony made a very considerable concession and advance towards the South when they consented to abandon their right, or supposed right, to regulate the employment of alien labour in the Northern part of the colony, and to give up control of the tariffs. This was, beyond doubt, a concession of a very important character, and a decided advance towards the contention of Southern members, who cannot help feeling that territorial separation will be a serious evil to the colony, especially at the present time. At this time, when we have to meet difficulties of all kinds, and when our best efforts are required to meet those difficulties, the separation of the colony into two parts by territorial separation would be a serious matter, and one which would not conduce to the well-being of either part. This matter might be allowed to stand over in view of the near approach of the general election. Many members find themselves in the position that they cannot vote for the second reading of this Bill, because it affirms the principle of the division of the colony into three parts, with which they do not agree; and they also think that the House would be much stronger in dealing with the question if the matter were fairly and fully put before the constituencies. A settlement upon that basis would be more likely to be strong and amicable, and hopes are not extinct in my mind that by some process this question may remain over until the general election has taken place. I cannot give the Chief Secretary more credit than I gave him on Thursday last for the manly consistency he has exhibited in introducing this Bill; but, at the same time, I should be very glad if he could see his way to allow this question to lie quiet until the general election, when this question will probably be put before the constituencies by everyone who asks for their suffrages. It is not at all necessary that we should have this enormous array of officers in order to form a scheme which would answer every purpose. After all, the best of anything is its efficiency for the purpose for which it is created or made. Many persons arrive at conclusions without any power of arguing them out, or without any mathematical knowledge; but, still, it is quite possible that a scheme may be devised which

would prove efficacious, without creating the enormous multiplication of members of Parliament and officials which has been referred to. I doubt very much whether a Southern legislature is required at all. The State district of Columbia is governed by the Federal authorities of the United States of America, and I see no reason why the House of Representatives should not act in the same way as regards the Southern province. If it could be worked out so as to avoid any collision by the same members having to act in both capacities, it is open to question whether there is any necessity for a Southern legislature. The federal capital might not be in Brisbane, but there would be nothing to prevent the Southern members in the House of Representatives meeting in Brisbane for the purpose of discharging the functions of a Southern legislature. The only question is whether it would be possible for members acting in both capacities to guard the two distinct interests. There is no doubt that, in the event of autonomy being given to the North, the Northern legislature would have to sit in the Northern capital, wherever that might be. I shall only detain the House five minutes whilst I throw out some hints which have occurred to me from reading the history of analogous legislatures in different parts of the world. The scheme of the Bill is that the House of Representatives shall contain one member for every 10,000 of the population. If the colony were divided into two by a line from Cape Palmerston, that would give thirty-three members to the Southern province and eight to the Northern province, or forty-one in all. Surely fifty members would be sufficient for a provincial Southern legislature, and twenty-five members would be sufficient for the Northern legislature sitting in the Northern capital. Then comes the question of the Senate, and the question as to what is to be done with the hon. gentlemen sitting at the other end of the building. In the Bill it is proposed that they are to be put in the position of an Upper House or Legislative Council for the province of South Queensland, thereby introducing a want of symmetry into the Bill by giving the Southern division a Legislative Council, which neither of the others is to have.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: So has Ontario; none of the other provinces have.

Mr. BARLOW: That is true, and that may have arisen from causes very similar to those which we are now debating. At any rate, hon. members must agree that there is a want of symmetry in the matter, and that there might be a difficulty in getting the Bill through the Legislative Council if some such provision were not made, although the Chief Secretary has laid down the law that an Act of the Imperial legislature would override the necessity for a two-thirds majority in the Legislative Council as provided for by the 9th section of the Constitution Act.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman misunderstands me.

Mr. BARLOW: I speak subject to correction; but I understood the hon. gentleman to state that if the Imperial Parliament affirmed a Bill passed by simple majorities in both Houses, that would get rid of the necessity for the two-thirds majority required in the Legislative Council before an alteration can be made in the Constitution of that House.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker.—The hon. gentleman will pardon me. What I said was that I did not think this legislature had power, by any majority, to pass a Bill such as this without an Enabling Act of the Imperial Parliament. An Act of the Imperial legislature would be necessary to authorise Her

Majesty to assent to this Bill. I do not think a two-thirds majority here has anything to do with the subject.

Mr. BARLOW: The late Hon. Mr. Macrossan pointed out that when a radical change is proposed to be made in the Constitution of the Legislative Council, the Constitution Act provides that a Bill for that purpose shall be passed—at any rate in that House—by a two-thirds majority.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This does not change it—it abolishes it.

Mr. BARLOW: I have stated what was the opinion of the late Hon. Mr. Macrossan.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He used that argument, but I did not accept it.

Mr. BARLOW: Mr. Macrossan pointed out that a two-thirds majority was necessary to agree to any change in the Constitution of the Legislative Council, although such a necessity does not exist in regard to the Constitution of this House; and if those hon. gentlemen were asked to efface themselves there would be a difficulty in obtaining the statutory majority. It appears to me that the same thing might occur with respect to a simple majority, and, therefore, any variation of the scheme which would get over that difficulty would be an exceedingly good one. What is there to prevent the North and the South returning ten senators each—making twenty in all—to sit with the present Legislative Council as the Senate for the whole dominion; and that in financial matters under the 65th section of this proposed Constitution they should sit by themselves, appointing a chairman from time to time from amongst themselves? There could be no great difficulty in that, and there are absolute precedents in several deliberative bodies in the world which have adopted that course. The opinion and advice of the hon. gentlemen at the other end of this building might be very valuable upon many matters, although it might be neither expedient nor constitutional that they should interfere with financial questions. As regards the 65th section of the proposed Bill, which embodies the principle of the Federal Constitution Bill, there can be nothing more certain than that a federal Senate without any power whatever in money matters would be a mere anomaly. It would throw all the representation into the more numerous House; and all the financial power, which is the very foundation of government, would be thrown into the hands of the House returned by the greatest number of electors. In my opinion the scheme proposed in that section is an exceedingly wise and good one. What may happen now? Suppose that on some future occasion, when the *personnel* of this House is entirely changed, the House does something outrageous and tacks on some improper item to an Appropriation Act, as was done in Victoria, that goes to the other House, and that House must take the responsibility of rejecting that Bill and throwing the whole machinery of the Government into disorder. It is all nonsense to talk about broken heads and flaming houses, as they did in Victoria, when they were passing through a period of political turmoil, of which the people there have become thoroughly ashamed. If this 65th section were adopted, the result would be that the revising Chamber would send back a temperate and properly worded request to the House to reconsider the items which were considered objectionable. If after that the representative House declined to entertain these moderate proposals, and the Bill were sent back to the Council and were rejected, the consequences would not lie upon that House. I say, in answer to some arguments raised in the course of the debate, that the power of suggestion

in the revising Chamber is a real advantage to financial legislation. That that power should be exercised by nominees is an objection; but it may be said, Is the nominee House to go on for ever? Not at all. We have an analogy in the case of the Irish peerage, which body is kept at a certain number. I am not quite sure, but I think Her Majesty has power to create only one Irish peerage in proportion to every three that become extinct. In the same manner, by refraining from nomination until the number is reduced below twenty, and then only nominating members to keep it up to twenty—providing that in the case of this nomination there can be no vested right to the seat and no right to vote upon any Bill which purported to affect their position—we may by-and-by get a purely elective Senate for the whole federation. These are only some suggestions. I do not think it is at all necessary, if the colony is split up into two provinces, to have lieutenant-governors. What is the necessity for having officers to keep up a little court? We would have two vice-regal courts in Brisbane, and one in the North.

Mr. MURRAY: And one at Gladstone.

Mr. BARLOW: Gladstone is a very nice place; but I am now only dealing with two provinces, and I shall be very glad to explain to the hon. gentleman why I do so. These vice-regal courts are hardly necessary; and, therefore, why should not these officers take less pretentious titles and smaller salaries? Why not call them superintendents? That answered very well in New Zealand where they did not call the local officers lieutenant-governors, or "excellencies," or "eminencies," or anything of that sort; but simply superintendents of provinces. Officers of that type, at salaries of £1,000 a year, would be quite sufficient. They might be appointed by the Governor of Queensland, and in order to get a little more work out of them they should act, as is the case in other countries, as president of the local legislature without any vote, but with a right of addressing the legislature. I know all these things appear to be terribly wrong, looked at from the view of what we term "responsible" government; but they are exceedingly cheap ways of getting over the difficulty. I have no doubt it is considered a terrible thing that an executive officer should sit in the legislature; but I do not see why they should not act as presidents, and it would not hurt to make them clerks of Parliaments too. I do not see anything difficult or degrading to a gentleman in that position to take the minutes of the local legislature. In all these colonies we have got into the habit of an extraordinary and unwarranted expenditure. We have got into that habit from the time of the gold discoveries, and if I had anything to do with it I should prefer that constant changes of provincial Ministries should be avoided. Nothing militated so much against the success of responsible government in New South Wales as the continual changes of Ministry. The same thing occurred in Victoria, and, although, perhaps, not to the same extent, in Queensland. There has never been any continuity of purpose. In South Australia the average life of a Ministry is eleven and a-half months.

Mr. DONALDSON: They do not go before their constituents for re-election.

Mr. BARLOW: I am not sure that it is necessary to do that, because if the constituencies send men to Parliament they send possible Ministers. When there have been flagrant breaches of trust it may be necessary; but those actions always come home to roost, and people cannot commit them without eventually suffering for it. Therefore, I do not see that there is so much

wrapped up in this question of going to their constituents; and if the provincial Governments were to change their Ministries every eleven and a-half months, that would be worse than our present experience with regard to administration. There is some continuity now, but there would be very little with eleven months Ministries. While I admire the perfect symmetry of the Bill, and the ability with which it has been drawn, I think it might be worth while to consider something approaching the Swiss system, and allow the Ministries to be elected by the local legislatures for a short period—say two years. That would enable some continuity of purpose to be carried out, and prevent the perpetual scramble for office which was the curse of responsible government in the early days of New South Wales. I remember that in the early days of responsible government in New South Wales, as soon as a Ministry were in office—no matter what measures were brought forward—traps and snares were laid to put them out again.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: When is that going to be altered?

Mr. BARLOW: When people get more experience of responsible government; when they learn that holding office is not the sweetest and finest thing in the world, and when they understand that there are difficulties in the way of governing a country which can only be appreciated by those who have served as Ministers, and those who have served in a humbler way as members. People outside are apt to think it is much easier to govern a country than it really is. I have given these few hints about what I think are some wants in the Bill. This question must be faced in some way, and I should prefer it if I could be allowed to go to my constituents and submit to them the amendment I am going to move. I dare say that the particular forms and usages of Parliament may render a certain course necessary on the part of the gentlemen who sit on the Treasury benches; but for my part I firmly believe that the time has come when we should avoid extremes and endeavour to make a reasonable and moderate compromise. I therefore, without taking up any more time, beg to move that all the words after the word "that" be omitted, with the view of inserting in their place the words "this House approves of the division of the colony into two provinces on the basis of this Bill."

Mr. MURRAY said: Mr. Speaker,—I trust I am not guilty of any breach of parliamentary etiquette in rising at this stage to protest against this amendment. I do so because I feel that I have a very important duty to discharge to my constituents, and to the people of Central Queensland generally. This question is of vital importance to the people of Central Queensland, and because I wish to see that their interests are duly respected, and that there shall be no breach of faith or broken pledges if I can possibly help it, therefore I rise to oppose this amendment. The Chief Secretary in introducing the Bill dwelt on the grandeur and magnitude of his scheme, and implored hon. members to rise to the occasion and deal with the matter in a fair and impartial manner. He quoted at considerable length from the replies of the Secretary of State to the gentlemen who formed the delegation from the people of Central Queensland to lay their claims for separation before the Imperial authorities, to show this House that the proposed division of the colony into three provinces demanded their earnest and impartial consideration. He also implored hon. members not to use their numerical strength in opposing this important measure—a numerical strength which he said they possessed, but which he

cautioned them against using, as opposed to the interests of those who were so numerically weak in this House that they were unable to protect their own interests—provided that gentlemen representing Southern constituencies could not look upon this as a question that demanded their liberal and impartial consideration. If it was necessary for the hon. gentleman to appeal to hon. members not to use that numerical strength against the interests of Northern and Central Queensland, how much more necessary is it now for me to appeal to hon. members when he invites the Southern and Northern members to combine as against the rights and privileges of Central Queensland? I feel so strongly on this subject that it is difficult for me to contain my feelings, and I hope the House will bear with me a little while I try to place the claims of the people of Central Queensland impartially before this House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MURRAY: This is a privilege that every Government that has sat in this House for the last ten years at least has pledged itself to confer on the people of Central Queensland. They were on the tip-toe of expectation of these hopes being realised, trusting to the consistency and honour of the Chief Secretary to see that their interests were protected in this place; but here we are, at the most inopportune time for us, threatened with the combined forces of this House as against the interests of those people, and I would like to point out how it is that this is an inopportune time to consider this question in an impartial way. Our ranks as members of Central Queensland are disorganised and broken in every direction. Our two leaders, who if they were here would be able to speak with some effect against this detestable job, are absent. The hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Archer, is at this moment pressing our claims on the Imperial Government for our liberty, and for that right of self-government which this Parliament and the people of Southern Queensland now enjoy.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He is a rebel to the colony in doing that.

Mr. MURRAY: Were the early pioneers of the colony who went to the Imperial Government on the self-same mission—who went as against the Parliament of New South Wales, in a similar way we are doing now—were those gentlemen rebels to their country? I say that they were the benefactors of the country, and that without such men Australia would have been a paltry country, consisting of one State only. It is such men who, as settlement has spread, and people have gone out into the wilderness and made it productive, have seen the necessity of giving those people some reward for their toil, by conferring upon them the privileges of self-government which we now enjoy. The Chief Secretary has had many years to consider this question in all its details, and why did he not discover last year, when he introduced a series of resolutions affirming the desirableness of dividing the colony into the three provinces, that two provinces were preferable to three?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not say so now. I think three would be preferable to two.

