

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 16 AUGUST 1898

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TUESDAY, 16 AUGUST, 1898.

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

ESTIMATES FOR 1898-99.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, forwarding the Estimates for 1898-99.

Ordered to be printed and referred to Committee of Supply.

QUESTIONS.

MINING BILL.

Mr. JACKSON asked the Secretary for Mines—

Is it the intention of the Government to introduce this session either a Mining on Private Property Bill or a Mines Development Bill as suggested last year by the Mining Commission?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES replied—

Yes.

NEW GUINEA SYNDICATE.

Mr. JACKSON asked the Premier—

1. Has he yet instructed the Agent-General to return the £1,000 deposit money paid by the Lowles-Vine New Guinea Syndicate?

2. If so, has he any information whether such deposit money has been returned?

The PREMIER replied—

1. and 2. The Agent-General in receiving this money was acting merely as the representative in London of the British New Guinea Government. I learn that the amount has been remitted to the Treasury for payment to the credit of the British New Guinea Government.

LEASES IN THE SETTLED DISTRICTS.

Mr. HARDACRE asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

1. What runs in the settled districts, the leases of which have expired, have the Land Court considered and certified to under the Land Act, 1897, as not likely to be required for the purposes of settlement?

2. What runs in such districts have the Land Court certified to as being likely to be required for purposes of settlement?

3. What applications have been made by former lessees for renewal of the leases of such runs?

4. What number of applications from married women have been made under the Land Act, 1897, in each land agent's district for agricultural and grazing farms respectively?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS
replied—

1. The Land Court has certified, in accordance with the provisions of section 73 of the Land Act, 1897, in respect of the following runs situated in the settled districts, the leases of which have expired, that the lands comprised therein, or any part thereof, are not likely to be required for the purposes of settlement:—Boyne Island, Bronte, Bulburin, Hummock Hill Island, Monte Christo, Proserpine, Townshend Island, and Turkey.

2. No such certificate is authorised or required by the Land Act, 1897, and none has been given.

3. Applications have been made by the former lessees for extensions of the expired leases of the following runs:—Barmoya, Barmundoo, Boyne Island, Bulburin, Bronte, Callungal, Hegillo, Doongul, Dotswood, Dumgree, Harrisdale, Hummock Hill Island, Kilburrie, Kroombit, Magowra, Milton, Molangul, Monte Christo, Morrish 3 and 4a, Mount Spencer, Proserpine, Raglan, St. Helen's No. 1, St. Helen's Nos. 3 and 4, Salsibury Plains, Spring, Springvale, Taromeo, Taunton, The Prairie, Tooloombah, Townshend Island, Turkey, Waterview, and Yabba.

4. Applications for agricultural and grazing farms respectively, under the Land Act, 1897, have been made by married women in each land agent's district as follows:—

Agricultural Farms.—Aramac, 1; Brisbane, 1; Bundaberg, 1; Ipswich, 2; Nanango, 1; St. Lawrence, 1.

Grazing Farms.—Bundaberg, 1; Charleville, 1; Cunnamulla, 2; Gayndah, 1; Hughenden, 6; Rockhampton, 1; Springsure, 1.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF THE QUEENSLAND NATIONAL BANK.

Mr. GROOM: Mr. Speaker,—In accordance with the notice I have given you, I move the adjournment of the House.

The SPEAKER read a letter from the hon. member intimating that, in accordance with Standing Order 130, he intended to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of calling attention to a matter of urgent public importance—namely, “the proposed alteration in the articles of association of the Queensland National Bank to be submitted to the shareholders at a meeting to be held on Thursday next.”

Not less than five members having risen in support of the motion,

Mr. GROOM: In connection with the note which you, Sir, have just read, I desire to say that a deputation representing a number of the shareholders of the Queensland National Bank waited on me this morning and desired me to bring this question before the House this afternoon. I am not a shareholder in the bank, and therefore it cannot be imputed to me that I am actuated by interested motives. I take much higher ground than that this is a shareholders' question. As a representative of the public, I consider, in common with other hon. members, that as the public are interested to a very great extent in the management—past, present, and future—of this bank, every movement affecting its management should be jealously guarded and candidly criticised if necessary. Complaints have been made in this Chamber and in the public Press that a great deal of what has happened in the past in connection with this bank would never have happened if the shareholders had exhibited ordinary vigilance and had presented themselves at the shareholders' meetings and there exercised their votes to place new directors in charge of the bank. It is pretty well known that even if the shareholders had done so on the several occasions alluded to there were sufficient proxies held by the directors in charge of the bank to swamp any malcontents who might present themselves at the meetings. The directorate in days gone by was a close corporation, and formed a select family circle within which no outsider was admitted to become acquainted with the secrets. Everyone admitted the undesirability of such a state of affairs, and that in the future manage-

ment of the bank care should be taken that such a state of affairs should not exist again. Accordingly at the reconstruction it was arranged under Article 85B of the articles of association that—

At the first ordinary general meeting of the company held in every second year subsequent to the year 1897, one of the shareholders' directors shall retire from office, but shall not be eligible for re-election for twelve months

That clause was inserted in the articles of association, with the full concurrence of the Government as a very large depositor in the bank, and it met with the general concurrence of the public throughout Australia as being a step in the right direction, and one which it was hoped would prevent anything like what had occurred in the past. What then is the astonishment of the shareholders when they find now that a circular has been issued by the chairman and general manager of the bank, addressed to the shareholders, in which it is stated that—

A number of the British shareholders have signified through the London office their desire to amend Article 85B. of the articles of association, as they consider that it would be most unwise to alter the *personnel* of the board of directors just as they have mastered the difficulties and needs of the bank; and as this view is shared by the London Board, the meeting, of which due notice is now forwarded to you, is called for the purpose of affording an opportunity of making the desired amendment in the article referred to.

You will observe that this proposal does not come from the colonial shareholders, who throughout the colonies are in accord with the articles of association as they at present stand. Strange to say, the proposal comes from London, and the reason for it is difficult to surmise. One of the reasons assigned for the proposed alteration is that the depositors' directors are eligible for re-election, and it is not desirable that there should be two modes of election for two sets of directors. But at the time of the reconstruction one of the precautions taken by the shareholders to prevent anything like a close corporation in the future management of the bank was to provide that a retiring shareholders' director should not be eligible for re-election for twelve months, the object being to have new blood introduced into the directorate. No one could doubt for a moment the desirability of this, and it seems an extraordinary proceeding that just now when the bank is as it were gaining public confidence—when everyone is disposed to allow it to work out its own salvation—there should be any desire to stir up the events of the past and bring the bank once more into notoriety before those concerned in it have had an opportunity to retrieve their losses. What I have principally desired in bringing forward the matter in the House is to ascertain whether the Government have any sympathy with this proposal to alter the articles of association in the way suggested. If an announcement is made from the Treasury bench this afternoon that the Government have no sympathy with it, but, on the contrary, are opposed to it, it would have a very material influence upon the meeting to be held in preventing the alteration being carried out, and confer a benefit on the public, the extent of which can hardly be realised at the present time. The deputation that waited upon me this morning represented proxies that will be used at the meeting, numbering over 1,000, and I mention that as an evidence of the widespread discontent that exists in the public mind with regard to the proposal. As I said before, I take the higher ground that this colony is a creditor of the bank for £2,000,000, locked up for eighteen or twenty years, besides public deposits, so that it is interested to the extent of some £3,500,000 in this bank, and I certainly think that before any such alteration as is now proposed should be made, considering the magnitude of the colony's interest, it would only have

been ordinary courtesy on the part of those proposing the alteration to have gone to the Government and asked whether they were in sympathy with the proposed alteration or not. It is not generally known outside whether they have been to the Government or not, and I now leave it to the head of the Government or to the Treasurer to state the intention of the Government with regard to this matter.

The PREMIER: I regret that the hon. member did not mention this matter to myself, or give me some inkling of his intention to move the adjournment of the House to call attention to the subject.

Mr. GROOM: I mentioned it to the Treasurer.

The PREMIER: When?

Mr. GROOM: This afternoon.

The PREMIER: Five minutes before the House met. I think that on an important question like this, on which the hon. member wishes to have the views of the Government, he might have informed them that he was going to bring the matter before the House. As it is, I have not had any opportunity of consulting with my colleagues, except those who happen to be sitting on the Treasury bench.

Mr. GLASSEY: Do you think there is power under the 6th section of the Queensland National Bank Agreement Act of 1896 to make the proposed alteration?

The PREMIER: That is another important question, and one which I should like to have a good deal of time to consider. I cannot undertake on the spur of the moment to give an answer in as definite a shape as I could wish—that is as far as the legal aspect of the question is concerned. But for the information of the House I am prepared to state that this Government have not been approached on the matter at all, that the Government have no sympathy with the attempted alteration, and that they have not concurred in it in the slightest degree.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GLASSEY: Personally I find no fault with the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba for his action in moving the adjournment of the House on such a very important and large question; nor do I find any fault with the action of the Premier and the Treasurer in mentioning the fact that the least the hon. member could have done would have been to inform the Government of his intention. Doubtless the hon. member had not the opportunity of consulting the Premier and the Treasurer prior to his action this afternoon. At any rate, I was pleased to hear the statement made by the Premier that he himself—and I presume he speaks on behalf of the Government—has not been consulted with regard to this proposed change in the articles of association of the bank, and that, speaking for the Government, they have no sympathy with it. That is a view which is shared by members on this side of the House, and by a very large portion of the community. I intimated by an interjection just now that I thought the bank had no power to make any alteration in the articles of association without first and foremost obtaining the sanction of the Government, who are the custodians of the funds of the people—a large sum—which are locked up in that institution, and I certainly hope the bank authorities will pause before they ask for such a radical change in their articles of association as that mentioned by the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba. I should oppose very strenuously any attempt on the part of the bank to bring back the old state of things, with all its contingent risks and responsibilities, and I think it would be extremely foolish, if I may be pardoned for using the term, on the part of those connected with the bank to attempt to make any

such change. The 6th section of the Queensland National Bank Agreement Act of 1896 is an amendment which I proposed, and I certainly had in my mind at the time that the bank should not be allowed under any circumstances to make any such alteration without first obtaining the sanction of the Government, and I believe that was contemplated by the House in agreeing to the amendment. If the section does not provide for that, it does not come up to my expectations. I take the liberty of reading the section—

Notwithstanding anything in any Act to the contrary contained, any condition or regulation inserted in the memorandum or articles of association of the bank or any such company as aforesaid, for the purpose of enabling full effect to be given to the terms of any agreement entered into under the provisions of this Act, shall not, so long as such agreement remains in force, be, or deemed to be, capable of rescission or alteration except by the consent of the Governor in Council.

The PREMIER: The only difficulty is in those words, "for the purpose of enabling full effect to be given to the terms of any agreement entered into under the provisions of this Act."

Mr. GLASSEY: As I have said in proposing that provision I had most distinctly in my mind the desirability of having some provision inserted in the Act prohibiting the bank authorities from making any such alteration as that proposed without the concurrence and sanction of the Government. I think the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba has rendered signal service in bringing this matter forward, and giving members an opportunity of expressing their opinions upon it, which may have some effect at the meeting to be held on Thursday, and I most heartily support the sentiments expressed by the Premier, when he said the Government had no sympathy with the contemplated action of the bank authorities.

Mr. CROSS: I think the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba might as well have given the Premier some information that he intended to move the adjournment of the House this afternoon. At all events he might, with great advantage to himself and the object he seeks to attain, have given notice of his intention to this side of the House. As far as I am concerned, the thing has come as a surprise, though I am glad that it has been brought before the House. The 6th section of the Act places it beyond doubt, I think, that no such action as that contemplated can be taken by the bank without the sanction of the Governor in Council. I am quite aware that those who propose to make a change in the articles of association give as a reason—and on the surface it is a good reason—that in the transactions of the bank it is eminently necessary that a directorate which takes an active and sincere interest in the control of the affairs of the institution should continue in office as long as possible in the interest of the bank and of those who do business with it.

