

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 23 AUGUST 1893**

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### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Wednesday, 23 August, 1893.*

Inquests of Death Act Amendment Bill: Assent.—  
Duty on Imported Coal and Timber.—Examination  
of Imported Fruit.—Meat and Dairy Produce  
Encouragement Bill: Third reading. — Central  
Separation.—Pearl-shell and Béche-de-mer Fishery  
Acts Amendment Bill: Message from the Legisla-  
tive Council.—Adjournment.

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

#### INQUESTS OF DEATH ACT AMEND- MENT BILL.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER reported that he had received  
a message from His Excellency the Governor,  
assenting to the Inquests of Death Act of 1866  
Amendment Bill.

#### DUTY ON IMPORTED COAL AND TIMBER.

Mr. HARDING asked the Colonial Treasurer—  
1. Is it correct that the coal used on the hulks at  
Townsville, Cooktown, and Thursday Island, and brought  
from New South Wales, pays no duty?  
2. Was a lot of timber delivered at Townsville Meat  
Works on which no duty was collected?  
3. And if so, on what authority?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. H. M. Nelson) replied—

1. Duties are collected on all coal imported into the colony in accordance with the Customs Act.
2. No dutiable timber has been delivered at the port of Townsville at any time without payment of duty.

#### EXAMINATION OF IMPORTED FRUIT.

Mr. GROOM asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

1. Whether the Agricultural Department have made any arrangements to examine before landing green fruit imported from places other than the Australasian colonies?
2. Is the Agricultural Department aware that large quantities of American fruits are now being landed in Brisbane, containing insect pests destructive to the apple and other orchards of the colony?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. A. H. Barlow) replied—

1. No. The Department of Agriculture has no power to do so.
2. The department is aware that American fruits are landed in Brisbane, *via* Sydney, but is not aware that they contain any insect pests, or, if such be contained, that they are likely to be more destructive to the apple and other orchards of the colony than the green fruits imported from Tasmania and other Australian colonies, where the orchards are infested with the codlin moth and other insects destructive to the apple and other fruits. No direct shipments of green fruit from America have been landed in Brisbane during this year.

#### MEAT AND DAIRY PRODUCE ENCOURAGEMENT BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

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

#### CENTRAL SEPARATION.

Mr. CURTIS, in moving—

1. That the constituencies of the Central division of the colony of Queensland having, at the recent general election, declared in favour of territorial separation, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the territory comprised within such division should be separated from the said colony and erected into a new colony; but so that the interchange of natural products between the new colony and the old one shall be and continue as free from tax or duty after such separation as if it had never been made.

2. That this resolution be presented to His Excellency the Governor for transmission to the Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies in the usual way—

said: I desire, in bringing forward this resolution, to state in the first place that I do so with the entire approval of all the Central members, with one solitary exception—that is, the hon. member for Gregory. I also wish to state that we are impressed with the conviction that in bringing this matter forward, and asking the House to discuss it, we are performing a duty which we owe to ourselves, to the people of Central Queensland, and to those who come after them, their children, and their children's children; and that we are also upholding a great principle which was long ago established for all time—namely, that as soon as an offshoot of the mother country or a mother colony becomes self-supporting, it is entitled to the management of its own affairs. I am aware that this question of separation has frequently been discussed in this House; and, so far as the older members are concerned, I can say nothing on the subject of which they are not already aware. On the other hand, there are a large number of new members who probably are not very familiar with the subject, and have not heard the matter debated. Therefore I think it desirable that I should, as briefly and succinctly as possible, give an outline of the separation movement so far as it relates, to the

great Central division of the colony. Shortly after the colony of Queensland obtained separation from New South Wales the people living to the north of Dawes Range, who were really offshoots from the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, found that, owing to the centralisation of the whole of the legislative and administrative affairs of the colony in Brisbane, it was impossible to obtain due consideration of their own affairs, and they protested frequently by their representatives in the Brisbane Parliaments against the system; but always without avail. About the year 1863, the people in the Central district made a formal protest and a specific demand regarding, first, the adjustment of accounts, because even at that early stage of the history of the colony the people living to the north of Dawes Range alleged that they had lost large sums of the surplus revenue contributed by them, which had been spent in the Southern division. They demanded increased representation and the establishment of provincial councils; and in 1864 our then representative, Mr. John Douglas—now the Hon. John Douglas—brought forward a scheme for a sort of federated division of Queensland, for the establishment of provincial parliaments, with a Central Parliament exercising jurisdiction over matters of general concern. The Herbert-Macalister Government, however, objected to such a measure being brought in by a private member, and Mr. Douglas was obliged to withdraw it. But the Government distinctly recognised the fact that, owing to the great extent of Queensland and the remote situation of its capital and the seat of government in the extreme south-eastern corner of the territory, it was impossible that the affairs of the colony could be managed under the then system, and they proposed to establish a system of provincial councils. They brought in a Bill called the "Provincial Councils Enabling Bill," which was allowed to drop after being read a second time. Mr. Douglas then stated that, as justice was not to be obtained from the Parliament of Queensland, they would seek it elsewhere, and very shortly afterwards the first separation movement was started by the people living to the north of Dawes Range, the headquarters being in Rockhampton, and the southern boundary they adopted in their first petition was Dawes Range, in respect to which Sir Thomas Mitchell said that Nature had set up her own landmark not to be disputed. Dawes Range naturally separates that part of the colony from Southern Queensland. The agitation was carried on for some time, until in 1871 our first petition was presented to Earl Kimberley, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, by Mr. Archer. Unfortunately, the movement was not carried on as it should have been. It was allowed to lapse; but subsequently to that repeated demands were made by the people living in the Central districts for some scheme of decentralisation, and successive Governments brought in different measures from time to time having decentralisation for their object, but none of them were allowed to become law, simply because the South was too strong, and it did not suit its interests that any scheme of decentralisation should come into existence. I will read the different measures brought forward from time to time. In the year 1871 the Colonial Secretary, Sir Arthur Palmer, introduced a Bill known as the Financial Separation Bill, which provided for the financial division of the colony into three parts; and in 1872 a Bill of a like nature was introduced, but neither became law. In 1877 a Royal Commission was appointed by the Government for the purpose of finding out how to allay the feeling of discontent, and bring about a more equitable distribution of the revenue. The recommendations brought up

were embodied in a Bill which was introduced and read a first time. In 1877 Sir S. W. Griffith introduced what is known as the Financial Districts Bill, to divide the colony into three parts, and provide for the keeping of separate accounts of the expenditure within such divisions and the revenue raised therein. At the same time he laid upon the table of the House a map showing the boundaries of the three divisions, but the Bill was afterwards withdrawn. In the same year the people of Central Queensland presented a petition through Mr. Pattison, one of the members for Rockhampton, praying for the establishment of a system of provincial councils. In the following year Sir Thomas Mellwraith introduced a Bill adopting the boundaries of the three divisions laid down in the map laid upon the table by Sir S. W. Griffith, and the boundaries of these divisions are described in the Real Property (Local Registries) Act of 1887. Hon. members will bear in mind that the tripartite division of the colony was always the fundamental basis, and there is no doubt whatever that Nature herself dictates the division of the colony of Queensland into at least three parts. On the one hand, we have the tropical North, then the semi-tropical Centre, and then the temperate South. It is quite clear that, owing to the vastness of the territory and the great diversity of its interests and conditions, a policy which would suit one part would not suit another. For instance, I should imagine that a land law suitable for the Southern division would certainly not meet the requirements of Central or Northern Queensland. Every attempt at securing some measure of decentralisation having failed, the second separation movement was inaugurated in Central Queensland some four years ago with great vigour and determination—with a determination on the part of the people to carry it sooner or later to a successful issue, because they felt they were only asking for that to which they were justly entitled. In 1890, Mr. Archer, on behalf of the people of Central Queensland, brought forward a motion in this House affirming the desirableness of granting separation to Central Queensland, and the Hon. J. M. Macrossan introduced a similar motion with regard to Northern Queensland. Mr. Macrossan, in referring to Central Queensland, said Queensland was too big for good government, that it would make four or five good States, and therefore he would vote for the separation of the Central district. Those motions were met by an amendment moved by Sir S. W. Griffith, affirming that territorial separation was not desirable, but that a federative division of the colony was desirable. The resolutions were negatived, and the amendment, when it became the substantive proposition, was so coolly received by Southern members that it was allowed to drop. In the interval between the rejection of the motions I spoke of and the introduction of the amendment, a letter was signed by the following members of the Queensland legislature, and despatched to Lord Knutsford, in reference to Central separation:—Wm. Pattison, A. Archer, W. S. Paul, J. Murray, Rees R. Jones, A. J. Callan, J. M. Macrossan, R. Philp, D. H. Dalrymple, F. Clewett, Ed. Palmer, M. H. Black, J. Stevenson, A. S. Cowley, L. Goldring, J. Hamilton, F. R. Murphy, W. C. Little, J. Crombie, I. Lissner, R. H. Smith, W. Aplin, W. F. Lambert, R. G. Casey, P. O'Sullivan, and J. Deane. In that letter the members in question, comprising nearly all the Northern and Central members and some Southern members, together with four members of the Legislative Council, expressed the opinion that Central Queensland was in a position to be erected into an independent colony, and praying for consideration at His

Lordship's hands. The Governor, in a despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, referring to the amendment brought forward by Sir S. W. Griffith, said he did not feel called upon to express an opinion upon the resolutions then before Parliament, but it appeared to him that the amendment proposed by Sir S. W. Griffith practically admitted the necessity or expediency of some considerable measure of separation, to divide Queensland into three parts. In 1891, when Sir S. W. Griffith submitted his proposals in a revised form, after considerable discussion they were rejected, and between that time and the introduction of the Queensland Constitution Bill, No. 1, the people of Central Queensland despatched delegates to London, where they had a long interview with Lord Knutsford. Lord Knutsford told them that he was advised that the proposals would be reintroduced in the form of a Bill, and that he had made up his mind to await the further discussion of those proposals. He said, substantially, that, in the event of the proposals being again rejected by the Queensland Parliament, the time would then have arrived, in his opinion, when the Imperial Government and the Imperial Parliament would no longer wish to delay in giving effect to the wishes of the people of Central Queensland.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not think he said that.

The PREMIER: No, nor anything like that.

Mr. CURTIS: Mr. Archer, the senior member for Rockhampton, will give a full account of what transpired between himself and Lord Knutsford.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He said he would take the matter into consideration.

Mr. CURTIS: On 26th July, 1892, in moving the second reading of the Queensland Constitution Bill, Sir S. W. Griffith said that "the movement for local autonomy has so far progressed that, unless this Parliament moves, the Parliament of Great Britain, which has a controlling authority, will certainly be invited to move. We have to choose between two alternatives. Either we must rise to the occasion and deal with the matter fairly and honestly, endeavouring to do the best for all parts of the colony—not looking to our own corner of it alone, but looking to the whole of it—or else we shall have the matter taken out of our hands by the Imperial legislature, and they will do what they think best under the circumstances."

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Do you endorse that?

Mr. CURTIS: I do, substantially; and more especially that part which states that, failing this Parliament consenting to give the Central and Northern districts what they want, the Imperial Parliament would step in and do it for them. The hon. gentleman further on said that "attention was naturally called to the remarkable circumstance that the Southern members solidly voted against the almost unanimous requests of the Northern and Central members: a very remarkable circumstance, because, if hon. members would put themselves in the position of persons looking on at those proceedings, they would see that the people of the Northern and Central districts asked for a thing which in the history of the world had been almost universally conceded to people making similar requests. A not unreasonable inference to be drawn from that was that the Southern members were actuated by motives of selfishness in considering the interests of the Southern part of the colony in opposition to the interests of the colony as a whole."

The COLONIAL TREASURER: You had better read the reply to that.

Mr. CURTIS: While the discussion was going on, the *Brisbane Courier*, the leading journal in the colony, expressed an opinion on the subject on 20th May, 1892. It was then stated that what Lord Knutsford had said to the Central delegates should open the eyes of some of our prominent politicians, who affected to believe that, while the Northern division was entitled to territorial separation, Central Queensland must ever remain an integral part of the colony of Queensland. The *Courier* said that had never been their contention, as they believed that almost precisely the same arguments applied in each case. The climatic and social distinctions were just as diverse in the one case as in the other. In Rockhampton there was as little sympathy with Brisbane as there was in Townsville with Brisbane, and there was as much sympathy between Rockhampton and Townsville as in either. The desire for local autonomy was as paramount in the Central district as in the Northern, and though the agitation was stronger in Rockhampton and Townsville, which expected to obtain greater importance from being capital cities, the feeling was also strong in the inland centres. On the 30th of the same month the same journal expressed the opinion that the question could be settled by a short Act of two or three clauses, which could be passed through the House of Commons in an hour if a favourable time were chosen, unless the Queensland Parliament, within a reasonable time, showed its willingness to create a working system of provincial autonomy. After the elimination of Central Queensland from the Constitution Bill, which then became a Bill for the formation of two provinces only, the Bill itself was rejected by the Upper House. Then our London committee, with our delegate, Mr. Archer, approached Lord Ripon, who replied that he acknowledged the strength of our case, but would await the result of the elections that were about to take place in Queensland—meaning, I suppose, that he would wait to see whether the people of Central Queensland were fairly unanimous on the subject. Hon. members will bear in mind that the only part referred to was Central Queensland. The North was not mentioned at all.

The PREMIER: Nor the South either.

Mr. CURTIS: He was speaking to a deputation representing the Central division of the colony, and he wanted to see whether the people were really in earnest or not. The result of that election is that the people of Central Queensland have put it on record that they are practically unanimous in favour of territorial separation, and we are now in a position to give Lord Ripon the assurance he required on that point. Every candidate who came forward was pledged to territorial separation, with the exception of one, and he was beaten. That in itself was a sufficient proof of the feeling that pervades the mind of the people of Central Queensland on the subject.

Mr. CORFIELD: I was not pledged to territorial separation.

Mr. CURTIS: And now we come here, not to prove our case to this colonial Parliament, but to challenge its opinion as to whether the proposed separation is desirable or not. That is all we want now. I know it is the opinion of Southern politicians that no separation can eventuate without the consent of this Parliament. But that, to my mind, is absurd, in face of the many examples we have in history to the contrary. There is no example in history of a mother colony parting with her younger colony without

a struggle. It is not in human nature to suppose they would; therefore we do not expect it. The people of Moreton Bay took a very different view of the subject when they wanted separation themselves. When the separation movement was commenced here, Dr. Lang held a meeting in Brisbane in November, 1851, which was largely attended, and a motion was carried that separation from New South Wales was desirable. When Dr. Lang visited the district in 1845, they would not listen to anything of the kind when he suggested it, but when he came back in 1851 they signed a petition almost immediately, drawn up by him. The population of Moreton Bay at that time was 10,396. During the time the Constitution Bill was passing through Committee in the Sydney Legislative Council—it was mainly drafted by Mr. W. C. Wentworth, while the separation movement was proceeding here—a clause was inserted in the Bill that no separation or alteration of the boundaries of New South Wales should take place at any time without the consent of the Parliament of the colony concerned, expressed in some legislative enactment. Hon. members may imagine how that was received in Brisbane, when the news arrived here that the people of Sydney were attempting by that means to deprive them of their right to claim separation from the Imperial authorities. A great public meeting was held in Brisbane, a petition against it was sent to the New South Wales Parliament, and eventually the objectionable clause was thrown out. In the meantime a communication had been sent to England to Earl Grey, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, signed by certain members of the Council in Sydney; and in his reply he said that no colonial legislature possessed power to control the Imperial Parliament, or to limit and determine the boundaries of colonies which belonged to the Crown. It will thus be seen that the people of Moreton Bay at that time objected to any colonial Parliament taking up the position of saying whether separation should take place or not. But circumstances alter cases, and now we find that the people of Southern Queensland are doing the very thing that they protested so strongly and so successfully against in those days. It only shows how people can forget the strongest lessons when prejudice or the love of power of any kind comes in and influences their decision. Sir S. W. Griffith knew that the consent of this Parliament was not necessary when he warned the Southern members that if they did not give what was justly due to the people of Central and Northern Queensland a greater power would take it out of their hands. If the consent of the Parliament of the mother colony was necessary, no such thing as separation could ever take place. It is certain that if the consent of the Parliament of New South Wales had been necessary what is now Queensland would still be a part of New South Wales under what was then termed the selfish domination of Sydney. It is only by comparison that we can judge of our position as to whether we are able to stand and walk alone, without any support from the South on the one hand and the North on the other. In 1851, when the petition to which I referred was drawn up, there were 10,396 people here, sheep 1,430,000, cattle 175,000, horses 6,000, and pigs 2,000. In 1861, a year after separation, the population was only 28,000, the revenue £182,317, the expenditure £161,000, with exports £523,477, and imports £742,823. Next year the Estimates showed an expected revenue of £182,200, and an expenditure of £193,663. In the evidence given by Sir F. Napier Broome, before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, on the Constitution Bill for Western Australia, he gave some statistics