Mr. MURRAY: I will just read what the hon. gentleman said on this question last year, and hon. members can see how it agrees with what the hon. gentleman has said in the course of this debate. Speaking on the amendment moved by the hon. member for Bulloo, Mr. Donaldson, affirming that the time was inopportune for the division of the colony into three provinces, the hon. gentleman admitted that the

question was somewhat complicated by the inclusion of the Central district in the scheme. Last year the hon. gentleman said—

“We propose that the colony shall be divided into three provinces, and not into two only. There will certainly be the incidental advantage that it will be more convenient for the practical working of the general Parliament of Queensland that there should be three provinces rather than two, because if there were only two provinces a different scheme of Government would have to be adopted, and one rather difficult to work.”

Has the hon. gentleman shown the House any reason for going back on that opinion?

Mr. McMASTER: He has not gone back on that opinion.

Mr. MURRAY: The hon. gentleman has gone back on it so far that he now says that the question is complicated by the inclusion of the Central district.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I said that last year also.

Mr. MURRAY: The hon. gentleman suggested last year that the question would be complicated if the Central district were not included—if there were less than three provinces. Now, as the leader of the Government, and as a statesman whose career has been watched with the utmost interest by all the colonies, and I may say by the world, I would ask him whether it is not time that he was able to form some definite opinion on a subject of this description? He has had ample opportunity in the past of finding out by the test of time that the opinions he previously expressed have turned out to be erroneous; and I really think from that experience he should be able to come forward now with some solid opinions, which will stand the test of time and criticism. It is absolutely necessary that a gentleman who takes upon himself to guide the destinies of a country should be able to form some opinion upon every subject he brings forward in the House, and not be carried about by every little influence brought to bear upon him. I have not been idle since this debate commenced; both my eyes and ears have been open to what has been going on, and I see that there is a conspiracy to deprive the people of Central Queensland of those rights to which they are justly entitled. We have as leading actor in this business the hon. member for Balonne, Mr. Morehead; the next in succession is the Chief Secretary; and the hon. member for Bulimba, Mr. Dickson, is also playing an important part. The hon. member for Balonne rises from his seat with the solemnity, gravity, and dignity of a statesman, and reads extracts from the debate of last year on the same question, pointing out that the Chief Secretary did not on that occasion regard it as a Government or party measure, and inferring from that that there is no necessity to consider it as a party measure now. Thus he points out to the hon. gentleman a royal road by which he may descend from the lofty and dignified position he had taken up in introducing the Bill down to that of a mere trickster. I ask the hon. gentleman if he is going to allow himself to be drawn into this business? It was rather amusing to me to observe what was going on as each little scene succeeded another. There was a rush behind the scenes to exchange congratulations on past successes, and then a return to the House to take up a position of indignant opposition to one another, on the understanding that the Bill would be accepted as for two provinces only. That is the way the game has been played. The self-interest of Southern Queensland is directly opposed to granting to the Central district those privileges that we think it is entitled to. When an hon. member opposes this proposal he should not simply say that two provinces are better than three; if he wishes to eliminate

Central Queensland from the operation of this Bill, his first duty is to show that we have no case; but that has not been done. Our case is already made out, and it is recognised by the Secretary of State for the Colonies as one that is far in advance of the case that Queensland had when she got separation. There has not been the slightest attempt to prove that our case is not a good one, because taking it all round it has been shown to be a good case, and it is on all fours with that of the North. I now challenge the Chief Secretary to rise at any time and point out a single particular in which our case is not as good as that of the North, or to show why, if separation of any description is necessary for the North, it is not equally necessary in the interests of Central Queensland. There is no member in this House more competent to explain the feeling of the people of Central Queensland on this matter than I am, and I say they are unanimous on the point throughout the length and breadth of Central Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Nonsense!

Mr. MURRAY: I say, without the slightest fear of contradiction, that the people of Central Queensland are united and unanimous in their desire for separation of some description.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: Look at the two meetings at the end of the Central line.

Mr. MURRAY: I have had telegrams from every centre of population in the district where large public meetings have been held, and in every case an expression of public opinion has been given entirely in favour of some sort of separation for the Central district. I have had two telegrams from the largest centres of population in the Barcoo electorate—Isisford and Blackall—represented by Mr. Ryan, who has told us that the people there are opposed to the separation of Central Queensland. At a public meeting held in Blackall—

Mr. RYAN: How many attended?

Mr. MURRAY: I do not know.

Mr. RYAN: A few storekeepers and Rockhampton property owners.

Mr. MURRAY: Resolutions were carried at that meeting in favour of granting local autonomy to the Central district. I saw by the papers that a meeting was held at Longreach at which some discussion on the subject existed; but I notice that the leading characters there were some labour leaders, like Mr. Kewley and others I know to be secretaries of the labour organisations of that district. That was where the little discussion cropped up, as it always does wherever those people present themselves at public meetings. I have a telegram from the residents of Muttaborra, the chief centre of population in the Mitchell district, which says—

“At the largest meeting of Muttaborra residents ever held C. N. Cush in the chair it was unanimously resolved that the statement made by Mr. Crombie in the House as to having ascertained the views of the people in his constituency re separation was incorrect as regards Muttaborra he not having spoken to anyone on the subject whilst recently here and the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

“That this meeting of the residents of Muttaborra are in favour of territorial separation and the management of their own affairs and that they have not authorised the opinion expressed by Mr. Crombie in his speech in the Legislative Assembly nor have they been consulted by him on the matter.”

This telegram is signed, on behalf of the residents, by C. R. Klugh, C. A. Maskell, John Kennedy, F. McCaig, and J. Toole. That is the opinion of the people of Muttaborra; and I have no doubt the House and the country have some knowledge of the indignation felt in Rockhampton when the news of this amendment

was made known. I have no desire to waste much more of the time of the House or of my own time in conducting this unequal conflict in this House, and I now use the words of the Chief Secretary and ask hon. gentlemen of this Chamber to rise to the occasion and refrain from using their combined numerical strength against the recognised right of the people of Central Queensland, a right which has been acknowledged and the granting of which has been promised by every Government that has sat here for the last ten years. I hope hon. members will now recognise that right, and that they will not be guilty of lending a hand to so gross and so serious a transaction as the carrying into effect of this amendment. If this amendment is carried, it is just possible that this may be the last time my voice will be heard within the walls of this Chamber.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. MURRAY: I say it is just possible, and I suppose it does not matter very much whether it will be so or not.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: You never played a better card for your re-election

Mr. MURRAY: I desire to enter my emphatic protest, and to have it deeply impressed upon the records of this House as a lasting monument to the discredit of every member of this Assembly who will lend his aid to the passing of this amendment. I see no necessity for wasting my time—as it is nothing but a waste of time—because I suppose there are not more than four of us from the Central districts who will speak up here for the rights of Central Queensland. There is no necessity for wasting time here fighting an unequal battle of this description, and I shall return to the district whence I came, and there tell the story of this detestable business. Hon. gentlemen may laugh, but they have no idea of the strength, energy, and ability of the people of Central Queensland to defend their rights. I therefore again appeal to hon. members, in the words of the Chief Secretary himself, not to use their combined numerical strength in supporting this amendment. There is no question about it that, if this amendment is carried, I will not be answerable for what will take place in the Central district.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. MURRAY: I am glad to find that I afford hon. members some amusement, but they must not forget that I am speaking with a full knowledge of what I am speaking about, and with a full knowledge that one of the grossest wrongs ever perpetrated upon a free people will be done to the people of Central Queensland if this amendment is carried. Make no mistake about that. If the Chief Secretary thinks that by passing this amendment the question of separation is settled, he never made a greater mistake in his life. It will be more alive than it ever was before. I am not saying this without knowing what I am talking about. I have made it my business to know the feeling of the people of Central Queensland; and, moreover, I understand that when this colony received its charter of independence, the jurisdiction did not extend beyond the settled portion of the country. I do not think the great tracts of the unknown North were under the jurisdiction of the then inhabitants. They simply held it upon trust until the necessities of the people required self-government, and I say that the people of Central and North Queensland have arrived at maturity, at an age when they can claim from this House—and if they cannot get it here, from the Imperial Government—the same

privileges and rights as were granted to Queensland at the time of its separation from New South Wales, and only granted to it, too, after a fight of the same kind that we are having now. It is only a fitting and proper reward for people who have devoted their whole lives to the settlement of a new territory, as we have done. I have spent the whole of my life there in battling with the elements and helping to bring the territory into subjection, and making it productive. We have made it so. We have made it one of the richest provinces of the empire; and in the face of that it is rather amusing to see a gentleman like the hon. member for Bulimba, Mr. Dickson, rising from his seat and speaking as he has done—a gentleman who has never been beyond the environs of Brisbane. As a business man he knows nothing whatever of the troubles and trials we have had in our district, but he has grown sleek and fat upon our industries. Of course, I understand that he and others with him are quite prepared to keep us in our present position; I know we are very useful to him, but we intend to be useful to ourselves in the future. We are not going to waste our energies and send the products of our labour down here to be expended in the riotous living and extravagance of the South.

Mr. CROMBIE said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman who has just sat down says that he will not be responsible for what the Central district will do if Central Queensland is eliminated from the Bill. Judging from the hon. gentleman's speech, I do not think he would be responsible for himself. Judging also from what has taken place lately in Rockhampton, which has done nobody any harm, or the cause any good, I doubt very much whether the people of Rockhampton would be responsible for their actions. I have nothing particular to say beyond what I said before. Some telegrams have come down from the Central district—one especially from Isisford. I know the history of that telegram perfectly well. The gentleman who called the meeting was, I understand, a shareholder in the Rockhampton *Bulletin*. I have known him for many years, and he is a decent man, but he is tarred with the Rockhampton brush. Another telegram came from Blackall. I know perfectly well who got up that meeting. It was a partner of G. S. Curtis, the man who has got Rockhampton by the nose. That is the history of that telegram. Another one came from Longreach. The people there, as I have said previously, are not in favour of separation. Another telegram came from Muttaborra, and the chairman of the meeting was a man named Klugh. That man, when I was there, told me that this was simply a Rockhampton movement; but he is a man in rather peculiar circumstances, and perhaps he is liable to be controlled by other people. That was his opinion when I was up there only six weeks ago. I know one of the other men who sent the telegram, and he has just got to do what this man Klugh tells him. I know the circumstances perfectly. I think those are all the telegrams the hon. gentleman mentioned. I have received one to-day from the mayor of Rockhampton; I don't know him from Adam, but he probably is a very decent man. He is very anxious for separation, but he is only a Rockhampton man after all. I was invited three or four years ago to join the Central Separation League, and I wrote back stating that I approved more of dividing the colony into two—the Central and Northern divisions going together and making one grand colony of the North. In reply I got an insulting letter from the secretary of the Central Separation League, Mr. Curtis. I dropped it at that, and did not say anything more about it. The petition that we have heard so much

about was got up and signed two or three years ago; but they have never taken into consideration that the people's minds have altered since. I know when a deputation went from the Central Separation League to Barcaldine, they got a very bad reception there, and the hon. member for Normanby was one of them.

Mr. MURRAY: I considered it a very good reception.

Mr. CROMBIE: The people of Barcaldine thought he had a very hot reception, and the people of the Central district thought so also. But the fact is, at that time the people had not thought the matter over at all, and a great many have never thought about it since. It seems to me the league has taken the 9,000 names on that petition as something to go by, and think they have got the unanimous feeling of the district, whereas they have nothing of the sort. The people have altered their minds altogether from one end of the district to the other. I saw a Rockhampton man to-day, who told me he was not in favour of separation. I also saw three or four men from the Central district on the Exhibition grounds to-day—men with large properties in the district—and they are all dead against separation. I could not get up meetings very well, because I have no interest in getting them up, and besides it is very hard to get the people together, except a few living in the townships, and you can get them to say and do anything you like—the great bulk of them. I know what the feeling is all round the stations—the owners, managers, overseers, and the men themselves. With regard to Rockhampton, I do not wonder at the people there wanting Central separation. It would be a very good thing for Rockhampton, but a very bad thing for the district.

Mr. MURRAY: You did not think so last year.

Mr. CROMBIE: I did think so.

Mr. MURRAY: You did not say so.

Mr. CROMBIE: I am very glad the hon. member for Ipswich has moved the amendment, and I shall support it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I have only a very few words to say on this question. I want to know what is coming over the Chief Secretary that he should introduce useless Bills of this sort. People do not know what to make of him; they think it would pay the colony better to give the hon. gentleman half a million of money and send him to Fiji or somewhere else out of the colony. If he would take my advice, he would withdraw the Bill and let us get on with something useful to the colony. Nobody has asked for this Bill; the hon. gentleman has introduced it entirely on his own motion. I have telegrams in my pocket stating that the North will have none of this Bill. They will not look at it. They will either have separation or nothing; and if it is forced on them, they will make it, as the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black, very sensibly said, a stepping-stone to territorial separation. They look upon this plan as a sort of enlarged divisional board, and nothing else. Fancy all these Governors, and Lieutenant-Governors, and Legislatures! In one word, I may tell the hon. member that this Bill is the laughing-stock of the colony, and if he will take my advice he will withdraw it without any further delay.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—I did not intend to speak so early on this amendment—knowing that I should only have one opportunity of replying—because I anticipated hearing arguments from other hon. members representing the Central district besides

the hon. member for Normanby, and I should like to have been satisfied that that hon. member expressed the opinion of a strong majority—or, at any rate, a large number—of the people of that district as represented by their members here. I certainly am surprised that the eloquent appeal of the hon. member has not been supported by any of his co-members for the Central district. I do not intend to support the amendment. I wish to make perfectly clear the position the Government take up in this matter, and also to correct some errors which the hon. member for Normanby fell into. He says that this proposal has been promised to the Central district for ten years. That is entirely wrong. It was not until the last three years that anything was heard of the movement for Central separation, and that followed upon the Northern separation movement. The reason for that was, if I recollect rightly, that when the Northern part of the colony became very active in advocating separation, the people in the Central district began to be afraid that they would no longer have their assistance to obtain consideration for themselves. That was one of the reasons. Other reasons were, of course, given which it is not necessary to refer to, for supporting the division of the colony into three provinces. I said last year that I believed it would be more convenient to work a federation of three provinces than one or two, and I am of that opinion still. But the first thing we have to consider—those of us who believe in it—is to maintain the unity of the colony and to prevent any fiscal strife amongst ourselves. Let us work out our own destiny together in our own way. The Government, feeling that the time has come when the question must be faced, have brought in a scheme which they honestly believe to be the best way of dealing with it. If the House is of opinion that the scheme contained in the Bill is not the best way of dealing with the question, but that the principle of it is good, it is, I think, the duty of the Government to still endeavour to give effect to their proposals—which are framed to preserve a united colony—and to modify them in such a manner as the House thinks ought to be done. It is of no use to say that the Government are acting dishonestly or improperly if they cannot carry all that they want. The Government are not the House, nor can they dictate to the House what they shall do in the matter. This is a matter on which the House should form its own opinion. This, as I have said all along, is not a question of party politics. The matter has been remitted to us, and the question is: Shall we deal with it or shall we not? I think, as I have so often said before, that the time has come when we should deal with it in some way or other. The hon. member for Ipswich proposes to ask the House to approve of the division of the colony into two provinces, and if a majority of the House agrees to that the majority must prevail. I do not see that any injustice is done to any one part of the colony by that means. I confess I think stronger arguments might have been used by the members for the Central district. Although the Government are satisfied that it is a desirable thing to have three provinces, I have heard very few arguments used by members of the Central district in support of that view. The hon. member for Normanby tells us that if a Central province is not created it will give rise to all sorts of things, and that he will not be responsible for the consequences if their arguments are not accepted. Let them give us figures and arguments, which they have not done yet, instead of declamation of this sort.