The PREMIER: There are two sides to that proposition.

Mr. CROSS: Yes. I say that is a reason given for the change; but experience has proved that while it is a plausible reason and under just and honest conditions would be a valid reason for doing what is proposed, experience has proved beyond a doubt that the directors of financial institutions, and most institutions of that kind, take but a very perfunctory interest in the business. Parliament has wisely set it down in this Act that so far as the Queensland National Bank is concerned it shall not be possible for directors to continue in office as they have done in the past by the use of proxies, and I hope that the Government will inform the bank that so far as they are concerned as a large creditor they are against any such alteration whatever. I am of

opinion that an intimation calling the attention of the directors to section 6 of the Act as one that prohibits any such alteration as that proposed would result in their taking no further action in the matter.

Mr. GROOM, in reply: I hope the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government will acquit me of any intentional discourtesy towards him, for it was only about 11 o'clock this morning that the matter was first suggested to me. I requested time for consideration, and it was not until 1 o'clock this afternoon that I definitely determined to take the action I have taken. The shareholders who approached me were extremely anxious that the attitude the Government were prepared to take in regard to the proposed alteration of the articles of association should be made known through the Press this afternoon and to-morrow morning so that it might be telegraphed to the various colonies at once, seeing that the meeting is to take place on Thursday, and, therefore, I had no time for consultation with anyone. I happened to see the Treasurer shortly before the convening of the House, and mentioned the matter incidentally to him. He was the only member of the Government I had an opportunity of seeing. The object which the shareholders had in view has been attained by the short statement of the leader of the Government, and with that they will be in a measure satisfied—that is, that the proposed alteration has not the sympathy of the Government. I may mention that the clause to which the leader of the Labour party has referred has already been submitted to learned counsel in this city, who have given their opinion very emphatically on it. I have no doubt that that opinion will be read at the meeting on Thursday, and it is to the effect that the hon. gentleman has intimated—that under that section of the Act the board of directors have no power whatever to ask for an alteration of the articles of association until they have obtained the sanction of the Government. The principal object of the shareholders is not only to ascertain the soundness of that legal opinion, but to find out whether or not the Government have any sympathy with the proposed alteration, and also whether or not, considering the large stake the colony has in the bank, and of which the Government are the custodians, the ordinary courtesy had been extended to them of notifying them of the proposal to alter the articles of association. What the Premier has stated will be a revelation to the shareholders that, notwithstanding the position in which the colony stands to the bank, that courtesy was not extended to the Government. My object having been attained, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave now, with the consent of the House, to withdraw the motion.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Before the motion is withdrawn, I would like to say a few words. I had no idea that this subject was to be broached this afternoon. I certainly would have liked to have had a little notice of it. Even if that notice had been as late as this morning, it would have been of advantage to myself, but, as the matter is of such great importance, the hon. member for Toowoomba was, perhaps, justified in taking time by the forelock. When I was in London last year a number of old colonists who are shareholders in this bank made their views known to me regarding the periodical retirement of one of the shareholders' directors. Their approval of the rule was unanimous. Every shareholder I came across approved of the rule as it is; but regret was frequently—and I may say spontaneously—expressed, without any interrogation or inquiry on my part, that the depositors' directors were not subject to a similar condition. I have risen

for the purpose of giving expression to the view which was not only believed in London, but is also believed in Queensland to be the correct thing. Speaking for myself, it was believed when the Act was passed that a reasonable amount of continuity of the directors who represented practically the biggest interest in the bank was desirable; but after full consideration, and from what I heard in the old country—in Edinburgh as well as in London—I was convinced that the time has arrived when the rule that applies with regard to shareholders' directors should also apply to the representatives of the depositors.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must remind the hon. member that under the Standing Order the only subject that can be debated is that which is definitely stated in the notice. The question of depositors' directors, therefore, cannot be discussed on the present occasion.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I was not in the House when the notice was read, so that I have alluded to that question under a misapprehension as to the terms of the notice. However, I am glad to have had the opportunity of saying what I have, and I quite approve of the action taken this afternoon.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. O'CONNELL: I believe this House has been accused of wasting a great deal of valuable time in continuing this debate; but hon. members—especially hon. members on the other side—ought to receive a great deal of credit for their industry in looking up the wrong acts of the Government during the last few years. This afternoon I am afraid I may tire the patience of hon. members with quotations; but I desire to make them in refutation of the remarks made against some members of the Ministry. Before proceeding I must congratulate the Premier on his accession to the honourable position which he holds. Many of his countrymen have already congratulated him as a native of the colony, and I am sorry to see that an unfavourable view has been taken of the action of Australians in doing so. I am sure they had no intention of raising any difference between those persons who have come to Queensland and made it their home by adoption and those who have been born here. They simply ask for the privilege which is given to all nations of paying honour to men of their own nationality who distinguish themselves, and wherever the Premier visited centres of population the native-born Australians specially congratulated him with a view of creating a feeling of national pride in their country, and with no mean or underhand motives whatever. Men cannot be considered to have a love for their country if they do not wish to see it become a great and powerful and free nation, and from time immemorial it has been the habit of all peoples to raise the enthusiasm of the nation by paying respect to the great men who may be born in it. Hon. gentlemen have lately had an opportunity of witnessing the universal grief on the death of the late Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, and the immense respect paid to his memory not only by the people of Great Britain, but by people all over the world. I maintain that a feeling of that sort will do no harm in Australia when brought into existence, if it is not in existence to-day. I hope the action of Australians will not be misunderstood, and that we will be given credit for doing what we thought a proper thing in regard to showing distinction to the Hon. the Premier on the occasion of his attaining to his present high position. The hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, thought fit to throw a good deal of disparagement on the

action of the Premier in visiting the different centres of population since his accession to office. I must confess that when he dwelt so much on the guzzling and razzle-dazzling I thought the hon. member must be affected in the same manner as the conductor of a tramcar who is depicted by Mark Twain as having been so affected by the notice "Punch in the presence of the passenger" as to convert it into the rhyme—

Punch, brothers, punch,
Punch with care,
Punch in the presence of the passengare.

I thought that perhaps the hon. member for Rockhampton allowed the question of guzzling and razzle-dazzling to take such complete hold of him that he was not able to get off it. However, he let out later on that no such calamity had befallen him, and that he was quite able to deal with other matters. I have just returned from one of those guzzles, or razzle-dazzles, or whatever the hon. member may like to call them, in the electorate of the hon. member for Cambooya, and I must say that I saw none of that want of enthusiasm for the Premier which the hon. member for Rockhampton spoke of. There was a large assemblage of "all sorts and conditions of men," and they seemed excessively pleased to see the hon. gentleman, and glad to have an opportunity of finding out what sort of a man was leading the Government of the country and with whom they would have to deal when making their wants known. In coming from Yandilla yesterday it was not a question of how much hospitality the party would receive, but what time there was to receive it in. On the banks of the Condamine there was a spread fit for an epicure, and what perhaps was a better sight, as indicating the country's progress, was the large number of healthy children sitting there with opened eyes and gazing with wonder at the display of talent in the shape of the Premier and members of the Ministry present. I am quite satisfied that the information which was gained will be very valuable to the Premier when he is dealing with the wants of the district, and will also enable members who accompanied him to give valuable service when those wants are being discussed in the House. I am satisfied also that the information which the Premier must have gained on his tour through Queensland, and the satisfaction it must have given to many people to be able to approach him personally was quite worth any cost the country may have been put to, and justified the delay in the meeting of Parliament. Nobody would of course impute anything but the highest patriotic motives to gentlemen on the Opposition benches in trying to show that the Government of the country is not in good hands. It is the function of an Opposition to assume that rôle, and the candid friends on this side who take good care to let the Government know their disapproval of the appointment of the hon. member for Normanby to the portfolio of Railways will also have credit for high patriotic motives. The idea of a gentleman like the hon. member for Normanby joining the present Ministry, when he is so much opposed to the agricultural interests of the country, must be a sufficient reason in anyone's mind for objecting to him holding his present position.

Mr. Cross: What, another candid friend?

Mr. O'CONNELL: Yes, there are a lot of candid friends on this side. I understand the hon. member, Mr. Kidston, and some other hon. members opposite, were through the electorate of the hon. member for Normanby lately, and after saying that he had broken all his best pledges and sacrificed the interests of his constituency by accepting office in the Government, they went on to say that they had nothing personally to say

against him. I must say that if I were told that I had become a traitor to the best interests of my constituency I should not pay much regard to the after statement that I was the whitest man on earth. I can hardly see how you can reconcile the two statements—that a man should be an accomplished scoundrel politically and yet be a thoroughly honourable man in every other walk of life. I do not see how a man can make solemn political pledges which he lightly casts aside afterwards, and at the same time be a thoroughly straightforward and upright man.

Mr. GLASSEY: The Government he has supported for years have done the same thing.

Mr. O'CONNELL: I cannot agree with the hon. member. One of the objections taken to the hon. member for Normanby accepting office is that he has sacrificed the cause of separation. I would ask hon. members opposite what they would do if the hon. member for Bundaberg came into office and the supporters of separation were asked to take office under him? Would they refuse? Would they say that their pledges to the separation cause precluded them from accepting office, or would they do as the hon. member for Normanby has done and say, on this question I hold an open and free hand? If the question of separation is an open and free one to members sitting opposite, it is only fair play that it should be similarly regarded by hon. members on this side. When I first came into this House the Hon. Sir Hugh Nelson held office in the McIlwraith Ministry, which was a pronounced protectionist Ministry, yet that hon. gentleman was strongly pledged freetrader. He afterwards became the head of this Government, and even then he carried on, to a great extent, the policy of his predecessor in the protective tariff which he had framed. The only departure made, as against Sir Thomas McIlwraith's tariff, was made with the view of relieving the producers of the country from some heavy taxation which had been put on machinery, and from which, I believe, the Treasurer received some £50,000 or £60,000 a year. The hon. member for Bundaberg did not give Sir Hugh Nelson credit for that when he was talking about the financial position of the colony.

Mr. GLASSEY: But you must remember that there has been clearly an increase of taxation.

Mr. O'CONNELL: With regard to the Secretary for Railways, it is well known that the hon. gentleman has been warmly attacked by the local Press; but I hold in my hand a rather lengthy document which appeared in a very leading journal of that city a year or two ago—the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*—which gives him a very high character indeed. I am aware it was written before certain business changes took place in connection with that paper, which, I understand, have led to a certain amount of difference of opinion from what is expressed here. Amongst other things the article states—

The hon. gentleman appears to be on good terms with his constituents, and nothing he said in his address at Westwood the other evening is likely to alienate their confidence. . . . Towards the question of separation his attitude is perfectly clear, and it is that which will be approved of, not only by the bulk of his own constituents, but by the great majority of the electors in the Central division. The hon. gentleman has been coming in contact with colonists of all shades of opinion, and the conclusion he has come to is that the time is inopportune for carrying on the agitation in favour of Central separation. He is not in favour of letting the subject be lost sight of, but would keep it before the country, "treating it in a dispassionate, dignified, persistent, and consistent manner." It is unfortunately the case that some people have become so possessed with the question that, like an evil spirit, it will not let them rest, but drives them to all sorts of extravagances. To us it appears Mr. Murray points out the better course that

should be followed in future, and one preferable to that taken by those who would excite the people with hopes that if they only continued to thwart the Government and keep demanding autonomy they would get it.

After referring to Mr. Murray's views on the Hughenden-Winton Railway, the Port Alma Railway, and the improvement of the port of Rockhampton, the article continues—

On the administration of the Lands Act Mr. Murray waxed very indignant, and the Minister for Lands will have much to answer for when Parliament meets.