with regard to that colony in the year 1890. The population was 40,000; exports, £680,000; revenue, £382,000; and expenditure, £386,000. Now we come to Central Queensland, and we will see by the comparison how well able Central Queensland is to stand and walk alone. We have 220,000 square miles of country, or three or four times as big as Victoria, and as big as I do not know how many American States or States of the Union. Our population is 50,000; the exports for the year ending in December last £2,713,116, or about £54 per head of the population. The figures show an increase of £500,000 in the exports of Central Queensland upon the returns for last year; and in this connection it must be borne in mind that the output of gold was diminishing all the time, while exports more durable and more beneficial to the community were increasing all the time. Our direct imports were £417,116, and our estimate of transshipments from Brisbane is £208,558, or £625,674 altogether. Our revenue was £759,060. We do not take that as a correct return of our revenue, and I shall have something more to say about that later on. Our expenditure was £619,000, showing a surplus of £140,000. We have 559 miles of railway paying a net return of £4 6s. 6d. per cent., and our great trunk line is worth a good deal more than its actual cost, and worth, probably, the whole of our public debt. In a few words, we have a fourth of the trade of the colony, and only one-seventh of the representation in this House. I want to make it distinctly clear that we base our claims to self-government much less upon our grievances, whatever they may be, than upon our natural inherent and unalienable right as a community of free British people; and as such a community we demand that right; we do not come here to ask it as a favour, but as a right. To show you that when the separation of this territory took place from New South Wales it was never for a moment intended by the Imperial authorities that this vast territory should for ever remain subject to the domination of the few people in this end of the colony, or that they should hold it in perpetuity to do as they liked with, I have only to say that that is opposed to all precedent of the policy of Great Britain, whose scheme of colonisation has all along been to divide her large and unmanageable colonies as from time to time has appeared necessary through the spread of population and settlement. The Duke of Newcastle wrote to Sir Wm. Denison on the 5th August, 1859, in these terms, to show the intention of the Imperial authorities on the subject—"The Crown should possess the power of further subdividing the territory now erected into the colony of Queensland, and of detaching such Northern portions as may hereafter be found fit to be erected into separate colonies." And on the 14th September, 1861, in a despatch to Governor Bowen, of Queensland, he observed that he was "not prepared to abandon, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, the power to deal with districts not yet settled, as the wishes and convenience of the future settlers may require." We say we do not come here to ask this Parliament as a favour to pass a resolution in favour of what we are asking for, nor do we come here to prove our case. Our case is already proved. But if we wanted any further proof of the necessity for separation, so far as Central Queensland is concerned, we have it in the returns, published only the other day, of the revenue and expenditure of the three districts of the colony, kept separate in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Districts Bill of 1887. We find from those returns that, in respect of local revenue, we contribute more than twice as much per head of

population as Southern Queensland. The local revenue is kept separately, and is supposed to represent the actual collections under various headings for the different districts, but the general revenue is not kept in such a way as to enable us to say how much is actually contributed by each division of the colony. The return is divided by the total population of the colony, and the resulting quotient is multiplied by the population of each district, and that amount is taken as the contribution of each division to the general revenue. We object to that, because it is a fair assumption that the ratio which the amount of local revenue contributed by Central Queensland bears to the total local revenue of the whole colony is the same as the proportion of its contribution to the general revenue to the total general revenue of the colony. The estimate is approximate, of course; but we assume that we are entitled to a very much larger contribution to general revenue than we get credit for in the returns. Then there are, of course, the Customs duties, and our calculation with regard to them, based upon very careful inquiries at Rockhampton and elsewhere, is that we should get 60 per cent. more than we are credited with. If our assumption with regard to general revenue is correct, and we were collecting our own revenue, we would have a great deal more than we are now credited with, and instead of having a surplus of £140,000, as the returns show, we would have something like £290,000 to our credit. There is the proceeds of forced sales of land by auction, to which we greatly object. The land is ours; at all events, the money received for it should have been made available for the extension of settlement in Central Queensland, and not elsewhere. That was the principle of the Financial Districts Bill of 1887, as may be seen from a speech delivered by Sir Samuel Griffith on the 26th September, 1889, on the subject of the returns, so far as Northern Queensland was concerned. The hon. gentleman explained that the accounts were kept in such a way as to show the general revenue of the whole colony and the receipts on account of the districts, on the one hand; and on the other the general expenditure relating to the whole colony, and the expenditure relating to the different districts, so that instead of there being only one balance-sheet there were four—one relating to the general account, and three to the different districts. The returns kept in that way showed some extraordinary things, which rendered it important to know the actual result of the financial transactions of the year. Then he goes on to point out that the net surplus on the whole transactions of the colony was £116,800, which was made up of £2,719 contributed by the South, £407 by the Central districts, and £113,720 by the Northern district. That, he said, was a most unsatisfactory state of things for every part of the colony, for the South as well as for the North—for the North, because it appeared that the surplus revenue, which, according to the scheme of the Bill, properly belonged to them, had been absorbed in paying the general liabilities of the colony. Is not that exactly what has been done with our surplus revenue? Instead of being made available for expenditure on urgent works in Central Queensland, as was intended under that Bill, it has come down here and been placed in the bottomless pit of the Brisbane Treasury. Sir Samuel Griffith went on to say that it was most unsatisfactory to the South, because any action which would result in doing injustice to the North could only have the effect of embittering the feeling of one portion of the colony towards another, and intensifying the irritation that had for some time existed. That

is the very thing that is being done in Central Queensland. The feeling of dissatisfaction and irritation, which is very strong and deep-seated, is being intensified. Sir Samuel Griffith further said that out of that £116,000 no less than £113,700 was derived from the North, and the greater part of that was obtained from the excessive forced sales of land in that part of the colony, which he described as especially unfair. Is it not equally unfair to make forced sales in Central Queensland? Yet that very thing is being done now in Central Queensland. But he goes on to say that the Government, having got this surplus, prided themselves on being splendid financiers. They said, "We have only been in office for twelve months, and we have already reduced the deficiency in the general revenue of the colony by £116,000. But how have they done it? By forced sales of land in the North—which is highly improper in principle." If it is highly improper in principle so far as the North is concerned, it is equally improper in principle so far as the Central division is concerned. And Sir Samuel Griffith remarked on this: that if it was a specimen of the financial ability of the Government, they had shown their utter incompetence to conduct the finances of the colony. Later on, he said that the case was really worse than it appeared by the return, because in the return all the Customs revenue collected in the Southern division—including the Customs revenue on goods re-exported coastwise to the North—was credited to the South; and they did not know exactly how much of that should be credited to the North. That is the very thing we have to complain about, and the consumption of dutiable goods re-exported from Brisbane is much larger in Central Queensland than it is in the North, where they avail themselves to a much larger extent of the British India service than we do. Sir Samuel Griffith further contended that, in the interests of all parts of the colony alike, it was very important that this state of things—that is, forced sales of land—should not be continued, because they were forging weapons, whether intentionally or not, in favour of separation. Then he concludes by saying—

"It is the duty of the Government and of the Colonial Treasurer, who has charge of the finances of the Government, to keep within their grasp the manner in which the money has been raised and the way in which it is expended, so that no injustice of this kind may be done. If that is not done we shall certainly increase very seriously the difficulties between the different parts of the colony, and we shall decrease the good feeling which, I think, generally exists at present. From the point of view of those who do not believe in separation we are doing the very worst thing which can be done by those who wish that this colony should continue one and undivided."

If there is anything that has intensified the feeling in Central Queensland in favour of territorial separation, it is these forced sales of land. The then Treasurer, Mr. Pattison, followed Sir Samuel Griffith, and said the latter was perfectly right, so that the Opposition and the Government were at one on this matter. The Treasurer said that in going through the tables, which he had done carefully, he could fully understand the objection of many Northern members that the North was being pilfered for the benefit of the South. If "pilfered" is a proper term to use, then Central Queensland is being pilfered for the benefit of the South. The Treasurer further said that to some extent he had always believed that the North paid more than their fair proportion of the taxation of the colony; they were the largest consumers of dutiable goods, and the table did not, he contended, properly represent the amount they had contributed to the revenue of the colony, but that, if we had the means of showing accurately

what they have contributed, the balance would be very much more in their favour than it was. I say the Central division is placed in precisely the same position as the North. The Treasurer pointed out that the large quantity of goods that went North, on which Customs duty was paid in Brisbane, was not taken into consideration at all; Brisbane got the full benefit of that. In 1864 the then member for Rockhampton called attention to this very thing in Parliament, and some sort of an address to the Governor was adopted, asking that certain accounts should be kept as a check on duty-paying goods going North from Brisbane; so that as far back as 1864 we called attention to this abuse. I notice that Sir Samuel Griffith stated in a recent letter that no effect could be given to such a resolution without legislative enactment. But if there is no legislative enactment on the subject, that is the fault of the majorities who have kept successive Governments in office, and not the fault of the people of Central Queensland. Mr. Pattison further stated that the condition of things to which I have referred would certainly carry conviction to the minds of the people in the North that their statement was not altogether without foundation that they were contributing unduly to support the South in its expenditure on account of its policy of centralisation. Every word the hon. gentleman then said with reference to the North applies with greater force to Central Queensland at the present time. The Minister for Works, the late Hon. J. M. Macrossan, on the same occasion said he believed that the only remedy for maladministration of revenue, especially in the North, was separation; that no matter what Government was in power, as long as the present system of government prevailed, there must be maladministration of revenue. He also stated that the case stood actually a great deal worse than the figures showed. Mr. Philp, one of the members for Townsville, spoke later on in the discussion, and, referring to the allocation of the deficiency between general revenue and general expenditure, asked, "How are the figures arrived at?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. R. Philp): That was about Northern separation, not Central separation.

Mr. CURTIS: It is in reference to the Financial Districts Bill, which I am speaking of. The hon. gentleman said he found that the proportion of deficiency in the South on general account was at the rate of 16s. per head. In the Central district it was at the rate of 23s. per head, while in the North it was 24s. 6d. per head. Then the hon. member went on to say that, when the question was decentralisation against territorial separation, he was always in favour of the latter; but, as it was a question of decentralisation or no decentralisation and a continued robbing of the North by the South, they must accept decentralisation in preference to being robbed. I do not know whether "robbed" is the proper term; but if so, then we are being robbed. Then he said, in regard to decentralisation, that he did not take it as a permanent solution of the difficulty, but it was better the Bill should be accepted until they could obtain territorial separation. Mr. Cowley said he sincerely hoped the Government would not sell much more land in the North until the Decentralisation Bill was passed, and the North got full credit for those sales. The Government could sell as much land as they pleased, and the North was simply credited with it in the books, but received no tangible results from it. It all went into the general revenue, and was swallowed up. When they had passed the Decentralisation Bill, they would get the full value of the revenue

obtained from the North; but at that time the Government could sell £500,000 worth of land in the North, and it would all be swallowed up in the general revenue. The sooner the Bill was passed, the sooner the North would be satisfied; but it would not be completely satisfied, because nothing but separation would eventually satisfy the North. I make these references to strengthen the assertion I made that the accounts kept separate in accordance with the proposed Decentralisation Bill are not fair to the Centre or the North, for we do not get credit for Customs duties; and I do not believe the general revenue is fairly apportioned. Then I quote Sir S. W. Griffith in support of the protest I made here, while the Financial Statement was under discussion, on behalf of the people of Central Queensland against the sale of their land—the very thing that Sir S. W. Griffith denounced as wrong and unjust in principle. We must bear in mind that, according to the spirit and intention of that Bill, the surplus balances were to be available for expenditure in the division which contributed the money, and not elsewhere. If the South or any division showed a deficit, it had to make up that deficit itself, which was only a fair thing. But we may be asked where do we get our title? My answer would be by occupation and settlement, just as the people of Moreton Bay acquired the right to the land in the Southern part of the colony—by coming here and entering into the wilderness and subduing it. We must also bear in mind what the Duke of Newcastle said in his despatches before and after separation took place—namely, at some future time the colonies might be divided in accordance with the wishes and convenience of the future settlers of territory that was then unsettled. We are those people. I recollect reading a speech delivered by Dr. Lang in the Legislative Council of New South Wales, in support of the separation of Port Phillip from New South Wales, in which he said that the system under which the people of Port Phillip were controlled was nothing more than a despotism. If that is so, this is a greater despotism. Dr. Lang is an authority to be listened to, because it was mainly through his efforts that Queensland obtained separation from New South Wales, and he denounced the sale of Port Phillip lands and the placing of the proceeds in the New South Wales Treasury as a downright robbery. If it were a robbery in that case, it is a robbery in this. In asking the Imperial authorities to divide Queensland, we are not asking anything unusual or unconstitutional; we are only asking them to do what they have done over and over again. The universal practice may be inferred from the fact that the original American States were divided from time to time until finally there were thirteen colonies carved out of them, which eventually obtained their independence. In connection with that, Dr. Lang said it was taken for granted on all hands, so far as the American colonies were concerned, that when separate settlements sprung up, and distinct communities sprung up here and there, those people should be supplied with the means of self-government—their natural and inherent right. We know what America has done with regard to the division of territory and the creation of small compact States since the establishment of a federal republic. They had to undo some of the blunders of the British Government, and to readjust boundaries, which will have to be done here some day. The original thirteen colonies now include about twenty-two States; in addition to these, twenty-two other States have been carved out of the territories. America had set the world a great example in dividing territory and creating fresh States. The *bear ideal* of a State, so far as size is concerned,

contains from 50,000 to 60,000 square miles, or about one-fifth of the area of the Northern division of Queensland. Dr. Lang remarked that, when the State of Texas applied for admission into the Union, Congress would not consent until she had submitted to a proviso allowing her territory to be divided into four States at some future time as population required. One of the greatest of American Presidents said that no separate community of people deprived of a legislature could be well governed, no matter how carefully representatives might be selected. Human nature would have to be changed before a distant Parliament would legislate well and wisely for distant communities. They would look after themselves and people living in remote places would, as a matter of course, be somewhat neglected. The wants of the district are either not ascertained, or, if ascertained, are not attended to. That is our experience. There are many important things which require to be done in the Central district. I may mention one. Years ago the Railway Commissioners recommended strongly the connection of the great Central line and the line on the other side of the river by a bridge across the Fitzroy. The total cost would only be about £50,000 or £60,000, and the construction of the connecting link would largely increase the receipts on both lines, and yet nothing has ever been done beyond making the original surveys. On the other hand, the Financial Statement recommends the expenditure of about £110,000 for Southern railway works. I admit that some of that work is absolutely necessary, such as the replacing the bridges destroyed by the floods; but the complaint is that when money is wanted in the South it is always to be had, but when we want money we cannot get it. The proposed tripartite division of the colony is no new idea, as the late Sir Thomas Mitchell, Surveyor-General for New South Wales, when he made his trip through tropical Australia, said that in time Dawes Range would form a natural boundary for a new colony, for which he suggested the name of Capricornia. He further said that at some future time another colony would be created to the north of that, and including the Gulf country, for which he suggested the name of Australindia. Dr. Lang, however, thought that Carpentaria was a more suitable name, and said that any sensible man in any part of the world at once know where Capricornia and Carpentaria were. Dr. Lang took notice of our original separation movement, started in Rockhampton in 1866, and stated that those people were justly entitled to separation. He said that separation should be granted in view of the experience of the evils of centralisation in Sydney, in the cases of Port Phillip and Moreton Bay. He pointed out also that even at that time the people of Central Queensland were in a more advanced position in every respect than Moreton Bay had been at the date of separation from New South Wales. I wish now to refer to the testimony of a disinterested observer—the lady who visited Central and Northern Queensland, as well as other parts of this continent, as the special correspondent of the *Times*. Her testimony may be considered to have more weight on this question than my own, as I may be looked upon as an interested party. [The hon. member here read an article pointing out that Brisbane, in the extreme south-east corner of the colony, was as distant from the far North as London was from Gibraltar; whilst it took as long to communicate with those places as it took to communicate between London and South Africa; that the diversity of climate and other conditions of life formed a claim for separation; that Queensland was three times the size of France, and if it were divided into three parts the Southern division

would contain an area of 190,000 square miles, the Central division 223,000 square miles, and the Northern 255,000 square miles; that the population of the Southern division would be 279,000, of the Central division 50,000, and of the Northern 81,000, the parliamentary representation of each being respectively forty-five members, eleven, and sixteen; that with forty-five Southern members against twenty-seven representing the combined Central and Northern divisions, it was impossible for the latter to have much influence in the management of their own affairs. She pointed out that if the Central and Northern districts returned none but separationists, even though they would be unable to carry resolutions through the two Houses of Parliament in Brisbane, it would be an irrefutable testimony to the Imperial Parliament that an overwhelming majority of the people in those districts desired self-government.] I can say without fear of contradiction—at all events, I know it to be a certain fact—that the sentiment, the idea, of separation has sunk deep into the minds of the people of Central Queensland, and that it constitutes a bond of brotherhood amongst them just now of a most influential and salutary character; and I am also certain that the more obstacles are placed in the way of separation the more determined will they be to overcome them. I believe the opposition to separation in the Southern part of the colony is based on the assumption that they will be injured by it—that they will lose trade. That is absurd. The very same argument was used by New South Wales, and especially by Sydney, with regard to the separation of Port Phillip and of Moreton Bay. What has been the result? The result of the separation of those territories has been that her resources have been more largely developed, and her trade and commerce have grown greater, than would have been the case had she continued to remain one large undivided colony. In like manner will Southern Queensland benefit by the creation of two friendly neighbours in the North, with whom she will carry on very much more trade and commerce than she does at the present time. There can be no satisfactory development and progress made so long as we remain as we are, for it is impossible that such a vast territory can be effectually governed by any one Government. Sir S. W. Griffith said so over and over again; so did the late Mr. Macrossan and many other persons, and disinterested persons, too, whose opinion is worth having. If it is desirable that the colony should be divided, surely to goodness the sooner it is done the better! It may be argued that the present is an inopportune time, while the finances of the colony are in such an unsatisfactory condition. I do not believe it for a moment. Besides, this is not a question of opportunity, so far as we are concerned, but a matter of right. It is especially desirable to the people of Central Queensland that their territory should be so governed that they may be able to exert their energies in managing the affairs of the country as they should be managed, and in the proper development of its natural resources, which can never be done while the present system lasts. It has been said that the debt is an insuperable difficulty, but we are well advised that it is not; and when our deputation went to England, they took with them a proposition, based on the Imperial Act of 1861, for the apportionment of the debt between the three divisions, leaving the public creditor in his present position, with security over the entire revenue of the colony. Lord Knutsford said that when the time came the proposal for the adjustment of the debt would be submitted to the law officers of the Crown. We have heard nothing about the matter since. But it is not for us to provide a scheme for