Mr. MURRAY: They will all be found in the petition sent home to the Imperial Government.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think those arguments are anything like sufficient. It may be vanity, but I imagine I gave much sounder arguments myself last week in moving the second reading of the Bill for the creation of a Central province. If the hon. member desires to convince the House that the people of the Central district have a claim for separation, it is his duty, and that of other members for the district, to show not only that they can carry on their own local affairs better as a separate province, but also to point out any disadvantage they may suffer if they do not obtain that which is to be given to the Northern part of the colony.

Mr. MURRAY: We have done all that the North has done.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The two cases are not at all the same. I think myself the arguments are sufficient, but I am not at all surprised that other hon. members do not think so, because so little has been said about them. The hon. member for Ipswich suggested various amendments which might be made in the Bill, making it applicable to two provinces instead of three, but the time has not arrived yet to discuss that matter. I do not propose to say anything with respect to the various suggestions of the hon. member, except to assure him that a good many of them have been under our consideration already. It is impossible to deal with a subject like this, affecting the Constitution, in a satisfactory manner without making yourself acquainted with what has been done elsewhere. The hon. member for Stanley advises the Government to withdraw the Bill. The hon. member has the same advice to give with respect to every Bill. What the hon. member means is that he would like to see me withdraw myself from this House, and not enter it any more. The hon. member will not be satisfied until that happens; but, for all that, it is quite possible that he may withdraw himself before I do. At any rate, I am not going to withdraw in obedience to the hon. gentleman's wishes. I venture to say that the hon. gentlemen has not read the Bill, because he has too much sense to have spoken of it in the way he has if he had read it. I hope the House will consider this matter fairly and fully, and that hon. members will give that consideration to the Central district which it deserves, giving full weight to the arguments of the representatives of that district. If they are of opinion that they cannot vote for the division of the colony into three provinces, then they are bound to say so. If, on the other hand, they are of opinion that they agree with the arguments in favour of the establishment of three provinces, then they can support it. But a vote which will determine whether we are to present a united front to the rest of the world ought not to depend upon whether hon. members think there should be two or three provinces. The one question is very much larger than the other. The question whether there should be two or three provinces, compared with the main question of keeping the colony one and united, seems to me very much like the quarrelling which used to take place in the history of the early Christian church about doctrines—quarrelling of such a nature that one now can scarcely understand how sane people ever engaged in them. I hope hon. members will consider this question, and that they will not, by any action they may take, give a handle to those persons who desire to see this colony dismembered, and its progress seriously affected for many years to come. One other thing I wish to say. Some people are endeavouring to frighten Southern members by saying that the Bill will lead to territorial separation. Well, if in the fulness of time it turns out that separation is the best

thing, then separation will be brought about, and nothing we can do will stop it. But, at the same time, I believe that territorial separation is not the best thing—that it is a very evil thing; and it is, therefore, our duty to do all we can to meet the just requirements of the people without incurring the disadvantages of that particular mode of dealing with the question. That is the reason the Government have brought in this Bill. This is the third time I have spoken on the subject, and I have really nothing to add to what I have already said.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I have never got very excited over the Bill or very enthusiastic over it either; nor was I over the resolutions to the same effect which were brought in last year. I know the hon. member for Normanby pretends to be very enthusiastic over this.

Mr. MURRAY: Pretends!

Mr. STEVENSON: I know he is very enthusiastic over Central separation. I shall console the hon. gentleman by telling him that I mean to assist him in opposing the amendment, because I do not believe in tricks being played either one way or the other. I have told the hon. member from first to last that the Chief Secretary was not in earnest about including the Central district in the Bill; and I have said so to the Chief Secretary in this House. I do not believe that either the Northern or the Central members are sincere in regard to the passing of the Bill, except in the light of a stepping-stone to territorial separation. That is the reason why I have taken such a half-hearted stand in regard to the Bill. I knew that if the Central and Northern members got this Bill passed it would simply be an excuse to go further, and the hon. member for Mackay admitted that. I do not believe in being fooled by Rockhampton, because Rockhampton is at the present moment trying to rule the Central district. Where is the desire of the Central members for this Bill, or their belief in it, when we remember that there are now two Central delegates in England trying to induce Lord Knutsford to grant territorial separation? Does that show any earnestness in the Central district in passing the Bill? Had I seen any intimation on the part of the Northern or the Central districts that they would be satisfied with this Bill in place of territorial separation, and that they would leave the matter settled at that, I would have gone tooth and nail for the Bill. I supported the resolutions last year in a very half-hearted sort of way—I almost spoke against them—simply to see where the earnestness of the Chief Secretary came in, because I know that, if he had been in earnest, he could have got sufficient support from the South to carry them. When I saw that he could not command enough support to carry the resolutions, I began to think that he was not in earnest in passing this Bill. If he had liked to draw his forces together he could have easily passed it, but I never believed he was in earnest. We have heard a great deal about telegrams from the Central district; but if outside influence had not been brought to bear, I should never have received a single telegram from Clermont. The first one I got, and which I read to the House, was in reply to one sent by myself, and immediately after I had spoken I got another. Those are the only two telegrams I have got. To show how Rockhampton interest was at work, I may say that the opening words of the second telegram were "Curtis wiring." I do not believe in being coerced from Rockhampton, and I do not believe in my constituents being coerced by any Rockhampton man, or by any wires from Rockhampton. My constituents have never

taken the slightest interest in this Bill, or in the resolutions proposed last year. If they had, they would have communicated with me on the subject, but they never sent me a single wire until I first wired to them; and my reason for reading that telegram was to show that they did not know what the Bill was about; they thought it was proposing financial separation. The second telegram showed that it came from Mr. Curtis, of Rockhampton, dictated by the hon. member for Normanby, who sent up to Mr. Curtis telling him to send wires all over the West.

Mr. MURRAY: I did nothing of the sort. I did not send a single wire.

Mr. STEVENSON: I do not believe the Central district is sincere, except to get this, like the North, as a stepping-stone to territorial separation. On these grounds I do not believe in voting for the Bill, but, at the same time, I am not going to be fooled by the North and the South allying to throw the Central district out of the Bill. I consider that is also a pure trick, and I do not believe in it. I shall oppose the amendment as strongly as the hon. member for Normanby does; but further than that I shall not go. I have no doubt the people of Rockhampton are sincere, but they will not help their cause by condemning people who differ from them. They did not help their cause by burning the hon. member for Mitchell in effigy the other night. I believe that hon. member is sincere, and thinks that he represents the views of his electorate, as I think I represent those of mine.

Mr. RYAN said: Mr. Speaker,—As hon. members are aware, I was elected only a few months ago, and I come from a Central district. Separation was then the test question, and when I was asked what were my views upon it, I said distinctly that I was opposed to it, although I admitted that I firmly believed separation would come about at some future time. I deny that there is any clamour in the Central districts for separation in any shape or form. All the wires I have received from my district have been from persons who have no direct interest in it at all, and I can bear out the statement made by the hon. member for Mitchell that the wires are being pulled by people interested in Rockhampton. With regard to the meetings that have been held, the most important was at Longreach, where numbers of people from the Barcoo and Mitchell were present, and they almost unanimously vetoed separation in any shape or form. The meeting at Blackall was very meagre, and utterly devoid of any interest. There was a meeting at Muttaburra, but in the months of July and August there are only a few of the townspeople there, because the majority of the people are then out on the stations in search of work. It appears, consequently, that the Central districts are not languishing for separation at all. At present I shall oppose any alteration in our Constitution, and to be consistent I can do no better than to vote against the amendment, because I think the Central districts have as much right to separation as the Northern; but I shall oppose separation either under this Bill or any other Bill.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall certainly support the amendment. Believing as I do in territorial separation for the North, I shall vote for it as a step distinctly in that direction. It has been pointed out over and over again by myself and others what differences exist between the Northern part of the colony and the Southern, and the proposed ribbon proposed to be excised by the vehement eloquence of the hon. member for Normanby. That hon. member has been kind enough to denounce me as the principal conspirator, putting me above the leader of the

House. I am quite willing to accept that opprobrious epithet if any action of mine will tend to prevent the disruption of the colony in the manner intended by that hon. member. This House was intended to have within its walls reasonable beings as representatives; but after hearing the speech of the hon. member for Normanby, I do not think he can be included in that category, because I never heard such a wild speech as he made. I suppose he thought he was making a speech calculated to obtain support for the views he advocated; but I am afraid he rather failed. He seems to imagine that by abusing those who differ from him he will receive assistance. The hon. member was not very polite in some of his epithets, and he also posed as a great pioneer, the Gulliver of the Central districts. I am informed that he has not been such a very great pioneer. He also spoke about the great interests he represents. There are two townships in his district, both of which I have visited, and I desire to see them no more for ever. The seaport is St. Lawrence. I do not know whether any hon. member has undergone the misery of being a night there. They have the finest mosquitoes that can be found in Northern Queensland or Central Queensland. I must say that I was not much impressed with what I saw of this seaport twenty-six years ago, and I believe it has not improved since. Leaving the seaboard we come to the inland city, the seat of Government possibly of Central Queensland, if the hon. member's wish is realised. That is a township called Nebo. If I were to ask hon. members who have been there to hold up their hands, I do not think there would be many held up; but if I put the second question, "Hands up those who wish to go there again," I am perfectly certain there would not be a single hand held up. The same remarks might apply to St. Lawrence, only more so. I am pointing out to the House the immense importance of the district the hon. member represents, who made such a tremendous noise about Central separation. That is all I intended to convey to the House, and I think I have fairly succeeded in doing so. The hon. gentleman has interests in other portions of the colony, but I think they have been acquired recently, and under very favourable circumstances—under favourable Land Acts passed in late years. That can hardly be called pioneering. Therefore I think the hon. gentleman who has set himself up as the justifier of the claims of the Central district to provincial separation, is not the best champion that might have been selected. I have said something of his district, which he does not accuse me of misrepresenting in any way; and I have described the position of the hon. gentleman himself as an exponent of the policy he advocates.

Mr. MURRAY: Is it any benefit to the House or the country for you to run down the Central district?

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I extenuate nothing, and I set down naught in malice. I am simply giving as nearly as possible a photographic illustration of the hon. gentleman himself in his demeanour and address, and also—

Mr. MURRAY: It will compare very favourably with yours at any time, and under any circumstances.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: No doubt he is right, Mr. Speaker; but I am afraid he has not that power of depicting it to the House which I have. I have had an opportunity of seeing the two principal towns, and I have described them to the House. There are members here who have seen both and have survived, and they can correct me if I am in error. Everyone present has witnessed the hon. gentleman's demeanour; therefore, I am before this court.

Mr. MURRAY: I am not ashamed of my demeanour here or elsewhere.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I am sorry the hon. member does not admire the way in which I have described him and certain portions of his district; but I am happy to observe that he is the only one who dissents. I am sure that other members agree with the picture I have drawn. For the reasons I have given I shall support the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Ipswich.

Mr. AGNEW said: Mr. Speaker,—When this subject was before the House last year I expressed my opinion on the question, and I have to confess that I see no reason now not to be perfectly satisfied with the expression of opinion to which I then gave utterance. In fact, I am strengthened in the opinion that the time is inopportune for dividing the colony into three strips. I think there never was a time since I have been in the colony when it would have been so ill-advised to divide the colony into three parts. During the past two years the colony has taken a retrograde step, and anyone who knows anything of its financial condition must admit that we should certainly economise in its management; but it seems absolutely impossible that there can be any economy if the proposals contained in this Bill are carried into effect. At the close of last year we had an overdraft of £1,300,000, and we have lost on the consolidated revenue for the year about £342,000. On the previous year's account we went to the bad about £494,000. I ask any man of business who is losing money at the rate the colony is going back whether it would be considered a wise step on his part to increase his expenditure?

Mr. DONALDSON: Or dissolve partnership?