Mr. Murray never had much faith in the Co-operative Settlements Act, and his observation of its operation in various parts of the country has not induced him to change his mind with regard to it.

We will not follow Mr. Murray through the remainder of his address, but we must compliment him on being so outspoken on the subjects of coloured labour and the expanded demand of the Labour party—"One adult one vote"—adult including both men and women. The hon. gentleman has always been in favour of coloured labour, and repeats his reasons for being so. He has yet to be convinced that sugar can be produced in the tropics by white labour as cheaply as by black labour, but, according to some observers, the arguments from experience are going against him. His views upon the electoral franchise will probably provoke hostile comments from our modern reformers, but we cannot deny the force of the hon. gentleman's contentions. That a useless, weak-minded loafer should have the same power in the management of public affairs as an industrious, intelligent colonist is not fair. Upon reading his speech, whether they agree with him or not, Mr. Murray's constituents will be convinced that they are represented by a practical man, and an intelligent and experienced colonist.

Mr. DAWSON: What is the date of that?

Mr. O'CONNELL: I cannot give you the date.

Mr. DAWSON: They have changed their minds since.

Mr. O'CONNELL: Evidently; and that is the reason why they abuse the hon. gentleman for having taken office under a Government which, as I say, he has supported for ten years, and as to whose policy the only question on which he is opposed to them is that of separation, on which he has kept a free and open hand in joining them. No paper could speak more favourably than the one from which I have read on the hon. member for Normanby. I am perfectly satisfied that the Government have not only done an act of justice to the Central division in having that large district represented in the Cabinet, but that the Premier has got a warm and strong advocate and friend in the hon. gentleman whom he has asked to join his Ministry; and I am sure that those people who have to do business with him as a Cabinet Minister will find that they have to deal with a sterling, straightforward, honest man.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. DAWSON: Good "barracker."

Mr. O'CONNELL: If the hon. member likes to allow his friends to be bested in this House, and never say a word in their favour, I am not going to follow his example, either by "barracking" or otherwise. There is a matter which it is well known I take a deep interest in; that is the question of federation; and I must confess that on this particular point I cannot say I am altogether satisfied with the action the Premier has taken. I should like to have seen a much higher stand made by the hon. gentleman and the Government he represents. But upon this question of federation I am afraid we have had in the Premier anything but a warm friend; and his action now, I am afraid, is not one which will encourage the advocates of federation in New South Wales but rather the opponents of it. If Queensland wants to assist in bringing about Australian unity the Government should let it be known that so far as they are concerned they are willing to bring forward a fair and reasonable

Bill and get the country to accept it. That is the position I hope the Premier will be able to announce before long, but up to the present he has been most guarded in all his speeches on the matter, and you cannot help feeling—whatever may be the reason—that he is very unwilling to give a pronounced opinion. I would sooner that he would honestly say he does not believe the federation of Australia is possible on equitable terms so far as Queensland is concerned. If he would say so federationists would know what to expect from the present Government, but up to the present he has simply said the matter is one of great moment and is still under the consideration of the Government and that they are awaiting the action of the neighbouring colonies.

Mr. DAWSON: Not federation, but the Bill.

Mr. O'CONNELL: Awaiting the action of New South Wales in regard to whether they are going to accept the amended Bill in the new Parliament. Even if they do accept the amended Bill it is doubtful whether the other colonies that have passed the Convention Bill will agree to any amendment at all. The only excuse for such action would be that they considered federation of such importance that it must be secured if possible even at the cost of retracing their steps. I believe there are many sections of the community in Queensland who believe that federal union with intercolonial free-trade would mean a great loss to the producing industries of the colony. But all our big producing industries are producing in excess of what we require. We are exporting gold, wool, sugar, meat, coal, and our only producing industry of any magnitude receiving any protection from the tariff is the wheat and flour industry, and the question is, How long will it be before the produce raised on the Downs and elsewhere will overtake our requirements in Queensland? The Minister for Agriculture has given me a few statistics as regards the production of wheat, which I will quote. I think he quoted some of them himself the other night. In 1888 there were 9,305 acres under wheat producing 8,263 bushels, in 1889 there were 8,459 acres producing 134,335 bushels, in 1890 there were 10,390 acres producing 207,990 bushels, in 1891 there were 19,306 acres producing 392,309 bushels, in 1892 there were 31,742 acres producing 462,583 bushels, in 1893 there were 28,993 acres producing 413,094 bushels, in 1894 there were 28,997 acres producing 545,185 bushels, in 1895 there were 27,090 acres producing 123,630 bushels, in 1896 there were 35,831 acres producing 601,254 bushels, and in 1897 there were 58,975 acres producing 1,009,293 bushels. So we see how rapidly our wheat production is increasing, and the question is whether it is worth while trying to keep back federation, so that this industry may have the advantage of a protective tariff for a few years, and while doing so prevent the free interchange of all other products. I do not think it would be worth while. From what I have seen and heard I believe there will be an enormous increase in the production of wheat this year if we have anything like a decent fall of rain; and I would ask those gentlemen on the Downs, who seem afraid of the result of federation, whether it would not be of more advantage to them to help federation than to keep it back for the sake of the small protection they are getting at present, and which cannot last more than a few years? Some hon. members who represent agricultural constituencies on the Downs seem to have the idea that the sugar industry is exceptionally favoured by the Government. The Government has advanced money for the erection of central mills in the North, but in doing so they have certainly caused an increased market for the produce of the South, so that while giving assistance to the North-erners they were also assisting the Southerners.

So far from being specially favoured by the Government, I may state that for years past the railway tariff on sugar has been from 100 to 200 per cent. more than for any other agricultural product, and I have been lately fighting the Commissioner and the Minister for some reasonable recognition of the sugar as an agricultural product. Of course, the Minister has comparatively little to say in regard to the rates charged. That matter is largely in the hands of the Commissioner, who was good enough to say that if they made sugar an agricultural product he did not know what would happen. I told him that a bountiful Creator had saved him from any necessity of making it an agricultural product, by having already made it such, and that an injustice was being done by him in attempting to make it anything else. I shall give an illustration to show the sort of charges made upon sugar in proportion to those made upon other things, and it will serve as an illustration all through. A truck of maize from Gin Gin, about twenty miles from Bundaberg, is charged at the rate of 2s. 11d. per ton; but if you send down raw sugar at the specially reduced rates the charge is 7s. At the ordinary rate the charge would be 10s. The difference in the prices of flour and sugar should also be considered. Flour is worth about £13 per ton, whereas raw sugar is now worth only about £8 5s., so that there can be only one reason for keeping up these high charges, and that is that the Commissioner wants revenue. That is the only conclusion I can come to, and although the sugar industry is being conducted, if not at a loss, at any rate at not more than cost price, the Government refuse to interfere and reduce the freight upon it to that charged upon other agricultural produce. I do not think the Government are treating the industry fairly—certainly they are not pampering it. I may also remind hon. members that there is a duty of 4d. per bushel upon wheat and £1 per ton upon flour, whereas the nominal duty of £5 per ton upon sugar has been inoperative for many years. A remark fell from the hon. member for Bundaberg in his criticism of the action of the Government which I hope he will amplify when he comes to speak upon the Financial Statement. He called attention to the fact that the Government claimed to have put the finances of the colony into a thoroughly sound condition, and then he went on to tell his audience how it had been brought about. In his opinion the Government had brought it about by cutting down the salaries of the Government servants in cases in which they should not. I suppose that he was particularly referring to the wages of the railway lengthsmen; but in spite of the fact that these wages have been reduced, hon. members are constantly being besieged by people wishing to get into the Government service, and who are ready to take the positions of those who are getting such low wages.

Mr. STEWART: Is that an evidence of prosperity?

Mr. O'CONNELL: I am not giving it as an evidence of prosperity, but as a fact, that in spite of the cutting down of wages the outside public are suffering to a greater degree than the Government servants, and the consequence is that there is an excess of people wishing to get into the Government service. It seems to me that if the Government did wrong it was in not using the pruning knife in a more drastic manner. Civil servants should not be paid higher wages than the current rate outside the service. They should receive fair wages, but they should not receive so much in excess of the wages paid to outsiders. No more should be taken from the taxpayer than the labour is entitled to in the open market. I believe that is the position now

taken up by Mr. John Burns, who does not believe that Civil servants should take advantage of their votes to press the Government to pay them larger wages than are paid to their fellow-men in the ordinary avocations of life. I have often asked applicants why they are so anxious to get into the Government service, and have been told that it is simply because it is a permanent billet. They not only look at the wages, which as a rule are slightly above the outside rates, but they look at the permanency of the employment, and it is that which makes them anxious to get there.

Mr. KEUGH: You do not give them facilities to get on the land; if you did they would not apply to you.

Mr. O'CONNELL: I am very glad the hon. member reminded me of that, because I think that if any Minister has administered the Land Act fairly it is the present Secretary for Lands. I have always been a strong advocate of the opening of land, and making it available for the people. I have fallen out with some of the best friends I had in my electorate in consequence, because they happened to be lessees of Crown lands. I am glad to say that since the present Secretary for Lands has had charge of the Lands Office a change has come over the administration of that department. It is very seldom now that a Crown lessee is able to prevent land from being thrown open. Some years ago there was an effort made to have a run called Rawbelle, to the west of Bundaberg, thrown open for selection. It was well known that there were several people ready to take up country there as grazing farms; but the lessee got up a petition, and had it signed by a lot of people in and around the district, who said they wanted the land thrown open as agricultural farms. Now, this land is from 150 to 200 miles away from the nearest market, and I need hardly tell hon. members that the idea of growing agricultural produce there was absurd. It was simply done with a view of trying to block settlement, and I am sorry to say it was successful. The land is still held under occupation license by the Crown lessee. Another attempt is now being made to have it thrown open, and I hope the Secretary for Lands will see that the Crown lessee does not succeed in blocking it. I do not intend to go through the Speech seriatim, as we will have an opportunity of discussing the Bills as they come before us. But there is one Bill which I should like to have seen on the list, and that is a Bill to provide for the inspection of boilers on land. There has been a terrible explosion lately in the Bundaberg district, and I hope during the session the Government will see their way to provide for the inspection of the boilers in the sugar-mills. It is a very desirable thing, and I think the sugar-planters will approve of it for their own sake, as it would be a guarantee to the public and to the men working in the mills that all necessary repairs have been made.

Mr. DIBLEY: Members on this side have been waiting anxiously to hear the hon. member for Brisbane North, Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, but as he is evidently not prepared to speak yet I wish to say a few words with regard to the speech of the hon. member, Mr. Annear. He attempted to justify the action of the Government with regard to the contract given to Walkers, Limited, at Maryborough. It is a well-known fact that when the changes were taking place in the Government during the recess the hon. member, Mr. Annear, was the most hostile man to the Government you could meet in the street. He preached the doctrine of discontent against the Government in the streets and on the "Lucinda," and when he was going up to Maryborough he told us

what he was going to do—that he was going up to lash the Government to pieces. What did he do? When he got to Maryborough he found that Walkers, Limited, had got a contract, without tenders being called, for the making of ten engines at an advance of 10 per cent. upon the price for which they had previously been made; and, instead of lashing the Government, the hon. member praised them for all he was worth. He was conciliated and pleased, and he has been praising the Government there and in the House ever since. My own opinion with respect to the contract let to Walkers, Limited, is that there is something very suspicious indeed about it. The whole thing is very like what the hon. member for Cairns would call a "pie," and a "pie" with a very bad smell. The hon. member for Maryborough and other members on the other side have attempted to pull to pieces the great platform of the Labour party. This massive structure and the number of planks in it have been mentioned so many times that one would think the Labour party was responsible for the recent rise of 25 per cent. in the cost of timber which has occurred since that platform was built. However, we find that the Government have come to the rescue by taking three of the planks and putting them into the Governor's Speech. If they come to the rescue in the same way every session, the platform will become so light that we shall have to manufacture a new one in the course of time if we wish to go on fighting. I may say that the members of the Labour party are here to support measures not men, and if when this long debate comes to a close the Government bring on good measures they will find us helping them in every way to bring about the good legislation they have promised. The hon. member for Maryborough regretted the very low wages paid to men generally in the colony, and particularly in Maryborough; but after that he went on to tell us about what the Chillagoe people are doing. I saw from a Cairns newspaper that they are offering 7s. a day; but the difference between Cairns and here is more than 2s. a day, and I think that a very low wage for the place. The hon. member told us that the Labour platform was white-ant eaten and wormy; but I noticed that he came very near taking the minimum wage plank—white ants and all. It is generally acknowledged that the difference between the Chillagoe district and North and down here is about 2s. 6d. a day, and the Chillagoe people will not be such a boon to the colony as the hon. member imagines, if they are going to cut wages to the low price they are offering now.