the settlement of the public debt. We have no authority to do so, and I apprehend that, if the Imperial Government once concludes the terms on which separation should take place, they will have the necessary arrangements embodied in the Bill which will, no doubt, be submitted to a select committee of the House of Commons for evidence and report. By the time the committee have done with it satisfactory arrangements will have been made as to the debt with respect to all parties concerned. In a speech, on the 23rd October, 1890, Mr. Macrossan said he saw no difficulty about the bondholder that could not be settled easily by experts; and also said that, if the argument about the debt was to be taken as a good one, it would prevent separation at any time. Again, speaking on the 26th July last year, Sir S. W. Griffith said that the difficulty, great as it was, and fully recognised as it was by Her Majesty's Ministers in England, was not, he believed, insuperable. In the Western Australia Constitution Bill, provision is made giving the Queen in Council power to divide the colony, and to re-divide it into other colonies; and provision is also made for the settlement of the public debt in the event of division taking place. I assume the arrangement made there will be made in our case. If that is not sufficient, no doubt the difficulty will be overcome in some other way. We invite Southern members to vote for the proposition, and to assist in bringing into existence a friendly neighbour for whom, for physical reasons alone, they are unable to exercise the functions of government satisfactorily—that is, so far as the remotest districts and communities are concerned—either to themselves or to those distant communities. If you say "No," then I reply that we cannot be bound by your decision in a matter which so closely concerns our own welfare and convenience and love of right; we shall take our own course, and again appeal to the Imperial authorities, and never give up the struggle until we have secured what we know to be, as I said before, our natural right. We want nothing from the South except their friendship and goodwill. As I have already shown by statistics, we are very well able to support ourselves; we have long been a self-supporting community. We desire to be friends with the South, but to be friends on an equal footing; and we only ask for the very same privilege that the people of this part of the territory were so anxious to obtain, and did obtain, from New South Wales. The people of Moreton Bay thought the people and the Government of New South Wales were very selfish in putting so many difficulties in the way; and the people of Central Queensland are inclined to form the same opinion now with regard to the people of Southern Queensland—that they are very selfish and inconsiderate, and, instead of putting difficulties in the way, they should take us by the hand and help us to bring into existence a political and friendly neighbour with whom they would do more business and have more trade and commerce in the future than they have ever had in the past. While we are separatists we are also federalists. We would like eventually to see these great colonies federated, presenting to the external world the appearance of one nation. All the artificial barriers would be broken down between the colonies, and hence that particular provision embodied in the resolution proposing to make provision for the free interchange of the natural products of Queensland.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No border tax.

Mr. CURTIS: As to the cost of government, some of our Southern friends have been very much concerned over that matter, and ask us how we will pay the cost of government? They

do not take into consideration that we have a larger revenue than when they started business in 1859; and perhaps they do not recollect that we already pay a large Civil Service staff, and that the duties we have been deprived of would alone go a long way towards paying the cost of separate administration. Even if it cost a little more, it would be worth having, because we would get better results. Then we have been told, "How can you expect to get Central separation unless Northern separation is also decreed?" Well, we do not see that at all. In the first place, I apprehend that the Northern people do want separation. If they do not, it is a very strange thing. I know they have been clamouring for it for the last ten or twelve years, and I assume that the large majority of them would be in favour of separation. However, if they are not, that is no reason why the boon of self-government should be denied to the people of Central Queensland, and if Northern Queensland prefers to remain under the dominion of Southern Queensland it can remain. There would be no difficulty. Communication by sea would still be by sea, and there would be no physical and geographical difficulty. We have instances in history of an independent State intersecting parts of another independent State; and we have Alaska, which was ceded by Russia to America, governed by the United States, and the Dominion of Canada divides them.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: There are no white men there.

Mr. CURTIS: If the Northern people do not want separation, I say it is no good reason why it should not be granted to us, as there need be no physical or geographical difficulties in the way. It would be impossible for us to conceive that the people of North Queensland are not in favour of self-government, and it would seem a great absurdity if they did not want to become masters of their own house, as we wish to be, and manage their own affairs. Then, again, with regard to the great natural divisions of Queensland. I believe that with our geographical position, our compactness, and our railway system, we would be one of the most economically governed colonies in Australia. So far as coast line is concerned, we have quite sufficient. Indeed, we have a great deal more than the average coast lines of the American colonies. They only had a coast line on an average of seventy-five miles each, and we would have quite as much as we want. As to representation, we are graciously permitted to send ten or eleven members down here. Do we manage our affairs by that means? We know we do not, and that we have no influence, because the odds are too great. What can be said in favour of a system that permits the city of Brisbane, which now overshadows the whole colony and the country within a radius of ten miles, to send thirteen members of Parliament here, while the great Central division is only permitted to send ten or eleven? I should say there is nothing to be said in favour of that. That is one of the results of centralisation.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The value of town property.

Mr. CURTIS: Now, before concluding I would like to say, with regard to that return of revenue and expenditure published the other day, that we do not accept it as a proper statement of the revenue produced by Central Queensland. We do not get credit for the Customs duties, and we believe our proportion of the general revenue should be in proportion to the ratio of the contribution of the people to the local revenue, which is twice as much per head of the population as that con-

tributed by the Southern division of the colony. Then, with regard to our land, I protest again against these forced sales. The very eyes of the country are being picked out because they are readily saleable, and, by-and-by, when land is wanted for *bona fide* occupation and settlement, there will be a difficulty in getting it, and settlement will be retarded to an incalculable extent by reason of the forced sales of land by public auction now going on. I would say, further, that my protest is supported emphatically by Sir Samuel Griffith's utterances in 1889, when he called attention to the surplus contributed by the North through forced sales, and denounced it as a wrong thing, and a thing the people of Southern Queensland did not want. I want to know why the people of the South do it if they do not want it, and it is no less an injustice as far as Central Queensland is concerned. I feel very strongly myself on that subject, and I speak as I feel. What would the people of Moreton Bay have done and said if their land had been sold in that way, and the money taken to Sydney to be spent there for purposes and concerns in which the people here had no earthly interest? They would, I am sure, have protested against it, as we do now. In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I invite hon. members of the Central district to supply any information which I may have omitted bearing on this important subject.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER said: I do not intend to follow the example set me by the hon. member in making quotations from so many authorities, because I do not believe much in authorities unless they are to the point. What the Duke of Newcastle thought of the separation of North Queensland fifty or sixty years ago is a matter of so little interest to me that I would not care to turn up the reference. What ex-politicians, whether alive or dead, said on the subject may have been of particular interest at the time, but it is of little interest now, unless it is brought down and shown to be applicable to the present position of the subject. All those matters I put on one side, and no doubt other hon. members will look at them in pretty much the same way as I do. The hon. member commenced by putting forward an astounding proposition, which he insisted upon throughout his speech. He said he was upholding the great and inherent principle that every offshoot of a colony is entitled to self-government by separation. The hon. member was most unfortunate in his illustration of America. He told us that America commenced with thirteen States, and those States were carved into the present United States of America. I do not know where the carving commenced. The plan was quite different altogether, because the American Union was built on. There were never any States that actually took territory beyond what was afterwards put into a State. They never separated into States, but simply added to their territory by purchase, by conquest, and by exploration. The States of the Union have not been increased to their present number—first by adding States, and then cutting them up.

Mr. HARDING: North and South Carolina!

Mr. ARCHER: Texas was divided.

The PREMIER: I do not say there have been no divisions—divisions of self-interest in which both concerned have agreed.

Mr. McDONALD: This is one of self-interest.

The PREMIER: Yes; but it is not one of self-interest in which both are agreed. That makes the greatest difference in the world. Both here are not agreed, and I say they ought

not to agree. That some of the United States have been divided in that way has no bearing whatever on this question, and no bearing whatever on the hon. member's proposition, giving an offshoot of a colony an inherent right to subdivision. I wonder the hon. member had the hardihood to make such statements, considering what took place in 1860 and subsequent years. Does he not know that the greatest war of modern times was caused by the fact that the people of a great nation would not allow those in a part of their territory to set themselves up as a separate State or nation?

Mr. HARDING: They were going out of the Union.

The PREMIER: What is this but going out of the union? We are the union as Queensland, and the case is exactly analogous. That great war was fought for the purpose of keeping the country together, and that is the sort of war that will be here.

Mr. HARDING: The sooner the better.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: The hon. member is awfully noisy, and excessively ignorant. If his interjections were to the point, would assist the speaker, or assist the House in understanding his argument, there would be no objection to them; but the hon. member is bellowing out noise which, in justice to the House, he should keep to himself. We listened patiently to the last member who spoke; and, though I do not object to interjections which are intelligent, I draw a distinction between ordinary interjections and mere bellowing. The hon. member for Rockhampton tried to give us the history of separation; and it was a very necessary thing to do, and a very delicate point for the hon. member, because we who know the real history of separation in the colony knew that the hon. member had to account for the extraordinary liveliness of the question since 1890 and the utter quiet of Central members during many previous years. I will not go so far back as the hon. member, but there was a great agitation in 1870 for separation. The separation meant at that time was that projected by the old Surveyor-General of New South Wales, an accomplished man, whom we all honour for his explorations. That was for the separation of the South of Queensland from the North at Dawes Range. That separation included the whole of the north of Dawes Range up to the Gulf of Carpentaria and Cape York. That separation was very strongly advocated by the member for Rockhampton at the time, Mr. Palmer, though he was Premier of the colony. In 1872 the agitation was very strong; in 1873 it was dead, and it remained as dead as the roses that perished in 1872 until 1890. During all these years not a single Central member agitated for separation, nor did they ask even for financial separation. In 1876 I and some other Southern members took up the question of financial separation, instigated not by the Central members, who took no interest whatever in the subject, but by the Northern members, who had commenced to take an interest in separation. Let the hon. member understand that the progeny he is now bringing forward is not the separation of 1872, nor is it the lineal descendant of that separation, or anything like it. In 1876 a commission sat for the purpose of inquiring into the subject of financial separation, owing to certain inquiries made as to the disposal of the revenue. The North by this time had come to be recognised as commencing at a point a great deal north of Rockhampton, and Rockhampton had settled down as a part of the South. Why did separation in Rockhampton, so lively in 1872, die in 1873? You have only to remember

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that at that time the railway went out from Rockhampton only as far as Westwood; and as soon as the arrangements made by Sir Arthur Palmer resulted in that railway going out beyond the Expedition Range, all that feeling vanished; the people there made up their minds to cast in their lot with us, and up to the year 1890 they deliberately did so. They worked with us, becoming responsible with us for the legislation up to that time; and they are bound with us by all codes of honour in the responsibility for that legislation. The hon. member has told us the first Bill dealing with financial separation was in 1877 read a first time; but I think it was only printed. At all events, no actual legislation took place; and during the rest of the seventies even Northern members did not agitate about separation. But about the middle of the eighties—at the end of 1883—some of the Northern members were particularly lively; and in London in 1885 a strong agitation was got up for separation. That was the time when the agitation for Northern separation commenced; it was at that time that it was brought before Parliament, and we felt it strongly in politics in the House. But the Central members were then perfectly quiet; we never heard anything from them about separation; they made no protest in the House that they were not included in the proposed separation. They complacently allowed themselves to be counted in as part of the South, and the whole agitation until 1890 was for the separation of the North from the South, leaving the Central division as part of the South. The Central members kept perfectly quiet all that time, and were members of Ministries, where they had great power and influence. During the time the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Archer, was my colleague, and occupied the important position of Colonial Treasurer, I never heard him breathe a word to the Cabinet or myself about Central separation. Mr. Pattison, another Treasurer, was also a representative of Rockhampton, and Mr. Buzacott, who acted for me as Treasurer while I was in England, was also regarded as a representative of the Central district, though at that time he had been put out of the representation of Rockhampton. There were three Treasurers during that epoch who represented the Central district, and I never heard from them all that time of any agitation with reference to Central separation as a lively piece of work for our politicians. The first that we heard of it was through the turmoil that took place in politics during the year 1890. Parties got so mixed up in that turmoil that nobody knows even now where they were; but some curious things came out of it, and among them was the agitation for Central separation. We never heard of it before, and the statement made by the hon. member who moved this motion—that his efforts and the representations which have been made to the home authorities were not new, but were simply carrying out the principles advocated from 1884 down to the present time—is absolutely without foundation. It is a new idea altogether—this idea of splitting up a colony that is going on fairly well at the present time, and, if carried out, would be to the detriment of the two colonies on either side of the Central colony, and very much to the detriment of the colony that now wants separation. I have now given the history of this agitation, and shown that the advocates can claim no merit from antiquity—that they cannot affirm that they have held this principle and stuck to it for a long time. As a matter of fact, the question entered into active politics about the year 1890, and not before. The hon. member claims separation as an inherent right. Of course, when he says it is an inherent right, he means for any district in the colony.

The districts shown on the map at the present time—the Northern, Central, and Southern districts—are a mere accident. They were made by Sir Arthur Palmer in 1872. At any rate, I have traced them back to him, and I do not find any reference to them further back. He made the present divisions, with certain small variations. The hon. member is wrong in saying that in the whole history of the question there were only three divisions. There were three in Sir Arthur Palmer's Bill of 1872, but four were recommended in the report of the financial districts committee, brought up in 1877. The Wide Bay and Burnett district was a district in itself. How the exact boundaries of the present divisions came to be made on the maps is a mystery, but I believe it was done by some clerks in the Crown Law Offices, in order to suit the provisions of the Local Registries Act. That is the only authority for it, and hon. members must not run away with the idea that it has the authority of any Parliament or any Government. The Decentralisation Bill has the authority of some Governments, so far that they introduced the Bill, but none of them carried it beyond the first reading, for the simple reason that the House felt it was not competent to deal with the subject. Nor do I think it is competent at the present time. I have followed the history of financial separation because until now we have had no question of Central territorial separation brought prominently before the House. It is most unjust for an hon. member to say that the scheme of decentralisation is a scheme of the present or any previous Government; and that it is a bad scheme, which the Central district would not have at all if they could manage it otherwise. The figures supplied on the basis of the Financial Districts Bill have always been given, not as Government figures, but in reply to a request of a Northern member that certain information should be furnished the House, according to the schedule of certain Bills. The Government have nothing whatever to do with those Bills, but have simply furnished the information that was wanted. They were responsible for the accuracy of that information, but not for the principle on which the accounts were made up, so that any hon. member can make objection to the principle, but he must not blame the Government, because the Government never fathered it. I agree with the hon. gentleman that when we come to examine into them, a great many faults are to be found. I have found many myself, and hope I shall be able to show that a better solution of the difficulty can be found than that suggested by the hon. member. The division of the colony that was made by the Bills I have spoken of, and the principle upon which revenue and expenditure should be divided, generally and locally, were adopted at a time when the colony was in a very difficult position. At the time Sir Arthur Palmer made his division there were some 50,000 square miles of country in the Central district upon which nobody had ever trod except explorers, and very few of them. When the matter of pastoral rents was considered, we took it for granted that it was a fair thing to give the pastoral rents to the district in which they were raised. That seemed reasonable enough, especially as there was not much inequality. In the South the quantity of land taken up was very great; there was only about one-fourth of that quantity in the Central district, and a great deal less in the North; so that in the financial commission of which I was a member, the question as to whether this should be dealt with as local or general revenue, was not very much considered. But now things have taken place which have altered the position of affairs very materially. The greater part of the Central district extends nearly to the South Australian border, and the rent-rolls

are very different. When we were drawing up the report in 1877, the contribution of the South to the pastoral rents was £81,919; of the Central, £55,078; and of the North, £19,197. But at the present time £125,202 is derived from the South, £131,632 from the Central, and £79,018 from the North. The hon. member says, "We made the country, and we ought to enjoy the fruits of it; we want it to ourselves." I think the pastoral rents ought to be considered general revenue. Who explored that land, and spent capital and energy of body and mind in working it? Was it Rockhampton men? It was the Queensland people. I could take six men from the Darling Downs and local districts who have done more than the whole of Rockhampton in exploring that land, and I do not see why it should be monopolised by the Central people, who claim the land revenue of the whole of this territory that they have no more to do with than I have at the present time. I was invited by the laws of the country to take up land, and I am no absentee because I live in Brisbane. But the hon. member wants to make me an absentee by drawing a line on this side of Dawes Range. I have bought lands of the country and have developed the country, and have as much interest in the country as the hon. member, even though he attend his office at Rockhampton every day in the week. The argument is unanswerable that the land revenue should be considered general, for the reason that it is not produced by the enterprise and capital of the people who want to monopolise the land.

Mr. HARDACRE: The district you are speaking of has returned men favourable to separation.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: That does not affect the argument.