Mr. AGNEW: Or set up three branch establishments, instead of being satisfied with one? I do not think it would be considered a wise step by any means. If any alteration is to be made in connection with the management of the colony, I think it must be made from economical motives; and that can better be done with a united colony. The Chief Secretary said that this proposed change would entail an additional expense of £20,000; but I am satisfied that it cannot be effected and maintained under an additional expense of ten times that amount, taking into account the money that would have to be expended on Parliament Houses, public offices, and additional officers. I am sure that the figures given by the Chief Secretary were given in good faith; but on consideration hon. members must admit that it is not possible to carry out the scheme propounded in this Bill for an additional outlay of £20,000. And even if that were possible, I should oppose the Bill on other grounds. I do not believe in the principle upon which it is proposed to elect representatives either to the House of Representatives or to the Senate, because in the one case it would give an undoubted preponderance of power to the thickly populated districts in the House of Representatives, and on the other it would give to the Central and Northern provinces a power in the Senate which I do not think they should have, particularly while the people of the Central district are in the frame of mind they are at the present time owing to their supposed grievances. I do not think the South would get fair treatment under such a system of representation. I have never argued that members should receive a mandate from their constituents before dealing with measures submitted to the House; but if there was a time in the history of the colony when a measure should be submitted to the constituencies, it is the present, when we are asked to give up

entirely the Constitution under which we are now assembled in this House. I do not suppose any member of the House addressed his constituents on such a question at the last general election; I am quite certain that I never did. I have always had great sympathy with the Northern members. Long before I was a member of this Chamber I sympathised with them, because I believed that at one time the wants of the North were totally disregarded; but that could scarcely be said of the Central district, and it can only be said in less degree of the North at the present time. Northern grievances have during the last few years received readier treatment at the hands of the Assembly than Southern grievances, and a large expenditure of money has been ungrudgingly granted to redress those grievances. The proposal in the amendment before the House seems to me impracticable, as the Bill contains provisions which are in no way applicable to two provinces. A distinct and separate Bill should be drafted if it is decided to divide the colony into two provinces. But in my opinion it would be greatly to the interest of the North to hold over this Bill till after the general election. I am thoroughly convinced that whoever may be returned for the district which I represent will be allowed a good deal of latitude in dealing with this question. I agree with much that the Chief Secretary said this afternoon, and I think the Central members have really made out no case whatever why they should have a separate province. I understand that the hon. member for Normanby has this afternoon made a fierce and vigorous attack upon the Government and upon Southern members generally; but if ever there was a case to prove that this Bill should be submitted to the country it is the case of that hon. member. When that hon. member came to this House he came as the avowed opponent of Northern separation, and he was not backward in his language in condemnation of the then policy of Northern members, and now all of a sudden we find him a rabid convert to the new principle of separation. In his own case that hon. member proves that this subject should be put before the constituencies before we are asked to legislate upon it. As my sympathies have always been with the North, I regret for my own part that I cannot support either the Bill or the amendment. I do not consider this is a correct way of bringing about separation for the North, and above all I do not consider the present the proper time to introduce any such scheme. So far I have heard no arguments sufficiently strong to induce me to support the Bill, though I came to this House with a mind perfectly open upon this question, and was pledged in no way whatever upon it. There is no question to which I have given more attention or upon which I have read more than this since I came to this House, and my reading upon it and financial searching of the last few days have convinced me that it would be most undesirable at the present time to split this colony up into either two or three parts.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member who has just sat down has made use of arguments which have been referred to before in this debate. He has used again the argument about the time being inopportune, and he says he cannot vote for either two or three divisions of the colony. Does the hon. gentleman understand the importance of the position, and what it really means? As has been pointed out by the Chief Secretary over and over again, some change is absolutely necessary. The time is opportune; no time can be more opportune than the present. We have, in this House assembled, hon. members who are familiar with the subject, who have been made familiar with it by the various debates of the last five years, and

yet we are coolly told that the time is not opportune; that the settlement of the question is to be relegated to some other Parliament, many of the members of which will have to be educated to the position of familiarity with the subject which hon. members at present in this House occupy. Ever since 1869 this matter has been more or less agitated and referred to in this House. In 1869 Sir Charles Lilley expressed a strong opinion even at that time in favour of separation as preferable to local government. In 1872 Sir Arthur Palmer endeavoured to introduce a Financial Districts Bill dividing the colony into four districts. Twenty years ago that happened, and it came to nothing. In 1875 the Hon. John Douglas carried a motion favouring financial separation, and that again came to nothing. In 1877 the Hon. John Douglas again advocated financial separation at Cape Palmerston, dividing the colony into two provinces, and that again came to nothing. In 1882, ten years ago, one of the then Ministers, the late respected Hon. Mr. Miles, at a banquet held at Townsville, expressed his opinion in favour of territorial in preference to provincial separation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Provincial separation was not mooted then.

Mr. BLACK: That gentleman strongly advocated territorial separation. I admit that the provincial scheme is a red herring that was not introduced until a much more recent date. In 1886 gentlemen in this House advocated territorial separation and said, "Let them go." In the same year, 1886, a petition was sent home containing no less than 10,000 signatures of adult males in the North advocating the territorial separation of the North from the South. That petition was supported by two delegates from the North, Mr. Rawson and Dr. Ahearne, who advocated it before the Secretary of State. In 1887, again two delegates went to London and interviewed the Secretary of State—the present member for Kennedy and myself. The Chief Secretary was at home at the time, and I will say advocated the adverse view—namely, some scheme of provincial separation, in the most able manner, and was undoubtedly able to impress the Secretary of State with his views.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member is mistaken. The subject was not mentioned at the time—the subject of provincial separation.

Mr. BLACK: I accept the hon. gentleman's statement; but I certainly understood from what the Secretary of State told me that he was led to believe that the then Premier contemplated introducing a scheme to this House the next session which would do away with the necessity for territorial separation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is quite right.

Mr. BLACK: That is practically what I said, or intended to convey.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I had not then in my mind any such scheme, so I could not have mentioned it.

Mr. BLACK: I am glad to be able to correct the hon. gentleman's memory. In the year 1890 the late member for Townsville, the Hon. J. M. Macrossan, moved a resolution in favour of territorial separation. That was defeated by thirty-three to twenty-seven votes. It was immediately followed by the Chief Secretary's resolutions in favour of a provincial scheme. That scheme was met in 1891 by an amendment by the member for Stanley to omit the word "Central," and leave two provinces only. That was negatived on the voices, and the main question was negatived by 34 to 29. That is the history of the agitation

for some altered form of government for Queensland during the past twenty years. Last year, when the Government brought down these resolutions, after mature consideration and great deliberation between the Central and Northern members, they elected to give the Government their loyal support in endeavouring to provide a remedy for the unsatisfactory state of affairs which has for so long existed. That they gave that support I know the Government will freely admit; but the best efforts of the Northern and Central members and the Government met with the defeat I refer to. The Government thought fit this year, induced no doubt by renewed pressure from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to bring this matter before the House again for consideration, and they have done it in the shape of a Bill. I have stated already that while not altogether liking the principles embodied in the Bill, which do not give the North everything that I desire it to obtain, I think the measure, if carried, will be a step towards territorial separation, and I will support the Government in endeavouring to carry it. The Treasurer and the Chief Secretary the other night objected strongly to the position that I took up on that occasion; but I do not depart one iota from those principles now, and still say that I support the Bill on those grounds. The various telegrams received from the North advocate the passing of this Bill for the reasons I have already given—that it is considered something, at all events, to get from the South, and will be a step towards complete territorial separation at some future time. Now, Mr. Speaker, we are met this afternoon by an amendment moved by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, that this House approves of the division of the colony into two provinces on the basis of this Bill. I understand that the Government are not inclined to accept that amendment, and for my part I unhesitatingly say that I, representing many of the Northern members, am going to support the Government in the Bill which they have brought down to this House, the principle of which we supported last session. I was not present when the hon. member for Ipswich proposed the amendment, and have had no opportunity of hearing any remarks made by the Government upon it. If the Government think fit to withdraw the Bill and bring in another Bill, that is a matter for their consideration, but as I stated when first speaking on the second reading, and as I said when the amendment was moved on the Bill, I was in favour of it, therefore it is my intention to support the Government in passing the Bill which they have brought down to the House.

Mr. JONES said: Mr. Speaker,—I was very much pleased to hear the hon. and learned Chief Secretary say that he was going to dissent from the amendment moved by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow; an amendment evidently aimed at excluding the Central district from the provisions of the Bill. I listened attentively, and did not hear one single argument of any avail in support of the amendment. Whether the hon. member's speech was an exposition of the views of Southern members in order to burke the Bill I cannot say, but I heard nothing said as an argument in favour of the amendment. Hon. gentlemen may recollect that more than twenty-five years ago in Rockhampton and the North a popular agitation for separation took place on account of the manifest injustice that the Central district and the North experienced at the hands of Parliament. Public money and loan money was being spent with a very free hand in the South, and in the Central and Northern districts that agitation went on; but when a greater measure of justice was dealt out to those two portions of the colony, that agitation

ceased, and I must say that at that time, although I did not take much part in politics, the agitation in the Central district had my hearty support. But when a measure of justice was meted out to the country north of Brisbane, that agitation ceased. When the North increased in population and power, and saw that it was not being governed from the South as it ought to be, and was entitled to be governed, an agitation arose there for entire territorial separation from the Southern part of the colony. At first I thought they were entitled to it, especially when I saw that, although some of the Southern members were inclined to do full justice to the Central and Northern divisions, there were others who, from I know not what motives, perhaps selfish ones, were in favour of spending loan money for aggrandising the South at the expense of the rest of the colony. Since that time I have come to the conclusion that it would be a pity to see this glorious colony separated into parts, and that must be the opinion of everyone who has the interests of the colony as a whole at heart. As far back as 1860 I was one of those who formed a provincial councils league at Rockhampton, and I formulated some proposals nearly on the same lines as those contained in the Bill before us—namely, to give to the Northern, Central, and Southern divisions certain powers of autonomy, with one general Parliament for Queensland. Those proposals were based upon the Act for establishing the Dominion of Canada.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: How many Governments do you want?

Mr. JONES: It does not matter if there are twenty Governments, if they give peace and happiness and contentment to the people. At that time there seemed very little hope or anticipation that the North would ever get territorial separation, and the scheme for provincial government lay at rest for a while; but by-and-by, when the people of the Central district saw that the North were on the point, as they thought, of obtaining territorial separation, they saw that unless they took prompt and decided action they would be tied irrevocably to the South, and would never get that justice which their position demanded. They accordingly went in for entire separation. They prepared a petition, and got it signed by nearly every adult male in the district, and sent it to Her Majesty. How was that met? The Chief Secretary and those at the head of affairs, seeing that unless some measure of justice was meted out to the Central district as well as to the North, there would be a probability of the dismemberment of this great colony, brought in resolutions for establishing provincial Governments. I supported those resolutions heartily, and I support this Bill, and I believe everyone does who has the interests of the colony at heart, for the only alternative is territorial separation. I say the proper plan is to keep the colony together, and that can only be done by dividing the colony into three provinces and giving them that measure of self-government to which they are entitled. If that is done I believe Queensland will be the premier colony of the Australian group. With regard to this matter, I have not pleased my constituents nor the people of Rockhampton, because I have not been an advocate for absolute separation. I have always been in favour of the provincial scheme in itself, and not as a sort of half-way house to entire territorial separation. I do not think it is necessary to weary the House with a long array of figures to show that Central Queensland is as much entitled to provincial government as the North or the South. It has a territory equal to each of them; its resources are greater than either of them, and its exports are larger. Nothing shows the wealth of

a country more than the amount of its exports, and the exports from the Central district are large and growing. We have been twitted that this is a movement emanating from Rockhampton, and from no other place; that it is for the aggrandisement of Rockhampton. I do not care where the capital is placed as long as the district gets autonomy. The people of Rockhampton feel every day the disabilities and grievances under which they labour; but if they are granted autonomy I believe they will remain loyal subjects of Queensland. I trust the amendment will not be carried, and that the colony will be kept together by equal justice being dealt out to its three great divisions, and, when the time comes, to any other province that may be carved out of it.

Mr. DRAKE said: Mr. Speaker,—When the hon. member for Normanby was speaking I had a difficulty in making up my mind as to whether he was entitled to the sympathy of the House. We are told that the spectacle of a good man struggling with adversity is a sight for the gods, and no doubt the hon. member deserves some sympathy for the fight he is making against overwhelming odds in this Chamber. But when the hon. member told us that an intrigue had been going on between the two sides of the House with regard to this Bill, he cannot have been alive to what has been going on during the present session if he has not seen that that is the way in which the government is being carried on. I have often found myself in the position of one of a very small minority fighting against a majority; but seeing how the business of Parliament is carried on I have ceased to feel annoyance at being opposed in what I think an unfair manner. Ever since this coalition Government was formed party government has practically ceased to exist; we have substituted for it government by intrigue, and so it will continue until this Parliament receives its quietus. I wish to say a word or two with regard to the power of Parliament to amend the present Constitution, because, though the Chief Secretary may understand it, and the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, and a few other hon. members, there are a great number of persons in the colony who do not understand how the matter stands; and from the debates that have taken place recently, I am sure many persons are in a more confused state of mind on the subject than they were originally. We have heard a great deal about the proviso in the Constitution Act with regard to the two-thirds majority standing in the way of this Parliament amending the Constitution Act. In the original Constitution Act there was a similar proviso that applied to the Legislative Assembly. There was also the proviso, which still remains, that no alteration should be made in the Constitution of the Legislative Council until it had received the assent of a two-thirds majority in this House. The proviso in section 10 with regard to amending the Constitution of the Legislative Assembly was repealed in 1871 by an Act which passed its second reading by a majority of one in this House, and afterwards received Her Majesty's assent. It can hardly be contended that a similar proviso in section 9 would require to be passed now by a two-thirds majority. There would be nothing whatever to prevent this Parliament making any alteration in the Constitution Act that might be considered desirable.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The difficulty would not be removed in the least.