Mr. ANNEAR: I said they would have to pay £2 10s. a week to get their work done.

Mr. DIBLEY: No doubt the hon. member was quite right, as a representative of Maryborough, in praising the Chillagoe people, because the Maryborough people are getting some contracts from the Chillagoe Railway Company. That is a well-known fact, and I think the whole of the hon. member's support of the Government since the changes in the Ministry is due to the contracts given to Walkers, Limited, and Maryborough.

Mr. ANNEAR: You see I am a consistent protectionist.

Mr. DIBLEY: The hon. member is a protectionist when protection protects Maryborough, and at no other time. I believe he protects his seat in this House as well as anyone in it, and much better than I can do. I think some member of the Government or some other member on the other side should have got up to justify the action of the Government in giving that large

contract without calling for tenders in the usual way. I do not know that I have anything more to say on the Speech.

Mr. GROSS: What about federation?

Mr. DIBLEY: I am not a federationist, remember. Still, at the same time, when it comes along, if I see we are getting a fair deal, I shall no doubt be as ready to support it as the hon. member for Clermont.

Mr. PETRIE: I did not intend to say anything on the Address in Reply, as I consider a good deal of time is wasted upon it, but the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough, with regard to certain contracts, have led me to justify myself as one of the deputation that waited on the Secretary for Railways in connection with them, and to put the House and the country on the right course with respect to the matter. I should like it understood that I have the greatest respect for the members for Maryborough. I consider the Maryborough people lucky in having such representatives. In attending the deputation I had no particular jealousy against Maryborough or against a Maryborough firm getting the contract, because when people lay out large sums of money upon works like that I think it right that a certain amount of protection should be given them. But I take exception to that portion of his speech, where, speaking to the hon. junior member for North Brisbane, he says—

So far as I am aware, this deputation is the first legislation he has attempted with his colleague and some protectionists, most of them from this side and some from the other side of the House. They represented to the Secretary for Railways that they had a great grievance to the electors of North Brisbane to put before him. But I am aware of the fact that Messrs. Evans, Anderson, and Phelan had no desire to appear in this case, and had no desire to go with the deputation, and the thing was brought about in the way I have stated by these active politicians.

I deny that charge. I believe the hon. member must have had things misrepresented to him, because I know that a member of the firm of Messrs. Evans, Anderson, and Phelan waited upon me, and asked me if I would see that their case was properly put before the Minister. The senior member for North Brisbane was absent down south the day previous to the deputation, but he came back the night before, and the following morning I called upon him, and we arranged to see the Minister. The deputation waited on the Minister that afternoon, because he stated that he would be very busy with the Estimates on the Friday and Saturday. The matter was in consequence more hurried than it would have been otherwise, but I believe we had a very good case, although the junior member for Maryborough gave good reasons from his point of view why Walker and Co. should get the contract for those locomotives without tender. I know that when some years ago the Government proposed to get some forty locomotives from the old country deputations from Maryborough and Brisbane waited upon the Minister, with the result that it was decided that tenders should be invited for the construction of thirty of those locomotives in Queensland, and that the remaining ten should be obtained from the old country. Walker and Co. were the successful tenderers. I am not here to advocate the case of Evans, Anderson, and Phelan, or any other firm. I feel very proud to know that we have in Queensland a firm like Walker and Co., and I am not running down that firm, but at the same time I think we had a very good case when we went to the Minister. As to Evans, Anderson, and Phelan being dragged there against their will, as stated by the junior member for Maryborough, I have since

seen every member of that firm and asked them if that is correct, and every one of them totally and distinctly deny the statement.

Mr. ANNEAR: One member of the firm told me that he had no inclination to go, but that he was forced to go.

Mr. PETRIE: I have seen every member of the firm since, and they totally and distinctly deny that. At any rate, the deputation had a very good case. If the Government wanted any more locomotives, neither Walker and Co. nor any other firm in Queensland should have got them at an increased price, but tenders should have been called for the work. Evans, Anderson, and Phelan have works equal to the works of Walker and Co. The junior member for Maryborough stated that Walker and Co. paid in wages £750 per fortnight.

Mr. ANNEAR: Per week, for the last four years.

Mr. PETRIE: Well, I know that Evans, Anderson, and Phelan have paid that amount per week, or per fortnight, whichever it is, and are at the present time paying between £500 and £600 in wages per fortnight. The hon. member also said that the engine-drivers were anxious to get one of the locomotives built by Walker and Co. I might tell the hon. member that when Messrs. Evans, Anderson, and Phelan, two and a-half years ago, constructed forty-six locomotives, the engine-drivers were just as anxious to get their locomotives as they are now to get the locomotives made by Walker and Co. But I do not think much of that argument, as the drivers were like a boy with a new toy, and wanted the new engines. The hon. member brought up the question of the construction of the dredge "Hydra," which I should not have referred to had it not been mentioned by him. The tender for that was accepted by the Government thirteen years ago. I put a number of questions to the Minister recently on that subject, and I am glad to see that the *Maryborough Chronicle* last week devoted a column to the matter, reprinting the questions and answers. In reply to the second question the Treasurer said he had no information, but the *Chronicle* gives reasons why the tender was accepted.

Mr. ANNEAR: Why not read them?

Mr. PETRIE: I do not think it is necessary, because I believe that every member of the House is acquainted with them. The *Chronicle* then suggests that if I have any more questions to ask on the subject and would kindly tell them what they are they would give the information, which is, I think, a piece of cheek. I am not running down Maryborough or Walker and Co.; but as the hon. member wished to make it appear that Brisbane has got more than Maryborough, I think I am justified in showing that Maryborough has got more than Brisbane. There is not a better built dredge in the whole of Queensland than the "Hydra." When tenders were called for the "Hydra," tenders were also called for the construction of five steam hopper barges. Maryborough got the greater part of that work, and the reason why they did not get the whole of it was that they could not do it in the specified time. They got work to the value of from £60,000 to £90,000, as against £30,000 given to Brisbane. Moreover, the steam hopper barges were afterwards made stronger, so that they could be used as gunboats in case of necessity, and extra money was paid to Walker and Co. on that account. If the junior member for Maryborough thinks that the *Maryborough Chronicle* or *Maryborough* itself is going to hoodwink us in this case he is very much mistaken. Passing away now from these locomotives, I may say that I do not intend

to touch upon all the questions dealt with in the Governor's Speech. Addresses in Reply are usually the outcome of political or electioneering speeches, especially when we come to the tail end of a Parliament. I see that the Speech contains this paragraph—

The public works sanctioned by Parliament are now in progress, and such further undertakings as are immediately required will be duly submitted.

I have no railway to advocate now. I know that the Government have been doing a good deal in the way of erecting public buildings and schools, but I hope that they will complete the Treasury Buildings before long. A great many of the departments are much hampered for room, and I feel certain that the completion of the square will not only increase the stability of the building and provide the necessary accommodation for the departments, but it will also benefit the whole colony. I am very glad to see that it is the intention of the Government to establish a university. I may be pardoned for alluding to a Bill which I am about to introduce, but if that measure is passed the money which will be obtained through its operations may be devoted either to a university, schools, or charitable institutions. Federation is a matter which we have to approach very slowly and very cautiously. I am not what might be termed an ardent federationist, and, on the other hand, I am not opposed to federation. I believe that if the powers of the Federal Council were extended, it would be satisfactory to the colony. However, it is not a matter that we should rush into.

We have seen the result of that lately in New South Wales, and I do hope that whatever is to be done will be referred to the people of Queensland. Our Government in the past has been too vacillating, and has not brought the question properly before Parliament, so that the Government alone is to blame for what has happened in the past. If the matter is placed before the people, we shall then know what they think on the subject. A lot of people in the colony do not understand what federation means, and I believe there are a lot of members who also require education on the matter. However, I hope that whatever legislation is introduced into this House will be dealt with promptly and straightforwardly. Every session we have an Address in Reply. It may contain a great deal, or it may mean nothing. We have now wasted three weeks over this Address, and last session more time was wasted than in any session since I have been in this House. We waste time at the commencement of the session, and then we rush through Bills and legislate in a hurry, and what is the result? Hurried legislation invariably means that we have in the next Parliament to undo a great deal of what we have done during this. While I am on my feet I desire to congratulate the Premier upon his accession to office. As a fairly independent member I intend to support him. At the same time I am of this opinion—I may be wrong—but I am of opinion that it would have been far better if the hon. gentleman had gone to the country straight away. He has been visiting the North and other centres of the colony, and he has met with a good reception wherever he has gone. In the Premier we have an able man, and I am proud to say a native also, and I hope that before long we shall have many other natives in this House. I cannot say that I am altogether satisfied with what the Ministry has done in the past, and I am not going to say anything with regard to the appointments that have been made beyond this: That I think the Premier was quite right in appointing a member of the Central district to a portfolio. The hon. member, Mr. Murray, is a very old friend of mine, and I congratulate him on his accession to office. He has a lot to learn

yet, and if I can do anything towards assisting him I shall be only too glad. He has had rather a rosy time of it so far from the contractors of this city and from others in connection with railways, but I believe he is honest in his intentions and that he will do the best he can for the colony generally. With regard to the appointment of the junior member for Mackay as Secretary for Agriculture, I believe he is a good man, although I do not altogether believe in having the two members for the one constituency in the Cabinet. At the same time I have a great respect for the hon. gentleman, and believe he will make a splendid Secretary for Agriculture. I have no axe to grind. I do not complain because I have not got a portfolio. I do not expect to get a portfolio in this Government. I believe that the best has been done all round. There is no doubt that the Premier has had difficulties to contend with in taking up the reins of office. He has had to take up all the old remnants of the other Premier, and perhaps he and his colleagues are good men—I believe they are. I hope the House will bear with me in what I have said. I am not given to making long speeches, and I trust that what I have said will be thoroughly understood by hon. members. No matter what the hon. members for Maryborough may say, I think those contracts should have been let by tender, so that other firms who are equally as well able to carry out the work as Walkers, Limited, should have had a chance. The Secretary for Railways has promised that he will view the works on Kangaroo Point, and I intend to take him over there and show him what they are doing.

Mr. BROWNE: Is that your little axe?

Mr. PETRIE: All I want is fair play. I want things carried out on a proper basis, and Walkers, Limited, compelled to tender in the same way as other firms. However, that is a matter on which the Minister will admit that he has done wrong. In fact he has admitted to me privately that he has done wrong.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. PETRIE: He said, at all events, that tenders should have been called.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Under the circumstances.

Mr. PETRIE: I understand that more locomotives will be wanted shortly, and I hope that tenders will be called.

Mr. ANNEAR: And that the lowest tenderer will get the contract.