The PREMIER: I will go further, and say that this has been actually leading to the aggrandisement of the Central districts upon paper; because, as a matter of fact, these rents have gone into the general revenue, and it is only in the accounts that it is shown. The hon. member wants to make out that for the future these rents ought to be collected by the Central district. In order that hon. members may follow my ideas better, I will take an area of 40,000 or 50,000 square miles of land in the Central district, and trace a line down 200 miles of that district, the people in which do business with the Northern division; and you can also trace a line where the Central business interest goes right into the Southern district. I can show cases where the Central business goes down South, and I wish them every prosperity in their trade and do not grudge it. Does the hon. member propose to draw a line and put up Custom-houses, and then draft a Railway Tariff Bill, such as we passed the other day, and force traffic that should go to Townsville on to his particular line? Is that a fair or just thing; will it lead to what the hon. member calls neighbourly association? I do not think it is likely to do that.

Mr. CURTIS: We do not want border dues.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Not in the meantime.

The PREMIER: I shall speak about the border duties a little by-and-by. This is the way that they mean to get business. The fact of the matter is that the Central district is simply a valley in which the big Central Railway line has been made, and they mean to claim the whole of the direct advantages from that for themselves. They are simply a big producing industry. They have claimed that they are the best and most intelligent and most industrious portion of the community because they export the most. In regard to that point I have something to say, but I may now say that in all my journeys to the North,

though I like the people there just as well as I like the people in the South, I must say that I never saw anything to show that they were better than we are down here. I never thought myself a better man when I stopped there for three months. I will show that this industry which they wish to have attributed to them altogether is due to a different cause. I think I have shown that they are trying to get an amount of traffic forced on to their railways by means of this motion, to be followed by other legislation—traffic that they are not entitled to by Nature, and that they are not entitled to by the laws of this country. Every man who has established himself in business under the laws of this country is bound to be recognised, and we should put no artificial barriers in the way to prevent him from carrying on his business on the lines on which he started.

Mr. MURRAY: You have done that on the Southern boundary.

The PREMIER: That is a perfectly different thing. Who have built the railways in Queensland? Why, the people of Queensland; and we want to bring the traffic of Queensland along our own lines. Now, who have made the railways in the Central district? Not the people of Central Queensland, but the people of Queensland as a whole. It has been constantly advanced as a grievance by the people in the Central district that they are treated badly. The hon. member complains—and he showed great ingratitude in referring to this particular question, considering what we have done for Rockhampton during the last five years—that we have done nothing for them, whilst we are doing a great deal for the people in the South, who have suffered so severely from floods. As a matter of fact, a flood, which took place at Rockhampton about five years ago, swept away a portion of their bridge across the Fitzroy or rendered it useless. The Government then paid one-half the cost of repairing the bridge, and advanced the other half by way of loan, to be repaid in forty years—a great deal better terms than the people of Brisbane are likely to get. That illustration was particularly unfortunate for the hon. member. To show how the Central district has been treated in regard to loan expenditure, I may state that the total local expenditure has been £25,112,718. In the Southern district the expenditure has been £14,933,079, or a debt of £53 6s. 6d. per head of the population; in the Central district, £4,369,029, or £89 9s. 4d. per head; and in the Northern district, £5,805,610, or £71 6s. 10d. per head. The Central district, therefore, has not paid for her railways within 40 per cent. Instead of being responsible for the whole debt, the whole of the colony has to find £36 2s. 10d. per head of that debt. In the face of plain facts like that, how can the hon. gentleman say that the interests of the Central district have not been attended to? And the hon. member now complains that they cannot get a second bridge at Rockhampton. Had hon. members from that place been in earnest, they would years ago have assisted the Government in giving them a port down at their own bay; but they have allowed the interests of the Central district and of Rockhampton to be coerced by a noisy mob that sometimes influences the elections, and which the members for Rockhampton have not shown the grit to face. It will be interesting now to refer to the question of land sales. I notice that the hon. gentleman very cunningly contrived to catch the applause of his friends on the left, who are ready to shout their approval of anything said in disapproval of land sales; but he did not denounce the sale of land. What he denounced was that the receipts from land sales go into the general revenue—or, at least, that the Central districts

are deprived of the money in the meantime. I shall take this question exactly as I have dealt with the pastoral rents. When the keeping of accounts on the basis of financial separation was initiated in 1876, the Land Act of 1876 had not come into operation, and land sales had only taken place under the Act of 1868. It was laid down then as a fair thing that the receipts from the sale of land should for the future be credited to local revenue. Up to the present time there have been £5,200,000 worth of land sold in the Southern district and £1,313,000 worth in the Central district, the area in the former being about three and a-half times the value of the land sold in the Central division. The Central members think that they are getting a fair adjustment of accounts by drawing the line at a certain time, and saying that all subsequent land sales will be credited to the various districts, ignoring what had gone before that time. Until £5,200,000 has been received from land sales in the Central district the account will not be square, and what we want is justice.

Mr. CURTIS: What about Customs duties?

The PREMIER: I will talk to the hon. member about Customs duties by-and-by, and I do not think he will make a better figure in regard to them than he does here. At all events, that is how this matter stands. Before I take up the Customs question, I have to make a short digression to show the position that the separatists of Central Queensland have taken up, so far as the legal aspect of the matter is concerned. It is amusing to one who has studied the correspondence, which is worth reading, to mark the ingenuity with which it has been carried out; but I will describe in a few words what has actually taken place. When the North saw that they were not likely to get separation from the South, or when they saw it would be a difficult question, they went in, with an acuteness which did them every credit, to study the legal bearings of the matter. They got together all the laws they could find—they were such as those that have been referred to by the hon. member—and they proved conclusively to their own minds, and sent petitions to the effect to the home Government, that by all the laws that were in existence at that time the English Government had a right to separate any part of a colony from any other part. When these were referred to by the deputation that waited upon Sir Henry Holland, at that time Secretary of State for the Colonies, he interrupted Mr. Black, who was speaking at the time, and said he took the law of the case from the Law Officers of the Crown, who, after having studied the Acts referred to, had come to the conclusion that, although the Government had the latent right, it would be most injudicious to exercise it. We can see at once that it was not the intention of the English Government to revive those latent laws, and we can quite understand the common sense of the position taken up by Sir Henry Holland, who could see perfectly well that the position of the different colonies would have to be considered, and that the question was one that could not possibly be settled without the consent of the parties most interested. He admits that those rights are only latent rights, and he says the Government had made up their mind not to insist upon those rights. Then the Central separatists went one better. They discovered another Act by which they proved conclusively to themselves—and put the argument before the present Secretary of State, Lord Ripon—that not only had the Government a right to do it, but, on the petition of the people who wanted to be separated, they were bound to do it because there was an

inherent right of separation in themselves. The people whom they were going to separate from were not consulted, whether on the one side nor on the other, although they also have certain inherent rights, and rights which Lord Ripon and other men of common sense in England will consider it proper to give due weight to. I will read a few words from the reply of Sir Henry Holland to the Northern deputation; they will serve at the same time as a reply to some of the arguments that have been used to-day by the hon. member for Rockhampton. He said—

“We are advised that it would be competent for the Imperial Parliament to pass an Act for the division of the colony; but in our opinion it would be very difficult, if not undesirable, for Her Majesty’s Government to adopt any such course until we had before us either some resolution, or address, or Bill passed by the legislature of the colony, or unless, perhaps, some overwhelming case were made out which would justify such an interference. I cannot admit there is an exact parallel between the present case and the case of Moreton Bay, because in the latter case a special power was reserved to the Imperial Government to make the separation which was subsequently found necessary, whereas we are asked in the present case to exercise a latent power, a power the exercise of which would be viewed with jealousy in all the large colonies, and a power which of late years we have never exercised. There is no instance of recent years, since the colonies attained the greatness they have, of the Imperial legislature passing an Act interfering with the administration of one of those great colonies, except at the request of the colonial Government. Therefore I say it is difficult, if not undesirable, to deal with such a question as this unless we have the authority, on a desire expressed on the part of the colonial legislature, or unless there is some case made out which is absolutely overwhelming.”

I have made this digression because it is more convenient to do so before referring to the financial aspect of the question. I will now finish this part of the subject by referring to the answer given by Lord Ripon to the deputation headed by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Archer. He says—

“I know that this is not a satisfactory statement to you, and that the conclusion I have thrown out will not give you immediate satisfaction. But I do draw from that fact the conclusion that it would be improper on the part of Her Majesty’s Government not to wait, before taking any independent action in the matter, until the result of the general election is made known. I do not refer merely to the number of persons returned, but to the course which they might take next session. I myself feel that we should be departing from that line which ought to guide the conduct of the Colonial Office in respect to self-governing colonies, if we were to determine this matter without waiting for the result of the general election, turning, as I imagine it will, mainly upon this very question, without any reference to what the result of that general election might be.”

That is an interesting paragraph, because Lord Ripon evidently thinks it was the great question at that time. He is wrong there, because it is quite a subordinate question to a great many very much more important matters that the House has before it now. He goes on to say—

“The case which you have brought before me may be perfectly right, but my experience of general elections is that even those who should know what the result should be are not always accurate, and therefore I cannot take this statement from one side.”

He is quite right there.

“I am bound to look at the result of the elections, and the expressed intentions of the colony on this question. I do not mean to say that Her Majesty’s Government would be exclusively guided by the course which the legislature may take, or that, if the results which the deputation anticipated should arise, the Government would be debarred from taking any course that might be necessary. All I can say is, until the result of the election is made known to us, and until we see what the newly-elected members intend to do on behalf of the colony, it would be, I think, inconsistent with that respect which we are bound to show towards the legislature and towards the Government of the colonies for us to act *ab extra*—that is to say, by an

immediate vote of the Imperial Parliament. This, gentlemen, is the conclusion to which I have been forced to come. I shall watch the result of that general election with the greatest interest.”

In making these statements he does not refer at all to what the result of the return of the Central members would be. He takes a much wider view, and that is as to what the result of the general election would be for the whole colony. Of course, what the Central members might say on the matter will interest him, but only in the same way as he will be interested by what other members may say. The opinion he expresses is simply that the Imperial Government tell us we are quite competent to manage our own affairs, and that, unless an overwhelming case of oppression of one part of the colony by another part is proved to force them to interfere, they will leave the management of the colony to ourselves. That is the conclusion I draw from the answers given both by Lord Knutsford and the Marquis of Ripon. Now I come back to the financial question made so much of by the hon. member, and I will preface my present remarks by a reference to what was said by Sir Charles Nicholson in introducing the deputation. Sir Charles Nicholson is a man of undoubted integrity, and one for whom everyone who knows him has the highest respect. He said the revenues of the Northern and Central divisions had been most unfairly appropriated by the Southern division. That was a matter of evidence, and an agitation had long since been raised to establish a distinct autonomy in the three divisions, each of which was as large as a European kingdom. That is where Sir Charles Nicholson, a large landed proprietor at Rockhampton, essentially failed to see the gist of the whole matter, taking for granted what the Central members told him—that the Central division was financially oppressed by the South. It is to dispel that illusion that the principal part of my speech has been and will be made. To return to the decentralisation accounts, the hon. member for Rockhampton disagrees with the way in which the general revenue has been appropriated. He disagrees altogether with the principles on which the so-called Decentralisation Bills have been founded. He says certain amounts have been put to general account which ought to have been made local, showing at the same time the weakness of the principle upon which we have been making up the accounts. At the time these accounts were made general or local, as the case might be, by the Commission sitting in 1877, we did not know as much of matters as we do now; and the hon. member, in making up his accounts by which the South is brought in so much in debt to the Central division, has not looked to the state of things at the present time. Putting down to local revenue what is now put down to general revenue, I will show by one example how that would act at the present time. Take one of the largest items of what is called “Miscellaneous Services,” for which the total amount is £144,445. There is £103,734 of that amount coming from interest on the public balances and interest on loans to local bodies. The amount *per capita* of this sum credited to the Central district is £12,208, while the actual contribution by the district is only £1,550 on account of interest in the public balances, and £5,334 on account of interest on loans to local bodies; so that, instead of the South getting the better of the Central district, the position is quite the other way, and the North and South make a present to the Central district of £5,324 on this one item alone. I take that as an example, because the item of £103,000 is more than two-thirds the gross amount of £144,000 for these services. The rest of the amount is

made up of items such as these: Stamp duty, dividend duty, postage, electric telegraphs, graving dock, Marine Board, escort fees, fees of office, fines and forfeitures; and I defy any man to apportion those items to the different districts of the colony, and put them fairly right. The Commission had no other choice but to put them down to general revenue; and I say that if the hon. member's contention was carried out, it would show that the Commission, in making the provision they did, made the South rather generous, if they knew what they were doing, and I do not think they did. The accounts the hon. member referred to are given at considerable length in a paper printed since notice of this debate was given. There an accountant on behalf of the Central division has given his mode of increasing the accounts; and he starts by saying that, by a general consensus of opinion on the part of the merchants of Rockhampton, 60 per cent. of the Customs duties credited there ought to be added on for duties paid in Brisbane on goods consumed in the Central district. The hon. member used that argument here. All the tables that were submitted to Lord Ripon at this interview were made out, correcting in this respect the whole of the decentralisation tables that have been put before hon. members for the last five years. Any hon. member that knows anything about the business done between Brisbane and Rockhampton will know that the statement that they ought to get credit for 60 per cent. of the duties paid in Rockhampton is perfectly unjustified by any facts, and is a great slur on the commerce of the place. I will say a few words now about the course of trade. There are some things on which it is to the interest of merchants to pay the duties to the Government at the latest moment they possibly can. If they can make arrangements by which they pay the duty on goods going to Rockhampton in Rockhampton instead of in Brisbane, they save the interest on that money from the time the goods are taken out of bond and exported from Brisbane until they go into use in Rockhampton; consequently, there are certain articles that always pay duty in Rockhampton. For instance, spirits sent from Brisbane to Rockhampton never pay duty here, and that item is more than one-third of the duty paid in Rockhampton, or £48,000. The great bulk goes direct from the country of export to Rockhampton, and pays duty there; but with regard to that which goes from Brisbane to Rockhampton the custom is to pay the duties at Rockhampton, so that there is £48,000 out on that account. I am taking the accounts published in June, 1892, as an illustration. Wine is in the same category. That pays duty in Rockhampton. Ale, porter, sarsaparilla, and vinegar all pay duty there, with the exception of a small quantity of colonial beer, and that contains certain ingredients scarcely worth considering, on which the duty is paid in Brisbane, though the beer is consumed in the Central district. Then we have tobacco, snuff, and cigars, £20,000. The great bulk of that is paid exactly in the same way; but there is a certain portion of the trade there again—I am speaking of facts ascertained on the most reliable authority by men connected with the Customs Department, men of integrity and above all doubt; and after the most minute investigation among the different merchants and others engaged in the trade—there is a certain amount of that tobacco which is made up here in a different form, and exported to the North and Central districts. Then there is the sum of £9,000 which the Central district pays on tea, coffee, chicory, and cocoa. The same remark applies to a small extent there. There are some teas put here in fancy packets, the duty being paid

here. Preserved fruits, pickles, and spices—all these, as a rule, go from here in bond, the duty being paid in Rockhampton. Then there are grain, malt, bran, hay, and chaff. Bran, chaff, and hay are mostly colonial products. They do not come from the other colonies, and do not pay duty. There is nothing in mal, so that that item is free from the taint of the duty having been paid in Brisbane and the article consumed in the Central district. Iron, iron castings, tanks, and wire nails pay £4,769; and the great bulk are imported from home. The amount for oils, chemicals, soap, and starch is £8,330. There is a considerable amount of work done by chemists here in preparing articles of perfumery and the like, the duty being paid here on the wholesale article and the preparations exported to the Central and other districts. The great item, however, is £24,139, the duties paid on *ad valorem* goods. It is in *ad valorem* goods that the thing is most felt. There are industries here in which certain articles paying duty in Brisbane are used, and the Central district is a consumer of the articles manufactured by the people engaged in those industries. There is a sort of reciprocity in all these things, because there is a back trade subject to reduction; but, the bulk of the manufactures being in Brisbane, it is reasonable to suppose that they consume a considerable portion of the articles on which the *ad valorem* duties are paid here. Hon. members will see that the total amount of duties paid in the Central district was £143,000. Sixty per cent. of that is £85,800, and the hon. member asks us to believe that £85,000 has actually been paid in Brisbane as duty on goods which have been sent to Rockhampton. I have shown that a great portion of the consumption, to the extent of nearly three-fourths of the whole, is of articles on which it is the custom of the trade to pay duty in Rockhampton. I have had the Customs officers going over the different manufactures in the most minute way, and the opinion of the best men I could get, after going most fully into details, is that not more than between £15,000 and £20,000 is paid in Brisbane on articles which are consumed in the Central district. The principal part of the duty paid in Brisbane is *ad valorem* duty on goods which are shipped direct from England or other countries, and made up into general orders for small shops, or for shelf goods; but the amount is very inconsiderable. It is to the interest of everybody to pay the duty at the port where the goods are taken out for consumption, and the merchant shipping goods does not care to give credit for what he pays cash. He is very anxious to avoid paying duty on articles re-exported, and everything tends to the paying of the duty on goods for the Central district at the landing port—Rockhampton. That is done to a great extent; and the best experts I can get are of opinion that the amount which is not so paid could not possibly be more than from £15,000 to £20,000. I think that is an over estimate, but I give the amount as under £20,000. I have taken the greatest care in seeing that every precaution was used to have the information correct, and I believe the estimate of the officers of the department, whom I have consulted, is above that of experts; and it differs very materially from the consensus of opinion among the merchants of Rockhampton. Then we have to deduct from that sum a certain amount of trade which goes back the other way. For instance, take the item of spirits. A table has been made out and submitted to the country, which shows that the consumption of spirits per head in the Southern division is 9s. 2½d., while in the Central district it is 16s. 10½d. Central members at once jump straight to the conclusion that

the difference is accounted for by the fact that a large amount of the spirits used in the Central district paid duty in the Southern district. But that is not a fact. The conclusion I draw is that people in the Central district are better drinkers than those in the South. If we want a thorough explanation of this, hon. members will see it when we go further into the table, and find that the consumption of spirits in the Northern division is 19s. 5½d. per head. I am not going to draw the inference that the Northern men are better drinkers than the Central men, because I do not think they are. But the inference I do draw, and it is a very important one in the consideration of this question, is that the red line on the map which separates Northern from Central Queensland has been drawn wrong, and that a great part of the spirits which have paid duty in the North has come down to the Central district. I know the Northern and Central districts; they are pretty homogeneous, and I do not think you can say that one lot are better drinkers than the other; they all consume a fair share. I do not think you can possibly judge from the character of the people that there is a greater consumption per head in one district than the other, but the figures give a valuable lesson as to how the dividing line is drawn, because they point conclusively to the fact that a large trade in spirits and other things is done by the North with the Central district. That is an argument against the artificial line which has been drawn, because it shows that the Central are appropriating what does not belong to them. No man will, however, deny that Townsville has a perfect right under the law of this colony, as I hope it will have under any law that may exist while I live, to make their trade with any part of the Central district. That certainly is the principle upon which we should go, and the attempt which is made to cut this wedge out between the Northern and Southern districts and call it one colony is simply an attempt to take away trade from the North on one side, and the South on the other side. I have given that one item of spirits as an illustration of the lot. As long as the figures given under the Decentralisation Bill fit the hon. member, they are assumed to be right; but as soon as he proposes to differ from them, then of course they are wrong to the extent of robbery. The term "robbery" has been used over and over again.