Mr. DRAKE: I should be very glad if some other hon. member will explain the matter. It appears to me that we have the power to amend the Constitution Act. The only thing that

stands in the way at the present time is the proviso in regard to the two-thirds majority in regard to any alteration in the Constitution of the Legislative Council. Power is given to this Parliament to amend the Constitution Act by a Bill passed through both Houses by an ordinary majority. We have already passed during this Parliament an Act to amend the Constitution, and I know of no reason why this Parliament should not, if it desired, make further alterations. I understood the contention of the Chief Secretary to be this: that while alterations may be made in a constitutional manner in our Constitution Act, it is not competent for this Parliament to totally alter the Constitution as is proposed in the Bill. I have endeavoured to point out before that this measure, instead of being a Bill to amend our Constitution where amendment has been found to be necessary, is intended in the first place to sweep away our present Constitution entirely and substitute something altogether different. The Constitution that is proposed to be substituted is practically the Commonwealth Bill. Ever since the appointment of delegates in July, 1890, to attend the convention in Sydney, the Chief Secretary seems to have taken a great deal of pains in elaborating an entirely new system of government for the whole of the colonies, and that system took the form of the Commonwealth Bill. It was assented to by the Convention; but when the members of the Convention went back to their various colonies they all seemed to have dropped that measure. There is no instance of which I am aware where any of those statesmen have ventured to submit that scheme of government to the people.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It was taken right through the Victorian Parliament and right through the Tasmanian Parliament last year.

Mr. DRAKE: The hon. gentleman misunderstands me. I did not say that it had not been introduced into any of the Parliaments. What I said was that none of those gentlemen had submitted the Commonwealth Bill to the people of their respective colonies. There have been elections in those colonies since the convention was held, but none of them were prepared to stand or fall upon that Bill.

Mr. BARLOW: There was a general election in Tasmania before the last session.

Mr. DRAKE: But I am not aware that the Commonwealth Bill was put forward as a test question.

Mr. BARLOW: It was taken for granted.

Mr. DRAKE: Certainly it was not during the elections in New South Wales. Having been practically dropped so far as Australia is concerned, the Parliament of Queensland is now asked to adopt it; but we ought to be very careful before we even go so far as to allow it to pass its second reading. When the Chief Secretary was recommending a series of resolutions, which practically embodied the same scheme as this Bill, the hon. gentleman said that he was not quite sure as to the way in which they would be carried into law, but that probably if the resolutions were agreed to something in the form of a Bill would be sent home, and the British Parliament would be asked to pass a Bill which would make that Constitution binding upon the colony. If the British Parliament has the power to pass into law a new Constitution that has been passed through both Chambers here, it would have the power also to impose upon us a new Constitution which had not been assented to by both Houses of Parliament here. We should therefore be careful, because even agreeing to the second reading of this Bill might be represented to the British Government as an indication on the

part of the people of Queensland that they were prepared to surrender their present Constitution and to accept a fresh one in its place. Having a Constitution under which we have worked fairly well up to the present time, we ought to be extremely jealous of surrendering any part of it. Until I am set right by a better authority I shall hold the opinion that the British Parliament has given us sufficient power to make all the alterations in our Constitution that would be necessary to give much larger powers of self-government to either the Northern or Central district, or any other portion of the colony. Dealing first with the North—and my remarks will apply, although in a less degree, to the Central district—if the North makes out a good case for self-government, and it is considered by Parliament that self-government should be given to them, there is nothing to prevent this Parliament from making such an amendment in our Constitution Act as would practically give the North self-government. If that were done, or even if this Parliament simply passed a resolution admitting that it was right and necessary that the North should have separation, the Northern territory would be cut away from the South, and would probably be endowed with a Constitution to some extent like ours; but probably altered as expediency might dictate, while we in the South would not have our Constitution altered at all. I think it is very much safer for us to go on as we have been, rather than practically give up our Constitution and accept blindly one which is admittedly an experiment. The proposed Constitution is not copied from anything, but is partly taken from the United States and partly from Canada—neither entirely one thing or the other. The Chief Secretary said it was drawn more upon the lines of the Constitution of the United States than upon that of Canada; but there is one very important point of difference. Although the machinery may be very much the same, in the United States the head of the Government is a person who is elected every four years by a popular vote, whereas in our case the head is to be a gentleman appointed from home to represent Her Majesty; and it must be remembered, as the hon. gentleman said, that Her Majesty will be an integral part of the Parliament. As it was put in the resolution, the Parliament will consist of Her Majesty, a Senate, and a House of Assembly. We know that “Her Majesty” means the gentleman appointed as Governor, and he will be one of the estates. That is certainly a very important innovation upon the British Constitution. I have always considered that British colonists in every British colony are entitled to live under as free a Government as those who stay at home. There they live under a Parliament consisting of two Houses, one partly hereditary and partly elective, and the other entirely elective. Besides that, there is a monarch who is practically a non-political head.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: So is a Governor.

Mr. DRAKE: The hon. member is wrong. One difficulty here is that at present we have one Chamber that is nominated and one which is elected by the people. Over that we have a gentleman who, to a very great extent, represents the British Parliament.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Only in certain things.

Mr. DRAKE: Yes; but we have had, only during this Parliament, a very sharp contest with regard to the exact lines which must not be overstepped by that gentleman. It is proposed under this Constitution to introduce a different state of things altogether.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I was not aware of it.

Mr. DRAKE: The hon. gentleman said Her Majesty was to be an integral part of this Parliament. The resolution said the Parliament should consist of Her Majesty, a Senate, and a House of Assembly.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think it was so; but it does not matter.

Mr. DRAKE: The hon. gentleman is generally credited with weighing his language, and not saying, in Bills, things that have no meaning. The matters I have referred to are very well worth consideration, and it seems that, with the exception of the hon. member for Ipswich, there has been hardly one hon. member who has told us anything about this Constitution that is proposed to be forced upon the colony. I protest against any new-fangled system being forced upon us without discussion. Then, besides this, we are to have a Senate which is to have powers in connection with money Bills far more extensive than those now exercised either by the House of Lords or by our Legislative Council. All these alterations are in the direction of removing the power from the people and placing it in the hands of a body outside of them. The Senate is to be elected by the Parliament, and not by the people; and there is a great difference between a person elected by a body that has been elected, and a person elected by the people directly. It is an attenuated kind of election, and the virtue of the representative principle is to a corresponding extent lost. It is proposed to impose upon us a Senate which will not be elected by the people, which will sit for six years, and be armed with powers not exercised by any nominated House in these colonies. I need not express any particular opinion with regard to the question as to whether it is desirable that Ministers taking office should go up for re-election. I think that is rather farcical when those gentlemen have only just been returned; but where they take office some time afterwards it is extremely desirable that they should do so, because they should be directly responsible to constituencies of some kind. But clause 59 provides that Ministers need not represent constituencies. They can go into either House and take part in the debates. If the Bill pass in its present form, the gentlemen sitting on the front Ministerial bench need not go before the electors, but can go on acting as Ministers.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Until they are turned out.

Mr. DRAKE: I think something more than that is required. It is desirable that Ministers, at more or less frequent times, should go before the people and give an account of what they have done, and obtain a fresh expression of confidence from those whom they are supposed to represent. I mention these matters because I am certain that there are very few people in the colony who have sufficiently studied this new Constitution to know what it is and how it will work. I feel certain that if they knew what this Constitution is which the Government are attempting to pass, there would be excited public meetings all over the place against such a measure being carried. With regard to the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Ipswich—“That the House approves of the division of the colony into two provinces on the basis of this Bill”—I cannot support that amendment, because I am not prepared to affirm that it is desirable to divide the colony into two, three, four, or any other number of provinces “on the basis of this Bill.” I say that we should pass neither the Bill nor any resolution whatever approving of anything being done on the basis of the Bill. Before anything is done in this House in connection with the Bill there should

be an appeal to the country, in order that we may know whether the basis of the Bill is approved by the people. This Bill is essentially the Commonwealth Bill, and if it were considered desirable that the colony should accept that, it should be brought forward in this House as a Bill to apply to the whole of Australasia; but I do not think it is right at the present time, when everybody is looking out for a general election, for the Government to attempt to force the House to agree to this Bill, or to any resolution affirming that there should be any alteration in the Constitution of the colony on the basis of this Bill. I must say, before I sit down, that I think the House might be very much better employed than in talking about this Bill at all. There is no doubt that the colony is in a deplorable state. Everybody is inquiring when Parliament is going to do something to improve the condition of things; and the public are getting to look with contempt on the House for talking and arguing on a paper Constitution when the people are being almost ruined.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—For many years the Northern members have fought for territorial separation in this House, but their voices were hardly listened to until 1890, when we received a sudden accession of strength by the support of the Central members. When in 1890 the late lamented leader of the separation party, Mr. Macrossan, brought forward a motion to the effect that it was desirable that territorial separation should be granted to the North, the Northern members were loyally supported by the Central members, but by only four Southern members. The result was that the Premier saw that the question had become an important one on account of the strong support it received, and he then promised to give those who desired territorial separation some satisfactory scheme in lieu of it if they would support it. Last year the hon. gentleman proposed the scheme—the proposal to divide the colony into three provinces—and the Northern and Central members gave it their support. I was one of those who voted for the resolutions last year, and now that the Bill founded on those resolutions has been introduced, I intend to support the Bill. I consider that it would be very mean on the part of the Northern members if we were to go back on the Central members, seeing that they have fought with us for the last year or two. At the same time, in voting for the second reading of the Bill, I do not pledge myself to vote for all the details of the measure, some of which may be amended in committee.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I agree with a great deal that has fallen from the hon. member for Enoggera. We are getting into rather a mixed state in regard to this Bill, and I do not know what course to take with regard to this amendment. My desire all along has been to do my utmost to satisfy our Northern colonists; but now I find that the representatives of the North are going to support this Bill, not because it satisfies them, but because they think it will lead to something further. I think, however, that if they accept what this Bill proposes it will be a very long time before they get anything further. I do not think it will happen during the present generation. It appears to me to be unreasonable to expect, after sending a scheme like this to the Imperial authorities, and after they have accepted it in good faith as the voice of the colony, that they will agree to re-open the question for a considerable time to come. If I vote against the amendment I seem to be voting against the North, because the Northern members are going to oppose the amendment.

The Hon. A. RUTLEDGE: Not unanimously.

Mr. NELSON: I hardly know what to do.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Vote for what is good for them.

Mr. NELSON: I do not think they know that themselves. I am very much afraid—and I am sorry to say it—that the Northern members are playing a very low game. I believe they are not sincere. I believe every one of them is pledged to territorial separation; and I say that the proper amendment to the motion for the second reading of the Bill—if it was considered necessary to move an amendment at all—would have been to the effect that nothing less than territorial separation would satisfy the wishes, aspirations, and requirements of the North. If such an amendment had been moved I should have felt bound to support it; and I believe that the Northern members are standing in their own light, because the sympathy with the North has been growing.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: That is all.

Mr. NELSON: They are taking the best step that can be taken to counteract the growth of that sympathy; and it seems to me that they want the Southern members to throw out this Bill in order that they may go to the Home Government and say, "Look what a selfish lot of people they are in the South; they won't give us the slightest assistance."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Don't help them.

Mr. NELSON: I am not going to help them. They threw me overboard, and I think it is time I threw them overboard. I have been trying to assist them all through. Two years ago I signed a petition to the Imperial authorities, which I thoroughly believed in, and believe in now; but it would almost appear as if in signing that I was really doing what was not good for the Northern part of the colony. A good many people outside have been deceived into the belief—and I am afraid the Chief Secretary himself has given some ground for the belief—that the Imperial authorities are likely to take the case into their own hands, and deal with it off hand. Some people actually believe that the Imperial Government can separate the Northern part of Queensland from the South by a stroke of the pen, or by issuing an Order in Council, or by a proclamation of the Queen. But anyone who believes such a thing must be very much deluded. In order that any question of that sort may be set at rest, I will refer to what took place in the House of Commons, on the 18th August, the last day of the session of 1890. Sir George Campbell, the late member for Kirkcaldy, according to the *Hansard* report of the House of Commons, asked the following question:—

"I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Her Majesty's Government have power to create Northern Queensland into a new colony without reference to Parliament; and, if so, whether the Secretary of State will give an assurance that such a colony will not be created during the recess, with the complete power over the aborigines and the Pacific Islanders now enjoyed by the colony of Queensland as a whole, or with the authority over the administration of New Guinea now vested in Queensland."

Baron H. De Worms, who represents the colonies, replied—

"Her Majesty's Government are advised that an Act of Parliament is necessary for the erection of any part of Queensland into a separate colony."

Sir G. Baden-Powell supplemented the question by asking—

"Does the right hon. gentleman mean by an Act of Parliament an Act of the Imperial Parliament?"

which Baron H. De Worms answered in the affirmative. Does anyone suppose for a moment that the Imperial authorities are going to introduce a Bill into the Imperial Parliament without consulting Queensland? Even if they attempted to do anything of that sort, they would have their constituents to consider; and who are their constituents? Our debenture holders. The first thing the Imperial authorities would require to do before introducing a Bill into the House of Commons would be to guarantee the debt of Queensland. Are they likely to do that? Anyone who looks at the matter for a moment will see that it is not at all likely. But unless they did enter into some such undertaking, they would have no chance of passing such a Bill through the Imperial Parliament. Their first concern is for themselves; they are just as selfish as we are, and the first thing they would have to do would be to see that the debenture holders were secured. The question asked by Sir George Campbell furnishes a very good example of the temper and tone of many of the members of the House of Commons. There are many of them who, like the late member for Kirkcaldy, are itching to get hold of a colonial Constitution, in order that they may pull it to pieces. They are a little afraid that we have too much freedom in the colony, and would like to have the framing of a Constitution which would give us less control over our lands and many other things. Nothing would please them better than that we should surrender our Constitution and allow them to make a fresh one for us. It is quite true that if we sent home a Bill the Imperial Government might approve of it; but they could not guarantee that it would be passed by the Imperial Parliament without amendments. If they did not approve of the amendments that might be made in it, all they could do would be to withdraw the Bill. On the other hand, they might approve of amendments which to them seemed trivial, but might be very material as far as the colony was concerned, and we might get a Constitution that would be ruinous to the colony. We should indeed act blindly in surrendering our Constitution, and would not know when we should get it back or what we should get back. With regard to the amendment, I should be very much inclined to vote in favour of it, but now I find that the Government will not accept it. There was one amendment proposed before, to the effect that it would be better to leave this matter over for a while, and the Government immediately said, "Why, this is a vote of censure." Is this amendment a vote of censure? If it is carried the Bill will be shelved, and it is simply because I want to see the Bill shelved that I am inclined to vote for the amendment. I do not altogether believe in the amendment, but I think it is time the Bill was shelved, and I hope we shall get no more Bills of this sort this session. If we do get another, I would most earnestly advise the Government and the House to consider whether we cannot devise some measure that we can carry out under our present Constitution without going to the Imperial authorities. I think it is possible to devise some such scheme, perhaps not so ambitious a one as this, but one that would possibly do as much towards supplying the wants and wishes of the Central and Northern districts as this Bill, or even another Bill dividing the colony into two provinces. I should like to see all hon. members of the same opinion, so that we might have some better scheme laid before us at some future date.