Mr. PETRIE: I know that Walkers, Limited, cut things down to a very low price.

Mr. ANNEAR: What about the "Hydra"?

Mr. PETRIE: I have explained that Maryborough got the lion's share of that work, and that the "Hydra" is one of the best-built dredges in the colony. However, I am not going to be drawn by the hon. member for Maryborough. I would not have risen but for the statements made by him and his colleague, and I only express the hope that the Government will see that fair play is done to all the manufacturing firms in the colony.

Mr. NEWELL: I am not going to repeat what the hon. member for Toombul has said—that I did not intend to speak on this Address in Reply. I have all along intended to say something, and, first of all, I would like to express my congratulations towards the Hon. the Premier on his attaining his present high office, and I cannot join with those hon. members who say that he is not to be congratulated on the fact of being a native. I think that is one feature of his Premiership on which he deserves congratulation, because, if nothing else, the way in which he has

worked up to his present position is an example to every young man in the colony, and should serve to inspire them with the belief that it is possible for each one of them to make a name for himself and for some of them to become Premier of the colony. I notice that His Excellency starts by expressing his satisfaction at once more meeting Parliament. I reciprocate that feeling, and was pleased to see His Excellency once again in the chair presiding at the opening of Parliament. Referring to the death of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, the Speech says—

Probably no event within the memory of the present generation has more deeply stirred the emotions and awakened the generous impulses of a sympathetic world than the passing away of this noble friend of humanity and lifelong labourer in the cause of liberty.

I do not think anything I could add could more adequately express the feeling of the community in reference to that sad event. In reference to the union of the Australian colonies, I may say that I have always been in favour of federation. I think the time has come now when all petty jealousies should be thrown on one side, and the people of Queensland do their best to bring about the creation of a federal nation. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see the federal flag flying from all the establishments throughout Australia. The next matter referred to in the Speech is the question of the New Guinea Ordinance. I think if any syndicate or company wishes to secure land in New Guinea they ought to do so under laws somewhat similar to the land laws of New South Wales, Victoria, or Queensland, with the reservation of all minerals and metals, and the right to enter for the purpose of finding minerals. Under those circumstances I should not have the slightest objection to seeing the whole of New Guinea taken up and colonised. Reference is also made to the submarine telegraph. I think Queensland has now attained such importance that it should be connected with the rest of the world in an independent manner. To be out of telegraphic touch with the rest of the world would leave Queensland and Australia generally in a sorry plight, and any reasonable amount of money required to bring about the desired result would, I am sure, be readily voted. The fact that the sugar crop has attained very large dimensions is mentioned in the speech. I believe the cause of that is largely to be found in the legislation which has been passed for the establishment of central mills, but I regret to see the number of Japanese who are now being imported to work in connection with the industry. I thought at one time that the necessity for that would be obviated by the small farmers going upon the land and cultivating it in small areas and then having the advantage of a central mill in which to crush their cane. It is possible that the industry may not flourish without the assistance of alien labour, but I still think sugar can be grown successfully without its aid, although perhaps not so cheaply. No doubt many of the small farmers who took up land years ago have been just eking out an existence, and now that mills have been established they want to make up for years gone by. At the same time I think if they had continued to work themselves, with their families, on the land, they would have achieved success in the end. Although the Government have done a great deal for the sugar industry in the erection of these mills, they might well do a little more. There are several districts where there is not sufficient land to warrant the erection of a central mill, yet where cane could be grown successfully. If in such districts the Government could see their way to give monetary assistance to the construction of tramways to the nearest central mill—which would make it a

district central mill—within of course a reasonable distance, it would do a great deal of good, and lead to a large increase of settlement and cultivation. Agricultural settlement, we are told, is on the increase. That, I have no doubt, is partly due to the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, which has proved itself an admirable means of settling people on the land. But I would suggest that before the Government rush into any more repurchases it would be well for them to cast an eye on the vast tracts of Crown land lying idle at the present time, which contain some of the finest agricultural tracts in the world. I would even offer so much for every acre of scrub cleared up to five years, when a sufficient area would be ready to be put under crop, and then give the settlers fifteen or twenty years to repay the money advanced for the building of central mills and so on. That would put the Government in quite as good a position as the repurchasing of lands which cost large sums of money, and when it is always a matter of doubt whether the lands will be taken up or not. And it must never be forgotten that we have some of the finest tracts of agricultural land in Australia lying idle at the present time. We are next told that the yield of gold for the year 1897-8 has been the highest yet attained. That is very satisfactory information. Gold-mining is one of our most important industries, and employs perhaps a larger number of hands than any other in the colony. I trust that next year it may show a still further advance. We are next told that the long-neglected industry of copper-mining has again begun to attract attention. We have not to look very far for the magnet which has brought that about. It was the Mareeba to Chillagoe Railway Bill which passed the House last session. There can be no doubt that that Act has had more to do in attracting attention to this long-neglected industry than anything else. It has already been the means of drawing large numbers of people to the district; it has caused vast areas of mineral land to be applied for, and it has brought a large revenue to the Mines Department. From the 1st January to the 30th June this year the revenue from that source alone has been nearly £9,000; and in addition to the 2,000 acres owned by the syndicate 9,000 acres of land have been applied for. And this industry is not confined to Chillagoe. There are other mines outside the limits of that Railway Act. At Mount Molloy and Mount Clark companies are being formed. At Mount Garnet, a place which has had very little attention paid to it for years, new machinery is being erected, and a large number of hands are already employed. Twenty-three or twenty-five miles further out still, there is another mineral area—I have seen it myself—the prospects of which are very good indeed. In fact, the entire district has been spoken of in the highest terms by the best experts who could be procured. They one and all say that when the railway is finished it will be one of the greatest successes the world has ever known. In the *Courier* the other day there was a telegram to the effect that Mr. Scott, a Melbourne expert who stands very high in the mining world, had been there. His opinion was that he had expected to see much, but that he had seen even more than he expected. In addition there are the reports of Mr. Jack and Mr. Stewart. The hon. member for Flinders, in the face of all that, says he does not believe the railway will ever be built. When it is built, will he believe it then? I do not think he will. The hon. member also made some insinuations about one of our leading Brisbane papers and about some member of Parliament who had done certain work for this syndicate. I should only like to gratify the hon.

member's desire for an inquiry. He would find that every hon. member who had the best interests of the colony at heart was trying to put the Bill through the House.

Mr. DAWSON: Do you support his application for an inquiry?

Mr. NEWELL: Another matter referred to in the Speech is that of the laws relating to local authorities. It is high time some attention was paid to them. In the inside districts the Government made the roads in years gone by, and handed them over to the divisional boards, whose chief work is to keep them in repair. In some of the outside districts in the North, as well as in the West, there are miles and miles of roads with not an acre of ratable land, and there should be a differential rate of endowment so that those districts could receive more assistance. We are told in the Speech that the country is in a prosperous state. I believe it is; I don't think anyone could travel from the Southern part of the colony to Cape York without noticing an increase in the prosperity of the colony.

Mr. CROSS: 7s. a day at Chillagoe!

Mr. NEWELL: I do not think there is any 7s. a day at Chillagoe. I understand that the 7s. a day to which the hon. member is referring was offered at the starting of the railway at Mareeba, and I had a telegram from Mareeba asking me not to induce anybody to go there as there were plenty of men offering for 7s. a day—

Mr. GLASSEY: Notwithstanding the prosperity of the colony.

Mr. NEWELL: Notwithstanding the prosperity of the country. I hear that in Brisbane at present men are doing twelve hours' work on the trams at 5s. a day, and if they give satisfaction they get 6s. a day after six months' service; and I notice that the trams keep going. And I feel certain that it is better to get 7s. a day than to go about the country idle. No one knows what this railway is going to cost; it is only an estimated cost; but I have no doubt that the men working in that district in the future will be considered as well as they have been in the past. The working man there in the past has always had as high a wage as the circumstances of the case would permit and many of them have had more. In criticising the statement that the colony is prosperous the hon. member for Bundaberg gave us a lot of figures which to my mind are just as true as some of the statements regarding the Queensland National Bank. The junior member for Charters Towers quoted a statement from the *North Queensland Register*. I have a great regard for the editor of that paper, and I would like to read a paragraph from it in reference to a speech made by the hon. member for Flinders at Ipswich on the prosperity of the colony—

Mr. Charles McDonald admitted the colony was progressing, but denied that the Government was responsible for it. The speaker asserted that Queensland was prosperous in spite of the Government, but periods of depression were inevitable. Mr. McDonald, however, belongs to that class which debits the Government with inaugurating every period of depression, but credits every return of prosperity to Providence. If depressions are inevitable, why should Government be blamed for not avoiding them? Mr. Byrnes and his Ministry, while not given the credit for prosperity, will be blamed for the tick plague, the droughts, poor crushings, the existence of Mr. McDonald, and all the other evils under which the country is groaning.

I do not wish to take up the time of the House. I think the country has been in a fairly prosperous state of late, and I think that prosperity is due to certain legislation enacted during the past few years.

Mr. BATTERSBY: I have no desire to prolong this debate, but I believe there are some hon. members on both sides who would like to

speak, and I do not think the time between now and half-past 10 o'clock will be wasted if they are allowed to do so. We have been in session three weeks now. On Tuesday last the Premier moved the adjournment over Wednesday for the opening of the Exhibition, and a great deal of fault was found by hon. members on the other side for adjourning over the whole day instead of meeting at 7 o'clock on Wednesday. After the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply and the hon. member who leads the Labour party had addressed the House, I think all those who have spoken on the Address for the last fortnight might have said "Ditto," and that would have settled all, because there has been no amendment moved, no fault found, and very little electioneering. I am not going to do any electioneering, but I have to find fault with one or two remarks made by the hon. member, Mr. Turley. He referred to the Sugar Works Guarantee Act; but I can assure him that if he will make inquiries he will find that some of the Southern mills have been amongst the most successful. The Moreton mill, in my district, paid something like £650 in interest this year, which is more than any of the Northern mills paid in the first year. If I am wrong in my figures I am sure the Treasurer will be able to correct me. I do not think the hon. member for South Brisbane could have known what he was talking about. Some ten years ago some £50,000 was voted for the erection of two mills at Mackay, and for the first few years they did not repay any of that money at all.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They do not pay now.

The TREASURER: Yes, they do.

Mr. BATTERSBY: They have paid pretty well during the last five or six years, and even at the present low price of sugar they will soon get rid of their debts. I am perfectly satisfied that if the Act is fairly worked, and the mortgagors are willing to do what is right, as the Moreton Company are, every shilling advanced by the Government will be repaid in a few years. The Government are the best possible mortgagees, and we shall soon see from the Treasurer's returns how matters stand; but it is a mistake for the hon. member to say that the Act has been a failure. With reference to the Governor's Speech, I must read it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: We have read it.

Mr. BATTERSBY: Don't be in a hurry. I am on the floor.

The SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Mr. BATTERSBY: Did you refer to me, Sir? Now, as regards the prosperity of the colony. The Governor travelled about a great deal during the recess, and what is said is true, so that I may leave that alone. I agree also that the death of Sir A. H. Palmer has caused unfeigned regret throughout the colony. I remember when that gentleman took the reins of Government in 1866, and pulled the country through such a crisis as it had never seen before. I admired him before most hon. members opposite came to the colony at all. He was a gentleman who took a great deal of interest in public affairs, and if the Government asked for a sum of money to erect a monument to his memory, I should be glad to support them. In regard to the federal union of Australia, I will not say that I am sitting on a rail, but like a great many more I shall be prepared to deal with the subject when the Premier comes back from New South Wales, and makes a statement here as to what is to be done. If I agree with him I shall support him, but if I do not I shall go to the other side of the House. We are also told that the sugar crop this year will be so large that our

producers will have to seek markets outside Australia. In regard to that, as some countries see fit to pay a bonus for the export of beet and other products, I do not see why we should not pay a bonus for the export of our surplus sugar. I am very pleased to hear from the other side that the Premier is a really good man, and that they are all prepared to give him a show, though they must get up and talk to their constituents. I believe that what they have said in this House in the last three weeks they really believe. With regard to the Sugar Works Guarantee Act I find that the Moreton mill has paid off £350 14s. 6d. of their interest, leaving £31 to be paid. Since they got the bonus I believe that has been paid, though it does not appear in this year's Estimate. I am not interested in what is done in other places, but I say that the Moreton mill has paid off all its interest this year, and I would like to know how many other mills can say that? I think the sooner we get the Address in Reply through and get to work with legislation the better it will be for the colony.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Before entering upon the various topics in the Address to which I should like to refer, I wish to make a short personal explanation, and I hope no one present will think I am electioneering in doing so. I find within the last few days that some few members of this Assembly and two or three in another place have an idea that I deserted my post as a representative in the Assembly by going to the mother country last year. I think it due to the House and to others who have no understanding in the matter that I should intimate that the electors of Brisbane North who did me the honour to wait upon me and request my services were told that I contemplated visiting the mother country for a long-needed rest. Subsequent interviews and depositions persuaded me to abandon that intention, and resulted in my consenting, on the distinct understanding with the whole of those electors, that I should be at liberty in the next session, if it suited my convenience and the political aspect of the life of the colony, to absent myself from Queensland for the period of the session at least. That agreed, I, as you are all aware, became along with my colleague, Mr. Fraser, an adherent and strong supporter of the then Nelson Government. Time went along, and I determined under medical advice and for other reasons to absent myself from Queensland. I had no anxiety at the time in matters pertinent to the welfare of Queensland generally, or the metropolis in particular, except on one point, and that was a work of the highest importance to Southern Queensland in connection with the port of Brisbane. I had considerable anxiety about that. A rumour assumed strength at the time that the works in the Brisbane River would not receive the attention they deserved—that there was a preponderance of Northern influence in the Cabinet that would affect the advancement of those works. Those rumours and what I learned in other respects I knew to be a fact, and it gave me considerable anxiety.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Northerners made Brisbane.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I am still in indifferent health, and suffer from a loss of nervous force, and I hope I shall have as few interruptions as may be consistent with the proper elucidation of my speech. I, however, have no objection to interjections. But I will say to the Secretary for Agriculture that the North was made by the South, and that Queensland was made by the mother colony, and Victoria in particular. I have been too long in this country not to know its history most intimately—since twenty-three or twenty-four months subsequent to separation. Before I left I saw the then

Secretary for Railways, the Hon. J. R. Dickson, the Premier, Sir Hugh Nelson, and other Ministers, with respect to several topics, and I had the most ample assurance from them, as well as from other hon. members, that if anything of interest to the metropolis arose while I was away my constituency would not suffer by my absence. Sir Hugh Nelson gave me the most positive assurance, in the presence of my colleague, Mr. Fraser, that the improvement of the Brisbane River and the bar would receive undiminished attention until that work was completed. The Government were determined, he told me, to make the port accessible to such vessels as were in the habit of visiting the port of Sydney. That was exceedingly satisfactory, and I think it is due to the House to say that I intimated to Sir Hugh Nelson, and to other members of the Assembly, that had there not been that pledge to me there would have been a very serious schism in the ranks of the followers of those sitting on the Ministerial bench. I will only say now that the Nelson Government have faithfully carried out their promise, and it is only necessary to mention three matters. I shall begin with the most trivial, that is the Roma street bridge, which was supposed by some to be an unnecessary work, but which has since been carried out excellently, and proved to be a work of utility and suitability to the railway, and to that part of the city where it is situated. The next thing is the promise given by the Secretary for Railways, Mr. Dickson, that a work affecting the welfare of the whole colony, a national work—namely, the survey of a line from Ravenswood to Clermont—should be undertaken. That promise has been carried out to the very letter, and more than that, because the Minister has had three surveys made. And the Brisbane River works have not ceased. I think these few words were necessary in order to clear away a little misunderstanding that existed. In my public address to the electors of North Brisbane I wrote these few lines—

The continuous extensions from year to year (by judicious instalments) of our trunk lines of railway. In this connection let me remind you that the day when the harbour of Brisbane is without impediment to navigation, the era of wool sales in the city of Brisbane begins and the importance of our city as a commercial and shipping centre will be at once recognised in the different commercial centres of Europe and America.

I am very glad to see from the Opening Speech that this is part of the Government programme, and I need hardly say that I am gratified that we are within sight of these wool sales being established in Brisbane. Notwithstanding the observations which have fallen from several speakers, I think a reasonable amount of judicious encouragement should be given to establishment of local wool sales during the first two or three years. I saw a statement in the papers by the chairman of the Wool Buyers' Association of Sydney, an association which is composed entirely of buyers for foreign markets, that is for European markets, to the effect that if we catalogue a certain minimum number of bales to begin with, there is no question whatever but that wool-buyers will come to Brisbane. I therefore hope that wool sales will be established here as soon as possible. I do not think it is creditable that they have not been established in this colony before; but doubtless the low prices which have prevailed, commercial disasters, the financial crisis of 1893, and other circumstances have contributed to make our people hesitate before embarking in a new venture. The Government have, I think, correctly interpreted the feeling of Queensland in saying that now is an appropriate time to initiate these wool sales here. I should like to say a word or two about the establishment of a university. I do not

know that I can say anything fresh on the subject. I have not been attending closely to the debate, having been mostly absent, and if I repeat what others have said, I hope the House will forgive me for that repetition. I may not use the same words as other members, and perhaps I may throw a little light on the subject. It is a good thing that we have now some hope of the proposal to establish a university taking a concrete form. For many years past, the establishment of a university has been advocated. I recollect the late Sir Charles Lilley speaking of it long ago, also the persistent advocacy of the late Mr. Justice Mein, and we all know that the present Chief Justice has always had his heart in the work. I hope the Government will take the counsel of the sages to whom I have referred, and begin in a reasonably small way as regards buildings. If the Government grant a good site, and a reasonable sum of money for the erection of buildings, and also establish a fund, or commit themselves to such an expenditure as will be suitable for the maintenance of a university in its earlier years, they will do well. But I think this is a suitable time for colonists to call attention to the complete absence in this country of any offer of money to establish a university by any one of the many colonists whose wealth is great, and all of which has been obtained in Queensland. In Victoria and South Australia, particularly in the first-named colony, they have been more fortunate in that respect, and they have monuments there of the splendid and munificent benefactions given by men whose wealth was acquired in the country of their domicile.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes; but they were given after a university was established.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I am coming to that. We have not given them the opportunity in this colony. I have it here on my notes that perhaps when a university is established benefactions or liberal donations will follow. There is one matter which has been advocated for many years in this country, more particularly since the great development in the gold-mining industry through the discovery of Mount Morgan, and which has been taken up by all Ministries, I think, and more particularly by the Premier since his return from the old country. I refer to the establishment of a mint. I am sorry that this important matter finds no place in the Speech—I hope that it is an unintentional omission. There may be reasons for the omission, but I believe that if the Government make full inquiries and give the matter due consideration, they will conclude that it is a desirable thing to establish a mint in Queensland. In the matter of advertising the colony, even if it should mean an annual loss for five, ten, or even fifteen years, the colony can very well afford the extra expense in view of the importance attaching to having a mint of our own. Another matter, I am sorry to say, has been omitted from the Speech. I do not, of course, suppose that all the policy of the coalition Government which began some years ago—I almost forget how many—

Mr. GLASSEY: 1890.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I do not suppose that all the items of policy of that Government are to be inherited by the successive changes of Ministry which have taken place since then, but we expect the main body of that policy to be adhered to. Take, for example, the question of the reform of the Legislative Council. When I had the honour to remain in that House the Ministry were apparently very sincere in their desire to initiate some reform. Their representative in the Upper House was the Hon. A. J. Thynne, and a select committee was appointed, which sat, and did good work. If

my memory serves me, the report of the committee was adopted without division in the Council.

Mr. DAWSON: They introduced a Bill.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I do not remember a Bill being brought in. I do not remember what action was taken.

The PREMIER: There was a Bill.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: At any rate, the Bill never went beyond a certain stage. It was dropped very suddenly, for what reason I could never understand. At any rate, the great majority of the members of the Council at that time were quite willing to agree to the reasonable compromise which was arrived at by the committee. It seemed to me to be a very wholesome proposition, and, in view of the fact that the great majority of hon. members were content to receive the report, I cannot understand how it has been allowed to be buried for so long, because the country seeks a reform there. It lies deep in the political minds of the people throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. It is merely slumbering; but disappointment has been expressed throughout the various regions of this country by different newspapers in consequence of the omission of all reference to this important item of policy. Speaking now in connection with the Legislative Council, I remember I spoke to several hon. members about introducing a Bill to render the position of the President of the Council elective. The idea took pretty strong hold of a number of members, but by-and-by it became apparent to me that it was distasteful to two or three members, who considered that it would not be a suitable time to introduce such a proposal in view of the precarious state of the health of the then President—that it might offend or worry him. That explanation was made in such a nice, sympathetic, and, perhaps I might say, merciful way, that, as I had no wish to do anything to pain an hon. gentleman whom I had known for so long as an old colonist of good repute, and as one who had served his country well, I agreed to let the matter drop. To my surprise, not very long afterwards, Sir Arthur Palmer sent for me, having heard of the matter, and I wish to place it upon record that his views were entirely in accord with my own. He said, "I am very sorry that the matter has not been brought forward, as things have now arrived at the stage when the President of the Legislative Council should be made elective, and I shall be very glad if I was the last man to occupy the chair under the present law"; and he was prepared to amend the Constitution accordingly. With regard to this boom, as it is called, in the North, by the Chillagoe railway enterprise, I fancy some hon. members as well as some people outside have lost sight of the bedrock on which this enterprise is founded. It has not been caused by the agricultural or timber lands in the districts, or by the presence of other minerals, but it is really the augmentation in the value of copper comparatively recently which has led to proposals being made to the Government, and to the enterprise that is now going on in the Chillagoe district. When I was in England there were all kinds of inquiries made of me as to copper areas, as Queensland was known to have a great deal of copper country, and I explained to many inquirers the great extent of our mineral wealth so far as it was known. I pointed out to several in London that the old Peak Downs copper mines had not been worked out. I also pointed out the copper country west of Mackay, and I dare say that in my usual way I contributed to bring about some of the inquiries that are now being made. I know that representations made incidentally by me led to business being done on

the Peak Downs as well as in the North. I at once, of course, disclaim having any interest whatever; I have never seen any of the men since, and probably will never hear of them again.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The same people who are working Chillagoe are on the Peak Downs.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: With respect to monetary assistance to farmers, I quite agree with the Government views, as expressed in the Speech, and I hope that whatever proposal is placed before us will be carefully considered, and that the greatest care will be taken, when once the department is arranged, to see that proper officers are appointed, and to see that the advances are carefully and legitimately made, and that the smallest amount of interest be charged. I also hope that provision will be made so that farmers will have power, if they have a successful season, to repay as much as they please, and that the department will, as in Victoria, look to the character of the seasons as a gauge of the amount that should be required of borrowers, both in principal and interest. There is also a reference in the Speech to the endowment to local authorities. I had occasion to say some weeks ago that unless additional endowment was given to the various local authorities it would be found that throughout the length and breadth of Queensland these bodies would be unable to keep on. I am glad that financial sustenance will be shortly forthcoming, otherwise the local authorities will be in sore trouble and embarrassed by diminution in revenue, caused by depreciation of property and other circumstances to which I need not refer. Regarding the tick question and its disasters, we have had a great deal of trouble in negotiating with New South Wales. The Secretary for Agriculture has, however, put his shoulder to the wheel in a most creditable manner, and is devising from time to time, with the assistance of others, new quarantine boundaries and endeavouring to please New South Wales and encourage the export of cattle from this colony. This matter, however, strikes me very much as the shearers' and maritime strike struck me. The shearers' strike was located in Queensland, but it really was an Australasian matter, yet not one of the Australian Governments came forward to aid Queensland in the expense she was put to in dealing with the question. And so it is with the tick trouble. I refer to this aspect of the case to show the necessity existing for federal control of some kind, either by means of the enlarged Federal Council or a more comprehensive form of federation. There is no doubt whatever that when a difficulty of this kind arises we ought to receive financial aid from the other Governments of Australia.