Mr. McDONALD: The Minister for Works used that word.

The PREMIER: I dare say he has more sense now than he had then; we are always learning. From the time of the general election there has been no soberer lot of men in this Assembly than the Central members; and, although they may rant about separation, they do not desire it in their hearts, but pray that we may be able to defeat them by a thundering majority. The mover of this motion is not pleased with the way in which the local and general revenue is put down, and wishes it put on a different basis, in which the ratio is that of the local revenue and expenditure in each district to the total revenue and expenditure of the whole colony. I have turned that over in my mind again and again, and have never been able to see on what principle of nature or arithmetic it could be advocated. The hon. member said it was a fair principle, but it has not been shown that it was a fair principle. He discussed other principles, and I am sure he ought to be first able to understand the principle and then discuss it. He simply said they would make it on that basis—the ratio of local revenue and expenditure in each district to the total local revenue. He gave us no information, but a great

deal of information was given to Lord Ripon. I understand the calculations that he has made, but I can see no reason for them, and therefore there is no reason why I should go against them. He does not explain his basis or defend it, and all I can say is that it is incapable of being defended. But the result is this: that in the long statistics he gives Lord Ripon he brings the deficiency the Central district was in, according to the accounts of 1888, from £45,634 to a surplus of £50,034. In the next year he brings a surplus of £407 to a surplus of £114,000, and so on, until he makes a total of £593,839. I am not afraid of these figures, because Lord Ripon will worry over them before he understood them, and he will understand them before he gives any decision in the matter. I never saw anything more absurd suggested, and shall not take up the time of the House by going into the matter, because it ought to be proved before we debate it. We have heard a great deal about imports and exports. The hon. member for Normanby was a much more enthusiastic defender of this proposal last year, and told us that we should not reckon the debt by population at all; but I confess I can see no more equitable way. He said it ought to be reckoned by imports and exports. That looks very nice on the face of it, and was particularly nice at the time it was said, because Mount Morgan was rushing out gold at the rate of £1,000,000 a year. I wish to show hon. members the absurdity of considering the position of the colony from the point of view of exports and imports. From its nature Rockhampton is essentially an exporter. Everything it produces goes out of the colony and figures in the table. But in Southern Queensland we have manufacturers and farmers, and the North has sugar-growers and fruit-growers and rice-growers. The produce raised by the farmers here finds a market in the Central district, and that trade does not count one iota in the tables of imports and exports of Brisbane. The exports the hon. member refers to are those which go clean out of the colony—to Sydney, England, or elsewhere. The North sends thousands of tons of sugar to the Central districts and the whole colony, and surely that ought to be considered as well as wool that is exported from the Central districts. We send any amount of fodder and timber to the Central districts, and no end of material from our factories, but that does not make its appearance in the tables of imports and exports. The Central district is a great producing country, but it has not learned, as we have, to feed itself and make products that are used in the country. We have made a great advance in that direction, and ought to get credit for it. The hon. member is thinking he does not want that; he wants to have a free port, and get all these things from home.

Mr. ARCHER: You are mistaken this time.

The PREMIER: The deputation that went home insinuated in a very catching way to Lord Ripon that all the members for the Central district are freetraders; that they want a free port, and do not want to pay the protective duties that have been forced upon them by the Southern members. I want to protest in the strongest way against the idea that we have forced protection upon the Central and Northern divisions. The present tariff was passed by the almost unanimous vote of the Central members, and the hon. member for Rockhampton was one.

Mr. ARCHER: I had to vote for it when we wanted money.

The PREMIER: The only objection the hon. member raised was when his national susceptibilities in conjunction with his freetrade principles got too strong, and he voted against the

duty I put upon oatmeal. Otherwise the Central members are just as responsible for the present tariff as anyone else. The hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Curtis, said they intended to let products of the soil in free of duty, and that means there will be Custom-houses for everything else all along the line. He cannot get out of that; the Custom-houses will be there, whether they are put there by the South, Centre, or North. What business has any section of the people of the colony to take a slice out of the middle of the country and say we must trade according to the boundaries they have elected to make? What inherent right have they to separate from the rest of Queensland? They say the right was given by the Duke of Newcastle or some of those old fellows fifty or sixty years ago. Supposing I was a resident of Brisbane, as I am, and, knowing the laws of the country, had made up my mind to put on a steamboat to trade to the Northern ports, and I did it, knowing perfectly well that a certain trade would be established. Am I to be told immediately by a party who claims the right to do so that I cannot come into Rockhampton except under certain conditions, or any other port in the Central district? If I have established a factory here, and make boots or shoes under the laws of the land, am I to be deprived of a market, when I put up the factory on the sound faith that I should have a market, by a certain number of people in the Central district banding themselves together, and saying they have a natural right to say they will not trade with me? I say I have a natural right to make them trade with me if the people there will buy from me as readily as from anyone else. The Central members do not consider for a minute the rights they are taking from others. They consider only the rights they are going to confer upon themselves. Just look at the map on the opposite wall. The hon. member for Carpentaria moved for a return for a certain district around the Gulf. That district is marked off by a crooked pink line, and comes down through Central Queensland. Now, I would like any hon. member to tell me what answer could possibly be made if the hon. member for Carpentaria said that every bit of the country to the west of that line is nearer to the Gulf than to any port on the eastern seaboard. There is no doubt about that, because I have verified the point geographically. Could anyone say to the hon. gentleman that the people in that country had not an inherent right to put up a fence along that line and prevent anyone crossing it without their permission? They have as much right as, and a great deal more than, the Central members.

Mr. HARDING: We concede that right.

The PREMIER: The Central members are as responsible as any other members for the railways we have constructed. I have never heard a Central member protest against the line going from Townsville to Hughenden. Still, the artificial line they now wish to draw comes within a few miles of Hughenden. The trade of Townsville comes 200 miles to the south of Hughenden, and it is now proposed to block those people from keeping that portion of their trade, which they have worked to build up, and to which they are just as much entitled as anyone in Central Queensland, and not a bit more than anyone in Central or Southern Queensland.

Mr. CURTIS: We do not say anything about blocking.

The PREMIER: Then take Mackay. That line comes within a few miles of Mackay, and the people of Mackay do a trade with the country to the South. Why should they be prevented

from transacting their legitimate business? The Central people might be a little generous, and take in the Mackay people along with them.

Mr. MURRAY: That is what we intend doing.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has put before us the statement that they are in such a position that they can demand separation. I have shown that they have not become responsible for the cost of their railways, but that they have actually got the credit of the Southern and Northern districts added to theirs in a bigger proportion than the amount they are responsible for themselves. Then they say that their railway is paying. I am glad to know it. Last year it paid £4 6s. 6d. per cent.; and if I could knock out £5 6s. 6d., no one would be more delighted than I would. But how that is an argument in favour of separation, I cannot see. In 1892-3 the return was £4 6s. 6d. per cent.; in the previous year it was £4 6s., the year before that £2 7s. 9d., the year before that—1889-90—it was £1 13s. 6d., the year before that £1 7s. 7d., the year before that 17s. 2d., and the year before that 13s. 1d.; so that it has been getting up every year. This is not due, as is claimed, to the enterprise of the Central people. There are two causes which have contributed to it. One is the extension of the line to the West, which has always been advocated by Southern members; and the further it is extended westward the more profitable it will become. The other contributing cause for the great increase which began in 1889 is that that was just the time when the system of railway management was changed, and the Railway Commissioners were placed in charge. I hope that the Central members will give credit to Parliament for having, at all events, effected that reform. I want hon. members to follow me now in regard to what I consider the rather jaunty way in which the hon. member for Rockhampton got over the difficulty of the loan debt. This has always been slummed over, and avoided as far as possible in any representations made to the Secretary of State for the Colonies either by the Northern or Central separation party. By the cuteness of some Townsville or Rockhampton lawyers, who were never brought up to the law, it was found that there was a clause in one of the old Acts that said that, in the case of the separation of any part of the colony, all the parts of the colony were to be responsible for the whole of the debt. But I desire to impress upon hon. members that when the Act was framed there was no debt worth considering; the whole thing might have been squared by a couple of practical men in a morning's sitting. But it is a very different case now. Here we have a partnership between Brown, Jones, and Robinson. They have a big shop, and there is a big front door in the centre, and Jones wants to have a dissolution of the partnership. Although he owes a great deal more to the creditors of the firm than either Brown or Robinson, according to this old Act he quietly invites Brown and Robinson to become responsible for his debts, although he has had far more than his fair share out of the partnership. I do not care twopence for this old law; but is that a fair thing between man and man? I will ask the hon. gentleman what the creditors at home will say to the proposal? Before anything is done they will have to be consulted, and if there was a possibility of consulting them I know what their answer would be. They would say, "You should have talked about that when you borrowed the money." They could never be got to agree to any system by which their security would be lessened. There

is no way by which it can be done except by the North, the Central, and the South agreeing among themselves, quite independent of any mandate from the British Government. If you can get the South and the North to say, "You can separate, and we will be responsible for your debts," that is all right. But the hon. member will have to put his proposition in a very different way, so that the interests of the North and of the South are not sacrificed to the interests of the Central province. There is one other way by which the difficulty may be got over, and that is by the British Government assuming the right to legislate in this matter and saying, "Very well; we consider you ought to separate, and that those ought to be the lines and the terms on which you separate." We then represent that we are being brought in for a liability that we do not wish to undertake, and decline to undertake; and no creditor could possibly refuse to admit our claim to relief when we were forced by a superior power to accept terms which we never thought of guaranteeing. If they put us into that position, they can only do it in one way, and that is by guaranteeing the debt themselves; and if we wait until the British Government do that, we shall be a great deal older than we are at the present time. It was amusing to hear the hon. member for Rockhampton quoting Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor-General of New South Wales, as if he knew a great deal about the colony. He knew Mount Abundance, but I do not think he knew much about the Central or the Southern district, especially as they have developed in later times. I do not think we should give much credit to Sir Thomas Mitchell's opinion on a question like this. This affects people; he only saw land; and it affects the interests of people most materially. I need not go further into details. I have followed most of the arguments used by the hon. member, and I have shown very conclusively that what he intends to do affects the interests of people quite outside the Central district, and very much to their detriment. It affects the North greatly by taking away the trade they have made, and to which they are entitled. It affects Carpentaria by taking away their trade to which they are entitled; and it affects the Southern portion of the colony by taking away a large portion of the trade they have got, and to which they are entitled; and no consideration whatever has been shown for it. The proposition totally ignores what has taken place in the colony up to this time, that under the laws of the colony we have encouraged capital to come here and establish manufactories, till the soil, stock it with herds and flocks, and introduce industries of every kind. Why should we come down now and pass a proposition depriving those men of the market they were entitled to under the laws of the land, and are entitled to now? We cannot possibly treat this proposal without considering the interests of other people, and unless we have found out in what way we can deal with the public creditor. That particular subject has been quite ignored by the hon. member, who confined himself entirely to the separation part of the question. We must have a solution for that before the entire question can be solved. But there is another consideration. We live under very peculiar laws. Hon. members on my right, opposite the Ministerial benches, will say, "Yes, we do." What would the separationists of the Central district have thought if, as the result of the general election, they had immediately got separation? They would not have been able to govern themselves; they would have been governed entirely by their own wage-earners. And that would have taken place in the North, too. Were I to see a country such as

Central Queensland, which, above all countries that I know, depends immensely on capital for its production, and where the great bulk of the population are wage-earners—were I to see that country handed over to the government of wage-earners, with its capital completely ignored, I should pity it. I know well what the result would be, and the hon. member would know it too. He has claimed before Lord Knutsford that the whole of the capital of Central Queensland, as well as the inhabitants, are in favour of the scheme. I deny it. The property-holders have never been consulted. I give very little consideration to the petitions that have been sent home and signed by different individuals. As an example, I may take the petition from the people of Winton, who are decidedly within the Northern district, that they should be taken out of the Central district; upon which a counter petition was sent home for the purpose of retaining them within the Central district. Anyone can see how utterly useless petitions are for enabling anyone at a distance to arrive at a common-sense conclusion. One great argument for Central separation is that they are the greatest producers in the colony; that they send the greatest amount of exports out of the colony; and that, being the greatest producers, they ought to be included in a colony by themselves. But let the producers be consulted, and see whether they will agree to a system of government by which they are to be governed by their own workmen. Hon. members know well what I am talking about, and there are none more cognisant of it than those hon. members to whom I have just referred. Look at the correspondence that took place between the Premier and the Secretary of State five or six years ago, wherein it was shown that the mining centres of population were thoroughly opposed to separation. They were the men who blocked separation at that time; they were its biggest opponents, at all events. But now we find some of the papers in the North and all the labour constituencies coming in after one another and saying, "We have made a great mistake. If we had gone in for separation—Northern and Central—we would have had two labour colonies." I defy any member to dispute that, and I hope the hon. member for Rockhampton, who is interested very much in the settled parts of the colony, will seriously take it to heart. I am not speaking against labour. No man rejoices more than I do to see labour well represented in the House. Long before the general election, I publicly and privately expressed my opinion that I would never object to seeing fifteen or sixteen Labour members in the House, but I would be very sorry if I saw in their hands the Government of the colony, and they would be the same before they had been in it three months. The policy of the Government is perfectly well known. I think the policy of this House as elected is to keep the colony together until we find some fair means of satisfying the wants with regard to local government. I admit we have made attempts in that direction and not succeeded, but we should not despair, and I believe we shall find a system, and have as divisions of the colony not only the South, Central, and Northern, but other divisions as well. The other scheme which was contemplated broke down through its costliness. We have learned a big lesson in trying economy, and if we approach the subject in that spirit we will find a remedy. I ask the House, therefore, to stand together until we find a remedy; not to rush in and cut up the colony, but to stand together until we find a right way of dividing Queensland into provinces.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARCHER: I think I should congratulate my friend, the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Curtis, upon his able speech; but I am quite certain the Premier has paid him a greater compliment than I could by the lengthy and carefully prepared speech in which he replied to him. It shows, at all events, that this matter is getting very serious, and although I cannot possibly occupy the time necessary to go through the whole of the hon. gentleman's speech, I would like to point out some things I consider are fallacies. We have to thank the Government for giving us this day to discuss the matter in, and as I am exceedingly anxious to go to a division to-night, I will be as brief as possible. There is something very peculiar in the way the Premier spoke. He gave us a long history of the separation movement. That history went to show that when the Central province was fairly treated by the Southern members, it was contented, but the moment it found itself less well treated, and its representatives not given consideration, the agitation for separation began again. Is not that the most natural thing in the world? We did not begin the agitation without reason, but when the reasons became strong, the agitation began. It was a natural thing that when the Central line started from Westwood it to a certain extent allayed the feeling of irritation existing at that time. At the time that railway was proceeded with, settlement had already spread 400 or 500 miles west of Rockhampton, and it was a matter of life and death that we should have the means of communication with the West that the Southern people were beginning to enjoy. It is therefore perfectly simple to explain the reason why there has not been the same persistency the whole time with regard to separation; but as soon as the people do not get what they consider their rights they begin to agitate, and we are now carrying on the agitation in that spirit. There were some remarkable utterances by the Premier. He asked us, among other things, who made Central Queensland? and then he said the South made it. Well, who made the South? Was it not made by New South Wales? And did not the South agitate for separation? The Premier knows that a great many people went to the Central district from New South Wales, and settled there long before the separation of Queensland from New South Wales. I am one of a family who went to Rockhampton in 1854, and so did a great many other people. Is that any reason why we should not ask for separation? If it is, then the same cause would have kept together the whole of Australia to Cape York as one colony. So that there is no more reason for a tie existing between Central and Southern Queensland than between Queensland and New South Wales. As centres of population increase and become strong, they naturally desire their independence. There was a great deal said by the Premier as to the way in which the districts lie; but it is not the fault of the Central people that the Central line is running due west any more than it is the fault of the Southern people that their line runs in a peculiar way. Of course I admit that, from the shape of Queensland, the Southern line ought to have gone down towards the border of New South Wales and prevented the trade going that way, but we must accept things as we have them, and must remember that at that time Central Queensland was as badly represented as it is now in point of numbers. Everything that was done was forced upon it by the Southern members. Therefore it is no use now calling attention to the fact that this line takes a westerly direction, because we had no control over it. There is something I cannot understand in the

way the Premier argued about the Central Railway. He seems to think that the fact of it being a paying line puts the Central district in no better position than if it was a non-paying line. He says it arises from the energy of the people who have settled in the Western country. Of course it does; but they are settled there, and I insist that the fact that the Central Railway is a paying line, and so lifts the burden of interest on construction off the shoulders of the country, shows conclusively that our financial position is far better than the Premier makes it out to be. The hon. gentleman said the Central members would be exceedingly pleased to see a "thundering majority" against them on this motion. Let him try it, and if he is kind enough to come over with us and bring a few of his followers with him, I can tell him we will be exceedingly obliged to him. We do not want a "thundering majority" against us, but what we do want is to show that, with the exception of the member for Gregory, the Central members are unanimously in favour of the motion.