Mr. PAUL said: Mr. Speaker,—I regret I was not present when the members for Mitchell and Normanby gave expression to their opinions

with respect to this amendment, but as one of the Central members, I desire to express my opinion with respect to it. I have not the slightest idea why the member for Mitchell has changed his tactics. As I said the other night, I was the only member for a Central district who objected to Central separation, although I was strongly in favour of separation for the North, because the North and South are diametrically opposed with regard to the conditions of climate. The North is essentially a tropical country; and if the deputation that went home some four or five years ago had had the pluck to state to the home Government that they wanted separation in order to get black labour for the greatest industry of the country, they would have attained their object. They had not the pluck, and they were deservedly defeated. I have not a single interest in the North, but I have always had a sincere desire to promote every industry that will give employment to skilled labour. I always advocated separation for the North, because I hoped that, with separation gained, they would be enabled to use that labour which would develop the great industries of the North, with a view to the employment of skilled labour. No one has a more sincere desire to promote the interests of the working man than I have, and I hold the proud position that I am one of the few members of this House who have never pandered to the working man's vote. I have told the working man wherever I have gone what his true position in life is, and I wish to God that leading men in the colony had done the same. I say it is the duty of all men who have had the advantage of education to try and guide those who have not had that advantage to a proper view of things as affecting the material prosperity of the colony. I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, you are going to call me to order. There is no member in the House who is called to order so frequently as I am. I know your desire is to keep discussion within its proper limits, and I hope that when the new regulations which the Government are about to propose limiting the time—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in anticipating the discussion upon business already on the paper.

Mr. PAUL: I regret that I departed from the true line of argument. I was always opposed to Central separation, and in favour of separation for the North, and some eighteen months ago, when the Chief Secretary gave notice of his resolutions for the division of the colony into three provinces, a meeting of the Central and Northern members was held to consider them. There was a caucus meeting of those members, at which a deputation was appointed to wait upon the Chief Secretary and ascertain his detailed ideas with regard to provincial separation. When the deputation came back they were perfectly satisfied with the result of their interview, and they ran me in as one of those who were to support the Government with regard to this provincial scheme. The hon. member for Mitchell, the late member for Barcoo, myself, and all the Central members, in fact, signed a petition to Lord Knutsford asking the Imperial Government to grant territorial separation, not only to the North, but also to the Central districts of the colony. I want to know why the hon. member for Mitchell has changed his tactics. Rumour states that he is the delegate of a union. I hate unions, whether they are pastoral unions or labour unions; and I have said wherever I have gone that unless unions are carried on in the interests of fair play—

The SPEAKER: I must recall the hon. member to the question before the House. The question before the House has no reference to unions.

Mr. PAUL: I am veryorry. I thought this was a general discussion. No one in this House has been a more loyal supporter of law and order than I have been.

The SPEAKER: I must recall the hon. member to the question before the House. The hon. member cannot depart from the discussion of the measure under consideration.

Mr. PAUL: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a subject deserving of every consideration. I ask the hon. member for Mitchell whether he has changed his tactics on account of the dictation of a union? There is not a single member of this House who has been more loyal in support of the pastoral interests than I have been.

The SPEAKER: I must recall the hon. member once more to the Bill before the House. The hon. member can refer to the change of opinion of another hon. member; but he has no right to prosecute a discussion on the question of the motives which induce an hon. member to change his opinion. The hon. member must confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. PAUL: I was not aware that new rules had been adopted by the House.

The SPEAKER: I must call the hon. member to order again. If he will not listen when I call him to order, and will not confine himself to the question before the House, I shall have to take some other steps. I should be exceedingly sorry to have to interfere with the hon. member again.

Mr. PAUL: I should be very sorry to call in question your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but it is a very unfortunate thing that every time I get up I am called to order.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member desires to dissent from my ruling he can do so in the usual way. If he does not intend to do so, he cannot discuss my ruling at all. The hon. member must confine his remarks to the Bill before the House.

Mr. PAUL: I regret that I am not in order in expressing my views, because I thought my opinions were practical, and would be of service to the colony at large.

The SPEAKER: I have already informed the hon. member that he must confine his remarks to the Bill. I do not intend to call upon the hon. member to do so any longer. If he persists in disregarding my ruling there is only one course open.

Mr. PAUL: Well, look here, Mr. Speaker—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Sit down.

Mr. PAUL: Why should I sit down?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Because you are out of order, and have been for the last quarter of an hour.

Mr. PAUL: In what way can I speak?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member may speak to the Bill. He cannot discuss other matters when the question is an amendment on the second reading of a Bill. The hon. member cannot bring in outside questions.

Mr. PAUL: I do not wish to impute any motives to any hon. member, because I know it would be out of order, but I like to know the reason for a change of front on the part of an hon. member. There is one member who is strongly opposed to the political opinions of the Australian Labour Federation, and I consider it is wrong for the pastoralists to use their union for political purposes. The hon. member for Mitchell signed the petition to Lord Knutsford, and yet he is now opposing Central separation. I should like to know why he has changed his opinions, and what has actuated him to do so.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—The leader of the Opposition has charged the Northern members with playing a very low game; but I do not accept the position which he has assigned to us. I have not played a low game. I have followed one consistent course throughout from the first to the last. I have known exactly what I wanted, and I have accepted the means placed before me towards attaining that end in the best way I could. If I could have obtained territorial separation at any time since I have been a member of this House I would have done so, and I have always voted for it. As I could not obtain that I have taken the next best thing to it, and that is the Bill before the House. The amendment now before us I consider consistent, and as far as I am concerned I intend to accept it. It may not always be politic or expedient to be consistent, but I will be consistent in this case and accept the means offered to us of obtaining a larger measure of self-government than we have at the present time. That will be the effect of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Ipswich. The people of the North will have a larger measure of self-government if they are separated from the South than they have at present. Whether that will lead to territorial separation or not I do not know. I hope it may, but I will accept it now. I consider I have not played a low game, and I shall vote for the amendment.

Mr. SMITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to vote against the amendment. If we in the North were going to gain anything by having two provinces instead of three, I could understand the argument of the hon. member for Carpentaria; but as we shall just have the same difficulty in getting territorial separation whether there are two provinces or three, I confess I do not understand the position the hon. member has taken up. I have always preferred territorial separation to provincial separation, and I would prefer it now if I saw we could go in a straight line to get it. But I recognise the difficulties that are in the way, difficulties that cannot be overcome very easily. I shall oppose the amendment on the ground that we should be in no better a position with having two provinces than with having three. I also oppose it on another ground. The Northern members would be playing it very low indeed on the Central members if they went back on their promises. The Northern and Central members agreed to support the Government in the resolutions brought before the House last session. Has anything occurred in the circumstances of the colony to cause us to alter our decision? Has anything occurred to cause the Northern and Central members to go back on what they then advocated with regard to dividing the colony into provinces? I think not; and the measure now before us is a development of what was then proposed. The resolutions we then supported are now before the House in the practical shape of a Bill, so that they can be dealt with effectually. I have heard no argument yet why the Central district should not have separation. Assertions have been made to that effect, but they have not been supported by arguments. Its area is large enough, its population numerous enough, and its wealth and resources are sufficient for the purpose, and if the people of the district desire to have the privilege of ruling themselves, of managing their own affairs, why should it be denied them? They say they are quite old enough now to walk alone; they do not want to be tied to the maternal apron strings any longer; and no reason has been shown why they should not be allowed to manage their own affairs. I believe in small States. They are much better governed, and are more liberal than large ones, and I am of opinion that there

is room in this great colony not for three States only, but for ten. I hold to the principle that the more States we can divide the colony into the better. It would be to the interest of the good government of the colony as a whole; it would give Queensland far more influence than it would otherwise possess, and the colony would progress much more satisfactorily under such a state of affairs than it has done in the past. I intend, as I said before, to vote against the amendment, and for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. GANNON said: Mr. Speaker,—I have listened to the hon. members who have spoken for and against the amendment, and as I am sure the House must be getting tired of hearing the question discussed at such great length, I shall put what I have to say into very few words. I intend to oppose both the amendment and the Bill. If I were a Northern member I would have nothing but territorial separation pure and simple; but, being a Southern member, I intend at the present time to oppose the Bill. Hon. members have spoken with regard to the alteration of our present Constitution. I took particular notice of the very able speech of the hon. member for Enoggera on that subject, and I consider that what he said were words of wisdom that should be taken notice of not only by the members of the House but by the colonists generally. Under our present Constitution we are perfectly safe, but we do not know what may become of us under the Constitution as proposed by the Government. The question is so grave that it ought to be decided by the constituencies; I certainly believe they should have some voice in the decision of it. It will not be very long before we have a general election, and the electors should have a right to express their opinions upon what is perhaps the greatest and most important question that has ever come before the Parliament of Queensland. I do not believe that the Northern members are playing low. I give them the greatest possible credit for the manner in which they have worked for separation, and for the able manner in which they have kept the question before the public. But the Central members, or some of them, have been very much sold, and some of them, I think, really deserve the manner in which they have been sold, for what they did two years ago when there were certain questions before the House which they combined to defeat. But that is one of the things we cannot help. The longer we remain here the more clearly we see how these little bits of log-rolling are done. I trust the Bill will be thrown out; but if it comes to a question as to whether the colony shall be divided into two or three provinces, I would very much sooner see it divided into two than into three. If I vote for the partition of the colony into two provinces, I will be agreeing to something that I might be very sorry for in the future, and I intend therefore to vote against both the amendment and the second reading.

Mr. MORGAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to vote for the amendment for the reason that it will clear the ground. A great deal of attention has been paid to-night by some hon. members to the attack which is in their opinion being made upon the Constitution. The discussion reminds me of the historic character who used to spend his time sitting up night and day to guard the British Constitution. The Queensland Constitution is in no danger; and as to the fears of the hon. member for Toombul that the people are not to be consulted upon this question, those fears are groundless. The people are going to settle the question whether

this House likes it or not. I do not propose to discuss the question of provincial legislatures at any length upon this amendment; but I would say that the difficulty in which this House finds itself is due in large measure to the unholy alliance which was entered into between the Central and the Northern members two years ago. Those hon. members reproach us with refusing to recognise their fair claims to self-government; but they are trying to form a party sufficiently strong to coerce the South, and if they do not alter their tactics they will find themselves "up a tree," as has been said, and they will have to spend a few years more in discovering means of getting down to the ground again. I propose to support the amendment, and I hope it will be carried. If it is carried it will be found possible, if not by this Government, then by the next, to devise means by which we can confer that measure of independence upon the North which they are fairly entitled to. I have no doubt hon. members as a body are anxious to take a division upon the amendment, which will show us our position. When I speak upon the main question, as I may do as soon as the division has been taken upon the amendment, I believe that I shall be able to show that, notwithstanding the earnestness of the hon. member for Normanby, the cause he espouses is not so strong as he would lead hon. members to believe. The North has a good cause; but I fail to discover any reasons which could induce me to say the same of the cause espoused by the two or three members representing Central district constituencies.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Warwick has just informed us that he would be glad that the North should receive that share of independence to which it is entitled, but he did not tell us how much it was entitled to, and therein lies the difficulty. The hon. member also spoke of an unholy alliance entered into between the Northern and Central members. I would like to know, in the first place, how he arrived at the belief that there was an alliance at all?

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member for Leichhardt told us.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: The hon. member for Warwick cannot expect us to be bound by what the hon. member for Leichhardt says. Then, assuming a compact had been made, I would ask how the hon. member calls it an "unholy" compact? In a House like this there are members who come from a portion of the colony where the population is small, and if they consider it necessary in their own defence, and in order to make head against a huge majority, to form an alliance, there is no reason for calling it an "unholy" alliance. It may be one of a very different nature. Under any circumstances, it behoves those who find themselves weak to make such arrangements as will enable them to see that their constituents will not suffer. Hon. members have spoken of the necessity of placing this question before their constituencies, apparently forgetting the length of time which has elapsed since it was first brought forward. It is not the fault of those who desire the Bill to pass that it is being disputed and discussed at this late period. It was our wish that it should have been settled before. Some years ago the late Hon. J. M. Macrossan brought forward a motion affirming the desirability of territorial separation for Northern Queensland. We have been told repeatedly during this debate that if we bring forward a motion in favour of territorial separation we shall be supported. Some hon. members might support it, but their support unfortunately would not be sufficient to give us the most remote chance of passing the motion. The hon. member for

Murilla told us to-night that some time ago he believed we had a good claim for separation, and he reminded Northern members that he signed a petition sent home in our favour, and that we had his sympathy; but the hon. gentleman also told us that nothing was more difficult than for the North to get separation. He pointed out the enormous objection entertained by Lord Knutsford, and he showed us that under no circumstances was there the most remote chance of Lord Knutsford or the Imperial Parliament giving us separation. That discounts the kindness the hon. member showed in signing the petition.