Mr. DAWSON: What have the shearers got to do with the ticks?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: They have nothing to do with the ticks. I explained that the dispute over the shearers' strike was really an Australasian matter; the maritime strike, too, affected Australasia generally, and yet the other Governments gave no help whatever. I could give other instances in which our neighbour, the mother colony, has stood aloof and seen us spend thousands of pounds over matters of grave concern to herself without contributing a farthing towards the cost.

Mr. DANIELS: You mean that this is a national matter?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Yes.

Mr. HOOLAN: And that the tick is a national insect?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I quite approve of continuation, by modest instalments, of the policy of repurchasing lands on the

Darling Downs. It took a long time to impress on the minds of the Conservatives of this House the desirability of resuming these estates; but thanks to members of the Liberal party, and particularly to the continuous, excellent, and sound advice of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, great success has attended the operation of the Act advocated by them.

The TREASURER: He had nothing to do with it.

The PREMIER: Neither he nor you had anything to do with it.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I unhesitatingly say that before the Premier left school the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, advocated the course to which I refer.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The land was not sold then.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: What nonsense! Dummying began immediately the 1868 Act was passed. With regard to the influx of aliens, it is a good thing that the Government have promised to repress it. There is one man whom I wish was alive and about forty years of age to-day—the late Hon. William Brookes, who did honourable and noble service in this matter for many years of his life.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: There never was a more consistent advocate of Queensland and Australia for the white man than the late William Brookes, and I hope his mantle will fall on shoulders worthy to bear even the shadow of that mantle. A greater and stronger advocate for the preservation of these lands for the European races there never was than the deceased gentleman to whom I refer. Now, coming to the question of harbours and rivers, I have paid some attention and devoted some time in the United Kingdom to the various rivers and harbours, and I discovered what had been done to accomplish their improvement by patiently going through the plans for many years back and tracing the progress and development of the various works. I have gained knowledge of the mistakes made by the various engineers of the day in relation to works carried out in the past in our colony, and whatever views I may have held before in relation to harbours and rivers, I am entirely confirmed in my convictions by subsequent thought and study that the proper course for the Government to pursue is to place the control of these harbours with the local bodies.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about your colleague?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I do not know whether I am in agreement with my colleague on that point, but it is my duty to declare myself because what I say has reference not particularly to the proposed harbour legislation for Brisbane and Maryborough, but also to any harbour authority in existence, or which may be brought into existence hereafter. The local authorities are more speedy in their administration, there is less circumlocution and far less red tape about their methods, and they will no doubt seek the aid of the best talent they can get in Europe to assist them in bringing their enterprises to a successful issue. We have a good many engineers in Australia just now with comparatively little experience in these matters and who are the position and knowledge of men whom it has taken from thirty to fifty years to educate in the science of hydraulic engineering, but it is the men of experience in older lands who must be called into the councils of our local bodies and assist them with their experience. I understand that Sir Horace Tozer has been supplied with despatches in reference

to the state of the Brisbane River, and has also been instructed to seek information on the subject of flood prevention. I do not know whether the Government have received any reply from him, but I hope he may be reminded that the matter is an extremely urgent one. I understand that he had instructions to utilise the best talent available in connection with this matter. With regard to immigration, I do not know whether to say I am pleased to see that subject introduced here. I would like to see more people in the colony. I am not like my hon. friend the Secretary for Railways, who is satisfied to remain in Queensland with 150,000 or 380,000 inhabitants. I remember him telling me one day, to my intense astonishment, that he did not see why we should trouble ourselves about getting another 100,000 people into the country, and that he would rather live in Queensland with half-a-million inhabitants than see another half-million brought in. It seems to me a paradox that the hon. gentleman should be asked to take office with a Government which has a policy of immigration.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you expect the Government to be all of my opinion? How was it in your own case?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: It is a very different thing being a member of a Cabinet and being one of two members of a city or a province. In regard to my own case, to which the hon. gentleman has referred, my duty was clear. I could not convince that particular Government that they were wrong, except on a few small points, and the balance was so great that I could not remain with them. The Government may make what provision for immigration they like, but the people are not in the United Kingdom to come here. They are there, and they are satisfied. They are perfectly well off; in fact, they are extremely comfortable. No doubt there is a way of getting a small stream of respectable, well-to-do people, but it requires a special agent, or more than one, and with special powers, to get them; so that I have not much hope in that direction. However, whatever provision is suggested will have my best consideration, and, if it is reasonable and proper, my favourable consideration; but I am afraid it will not bear fruit in the direction the Government expect. What we have been advocating for a considerable time past is the best plan—namely, to show our resources to the surplus population of the other colonies, for even there there is a surplus population. From Victoria, from South Australia, even from New Zealand we have constantly people making inquiries about Queensland. They are aware of our advantages, whether for agriculture, minerals, grazing, or otherwise; and by making those advantages more widely known we may expect to receive a fair number of well-trained colonists who are content with Australia as it is, and who will not be disappointed as many newchums are when they come here.

Mr. HOOLAN: Do you not think there is a scarcity of domestics?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I have always been well served in that respect. With regard to our industries, I am glad to see there has been an increased output of gold. Sugar speaks for itself. There are any number of sugar representatives in the House. There is a considerable development in the timber trade; and here I may say I am sorry that our Queensland timbers have not met with some enterprising person, firm, or company to put them before the British market. It is not only London that requires wooden blocks; other cities require large quantities. With regard to wool, I am very glad to observe that the recent war—now happily concluded, I trust—did not

affect the market price of our main staple. On the contrary, as was observed to me to-day by a Sydney buyer, wool seems to have hardened since the war began and all during the war. That is a circumstance that few Australian wool growers would ever have dreamed of before the first gun of that war was fired. Speaking of meat exported to England, I spent a great deal of time, trouble, attention, and travel to see for myself the meat from Australia and New Zealand as it arrived, as well as its distribution wholesale and retail. I saw it in Belfast, Liverpool, and Newcastle-on-Tyne, and of course a good deal in London. At the distributing company in London, of which Sir Montagu Nelson is the principal, the various meats were shown to me, and I must say that the lowest quality of New Zealand mutton was better than the primest mutton sent from Queensland. The mutton from Queensland was simply a disgrace to everyone concerned in its exportation. It was my belief that it was the duty of the inspectors to approve of the quality of the mutton as well as to see that no diseased mutton was exported. But such was the bad quality of what I saw that it has greatly damaged our market, and it will take us some time to establish Queensland mutton on that great market at anything like the price and the reputation of New Zealand mutton.

Mr. GLASSEY: Does the same thing apply to beef?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Not to the same extent. There is very little beef exported from Victoria or New Zealand. Queensland is regarded in Great Britain as the country in Australia from which all beef importation will come. The worst Queensland beef I saw was of fairly good quality, while the best was extremely good, quite as good as the New Zealand beef. People are beginning to ask in the old country what need we have for an Agent-General there at all. The biggest item we import is steel rails for our railways, and we have an inspecting engineer. When I was at Paisley, where the steamer "Premier" had just been taken to pieces, I asked what the practice was with regard to inspection. It was my impression that the inspecting engineer whom we pay in London did the work, but I was informed that he employs a man to inspect, and visits the work occasionally during construction. What is there to do for an engineer in London if he employs a sub-inspector to do his work? It was an eye-opener to me that the work of inspection should be delegated by our paid engineer, who is of course responsible to us, to another man. I do not know whether the Government pays the man, or the contractor.

The PREMIER: That would not be safe.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: What I want to know is whether there is any necessity for an Agent-General at all. So far as importations go, why do the Government not call for tenders for whatever they require to be delivered here the same as they do in New South Wales? In that colony tenders are called for rails delivered on the wharf at Darling Harbour at so much a ton; they are subject to inspection, when delivered, by officers in the immediate employ of the Government; and contractors knowing that take care not to send out anything of indifferent quality and run the risk of having it rejected on thi side of the world.

Mr. DANIELS: Do they pay more in New South Wales?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: They pay less. For a 66 or 78-lb. rail delivered in the colony I think they paid the ridiculously low sum of £4 5s. 10d. a ton. I know it was under

£4 7s. 6d. At the shows in London, and elsewhere the exhibition of Queensland products is very meagre. I am sure that at the Islington show, the great grocers' show, and particularly at the Imperial Institute, the meagreness of Queensland exhibits was such that one or two Queenslanders led the others right away, because they would not stand in front of the attenuated exhibits and appearance of the place. There was no order or classification, and the *toute ensemble* was disgraceful. I hope the Government will put their hand to the plough and let Queensland be creditably represented in future. I now come to a matter which I have had the pleasure of advocating for many years—that is rapid mail communication between Port Curtis and Townsville. I hope all sections of this House will support the Government in establishing a tip-top service. Some people laugh at twenty knots an hour, but I say that the Government can get ships built now of the best class to run twenty or even twenty-three knots without the slightest trouble. I do not advocate a cargo service, because the moment we depart from the style of steamer which the great railway owners in France and the United Kingdom have we encroach on the coast trade. All those steamship companies have high-class boats which are merely links between one railway system and another. For months in the year those steamers are crowded, and though they do not perhaps produce any commercial return they are looked upon as feeders of the best possible character to add to the annual revenue. In Queensland also we have a tourists' season, as mentioned by Sir Joseph Abbott the other day. For eight months in the year from Keppel Bay to Cairns and Cooktown we have a coast than which no colony in Australia can present its like, with its hundreds of islands, islets, and rocklets, its splendid bays and its excellent climate. But the moment you get on a cargo boat you have to submit to detentions, and you cease to attract the travelling from the other colonies. Therefore, I hope the Government will not forsake this good part of the programme laid down in the Speech. Incidentally I made inquiries from time to time of leading engineers in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and I may say that the engineers in Great Britain favour a bigger gauge than their 4 feet 8½ inches; they deeply regret that they have not the Irish gauge of 5 feet 3 inches, the same as Victoria. If they had the extra 6½ inches, it would be worth millions of pounds to the railways of the United Kingdom. They all say that we should never go below our 3 feet 6 inches gauge except in very difficult country, and where it may be desirable to construct little feeders of narrower gauge. If we have the Normanton-Cloncurry line made, or any of our existing lines extended, I hope we shall not go below the 3 feet 6 inches gauge. I say this because, according to rumour and something that has appeared in the Press, there seems to be a disposition to advocate a smaller gauge. I now come to the National Association. It is to be regretted that it has fallen into bad repute financially, but I think the Government might adopt my suggestion or evolve some other idea by the appointment of a few gentlemen in the city to inquire into the history of that association, find out the weak spots in its administration generally, and bring up a report. I believe the result would be to show that what I regard as the beginning of the end took place the moment they undertook to become purveyors of music to the public. The purchase of that organ was the beginning of the end of that society, and I was constrained for a few years to be cool in my efforts on its behalf, but subsequently I had the pleasure, with others, of assisting in its resuscitation. It is too