Mr. HARDACRE: He was not elected by the people at all.

Mr. ARCHER: We are anxious to get as many votes as possible from both sides of the House, but we would rather have the unanimous vote of the ten Central members than to have some of them against the motion, and be able to replace them by three or four members from outside. The Premier talked of the injustice of the proposal to Queensland; but all these arguments were just as applicable to the separation of Queensland from New South Wales. We know that, with the Centre and South separated, there will be as great an intercourse of trade between the divisions as there is between the united divisions, and that the intercourse between the Centre and the North in the same way will be quite as great as at present. We go so far as to say that we will accept a free interchange of natural productions, and the Northern sugar-grower will have the whole of the Central trade. We are not proposing to cut out anybody. With respect to the matter of duties, I was a party to them, as the Premier says, but it was in carrying out an effort, which every member of this House is bound to carry out, to make income meet expenditure; but I am extremely glad the hon. member, Mr. Curtis, has added that condition to his resolution, because it shows we wish to do nothing to injure either South or North. One country wishing to separate from another does not necessarily take into consideration the question of doing that other country an injury; but the position taken up is that it would rather do an injury to a certain extent than not have its own way and the right to self-government. The Premier said that, if we had not been joined with the South, we in Central Queensland would find ourselves governed by the Labour party. If a majority of the people of Central Queensland chose to return Labour members we would have to accept their decision, and we are willing to fight that out fairly and openly, and see which party would carry the day. There are plenty of sensible men in the Labour party who certainly would not go in for the purpose of ruining the colony. As to the boundaries of the Central colony, the Premier supported the Bill to provide for the division of the colony as proposed, no doubt, in the belief that it would facilitate good government. We have taken a leaf from his book, and if he really thinks Queensland could be better governed by smaller provinces, into which he suggests it should be broken up, we go a step further and ask why should Queensland not be better governed by breaking it up into three autonomous colonies, or, if the North does

not want separation at present, into two? The answer to us is—"Up to a certain point we will assist you, but we will not go one step further." We want to go that step further and try what we can do for ourselves. In referring to what has been said by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, I, who was present and heard the speeches made, came to a very different conclusion from that come to by the Premier on the remarks which were made. I have before me an authorised copy of Lord Knutsford's speech, issued from the Colonial Office, and I find he said that after the question of separation had been twice thoroughly thrashed out, if the Federal Constitution Bill was once more thrown out—and that has since happened—the time would have arrived for Her Majesty's Government and the Imperial Parliament to consider the position of affairs. In using those words he inferred that if the Queensland Parliament would not perform its duty, and give Central Queensland the autonomy asked for, it would be time for Her Majesty's Government and Parliament to take the matter into consideration. I would like to state that the words used by the hon. gentleman referred not to the Parliament of Queensland, but more especially to the electors of the Central district. The Provincial Districts Bill has been thrown out, and the elections have shown that ten members out of eleven are in favour of Central separation; so that the next person who approaches the home Government will have a far easier task than those who have gone home before in the cause of Central separation. The long and possibly instructive speech delivered by the Premier cannot possibly be answered by me in the short time I intend to take up this evening; but I can assure him that he has said nothing to-night that has had the slightest effect in weakening the determination of the Central members to carry on this struggle. If I were to speak longer, it would prevent others from speaking; and as I am anxious that the debate should come to a close to-night, I would rather let it be said that my speech is unsatisfactory than allow the discussion to go on to another night, and then from week to week, without any decision being taken. Of course, I have no power over other hon. members, but I am exceedingly sorry that the hon. member for Charters Towers, Mr. Dawson, has given notice of his intention to propose, as an amendment, that all the words after "that" be omitted, with a view of inserting "the question of territorial separation for Northern and Central Queensland be first submitted to a direct vote of the people of Queensland by a referendum." That amendment means putting the question back to the Greek Kalends.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot anticipate discussion on an amendment of which notice has been given.

Mr. ARCHER: I am not going to discuss the amendment; I am going to debate what effect it will have on the motion before the House.

The PREMIER: I think the hon. member is in order. The amendment has been distributed. I would myself, if I had thought it worth while, have referred to the amendment and the effect it would have on the motion. It would be out of order to debate the amendment itself, but it is in order to debate the effect that amendment will have on the motion before the House.

The SPEAKER: I was under the impression that the hon. member was going to discuss the amendment of which the hon. member for Charters Towers has given notice. In doing that he would be out of order, because he would be anticipating discussion on a question that has not

yet been proposed; but if he simply wishes to refer to the effect it will have on the question before the House, I think he is in order.

Mr. ARCHER: I simply wish to refer to the effect it will have on this motion. If the amendment is proposed and carried, this motion will never come to a division; and it will, therefore, have the effect of preventing the Central members from voting a direct "Yea" or "Nay" on the motion put on the paper by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Curtis. Of course, I am aware that every hon. member has a right to do what is right in his own eyes as long as he does not break the rules of the House; but I repeat that this amendment will have the effect of preventing the House from coming to a decision on the motion now under consideration. As I said before, I do not wish to take up time by speaking at length, and I will conclude with a very few words. In spite of the great trouble which the Chief Secretary has been at in replying to the arguments of the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Curtis, and in spite of the many pages of statistics he has gone through, I am still of opinion that the Central district has undoubted cause for asking for separation from the South. I have unbounded confidence in the determination of the Central people to acquire that by every legitimate means in their power, and I am certain that nothing but a satisfactory measure, such as would compensate them for want of this, will allay in the slightest degree their desire for separation. That it will come I am perfectly satisfied; that I, being far advanced in life, may not live to see it, is quite possible; but there are many hon. members in this House who will live to see the Central district a separate colony.

Mr. DAWSON: I can assure the hon. member that I intend to insist on moving my amendment and pressing it to a division. The amendment I move is the omission of all the words after the word "that," in the 1st line, with the view of inserting the words "the question of territorial separation for Northern and Central Queensland be first submitted to a direct vote of the people of Queensland by a referendum." I do not intend to go into the merits or demerits of the separation question, because to my mind that question is beyond argument. I am satisfied that, if the people of Southern Queensland or the Southern majority were losing by having the Central and Northern districts tacked to them, they would seize the first opportunity to cast them off; and the fact that they hold on to the Central and Northern districts so tenaciously is sufficient to show that such retention is desirable in the best interests of Southern Queensland. But this matter, I maintain, can only be settled by a referendum. We know that numbers of persons claim that the people of the colony desire separation, while others urge with equal force and vigour that they do not desire separation; and it is difficult to judge who are right. The hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Curtis, urged very forcibly this evening that the people of the Central district are in favour of separation, and he urged that from certain knowledge which he possesses; and there are other hon. members who are prepared to back up that statement. On the other hand, the Premier contended, from knowledge which he possesses, that they are not in favour of separation, and there are hon. members who will back up his statement. How, then, are we to judge who is right? One thing we can determine, and that is that the matter is agitating the public mind, and deserves the attention of the Government. But the question cannot be satisfactorily settled except by a direct appeal to the people themselves. It may be urged that the people had ample opportunity to express their

opinion on the subject. That I distinctly deny, because at the last general election, as in other general elections, there was no one question before the people on which they could give a direct vote.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Except the labour question.

Mr. DAWSON: There was a distinct issue in politics before the electors as far as the Labour party were concerned; but with the other party who wanted to squash labour in politics and prevent it having any say at all, there was no direct issue of that kind. In fact the most prominent election issue was the Queensland National Bank, though in addition to that there was the subject of land-grant railways. There were numbers of men who felt strongly on the matter of the Queensland National Bank, and claiming separation, voted for the Government. The hon. member for Rockhampton, in moving this motion, argued that only the people of Central Queensland should have a vote on the matter, that they only were entitled to have a say in it, and that if they desired separation that was quite sufficient. The Premier, on the other hand, urged that the whole of the people—Northern, Central, and Southern—had a voice in the matter. My amendment will meet both these contentions; it will secure a vote of the whole people, and will also show what are the wishes of the residents of the Central district. Another point I would urge is that this Parliament has no right whatever to alter the Constitution, and the separation of Central or Northern Queensland would mean an alteration of the Constitution. Many writers on constitutional Government hold the opinion I have expressed on this subject. Thomas Payne, one of the most powerful writers on the subject, says that a Constitution is to a Government what the laws made afterwards by the Government are to the court of judicature. He claims that the Constitution is an instrument which is in existence for the guidance of the Government, and that no Government has any right to alter it. It is something between the people and the Government, and really governs the Government. That being so, I fail to see that the Government have any power to alter the Constitution in the direction indicated. It remains, then, to find out who has that power. There are many who contend that it is the whole people of the colony, and that they have an inherent right to alter the Constitution under which they are governed; and I maintain that there is no way of getting at the wishes of the people except by a referendum. If, however, it is claimed that the people have not this right, but that it belongs to the Imperial authorities, the referendum still comes in, because it is only by a vote of that kind that the Imperial authorities can find out their desires. This idea of the referendum is not particularly new or startling. We know it has been in existence in Switzerland for a considerable time, and has worked splendidly; and we further know that before the Constitution of the United States of America can be altered the question has to be submitted to a referendum of the whole people. My authority is Mr. Bryce, an author very often quoted in this House by members holding high positions in it. I have not the book by me, but the information is in the first volume, about page 450. We have the referendum here in the shape of the local option vote; and in England, when they want to strike a rate for the creation of a free library for any municipality, they submit the matter to the ratepayers, and have a direct vote of the people before they do anything. In fact it is becoming the recognised method now of submitting matters to the people. Then in regard to the question of payment of members, which is agitating the people of New

South Wales now, Sir Henry Parkes advises that the question should be submitted to a referendum; and many powerful journals have expressed their approval of the idea—not excepting the *Brisbane Courier*.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Do you swear by Sir Henry Parkes?

Mr. DAWSON: No more than by any other leader of a Government; they are all equally unreliable at any time. Mr. Bryce again points out that in England, when any measure is passed by the Lower House which would effect a great change, the House of Lords generally rejects it on the ground that it should be submitted to the vote of the people—that there should be an election on the matter—presuming that an election would get at the wishes of the people. In fact, many of the journals in England advocate that course in connection with the Home Rule Bill. It is recognised as one of the fundamental principles of government, that any measure effecting a great change should be submitted to the vote of the people. The Premier himself gave a strong argument in favour of the system, when he pointed out that Lord Ripon stated that he would await the result of the elections to see the attitude of the people towards this question of separation. Why should he wait for that if it were not to get at the wishes of the people? But we who know more about the intricacies of politics here, know that the people did not give a direct vote upon the separation question at the last election. The Premier pointed out that the mining centres had decidedly blocked Northern separation when it was brought forward before. They did so because they thought the gentlemen interested in separation would introduce black labour; but they were relieved of that fear, because the Southern majority introduced it without any separation at all. At one time on Charters Towers there was a large public meeting held, at which it was sought to find the opinions of the public; but when the motion was submitted it was impossible to decide what was the vote, so the contending parties decided that they would submit the matter to the ballot. They did so, and the anti-separationists won the day. It would have been impossible to come to a decision otherwise, and the position is exactly similar to-day. We would certainly find out who was telling the truth. The separation cry was got up years ago by land-boomers. The Premier referred to the Northern men livening up in 1885. As soon as they commenced to make things lively, the Premier generally managed to "nobble" them and get them out of the road. The people suddenly found themselves left, and had to depend upon the integrity and sincerity of the men who presumably led them. But if a vote were taken upon the matter it would not depend upon any man or set of men. Every man would record his vote, and a just decision would be arrived at. The results of public meetings have shown the utter fallacy of going on in the present style, and the impossibility of arriving at a proper decision by any other means than by the referendum. I hope that my amendment will be carried, as I should like to see every adult in Queensland vote upon the matter. They are all interested in the matter, and they have a right to a voice in the matter. The most ardent separationist can have no objection to submitting the question to a referendum, because if he feels within himself that his contention is correct, and that the people of Queensland do desire an alteration in the Constitution, he has nothing to fear from a ballot; and the same argument holds good with regard to the anti-separationist.

Having put the question and the amendment,

The SPEAKER said: I would point out to the House that if the amendment is put in the manner proposed by the hon. member for Charters Towers and negatived, the hon. member for Croydon, Mr. Browne, will be unable to then move his amendment, of which he has given due notice. "It is my duty to protect the hon. member, and give him an opportunity of moving his amendment if he desires to do so in the event of the amendment of the hon. member for Charters Towers being defeated. I shall, therefore, put the question in this form:—"That all the words after the word 'that,' and down to and inclusive of the word 'Central,' be omitted." That will be substantially the same in effect, because if that is agreed to the hon. member can then move a further amendment omitting the remainder of the words.

The PREMIER: I would like to know how we stand at the present time. My own view of the matter is that the amendment, of which the hon. member for Croydon has given notice, is out of order altogether. I understand your suggestion is to make the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon authoritative, supposing the other passes. I think that the amendment stands as the hon. member for Charters Towers has moved it.

The SPEAKER: I did not ask the hon. member for Croydon to give his consent. I simply say that I wish to protect his right, and therefore I propose to put the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question," on the understanding that the words proposed to be omitted are "the constituencies of the Central." If the question is carried, and the words remain part of the question, the amendment of the hon. member for Charters Towers is practically defeated, and that will give the hon. member for Croydon an opportunity of moving the insertion of the word "Northern."

Mr. DANIELS: We have heard speeches both for and against the resolution, and I am in the position that I do not care either way. There is one thing I should like to refer to. In speaking on the want of confidence motion the senior member for Rockhampton, who is practically the leader of the Central separation party, said that when he looked round this House he could not see any hon. members fit to form another Ministry. Now, after that statement, how would it be possible for the Central division to form a Ministry? Perhaps it may be the intention of the hon. member for Rockhampton to take our present Ministry with him. Surely he would not be so mean as to leave us so situated that we could not form a Ministry for ourselves. How he proposes to overcome the difficulty I do not know; but perhaps, in order to give us a fair chance to keep our present Ministry, he may intend to toss for it. That is the only objection I have against Central separation. My belief is that the Central people do not like being ruled by Queen street, and I can safely say that Central Queensland is not the only district in which that feeling exists.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: Speaking to the amendment, I wish to point out to the House the extreme caution which is taken in the United States when any proposal is made for changing the Constitution. The 5th article provides that—

"The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which in either case shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by

conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress, provided that no amendments which may be made prior to the year 1808 shall in any manner affect the 1st and the 4th clauses in the 9th section of the 1st article; and that no State, without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate."

Mr. MURRAY: I take the opportunity of expressing my regret at the introduction of this amendment, more particularly in the form it has taken; and I am rather surprised at the hon. member for Charters Towers, who has so recently been before his constituents, when this question was very fully discussed, should ask to have it remitted to them for their further consideration. What better referendum could there be than the late general election? I do not feel it necessary to appeal again to my constituents with regard to this or any other question. I believe I have their full support in whatever I may do here. If we deem it necessary to refer this particular question back to the constituencies, I presume it will also be necessary to alter our entire system of legislation. I am sure hon. members know pretty well what the opinion of their constituents is on important questions of this description. My desire is to have the proposition discussed on its merits, and disposed of as quickly as possible. We have been here a considerable time, the session is passing on, and very little business has yet been done. If this question is again postponed, as the result of the amendment of the hon. member for Charters Towers, there is no knowing when it will be disposed of. It will appear on the paper week after week till the end of the session, and be not a bit more advanced than it is now. I will defer any remarks I have to make on the general subject until this amendment has been disposed of, which I hope the House will insist upon doing as quickly as possible.