Mr. NELSON: Bring forward that motion and see what support you will get.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I am exceedingly glad to hear that we should get support. Possibly this Bill may fall through, and if it does hon. members are very much mistaken if they think they will not have an opportunity of keeping their promises. If the Bill is unwisely rejected, we shall see by-and-by how many members will vote in favour of territorial separation for the North, and whether it is possible for us to obtain a majority, which I very much doubt. The principles of the Bill have been affirmed for years by a majority in this House. On the last occasion on which the motion in favour of territorial separation—which used to be brought forward with the utmost punctuality—was proposed, it was superseded by an amendment moved by the Chief Secretary, that it was preferable to divide the colony into three provinces; and it was in consequence of the House carrying that amendment that the resolutions were subsequently brought forward, at the instance of the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Archer, and the late John Murtagh Macrossan. It was because the House practically assented to these principles years ago that the Government now bring in a Bill; and yet that Bill is met with shuffling little amendments. Hon. members apparently forget that it is at the instance of the Northern and Central members, who acted upon the express wish of the House that the colony should be divided into three parts, that this Bill is brought in. As for supporting the amendment of the hon. member for Ipswich, I should not think of doing it. Last year the House passed these resolutions, although there was certainly a deadlock in committee; and the hon. member for Ipswich wants the House to stultify itself in regard to what it has done upon two occasions. The Bill, which was founded upon those resolutions, was desired by the Northern and Central members; and I do not see why we should modify the stand we took upon that occasion, nor do I see why the Government should modify its attitude. If it was for the good of the colony that those resolutions should have been carried last year, it would be a good thing now. Some hon. members have given as a reason why they decline to support the hon. member for Ipswich that they have acted with the Central members before and would not desert them. That is a very fair reason, especially if they believe in the Bill as a whole, which I distinctly say I do. Hon. members have told us that our chances of getting separation were so remote as to render it practically impossible that we should do so, and they have said they believe that if this Bill does not pass this House Lord Knutsford will interfere. Even if Lord Knutsford leaves office the government of the country will go on, and there is some degree of continuity, at any rate, in the policy carried out by officials of State both here and in the old country. Deputations have repeatedly waited upon Lord Knutsford, and they have been told that the question is not ripe. I decline to

believe that Lord Knutsford is a shuffler unless I have good reason shown me, and I believe that if under no circumstances will the Government of the Imperial Parliament move, he would say, "We have not the power; under no circumstances will we interfere." He would not have said, "Go back to the colony of Queensland, and endeavour to settle your own affairs; the matter is not ripe for me." Practically, he admitted to those who came to him that under certain circumstances he would interfere. Now, hon. members who think they are perfectly safe in rejecting this Bill are not so safe as they believe. In fact, if they did not believe this interference would take place, they would not talk about being haunted by the ghost of separation. A passage which occurred in the *Courier* the other day in a leading article showed that the writer, who appeared to understand the subject, was apprehensive that, under certain circumstances, Lord Knutsford would interfere. Hon. members have spoken about settling our own affairs, and in that expression of opinion I concur. We should settle our own affairs, and this Bill is an attempt upon the part of the Government to enable us to do so; but it will take a long time to settle it if every attempt is burked by this House. I think it is a good thing that we have someone to appeal to under the circumstances. If there were not such a court, how could we settle these difficulties? This House is not disposed to settle them, and does anyone wish to see civil war here? That is a matter that is not impossible in the dim and distant future. Probably people would have laughed if it had ever been intimated that a fratricidal war would be urged in the colonies of North America. Everyone who has studied history knows that States which lie in close contiguity must either fight or federate, and the Spanish-American States were not federated.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: The greatest war was after they had federated.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: That is true, but if States fight when they are federated under one Government, how much more likely are they to fight when they are not? The great and wise men who framed the Constitution of the United States foresaw the dangers which were ahead even then, and they instituted a supreme tribunal of the United States outside of the Executive. It is a distinct advantage to the people of Queensland to be able to settle difficulties by appealing to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and if the Imperial Government ever did take action, it would not be in the way of applying force to the people of the colony. They might give an opinion, as they did when the colony was constituted. They may pass an Act of Parliament, when any portion of this colony wishes to be separated—or any portion of South Australia, which must some day be divided—allowing them to do so, so far as they are concerned. After they had done that they would do no more. But the advantage of that would probably be to bring about appeals like those which are being made by nations to courts of appeal—such as the difference between the United States and Great Britain with regard to the Arctic fisheries, and like the dispute between Spain and Germany some years ago which was referred to His Holiness Leo XIII. Opinions were given in those cases, and the nations concerned were in honour bound by those opinions; and if the decision of Lord Knutsford is given in favour of separation, I would defy the people of South Queensland to endeavour to keep the North any longer a portion of this colony. I shall have to oppose the amendment of the hon.

member for Ipswich, because if I give it my support that would be a confession that my action on two previous occasions has been wrong. But I believe that my action has been right, and that in supporting the proposal to divide the colony into three provinces I have done what was wisest. If there were only two provinces the North would still be outvoted, and all we would have would be the gift of a Dead Sea apple—something that looks very well to those who do not examine it, but of no advantage whatever. The Chief Secretary was correct last year when he said it was necessary that there should be three provinces in order that the scheme should work correctly. There must be some means, at any rate, to counteract the enormous numerical superiority of the South; and if we drop one of these provinces we shall be as badly off as ever so far as power is concerned, and we shall, at the same time, be charged with deliberately accepting that state of things, whereas up to the present time we have protested against it. I shall support the Bill; but I shall oppose the amendment—first, because it is impolitic and bad; and, secondly, because by supporting it the Northern members would not be showing the Central members that courtesy to which they are fairly entitled.

Mr. SAYERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to vote for the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Ipswich, and I think that by opposing the amendment we should be grasping at too much, and perhaps lose all. I have never been a territorial separationist; but I have been willing to modify my views to meet the wishes of a large majority of persons who are in favour of more extended local self-government in the North. We have never had the question brought forward before in the manner in which it has been submitted to us this session, and I think that before it is settled we should have an opportunity of going before the electors, so that they may have the question decided in accordance with their wishes. As the matter has been threshed out pretty well during the last four or five sittings of the House, I simply rose to say that I intend to support the amendment.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—There is no doubt that this is the most important question that ever came before this House. Last year I opposed the resolutions, and now I intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill; but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the North is deserving of some consideration, and I shall do like the leader of the Opposition—vote for the amendment in the hope that the Bill may be shelved. I believe that if the amendment is carried it will either shelve the Bill or cause the Government to withdraw it and introduce it in a better form. I referred last year to the unholy alliance entered into between the Northern and Central members.

Mr. HAMILTON: The holy alliance.

Mr. McMASTER: We look upon it in a different light. They combined together for the purpose of outvoting the Southern members; but in speaking to some of the Northern members outside the Chamber last year, I pointed out that it would have been better for them to have asked for provincial government, or territorial separation for the North, instead of joining with the members of the Central, and one of them said that he believed I was correct. Whatever claim the people of the North may have to autonomy, I cannot see that the Central district has any. I never was a believer in territorial separation, and I am rather surprised to hear the arguments used by some of the Northern members, particularly the hon. mem-

ber for Bowen, who wants to cut the colony up into small estates. "I always understood that unity was strength."

Mr. SMITH: That is why we want federation.

Mr. McMASTER: There may be one federation, but we are told that if this Bill is passed the North will very soon get territorial separation. The hon. member for Normanby is very earnest in his advocacy of this Bill, but we find that the Central members are divided among themselves, and we are endeavouring to save them from themselves. I believe that there are only two or three Central members who are advocating the scheme proposed in this Bill, and they are doing so because they hope that if it is passed they will in a few years get territorial separation. I am prepared to give some assistance to the North, and I do not think that if autonomy is granted to them in the way proposed territorial separation would follow for many years. We hear from hon. members themselves that the North is getting justice in the matter of expenditure, so that there is no cause for complaint on that ground. The hon. member for North Rockhampton has accused the Southern members of selfishness in opposing this Bill. What is the object of the Central members? Is it not selfishness? It is selfishness all round. The hon. member also told us that lands are being sold in the Central district to recoup the Treasury. But are not lands sold in the Southern district for the same purpose? A large amount of money has been sunk in worthless works in the Fitzroy River, and the interest on that money has been paid out of the proceeds of the sales of land in the Southern district. We have been told that the Chief Secretary is not in earnest about this Bill. I believe that the hon. gentleman has never been more in earnest about any measure than he is about this Bill. I believe he sees danger ahead, and, from his utterances both in the House and elsewhere, I know that he is very anxious that this measure should become law. I noticed that the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Philp, when speaking on this measure, carefully avoided naming the Central district. I believe that he is of opinion that the Northern people would be quite satisfied if the colony were divided into two provinces, and that he also would be quite satisfied. It is not correct, as some hon. members have said, that all the Southern members are opposing this Bill, for it has substantial support from the two members for Maryborough and the hon. member for Carnarvon. However, I hope it will not be carried, and I shall vote for the amendment with the object of shelving the Bill.

Mr. CORFIELD said: Mr. Speaker,—I merely rise to endorse my previous decision, to support the Government in the second reading of the Bill in its integrity. I shall therefore vote against the amendment moved by the hon. member for Ipswich. I should like to take this opportunity to read to the House a telegram which I have received from some of my constituents upholding my action in advocating that a portion of the Gregory district should be included in the Northern colony. The telegram, which is from Winton and addressed to myself, is as follows:—

"As provincial separation seems inevitable we must insist on being included in the North but we believe that nothing short of territorial separation will satisfy the Northern people."

It is signed by Julius Von Beyer, Thomas Lynett, W. Brown Steele, W. Campbell, A. A. Thompson, John S. Williams, John Farrell, W. J. Gardner. I have nothing further to say.

Mr. STEVENS said : Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to give a silent vote on this question, but as I spoke at length on the Bill before, I shall not take up very much time. I intend to oppose the amendment, because I do not believe it will give anything like satisfaction to the North if a Bill introduced on the lines it lays down became law. If such a Bill were passed, the representation of the North would be very small compared with that of the South, and there would be just as much dissatisfaction as at the present time; there would be quarrelling then as there is quarrelling now. One of the reasons for opposing the division of the colony into three provinces was the increased expense involved; and even under this amendment the expense would be largely increased. At the present time we have a hard struggle to keep our heads above water, and legislation of this kind will only serve to sink us deeper. Some of the reasons given for supporting the amendment have been contradictory in the extreme. It has been said that the amendment will clear the ground, but I fail to see how it will do so. What is to follow after this? If this amendment is carried this Bill can go no further unless there is to be a wholesale amendment of it that will make it almost a new Bill. But if this Bill is withdrawn and another is introduced providing for the division of the colony into two provinces, I wonder how hon. members who have given such contradictory reasons for supporting this amendment will vote then? I think the Northern members may rest assured that any Bill dealing with separation, whether territorial or provincial, will meet with the same fate as this Bill. If the Northern people had stood by their own platform from beginning to end they would have a much greater chance of obtaining territorial separation than, in my opinion, they now have of obtaining territorial or provincial separation. Let the fighting be fair and above board. The hon. member for Mackay has lifted the veil, and every hon. member, I am sure, appreciated his remarks. The hon. member has drawn the curtain aside now and shown us the way in which the matter will be regarded by the majority of the people of the North.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He is not the North.

Mr. STEVENS: The sooner the matter comes to a point the better. Let us get on to fair and firm ground, at any rate. Let us know what we are going to do, and whether there are any more Bills to be brought up, and whether the North is really to have any chance of provincial or territorial separation from this House.

Mr. POWERS said : Mr. Speaker,—There are two questions before the House on which there may be some complication. The amendment is that certain words be left out, and those who want the Bill shelved will let the words go out. Then comes the next question, which is the real amendment, as to whether there shall be two provinces or three. The hon. member for Ipswich, in introducing his amendment, made a speech against it because he proposed that we should throw out the Bill altogether, and then he proposed that we should affirm the desirability of creating two provinces on the basis of this Bill. Then the hon. gentleman spoke strongly, as he did the other day, on the point that the proposal being for an alteration of the Constitution should be submitted to the people. I opposed the Bill on the question of the second reading, but I said that there ought to be three provinces if there were any division at all. I say that now, because otherwise there will be a deadlock. The Northern people would not accept the Bill unless they were given equal power in the Senate, as there would be no

proper federation without that. Will this House agree to give 80,000 people in the North equal representation with 320,000 people in the South? If we had three provinces we should avoid a deadlock, and I believe that under this proposal for two provinces the territorial separation of the North would be forced upon us, because of the deadlock that would arise. We should clash on the tariff question, on the question of railway management, and on the question of Indian coolie importation. I think it would be a disadvantage for us to clash on those questions. I do not believe this will be the end of the agitation either, because the Central people, who would be sold by such an amendment as this, would be bitter in their opposition to us, and it would make many men go over to Central territorial separation, or Central provincial separation, who would not otherwise have favoured either of those proposals. This House, last session, decided that the word "Central" should not be omitted from the resolutions upon the subject, when it was proposed by the hon. member for Stanley. The Central district has simply been used as a stalking-horse. There were certain measures which the Government wanted to get through, and now that they are passed there is no need to use the Central district as a stalking-horse any longer, and hon. members are being invited by the Chief Secretary to go either for or against the Central members, as they please. Everyone knows that the hon. member for Ipswich would not have proposed this amendment unless the Government agreed to it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The Government are opposed to it.

Mr. POWERS: Everyone knows that the Government could not have objected to the hon. member proposing the amendment, because the hon. member for Ipswich does not propose amendments in this House which are not approved by Ministers. If he does propose any amendment which is not approved of by the Chief Secretary, he always withdraws it. Hon. members must here see that continually during the session.

Mr. BARLOW: I am not going to withdraw this.

Mr. POWERS: I look upon the hon. member for Ipswich as a Minister without a portfolio. He is very useful in bringing forward amendments that the Ministry does not care to bring forward. He was very useful in bringing in an amendment upon the Elections Bill, which the Government did not care to propose themselves. There is no doubt they have a very capable man to do that work in the hon. member for Ipswich. I would not be surprised to hear that the Chief Secretary wrote out this amendment.

Mr. BARLOW: He did not; I wrote it out myself.