Mr. HARDING: I must claim the indulgence of the House while I refer to a most unwarrantable attack made upon me by the Premier. To an interjection I made while he was speaking, and which I had a perfect right to make, the hon. gentleman, as I understood him, said the South would be prepared to meet us in the same way that the Northern States of America met the seceding Southern States, meaning, I presume, that they would fight us before they would allow us to get our independence. The hon. gentleman is so dictatorial, and so used to having his own way, that he cannot brook contradiction; but as long as I am a member of this House I shall interject whenever I consider I have occasion to do so, in spite of the hon. gentleman. If I misunderstood his remark I am sorry, but I believe that is what he said. The Premier also stated that land to the amount of £5,000,000 had been sold in the Southern district, and only to the amount of £1,500,000 in the Central district, that the Government had a right to sell land from that district until the balance was made even, and that that money would be appropriated as the Government might think fit. All I can say is that if they are going to sell £3,500,000 worth of land in the Central district, especially at the proposed rate of 5s. an acre, we shall have no land left to alienate. With regard to representation, the Central district has two members out of thirty-nine in the Upper House, and eleven, or two less than Brisbane and its surroundings, in the Lower House. There is not the slightest doubt that the Central district has spoken out in no uncertain way, and that the whole of the electors have recorded their determination to have territorial separation. The only exception is the case of the hon. member for Gregory, who did not face his constituents, but was returned on a legal technicality; and standing in the position he does he cannot be taken as a representative of the

Central district. If he had faced the electors he would have had to come into line like the others and fight for separation. We are prepared to give every concession to facilitate the interchange of products between the colonies, and we do not want to have barriers or hamper trade in any way. Now, when Queensland was erected into a colony in December, 1859, the population was 25,000; the stock included 20,000 horses, 300,000 cattle, and about 2,000,000 sheep. The whole value of the stock at that time was estimated at about £2,500,000, and the total wealth of the colony was £4,500,000. Does anyone now say that the colony has not benefited by separation from New South Wales, and that it would have attained the position it now occupies if it had been governed from Sydney all these years? I say if we want to make the colony great and prosperous, the sooner we divide it up the better. Now, compare the position in which Central Queensland stands to-day with that of the South. The Central district has 2,071,000 head of cattle and 9,662,911 sheep; the South has 2,178,000 cattle and 9,000,000 sheep; the North has 942,781 head of cattle and 1,524,000 sheep; the total revenue for 1892 was £682,882, and the expenditure was £602,000, leaving a surplus of £80,882 to the good. Comparing the position of the Central district now with the colony when it was separated from New South Wales, there is not the slightest doubt that we have proved we are in a position to carry on and have sufficient resources to be able to govern ourselves. The Premier has said that the people of the Central district were frightened of the Labour party, but that district has only returned three Labour members—namely, Messrs. Hardacre, Kerr, and Cross, whereas there are eight Central members who are not Labour members. The North returned seven Labour members out of nine, so that, in that respect, I do not think the Central district has anything to fear. I am not going into the figures as quoted by the Premier; but I will put in a more straightforward manner the position we stand in as far as the national debt is concerned. The national debt of Queensland at the present time is £32,000,000, and our share of that is £4,500,000. The lines in the Central district cost £3,500,000, and have paid 4 per cent. interest, so that our debt has so far been reproductive, and given a surplus to the good. Now, the interest on the public debt of the colony is about £1,200,000, and of that public works produce about £500,000, leaving a balance of £700,000 to be obtained from revenue. I unhesitatingly state that the people of the Central district are paying largely for works in which they have no interest, and which have been paid for by money squandered in the South. We carry that debt on our shoulders like an old man of the sea; and, like the Israelites of old, we are held in bondage by the Egyptians. The Premier, in an elaborate way, tried to prove that our revenue only amounted to about £20,000, but if we get credit for all the broken packages coming through large houses like those of Scott, Dawson, and Stewart, and Hoffnung and Co., we would have to be given credit for a much larger sum. When Queensland separated from New South Wales she had four steam sawmills, one soap factory, with an output of five tons of soap a year; one candle factory, with an annual output of 50,000 lb. of candles; and two collieries, with an output of 5,000 tons of coal, worth about £3,000; and that was the extent of her commercial interests. The Hon. Premier talked a good deal of the boundaries of the different divisions of the colony, but the hon. gentleman cannot now go back upon what he himself proposed as an equitable adjustment of boundaries. If we are granted separation we are willing, if the necessity is shown us in the future, to concede a similar

claim to portions of the Central district as we now make for self-government. I hope the speeches on the subject may be sufficiently brief to enable us to get a vote on the motion to-night.

Mr. CORFIELD: The hon. member for Rockhampton North has said I did not meet my constituents. That statement I deny. I did just the same as every other member of the House who was returned unopposed. I travelled over my electorate and addressed various meetings, at which I received votes of confidence, and if I was returned unopposed it was through no fault of my own, as I was prepared to go through a contest. Speaking to the question, I do not see that there is any great need for this motion at the present time, and we all know that the mover of it has been forced by the pressure from one place to ask the House against its better judgment to pass this motion. I shall vote against it for three reasons. The first is that separation at the present time is calculated to materially injure the interests of Queensland. The second is that, so far as I can gather from people who have as great an interest in the Central district as the people of Rockhampton, in the pastoral districts and around Longreach Central separation is looked upon as a fad, and any agitation in support of it would be treated by them with indifference. So far as the district I represent is concerned, the residents are totally opposed to separation of any kind, provincial or territorial, for North, Central, or South at the present juncture, and they are only sympathetic towards Northern separation, so far as it interests themselves. The third reason—and alone it would be sufficient to induce me to oppose this motion—is that I decline to recognise the right of any unauthorised persons to include in the Central district that portion of Queensland which justly claims inclusion in the proposed Northern colony. I do not for a moment question the right of the leaders of the Central separation movement to speak for themselves, but I deny altogether that they represent the whole or even the greater portion of Queensland, which generally, but wrongly, is shown on the map of the colony as the Central district. The latter part of the resolution before us seems to me to be thrown out as a bait to secure the support of the residents of my electorate. I would ask, What is the use of it? In that instructive and amusing document entitled "Further correspondence respecting separation for the Central portion of Queensland," recently laid on the table of the House, it will be found that certain gentlemen, and amongst them some members of this House, signing a petition to His Excellency the Governor on this subject, repudiate "the right of a local Parliament to interfere with the exercise of the powers expressly reserved to the Crown and Government of the United Kingdom by its legislature." Yet it is now seriously proposed by the same gentlemen, in the latter part of this resolution, that they can not only bind the Crown and Parliament of the United Kingdom at present existing, but also the future Parliament of Central Queensland, should it ever become a reality. Surely the Separation League of Rockhampton must have got tired of poking fun at themselves, and are now trying to have a little joke with us by throwing out this bait of pledging themselves against a border tax. Assuming for a moment the passing of this resolution and the establishment of a Central Queensland Parliament, is it reasonable to suppose that Parliament would not do its utmost to draw all the trade of the district to its own port, despite the pledges conveyed by this resolution? In what way are these pledges to be enforced? Would North and South Queensland

combine to compel Central Queensland to keep these pledges? Although we in the west of Queensland are strangers to the hon. member who moved this resolution and to his district, he might have given us credit for a little common-sense and a knowledge of what we want ourselves, and that is a great deal more than a mere expression of opinion against the imposition of a border tax. What is the Central district? I know the Separation League in Rockhampton claim that it extends as far north and west as within 250 miles of Burketown, and nearly 1,000 miles from Rockhampton, but, according to the Central Separation League's own reading of the Act of 1850, the reservation of the powers of the Crown to separate territories was reaffirmed, and the right was vested in the inhabitants of Australian territories to call for its exercise. These people repudiate the deductions of that league, as they do not consider that they form part of the Central district. At any rate, the greater number of the residents of the Gregory disclaim any wish for the tender interest taken in them by the leaders of the Central separation movement. As I have already said, their only interest in the separation movement is their claim for inclusion in the Northern colony when it becomes a fact. It has never been disputed that the people in the southern parts of that district wish to be included in Central Queensland, and that only adds to the difficulty of discussing an abstract resolution like this. If the Government would accept a suggestion from me, I would strongly recommend them to make some effort to build the railway from Hughenden to Winton. They would then, I firmly believe, hear very little of Northern separation, and consequently the question of Central separation would be got rid of effectually. As a Central member I shall vote against the amendment, and also against the motion.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. member who just spoke is always talking about his constituents, who consisted of the returning officer—a junior partner or something of that sort—and now he tells us that the construction of a railway from Hughenden to Winton would settle the separation question in the Northern and Central districts. He talks about the electors he represents, and he knows well that if he went before his constituents he would be rejected by them; and if he had acted in an honourable manner he would have resigned when the illegality was discovered, and gone before the electors.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member can scarcely discuss that matter. It is not at all relevant to the question under consideration.

Mr. McDONALD: I was only replying to the hon. gentleman, who is continually talking about his constituents. However, as his constituents only consist of one, very likely there will not be much weight attached to his assertions.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Your constituents are very much divided.

Mr. McDONALD: Very likely. I had the pleasure, however, of defeating one of those who probably would have been a strong supporter of the present Government, and naturally the Government do not like it. I believe that those who are not prepared to trust the people are not to be trusted themselves, and if we want to get the real opinion of the people of the Northern and Central and Southern districts as to whether they are in favour of separation or not, the proper way is by means of the referendum. We have been told that separation is practically dead, and that the last election proved it. It did nothing of the kind. As a matter of fact, the whole of those who advocated separation in the past have been provided with billets, or

something that has taken them out of the realm of the separation movement, and consequently for a time the movement lost its leaders, but it will soon be carried on again with full force. The Minister for Mines was one who made a very big mouthful at the last general election in saying that if no other man brought the separation question forward this session he would do it. He was going to see that the North got territorial separation; but what do we find now? He is Secretary for Mines, and we do not hear anything from him about the separation question. The Chief Secretary told us that when the hon. member for Rockhampton was Colonial Treasurer he said nothing about Central separation; and it seems to me that the moment a man comes in contact with the Chief Secretary, he forgets his former radical opinions. The Chief Secretary told us—I suppose he threw it out for the benefit of the capitalists—that if we get a Central State or a Northern State it is going to be dominated by the Labour party. I may say here that though four-fifths of the Assembly may be opposed to the Labour party at the present time, sooner or later that party will come to the top; and the day is not far distant when a large number of Labour members will be returned, not only by the Northern and Central divisions, but also by the Southern division. We have been told that the last general election did not show that separation was actually wanted. I contend that the separation question never came prominently before the electors in any portion of the colony. There was the all-important question of black labour, that of land-grant railways, one man one vote, separation; and then it was said that if the Labour party got in they would break up all the financial institutions in the colony. Considering that all these matters were before the electors, I contend that we have not got a true idea as to whether they are in favour of separation or not; and the only way in which we can get the true opinion of the people is by referendum. If we submit it to the people, and they say they are in favour of it, we shall be in duty bound to bring in such measures as will give effect to their wishes; and if they are not in favour of separation, we shall be bound to do the other thing and leave the colony undivided. As the majority of hon. members are desirous that this matter should go to a division, I shall not say more; but I would again remind hon. members that the reason why the separation question has, at various times, apparently fallen flat on the attention of the public is that its leaders have been practically bribed by billets and other things to abandon the movement.

Mr. DUFFY: Before I enter upon a speech I should like to know whether we are now discussing the motion or the amendment?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member may speak to the amendment, if he wishes.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Must.

Mr. DUFFY: I "must" speak to the amendment?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member may speak to either the main question or the amendment.

Mr. DUFFY: I wish to make a few remarks on the motion; but I would first say that I was pained to hear the hon. member for North Rockhampton claim the right to interject and interrupt hon. members when speaking. To me interruption by interjections is very distressing, as I am of a nervous disposition, and I would like to see that practice, which is an abominable one, discontinued on both sides of the House. With regard to the motion, I am opposed to dividing the colony into two or more portions,

because it would simply mean increasing the cost of government, without giving us any corresponding advantage. I am exceedingly sorry that the hon. member has introduced this question into the House at this particular juncture of the colony's affairs, because I am firmly convinced that the cry for Central separation is not *bonâ fide*. It is not the wish of the residents of Central Queensland that they should have separation. The pastoralists, who are the wealth-producers of the district, are opposed to Central separation, and those who support it do so from fear of the organised band of individuals who dominate the separation movement at Rockhampton. The gentlemen who are booming the separation question at Rockhampton refuse to grant to others what they claim for themselves—that is, the right to one's own opinion; and if any person in Rockhampton was to express an opinion unfavourable to separation, the crowd would be only too willing and ready to burn him in effigy, as they did Mr. Crombie, a leading pastoralist of the district, and a member of this House, no more than twelve months ago, for having the temerity to speak against separation. The cry for Central separation did not emanate from the pastoralists, who are the mainstay of the Central district, but from Rockhampton; in fact, it emanated from the junior member for Rockhampton. It was conceived, hatched, and brought forth in the open air by the hon. member. I remember that, twelve months or so ago, the hon. member was safely delivered of his bantling on a four-wheeled lorry in the open square at Rockhampton. He is the Alpha and Omega of the whole separation agitation. He suckled it in its infancy, nursed it in its childhood, and is now assisting it on to a premature grave. I am quite sure he has seen long the hopelessness of his case, but being determined to die hard, he was seized with an irresistible desire to enter Parliament, and try and force his fad on an unwilling country. I felt gratified when I heard the hon. member, whom I have known for twenty years, was returned for Rockhampton at the late general election, because I thought that Parliament and the country would have the benefit of his varied business experience and undoubted ability; but I confess that I have been disappointed with him since he came into the House, for, instead of assisting Parliament and the Government to restore confidence and place the affairs of the colony on a sound and progressive basis, every time he has spoken he has simply ground his little axe of Central separation. I have come to regard the hon. member as a second Washington, and, judging from the speech he delivered this evening, I should say he has the declaration of American independence off by heart. Really, Washington, of American fame, cannot hold a candle to him. I have been reading up some of the speeches of the hon. member for Rockhampton in favour of separation, and have come to the conclusion that he is fairly bursting with warlike spirit. There is a report of one of his speeches in the Rockhampton *Bulletin*, and he is made to say that, failing to obtain separation by fair means, he was prepared to wrest it from the Southerners at the point of the bayonet. I would ask him what right he has to use such language to hon. members representing Southern constituencies? The inherent right, I suppose! Does he wish to intimidate us into voting for this separation scheme, or does he wish to convey that we are a lot of cowardly poltroons? If so, I can assure him that he is mistaken, and I have no hesitation in saying that, should the exigency of the case demand it, Southern members will be found able and willing to defend their position, even at the

point of the bayonet. With respect to the alleged injustice to the Central district, a great deal of capital has been made out of the fact that last year's revenue exceeded the expenditure by a considerable amount. But he took great care to quote last year's revenue only, and to quote last year's Financial Statement only. We all know that the Central district is a purely pastoral district, and we all know also that last year was very favourable to the squatters; and when that industry is prosperous, that portion of the colony where it is carried on is bound to go ahead. But the hon. member forgot to tell us that the expenditure in the Central district on the basis of population exceeded that in the Southern district by a very large sum. The hon. gentleman moved for a return to be laid on the table of the House, and I will quote from that return to show the peculiar position he is in respect to that expenditure. According to the return, the population of Southern Queensland is 287,612, and the expenditure for last year was £1,568,597, or £5 9s. per head. The population of the Central district is 50,139, and the expenditure was £463,595, or £9 5s. per head. So that, taking the expenditure on the basis of population, it has actually amounted to nearly double in the Central district what it is in the Southern district; yet our separation friends have the effrontery to come here and tell us that we rob them, when we know that for years past the Central district has been spoon-fed at the expense of the other districts. In proof of that I may refer to the last Financial Statement, which shows that, out of £16,000,000 which has been spent upon railway construction in the colony, no less than £4,500,000 has been spent in the Central district. That is, the Central district, with one-ninth of the total population, has received considerably over one-fourth of the amount of money spent on railway construction, and still we are told that we have been unjust to them. I shall not go into details as to the other amounts of loan money or general revenue that have been spent there. We all know that a large amount of money has been dumped into an impossible river, not to take into consideration the £40,000 absolutely wasted in building a wharf in a swamp at Port Alma, to satisfy their vanity. Now, having bled the Treasury, they want to cut the painter, and leave us in Southern Queensland to bear the brunt of the expenditure on public institutions that have been built especially to accommodate the government of the colony as a whole.

Mr. CURTIS: I wish to speak to the amendment. The hon. member for Bundaberg referred just now to the expenditure in the Central district on the basis of population, and pointed out that it was greater than that in the Southern division. But he forgot to say that it came out of revenue produced by the Central division, which, after incurring that expenditure, has still a surplus of £140,000. Then, with reference to the Port Alma wharf, the people never asked for it.

The SPEAKER: I must call the hon. member to order. I fail to see that he is speaking to the amendment, which is very definite in its terms.

Mr. ARCHER: I would like to have your ruling, Sir, upon this point. Has a member who rises now to speak to the amendment a right like others to speak on the main question?

Mr. CURTIS: The hon. member for Bundaberg directed a considerable amount of his remarks to me.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Bundaberg distinctly stated that he was speaking to the main question. The junior member for

Rockhampton will have the right of reply later on; but, if he wishes to speak now, he must confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. CURTIS: I shall wait, then.

Mr. FISHER: At the general election the question of Central separation obtained nothing more than passing notice. I would like to say, in regard to the motion, that while it might do justice to Central Queensland it might, taking all the circumstances into account, be doing an injustice to the rest of the colony. I believe that the colony is far too big to be governed from a place situated at one end of it. Districts remote from Brisbane suffer now, and will continue to suffer, from that fact. As to the assertion that the Central separation cry is wrapped up entirely in the junior member for Rockhampton, I do not believe that such a thing is possible. Some injustice must have been done to cause such an amount of irritation and feeling in the Central district; but I am not convinced that this is the proper time or the proper way to endeavour to obtain redress. I would remind Central members that a new and independent element in politics has been introduced into this House; and if the Central members can make out a case against the Government, or against previous Governments, of injustice, this party will see justice done to them. It has been pointed out that, whenever any concessions were likely to be got, the Government of the day "nobbled" the leaders of the Separation party, thereby preventing their schemes from bearing fruit. In the present instance, if the Central people are determined to have justice, and send men here to plead their case, and to represent it to the Imperial Parliament, at the proper time, they will receive that assistance that will advance their scheme of local government or separation, with the Northern part of the colony also included. I was astonished at the Premier referring, at the close of his very able speech, to the dangerous attitude of certain Labour papers, which I understood him to characterise as disloyal papers, which are now supporting separation. While they may politically be dangerous to the Government, and while they may advocate different views to those of the hon. gentleman, I deny that they are disloyal in any sense of the term. As to the fear that there may be two four colonies established in the Northern and Central districts, they could not produce worse legislation than we saw passed by the last Parliament. Because people happen to be poor, and perhaps in a measure unread, they are not bounced into a position of conspiracy and outrages, and, as time goes on, the working men are going to take a big share in the making of our laws and the government of the country; and I believe they will do better than our past Governments have done. Referring to the amendment, a referendum has been opposed in this House and in the Imperial Parliament; but, strange to say, the leaders of the Conservative party in Great Britain are now advocating its use. We find Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, and Mr. Chamberlain now wanting the Home Rule question settled by a referendum; and if men in their high positions think it a proper safeguard for the people, the Central members should see that the amendment is a proper one for them to accept.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Do you fear by Lord Salisbury? Is he your authority?

Mr. FISHER: I do not swear by Lord Salisbury; but I mention the circumstance as evidence of the advance in Conservative roles. In other words, we find politicians ready

to take up any cudgel with which to beat down their opponents. The people are concerned in this question, and they should be given an opportunity of saying whether this is an attempt to increase land values in Rockhampton, or whether they consider a Government established in Rockhampton would be better for them than a Government in Brisbane. This thing will come sooner or later. A large measure of extended local self-government will be attained in this colony, and it is necessary that it should be granted in order to allay the discontent which exists in the distant parts of the colony against Brisbane or Queen-street government. It would be of advantage to the South, as well as to the Central and Northern districts, if some such system of self-government could be instituted whereby the people might be enabled to manage their own affairs, which they can do better than other people.

Mr. BELL: If this debate has no other object of interest, it is at all events noteworthy for the fact that this is the first occasion on which the principle of the referendum has been practically introduced into this House. I rise merely to make an observation with reference to the vote I intend to give. As a factor in the practical administration of public affairs, I am a believer in the principle of the referendum, and I hope to see it come into operation in Queensland. But, before it does, it will have to be formally embodied in our system, and I do not welcome any attempt to introduce it in the manner proposed. When a formal proposition is made to make the referendum a part of our system I shall support it, but I cannot support it in the neck-and-crop fashion in which it is now sought to be introduced. Therefore I shall give my vote against the amendment.

Mr. CAMERON: Speaking to the main question—

The PREMIER: I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to reconsider the ruling you gave some time ago. I believe, myself, that the hon. member for Bundaberg was quite out of order when he was allowed to speak on the main question. When an amendment is moved, hon. members should confine themselves to it until it is disposed of, otherwise I do not see how we can get on with business. Besides, I believe the rule of the House is to that effect. When we get the amendment disposed of, the hon. member will have an opportunity of speaking on the main question.

The SPEAKER: With regard to the point of order, I may point out that according to strict rule the proper course is for members to confine themselves to the question before the House, but the practice of this House has been as I have already stated. The question before the House now is the amendment of the hon. member for Charters Towers.

Mr. CALLAN: I think it is rather unfortunate that the Premier should check a member who has not yet spoken in the House. I know what a nervous thing it is to get up and speak here, and I am sure the hon. member must have felt it. It may not have been intentional—

The SPEAKER: I must call the hon. member's attention to the question before the House. He is decidedly out of order.

Mr. CALLAN: I do not intend to be disrespectful to the Premier.

The PREMIER: I do not care whether the hon. member is disrespectful or not, as long as I understand what he says.

Mr. CALLAN: With regard to the referendum, I do not think the House is prepared to accept it; and as to the question of one man one vote, I am distinctly pledged against it. I do not agree with the amendment, and shall vote against it.

Mr. HARDACRE: As I distinctly stated in my election manifesto that I was in favour of the principle of the referendum, I intend to vote for the amendment. I do not do so with any reluctance either, because I believe that if the question were referred to the people it would result in placing the separationists of Central Queensland in even a stronger position than they occupy at present. It would show how overwhelmingly unanimous the people there were for separation.

Mr. BURNS: If the hon. members who are supposed to represent labour are really desirous of seeing the motion carried, they could not have chosen a better way to defeat it than by proposing this amendment. One Northern member has said that the question of separation was not brought up when he was elected. That is a most astounding statement, because I know that in every Northern electorate it was the particular question on which hon. members were returned. I do not intend to support the amendment; and if it is made in a friendly spirit, the mover of the original motion has every reason to say, "Save me from my friends."

Mr. MACFARLANE: It is well known to the old members of the House that frequently during debates on separation I have suggested that the best way to settle this question was to obtain the real voice of the people upon it. If the people, by a majority of five-eighths or three-fourths, declare for separation, I should not object to granting it. To be consistent I shall support the amendment.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put.

The PREMIER: I think, Mr. Speaker, it would be advisable that you should let the House understand the effect of the ruling you gave earlier in the evening with regard to the question. I am sure all hon. members do not understand what the effect of it will be.

The SPEAKER: I thought hon. members distinctly understood that I intended only to put the motion to omit the words, "the constituencies of the Central," because if the amendment is put as proposed by the hon. member for Charters Towers, Mr. Dawson, it would preclude the hon. member for Croydon, Mr. Browne, from moving the amendment of which he has given due notice. For the information of hon. members I will read a decision bearing on the subject.

The PREMIER: We are quite satisfied with your decision; but I should like you to explain to the House the effect of the vote.

The SPEAKER: The question put to the House is "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question"—that is, the words "the constituencies of the Central." If that is carried, the effect will be the rejection of the whole amendment and the retention of the original resolution. The question now is, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

The House divided:—

AYES, 39.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Byrnes, Nelson, Tozer, Philp, Barlow, Thorn, Morehead, Dickson, Archer, Bell, Crombie, Smyth, Callan, Agnew, Stephens, Foxton, Allan, Boles, Harding, Curtis, Duffy, Plunkett, Phillips, Cameron, Morgan, Burns, Murray, Kingsbury, Smith, McMaster, Corfield, Dalrymple, Stevens, Midson, Lord, Tooth, Annear, and Armstrong.

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NOES, 20.

Messrs. Hoolan, Kerr, Hardacre, McDonald, King, Reid, Turley, Macfarlane, Rawlings, Jackson, Dunsford, Cross, Browne, Fisher, Daniels, Cadell, Lovejoy, Dawson, Powers, and Drake.

PATR.

For the amendment—Mr. Groom.

Against the amendment—Mr. Hamilton.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. BROWNE: In moving the amendment standing in my name, I say at once that I am not animated by any antagonistic feeling towards the Central separation movement. On the contrary, as a Northern separationist myself, I want to help them all I can.

The PREMIER: I rise to a point of order. The amendment which the hon. member has given notice of is to add the words "and Northern" after the word "Central" in the motion. I submit that that amendment is perfectly irrelevant to the motion. On the principle that we cannot move an amendment on a Bill outside the scope of the Bill, we certainly cannot move an amendment on a motion outside the scope of that motion. Let us consider the position the hon. member for Rockhampton is placed in by this amendment. He asks, and has made every preparation, for a direct decision of the House on one subject—that is, whether we shall have Central separation or not. He now finds the whole issue confused by a perfectly incompatible amendment which will prevent him getting a decision of the House upon the question he has submitted.

Mr. HOOLAN: Not at all.

The PREMIER: The adoption of the amendment would involve a complete alteration of the whole motion. Though things of this kind may be done on less important matters neither in the Imperial Parliament nor in this has an hon. member's motion been allowed to be dummed by another member for a particular purpose outside the object of the motion. That is exactly what is proposed to be done by this amendment. The House is asked to give a decision as to whether Central separation shall be granted, and it is not a proper or constitutional thing, nor will the rules of this House allow the motion to be confused by the importation of a subject which has nothing in the world to do with it. According to "May," 1883 edition, page 325, it is laid down that—

"An amendment should be relevant to the question to which it is proposed to be made. On the 28th February, 1882, on a motion for declaring Michael Davitt incapable of being elected or returned as a member, an amendment was about to be proposed for an address to the Crown for a free pardon; but the Speaker interposed, and pointed out that such an amendment was inadmissible, as it had no relation to the question before the House, but should form the subject of a distinct motion after notice given in the usual manner."

That is completely to the point; and if any hon. member wished to get the decision of the House as to whether we should have Northern separation, his proper plan was to do as the hon. member for Rockhampton has done, and have brought the question before the House in a distinct motion, and not to confuse the motion we have before us now.

Mr. POWERS: Before the ruling on the point of order is given, and as the Premier has stated that in this matter a motion should be treated just in the same way as a Bill, I draw attention to the fact that the hon. gentleman was himself a member of a Government who introduced a Bill to divide the colony into Northern and Southern Queensland, and the hon. member for Normanby was allowed to move an amendment on that Bill to insert the words "and Central." This motion deals with the same

subject, and as that amendment was allowed in a Bill, I submit that the ruling in this instance should allow an exactly similar amendment to this motion.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: In support of the Premier, I quote from "Dennison's and Brand's Decisions." Mr. Speaker Dennison appears to have ruled, on the 5th June, 1871, that an amendment must be relevant to the question. The reference is—

"Army Regulation Bill.—Bill considered in committee; motion made, and question proposed for the committee to sit again to-morrow. Mr. G. Bentinck moved—'That the House at its rising do adjourn until a quarter before 4 o'clock to-morrow.' Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is that the committee do sit again to-morrow at 2 o'clock, and the hon. member's amendment is that the House do adjourn till a quarter to 4 to-morrow. That is not a suitable amendment. The amendment must be relevant to the question when the committee should again sit."

Mr. DAWSON: I would like the Speaker's ruling as to whether hon. members can debate a point of order, and I draw attention to the 110th Standing Order, which provides simply that the Speaker may invite the opinion of the House on a point of order.

The PREMIER: We have always enjoyed that right, and we mean to have it without any decision of the Speaker at all. What the hon. member for Maryborough said is not to the point. The Bill he refers to included the whole three districts—North, Central, and Southern—and the amendment was to omit the word "Central."

Mr. POWERS: No; it was on the second Bill, providing for only two provinces, that he was allowed to move the amendment.

The PREMIER: Then all it proves is that the good nature of the House, knowing what the result would be, granted a license to the hon. member to which he was not entitled.

Mr. POWERS: That is a precedent.

The PREMIER: It is not a precedent.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. T. J. Byrnes): The argument used by the hon. member for Maryborough, if it proves anything, proves that, because an irregularity may have been committed by the good grace of the House in connection with a motion, it must serve as a precedent by which the House shall be governed for all time when a point of order is raised. The Premier has raised a point of order now, upon which I submit a strict ruling will be given, not in accordance with any lax practice which may have been permitted, but according to a strict interpretation of the rules and practice of Parliament, which the authority of "May" does not for a moment leave in doubt. It is clear that an amendment must be relevant to the motion on which it is moved, and the importation of the whole question of Northern separation into a motion for Central separation cannot be said to be relevant to that motion.

Mr. BROWNE: The main objection is that this amendment is not relevant to the motion on the paper. One strong argument that has been used right through is that Central separation would cut a slice out of the colony—to which North and South are opposed. My amendment is to include the Northern district, so as to make it one question, and show at the same time that the North is not opposed to Central separation.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: This is a matter of relevancy. The question is the separation of the Central district, and any amendment dealing with the separation of the Central district would be relevant; but any amendment dealing with any other separation would be irrelevant.

This amendment goes to an entirely different subject—the subject of Northern separation, which is not relevant to the proposal before us. As relevancy is the guiding factor in this case, I maintain that the amendment is out of order.

Mr. DRAKE: Hon. members have overlooked one matter which is nearer than any that has been mentioned yet. The last amendment, which we have been discussing for two or three hours, relates to both Northern and Central separation; and it is rather late now to raise the question of relevancy. This is a motion with regard to the division of the colony; and it cannot possibly be irrelevant to move an amendment that deals directly with the question of the division of the colony.

The PREMIER: In reference to the point raised by the hon. member for Maryborough, I find that the ruling of the Speaker last year was that the hon. member for Normanby's amendment was not admissible.

Mr. MURRAY: I was allowed to move it, though.

The PREMIER: Quite so. It was well known what the result would be, and it was allowed in order to stop the mouths of hon. members; but that is no reason why the House should suffer for it now. The point is this: There is a motion brought forward which may be defeated by this amendment, because it confuses the issue. We want to decide whether there shall be Central separation or not; and it will be impossible, if this amendment is carried, to get a decision on the original motion. As to the hon. member who moved the amendment, his rights are not prejudiced in the slightest degree, because he can give notice to-morrow and bring forward a motion for Northern separation, and he will then occupy just as advantageous a position as the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. KINGSBURY: We have been arguing against this amendment on the supposition that the effect would be the creation of three colonies in the place of one; but the effect of the amendment would simply be to add on what we call the Northern division of the colony to the Central division, and making one combined colony of the two. The motion would then read that "the constituencies of the Northern and Central divisions of the colony of Queensland having declared in favour of territorial separation, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the territory comprised in such divisions should be separated from the said colony."

Mr. POWERS: That means nothing. Consequential amendments would follow on the acceptance of the amendment.

Mr. HOOLAN: I have only to say that it is well known, both inside and outside, that there is nothing of a confusing nature in the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Croydon. If the amendment is defeated, the question stands exactly in the same position as before. It is well known that the Government object to this, not for the purpose of regulating debate, or for the purpose of regulating anything in this Chamber for the guidance of hon. members, but rather for the purpose of screening some of their own supporters.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine himself to the point of order, and not impute motives to hon. members.

Mr. HOOLAN: The point of order is that you cannot separate the two questions; and I contend that the moving of the amendment does not interfere with the substantive motion moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. **HARDACRE**: If you, Sir, rule in accordance with the opinion of the Chief Secretary, it will be an injustice to the motion for Central separation. Objections have been made to the almost insurmountable difficulty of slicing a piece out of the middle of the colony and forming it into a self-governing community, and we propose to remove these objections by saying we will have three divisions—Northern, Central, and Southern. It may alter the votes in such a way that members would—

The **PREMIER**: That is not speaking to the point of order.

The **SPEAKER**: The hon. member must confine himself to the point of order.

Mr. **HARDACRE**: The point is that the amendment is not relevant, and I am trying to show that it is relevant, because it will affect the votes with regard to the main question.

Mr. **CURTIS**: Speaking to the point of order, I wish to say that I have no objection to the amendment.

Mr. **FISHER**: I can conceive of circumstances in which a resolution may be proposed applying to one town, say, Brisbane, and where, if this amendment is ruled out of order, it would not be competent to add Rockhampton, because it was out of the scope of the original resolution.

The **COLONIAL TREASURER**: That question has often been settled on those very lines.

Mr. **FISHER**: One thing I regret in connection with this discussion, and that is the dogmatic way in which the Premier spoke—

The **SPEAKER**: The hon. member must confine himself to the point of order.

Mr. **FISHER**: I merely wished to say I regretted the dogmatic way in which the Premier referred to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. **POWERS**: With reference to the remarks of the Premier, I would point out that, on the 27th September last, Mr. Murray moved a similar amendment in committee, and no objection was raised.

The **SPEAKER**: The motion proposed by the hon. member for Rockhampton has reference to the separation of the Central portion of Queensland. That is a distinct question, and it will be interfered with by the amendment which is now sought to be proposed by the hon. member for Croydon, Mr. Browne. A distinct issue is raised in the one case, and if the amendment is allowed that issue will be connected with another which is entirely different from it. Therefore, I am of opinion that the amendment is not relevant, and cannot be put.

Mr. **DAWSON**: I raised another point of order, as to whether hon. members were allowed to debate a question of order unless invited to do so by the Speaker, and I particularly drew attention to Standing Order 110. I again ask for your ruling on that matter, notwithstanding the assertion of the Premier that he did not care what your ruling was.

The **PREMIER**: I did not say anything of the sort.

The **SPEAKER** said: It has always been the custom of this House for any hon. member to speak on a point of order.

The **PREMIER**: I hope we shall always preserve that right.

The **HON. G. THORN**: I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

**HONOURABLE MEMBERS** on the Opposition side: No, no!

The **SPEAKER**: Does the hon. member withdraw the motion?

The **HON. G. THORN**: No, Sir. This is one of the most important questions we have ever had before the House, and should be fully discussed.

Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 33.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Barlow, Byrnes, Tozer, Nelson, Philp, Annear, Tooth, Midson, Lord, Stephens, Thorn, McMaster, Armstrong, Dalrymple, Chafaway, Callan, Burns, Cameron, Corfield, Phillips, Plunkett, Smith, Stevens, Duffy, Macfarlane, Kingsbury, Allan, Smyth, Agnew, Crombie, Dickson, and Hoolan.

NOES, 25.

Messrs. Archer, Drake, Powers, Curtis, Cadell, Lovejoy, Harding, Daniels, Browne, Cross, Dunsford, Rawlings, Jackson, Boles, Murray, Hamilton, Turley, Reid, Fisher, King, Kerr, Hardacre, McDonald, Dawson, and Morgan.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Friday, 25th August.

#### PEARL-SHELL AND BECHE-DE-MER FISHERY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The **PREMIER**: I move that this House do now adjourn. The first business to-morrow will be the second reading of the Victoria Bridge Bill, and after that the Co-operative Communities Land Settlement Bill in committee.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at a quarter past 11 o'clock.