Mr. POWERS: Perhaps the Chief Secretary drew it out, and the hon. member wrote it out afterwards. At any rate, I am pretty certain that the hon. gentleman submitted it to the Chief Secretary before he proposed it; the hon. member will hardly deny that. I have been watching the Chief Secretary for five years; I have known the hon. gentleman for twenty years, and I know what is likely to be going on. If this proposal for dividing the colony into two were accepted, the eleven members from the Central district would come down here and make things more unpleasant than sixteen members from the North in a House of seventy-two. We should find that the agitation for separation would only commence by the passage of such a Bill as this. We know that this Bill will only be accepted from one point of view

by the North. We have seen telegrams from places all over the North stating that it will only be accepted as a stepping-stone to territorial separation. I say that if there is to be any provincial division of the colony at all, it should be divided into three provinces rather than two, and in such a case the Central district would be very useful to us. The Central districts have returned protectionist members to this House, and the North has not. The Central members will, therefore, be very useful to us on the question of the tariff. I am satisfied, too, that after the general election the Central districts will return men against the sales of land in large areas, and against land-grant railways, and these people will be very useful to us in dealing with legislation upon those subjects, and also upon the subject of the introduction of Indian coolies. We would require to have their assistance in the Senate upon such questions, otherwise there would be a deadlock. Now, as to the question of the extra expense. Let us look at the expense involved so far as the Central districts are concerned. In the Bill providing for three provinces 196 members are provided for, and there would be only nineteen less if we left the Central district out, and they are to get £100 a year. As far as the members of Parliament are concerned, we are to have 196, and the nineteen extra is not so much after all. I contend if we pass the second amendment we will affirm the principle of two provinces before the colony has expressed an opinion on the question, and we also will affirm the principle of the alteration of our Constitution on the basis of this Bill. Hon. members know what the basis of the Bill is. It is a complete alteration of our Constitution—handing over a large portion of the colony to one House, and the other would control the rest of the colony, and the Council and General Assembly is to be controlled by members sent by the provinces. These are such alterations in our Constitution that we have no right at all to pass them, especially as they are not accepted by the leader of the Northern party except as a stepping-stone to territorial separation. It looks as if the Ministry are not taking this amendment as a vote of want of confidence when it is proposed to constitute only two provinces, but they were very firm about the other amendment. The passing of the amendment of the hon. member for Ipswich would of course mean that a new Bill would have to be brought in. I do not intend to detain the House any longer. I wish to say now that no argument I have heard has altered the conviction I expressed on the main question, and that is that if there is a division, there must be three provinces or else we shall clash, and that if there is to be an alteration of the Constitution at all, the electors of the colony have a right to have a say in the matter.

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

AYES, 22.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Unmack, Cowley, Tozer, Hodgkinson, Little, Hync, Hamilton, Callan, Stevenson, Black, Smith, Perkins, Philp, Murray, Dalrymple, Corfield, Lissner, Jones, Paul, and Anear.

NOES, 34.

Messrs. Donaldson, Nelson, Morehead, Powers, Hall, Dickson, Glassey, O'Sullivan, Ryan, Hoolan, Gannon, Drake, Morgan, Aland, McMaster, Mellor, Stevens, Barlow, Battersby, Smyth, Palmer, Rutledge, Jessop, Macfarlane, Isambert, Salkeld, Crombie, Watson, Luya, Grimes, Plunkett, Campbell, Stephens, Sayers.

Question resolved in the negative.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—stated.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it will be as well for the House clearly to understand what they are going to vote for now. As far as I can understand it a blank has been inserted in the question for the purpose of either inserting the amendment of the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, in favour of two provinces, or nothing at all. It is, therefore, for the House to decide that either the colony shall be divided into two provinces or remain as it is.

Mr. GLASSEY said: Mr. Speaker,—There is no misunderstanding with regard to the vote as far as I am concerned. It does not follow that because I voted for the omission of certain words I am going to vote for the amendment. I voted for the omission of the words with the view of practically deciding the whole question. Now, I shall certainly vote against the amendment, notwithstanding that there is a blank.

Mr. SMYTH said: Mr. Speaker,—There is one matter which has not yet been touched upon, and that is that the Northern members have had the "loan" of the Central members, and I should now advise the Central members to go in for territorial separation pure and simple. That is the proper way to take it. The Central and the Northern members do not all agree; but there are plenty of Southern members who will agree to let the North go, believing that they are quite entitled to go. They have population, resources, and enough brains to conduct their own affairs. I can assure the hon. member, Mr. Black, the great champion of separation, and his fellow member, Mr. Dalrymple, that if they will bring forward a motion for territorial separation pure and simple, they will receive a great deal more support from Southern members than they expect.

Mr. SALKELD said: Mr. Speaker,—I am more convinced than ever that this question ought not to be settled before the general election. The difference of opinion that appears to exist amongst the Central members themselves on the subject emphasises that view. Although I voted for the omission of the words, I do not want to pledge myself whether the colony should be divided into two or three provinces. My desire is to see that whatever is done is done deliberately and with the full approval of the electors of the colony. After the question has been remitted to the constituencies, I shall, to a certain extent, be guided by the expressions of public feeling in the Northern and Central districts as well as in the South. At the same time, I think it would be very undesirable to divide the colony into two provinces, and leave an open sore in the Central district. We want to know the real opinion of the Central district on the subject; and that cannot be ascertained before the general election.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it just as well to state to the House the view the Government take of the question after the division just taken. Hon. members should distinctly understand how the matter stands. The House has now left out the words that "the Bill be now read a second time." We now have before us a proposal to insert the amendment of the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, that "this House approves of the division of the colony into two provinces on the basis of this Bill." If that goes to a vote the Government will certainly support the motion to insert those words, because in this matter the Government are quite consistent. They have introduced the Bill in all good faith, and have asked the House to deal with it seriously—not to play with it. Some hon. members have said that, if it were confined to two provinces, they would support it. They will now have an

opportunity of saying whether they are prepared to consider the question of dividing the colony into two provinces on the basis of the Bill. That means the general basis, of course. I will point out exactly what will be the consequence if the amendment is carried. This Bill must be withdrawn. It will be restored to the paper for the purpose of being withdrawn. The Government will then ask for leave to introduce a new Bill, and the House will have an opportunity, on seeing that Bill, of deciding whether the proposal to divide the colony into two provinces on the same basis is satisfactory or not. If they think it is satisfactory, they can pass the Bill to its second reading, or to any further stage they think fit. If they think the Bill is not satisfactory, they will decline to pass its second reading. That is the position in which the matter stands. I hope, because I am anxious to show that we are sincerely dealing with the matter, that the House will agree to the amendment, and that the Government will have an opportunity of bringing in a Bill and submitting it to the consideration of the House, so that it may be considered on its merits. Of course, that cannot be done at a moment's notice; but I will undertake in the course of next week to submit the proposition of the Government to the House for dividing the colony into two provinces, as the House is not inclined to consider the question of dividing it into three. I hope that hon. members, who desire that the House should have the reputation of dealing seriously with the matter, and not playing with it, will give the Government that opportunity.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—What we are asked to do is to commit ourselves to divide the colony into two provinces on the basis of the Bill. We have had a lot of experience as to what is cast up against us when we do commit ourselves. We have had it thrown in our teeth hundreds of times, and we know what it means. We are supposed to have a free hand; and yet when we attempt to exercise that free hand, we are told that we have given our verdict beforehand. If we try to argue the matter out we are accused of obstruction. I do not want to commit myself to any particular scheme. I want to see a scheme which we can deal with ourselves without going outside the colony at all. We are an independent colony, and in a small matter like this—it really is a small matter when we consider the population we have to deal with—we can surely devise some scheme which we can finally pass without surrendering the whole of our present Constitution, which is a good one as far as it goes. It is fairly democratic, and, if we surrender it, we may possibly get a worse one. I do not feel inclined to commit myself to anything of that sort. The best thing for the Government to do now is to withdraw the Bill. If the question now before the House goes to a division, the best thing the House can do is to negative it. The consequence of that will be that nothing will be left in but the word "that," and "that" commits no one.

Mr. MURRAY said: Mr. Speaker,—I am exceedingly sorry to hear the Chief Secretary say that the Government are about to recede from the position they took up in introducing the Bill. This is a matter of extreme importance, and it is not fair that it should be forced upon the House at the present time in the absence of many of the principal members for the Central district—more particularly the two members for Rockhampton. I am inclined to think, with the leader of the Opposition, that the very best thing the Government can do under the circumstances is to withdraw the Bill altogether. I would much prefer to see it submitted to the

country, and let it be determined then whether Central Queensland is not in favour of separation in some form or other. I am convinced it is, and I shall support any motion for the withdrawal of the Bill.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—The main question is gone. The colony is certainly not going to be divided into three provinces. Now, the question comes up whether it is to be divided into two parts. Considering the action of one section of those two parts—that is, the Northern members, or the bulk of them—in the House, we had better stop as we are. We have had in the division a combination which was not creditable either to the Central or to the Northern portion of the colony, having regard to the way in which the Southern portion of the colony has always treated those portions of the colony. The best thing the Government can do is to accept the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition and withdraw the Bill. It is only beating the air after this. They have had a feather-bed made for them by their own side, and they have been assisted by hon. members on this side, with the kindest intentions, to fall as softly as possible. Having got into that position they should not push the matter. Let us go on with some useful legislation. Let us cease cutting the colony into bits; and let us do something for the good of the colony at large.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—I can, with confidence, claim the vote of the hon. member. At all events, he said the other night he would vote for the insertion of the words proposed by the hon. member for Ipswich, and he is bound to do so.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: Unquestionably.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The advice given to the Government by the leader of the Opposition is very bad advice, and no good Ministry ever takes advice from a leader of the Opposition. I can quite sympathise with the hon. member for Normanby, but he has not taken up a very logical position. We have faced the question of dividing the colony into provinces fairly and well, and we have been beaten on one part of it—that it shall not be divided into three.

Mr. MURRAY: I accept the defeat.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Quite so; but why should the hon. gentleman want to push that defeat on to the other two parts? The hon. gentleman has not only taken up an illogical position, but it does not lead him to what he wants to get. He wants to see the Central district a separate province. If we cannot get the three provinces now, the next best thing is to make two provinces, according to the proposition now before the House. If the system works successfully with two provinces, then we shall be on the high road, not only to see the creation of the Central province, but to see other districts come in. I do not want to see the scheme confined to this colony. I have little doubt that we shall have other provinces joining us. Let us make the Bill applicable to the two provinces, and if it works well then the Central district will be able to come in and better their position. The Government occupy a perfectly logical position. We are not going to take the advice of the leader of the Opposition, and after all these nights of discussion leave simply the word "that" as the result of all our work. It would be a much more manly thing to have voted the Bill out straight. We could have taken a defeat on the second reading, but we are not prepared to take a defeat on a motion of this sort.

Mr. PHILP said: Mr. Speaker,—I have given my vote for the three provinces, and if the question is put for the creation of two provinces I must vote for that too. I have loyally stuck to my promise to vote for the three provinces, and if this House in its wisdom has said that we cannot have three provinces we must submit. If a vote is taken as to whether we shall have two provinces or none at all, I must vote for two provinces.

Mr. PLUNKETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I have been an amused and an amazed spectator of the work that has been going on in this House for some time. I do not think there has been anything like it in any other Parliament in the world. I sympathise with the hon. member for Normanby, for if I ever saw a game of "cut-throat euchre" played, it has been over this Bill. For the last eighteen months there has scarcely been a word heard from Northern members; the Central members have made the whole of the running, and have acted as jackals to the North. That agitation culminated in the sending home of two gentlemen to advocate their views, and they even sent a telegram to them to remain in England until they learned the result of this division. I do not believe in giving the Central districts autonomy; I would rather keep the colony as it is; but I think the North has a better claim to autonomy than the Central districts. I am not up in the way things are managed now here, but would like to see fair play.

Mr. PAUL said: Mr. Speaker,—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Question, question!

Mr. PAUL: I think I have a right to speak, being a Central member. I think there ought to be as high a code of political morality as of social or commercial morality, and when the Northern members and the Central members agreed to stand shoulder to shoulder and support one another, I think it was derogatory for Northern members to go against the Central members. I have always been a strong advocate for Northern separation, and have been always opposed to Central separation, because the conditions in the latter district are like those of the Southern district. As a matter of loyalty, I agreed to sign a petition to Lord Knutsford in favour of Central separation, as well as Northern separation, and am surprised that the Northern members should have gone back upon their pledge.

Mr. JONES said: Mr. Speaker,—I believe the Northern members have loyally supported the Central members. I for one have always thought that autonomy should be granted to the North, and I shall support them in their endeavours to obtain it. The result of the division has converted me, and in future I shall be a thorough advocate for territorial separation.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I sympathise with the hon. member for Normanby to a certain extent only, because I told him long ago what would take place. I told him that notwithstanding the promises he had received, there was no earnestness in the desire for Central separation. The Chief Secretary and the Treasurer can make very earnest speeches when they are not in earnest at all. I have given the hon. member what assistance I could by my vote, but I certainly understood that since the resolutions of last session were thrown out, no compact had been entered into between the Northern and Central members. I shall now take my own course and vote against the amendment for the division into two provinces, but I consider the hon. member for Normanby has been fooled all along.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted, be so inserted—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 38.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Cowley, Hodgkinson, Tozer, Unmack, Morehead, Dickson, Hyne, Aland, Grimes, Barlow, Morgan, Isambert, Jones, Black, Sayers, O'Connell, Annear, Palmer, Dalrymple, Laya, Hamilton, Corfield, Lissner, Philp, Battersby, Perkins, Smyth, Crombie, Smith, McMaster, Mellor, Campbell, Watson, Stephens, Little, and Rutledge.

NOES, 19.

Messrs. Stevens, Allan, Nelson, Powers, Paul, Hoolan, O'Sullivan, Murray, Gannon, Macfarlane, Drake, Jessop, Ryan, Hall, Glassey, Donaldson, Plunkett, Stevenson, and Callan.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That this House approves of the division of the colony into two provinces on the basis of the Bill—put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—The Order of the Day for the second reading of the Bill still stands before us to be dealt with, though the House has declined to allow it to be read a second time to-night. I therefore move that the second reading of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for Thursday next. It is merely a formal motion. At an early date I shall move that the Bill be withdrawn, and state the intentions of the Government with respect to the matter.

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. I propose on Thursday to move the adoption of the new Standing Orders.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past 10 o'clock until Thursday.