good a thing for the whole of Queensland to allow to die, but I am sorry to say that many in this city who benefit most from its existence give least towards its support. It is a good thing for Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane, and I am sure it will some day be so for Rockhampton and Townsville, that they should have their annual shows. In a country like this where there is such rapid development in our industries these shows are most necessary, because they assist this development, and if the Government will accept my suggestion I think some proposal will be made by the citizens of Brisbane which will relieve them from the possession and administration of this valuable property. In regard to New Guinea, I think I can dispose of that matter in a sentence. Reviewing all that has been said by the Press and by representatives of the Governments of those colonies which contribute to the cost of the administration of that country, I unhesitatingly say that I shall be no party to aid in the ratification of that Ordinance, and if there is to be a struggle between the home authorities and the colonial Governments, let us enter upon it at once—let us buckle to, and have it out. Of course the matter is in a sense *sub judice* now, but that is the attitude I take in regard to it. I think something ought to be said in reference to the contract with the British India Company. I understand that the arrangement entered into by which that company should convey immigrants at £12 per head, is off; but we have heard very little about it. I heard in the Highlands of Scotland that passengers were not to be carried at that price any longer, and when I reached London I made inquiries as to what was going on. I met one of the shareholders in the company in the evening, and he told me that the negotiations were practically at an end; that his company were getting into disfavour with the other companies, and had made up their minds that the £12 arrangement should cease, and they should revert to the charge of £14 14s. There were three or four families who had arranged to come out on the £12 basis, but when they added up the extra money that they would have to pay, they found that the amount they expected to land in the colony would vanish, and therefore they decided not to come here. This change was known in London before it was known in Queensland, and I think it is not right that we should have received no notice of the abrogation of the contract. Hon. members will remember that an effort was made to reduce the passage money to £10, but a compromise of £12 was effected between the Government and the company, and now, although the bottom has fallen out of the whole thing, the company are still advertising their steamers as running under arrangement with the Queensland Government. I think it would be as well if we understood the terms upon which this new arrangement was entered into, and the old contract rescinded. I have referred to the traffic with the Northern ports, and should now like to say a word or two in reference to the journey from Brisbane to Sydney by rail. A Victorian ex-Minister of the Crown was here the other day, having come overland; and when I asked him how he liked the journey, he said it was all very well to the Queensland border, but on this side it was simply deplorable. The arrangements were very bad, the trains frequently ran late, which necessitated the shortening the meal-times, and the hours of arrival and departure were badly arranged. I told him that was the fault of the New South Wales Government, which refused to fall in with any other arrangements suggested by our department; but he said—putting that on one side—that the carriages were

very dirty, which I noticed myself, and there was no attendant besides the guard. There is no doubt that a little attention to cleanliness would go a long way. In regard to the traffic, I shall give some figures first, and then make a suggestion or two, which suggestions were made to me by those whose opinions are entitled to respect. The total number of passengers carried both ways between Sydney and Brisbane by rail was 7,820 for last year; but the number of arrivals by sea was 26,386, and of departures 27,686—a total of 54,072. This includes both cabin and steerage, and it is a remarkable thing that, within 100 or so, the number of steerage passengers was equal to the number of cabin passengers. In round numbers only about one seventh as many people travelled by rail as by sea, and the following remedy has been suggested, which I commend to the attention of the Government. That remedy is that we should run our narrow gauge on the New South Wales line as far as Glen Innes, which could be done at a very small cost by laying a third rail, and then we could arrange a much better time-table, which would allow passengers to reach the half-way spot at, say, 8 or 9 o'clock at night. Delicate persons and ladies and children do not care about travelling the whole way at once, and instead of having to pay 10s. for a sleeping berth they should pay it to an hotel erected at the half-way spot at the expense of both Governments. The custom in the old country is for people to travel for six or eight hours in the train, and resume their journey next morning. It takes a robust constitution to stand the trip from Sydney to Melbourne, seventeen hours, so that it will be understood how distasteful is the trip from Sydney to Brisbane, which takes twenty-eight hours. It is quite enough to keep the traffic from increasing, and I hope attention will be given to the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is a very good hotel at Wallangarra.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: But it is not at the railway station. The leading companies in Britain have their own hotels at the railway stations. Another suggestion, made by a Victorian engineer, is that we should run the New South Wales gauge, 4 feet 8½ inches, through as far as Toowoomba, so that the New South Wales trains and the Queensland trains would be run on joint account to Toowoomba, as they are run in the case of New South Wales and Victoria on the line from Sydney to Melbourne. That would make Toowoomba the station for the exchange of gauge. If one of those suggestions were adopted it would increase the traffic from one-seventh to one-half, and at a couple of pounds per head you would provide interest on a very large sum of money. At present I am very sorry to say that the overland route is a failure for all practical purposes, and it is the duty of everyone who can do so to suggest any practicable means of ameliorating the conditions of traffic on the line so as to make it more profitable. I intended to say something about the Queensland National Bank, but under the circumstances existing now I will leave it alone. I will say this, however: That until this matter is cleared off our reputation in London will continue to suffer. I can say that while in the old country I was representing Queensland more profitably than I could have done here through what has been described as a weary and profitless session. For the good of Queensland my visit to the old country was by no means profitless, as I took every opportunity and spent a great deal of money in putting myself in the way of opportunity to rebut the serious charges which were being hurled, not only at the reputation of our public men, but of the colony generally. I say that cloud still rests over us,

and even after it is gone the shadow will remain for a time, and, like all other colonists, I am anxious that there should be an end to the last page in the history of that deplorable matter. There are two other matters of importance to which I desire to refer. The first is the question of submarine telegraphic communication with the old world. To explain how I came to be associated with the information I am about to give to the House, I may say that accidentally, at a social function, I happened to be alongside a gentleman whom I did not know, and I unbosomed myself upon the wrongs of Queensland in respect of the non-completion of the original understanding with the cable company to land the cable at Normanton. I explained that Queensland had gone to great expense in sending out an exploring party under Walker, and in exploring the line from Cardwell up to the Gulf, and that the telegraph line constructed in Queensland at that time when money was scarce was a great financial responsibility. Someone came out to Queensland by way of Adelaide to make the necessary arrangements, but with the result, to use a local phrase, that the man was "collared" at Adelaide and he never came to Queensland at all. South Australia built its overland line at an enormous cost, and Queensland's premature expenditure at that time in the Gulf country was to some extent lost. That sore rankled in the breasts of Queenslanders for many years. Four or five weeks after this I was asked to meet one or two gentlemen with regard to this matter. Several interviews took place and I was asked to make a suggestion. I should explain that the Eastern Extension Company is now a combination of many companies which were themselves combinations of other companies, until it is a fact that the present combination had no more to do with the running away from Normanton and the taking of the cable to Port Darwin than I had. I found they were willing to placate Queensland, and, as I say, I was asked to make a suggestion. We are asking to have an alternative all-British cable to Vancouver, but on account of this jealousy, and the reputation this company has inherited, we have lost sight of the alternative of connecting Port Darwin with Cape York. Since 1890—that is, for eight years—the only break in the cable was that caused by the earthquake. The frequent breakdowns that have occurred have arisen from the inferiority of the construction or condition of the South Australian overland line. The newspapers of New South Wales and Victoria have had this brought under their notice from time to time, and have always advocated the connection with Queensland. It must be borne in mind that from Cape York we have only a single line for a certain distance, and it is easily accessible from both sides of the peninsula. After a certain distance it branches off into two and more lines, and though there would be only one line of ingress, there would be several lines of egress for cablegrams over the border to New South Wales and through New South Wales to the other colonies. I suggested that a connection should be made between Port Darwin and Normanton or Cape York. The result of two or three conferences on this subject was that it was decided that it would be better to connect with Cape York, as it would be nearer to New Guinea, and from thence 500 miles nearer to take a Pacific cable to Vancouver. The distances from Vancouver to Brisbane and to New Zealand are practically identical. To my astonishment the company actually proposed to adopt my suggestion, and put a cable down there, from Port Darwin to Cape York "free gratis, for nothing," provided the Government would grant a suitable area of land for officers'

quarters, etc., at Cape York. The only conditions were that South Australia should be consulted as to what proportion of messages should go through Queensland, and that we should join in the proposal made to the Imperial Government to continue the subsidy of £32,000 per annum for another ten years. Another consideration was that the all-British route by the Cape of Good Hope should go to Adelaide direct, instead of to Perth. It was also suggested that they would like the first offer on the terms of any other company to construct the Pacific cable. This company is called a monopoly, and it is a very big monopoly, but that monopoly has given Australia the cheapest submarine telegraphy in the world. It is only the other day that this powerful company put down a cable costing £60,000 to Tasmania, and the cable they propose to put down to Cape York will cost from £150,000 to £170,000. I am not advocating a desistence from the Pacific cable project, but why should we linger longer with the indifferent and dangerous communication we have between Port Darwin and Adelaide, and even by Western Australia lines from the branch cable through their territory? I am but expressing what has been said in the metropolises of the other colonies, that it would be desirable to have what I have suggested done. With regard to revenue it would be a very good thing for Queensland, as instead of getting 1d. per word we should get 7d. per word. We should have a large revenue, and it would cost us nothing. I believe that the revenue from our land line, if the cable were connected with Cape York, would be such a large sum as would enable us to pay the interest on our share of the capital which would ultimately be required to construct the Pacific cable. I wish hon. members to note in dealing with this matter—which is a very important one to the whole of Australia, and to Queensland in particular—that the prospects of a Pacific cable are very meagre from a revenue point of view. In the whole distance from Australia to London the cable would touch at very few spots from which there would be any contributions to the revenue at all. Canada does not require it, as she is already associated with many cables across that country, and the aggregate of Canadian business with Australia is not large.

The TREASURER: Canada proposed it first.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Yes, Canada proposed it first. At that time Sir Mackenzie Bowell and Mr. Sandford Fleming, in the fevered flush of joy and excitement at the prosperity of the Dominion, were prepared to do anything. The Canadian-Pacific line had a little while before been inaugurated, and they were proud of the achievement of being able to shake hands across the Pacific with Queensland and Australia. But on reflection the Government went back on their proposition. I had a conversation in London with a Canadian gentleman who had joined the Government without a portfolio, and he told me that there was not the slightest chance of the present Administration of Canada contributing on the terms suggested by the previous Government. Then Canada has but a small business with Australia, and a cable from Vancouver to Australia would cost, at least, £2,000,000.

The TREASURER: £1,500,000 was the amount of the tender.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I am giving you the latest data, because science has disclosed the fact that long stretches require a different and more expensive class of cable, and these particulars are given in the papers which accompanied the documents I gave to the Premier. I think it will be my duty to call for the production of those papers, in order that hon.

members may understand the question. The proposed cable from Australia to Vancouver would not touch a contributing station where we would get 1s. of revenue, and Canada will charge us for passing over her land lines. We will only get a certain proportion of the business passing over the present cable; possibly we shall not get more than half; we shall only get our share of the messages from Europe.

The TREASURER: We will get them from America

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Yes; but all the business from New York and Boston amounts to very little; it consists mostly of clothes pegs and kerosene. It is growing certainly, but it is comparatively small at present. And suppose we get the whole of the American business and all the Canadian business, what is the aspect on the other side? The existing cables of the Eastern Extension Company are at least duplicated right through, and they get the whole of the business from Japan, China, and India, vast countries which are almost worlds in themselves.

The TREASURER: Do you know what they actually lose by that cable?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I am not quite finished yet; I shall come to that. I have it from the very best authority, not from the Eastern Extension Company, but from other quarters—and I am prepared to disclose my information confidentially at any time if it is desired in the interest of Queensland—that there is no possibility of any company enjoying more than one-fourth of the gross business that is now done by the company. Three-fourths of the existing business will never leave the Eastern Extension Company. It is a monopoly, and they have the business in their hands. Reuter commands half the business, and he will continue with the Eastern Extension Company. The question of cheaper telegraphy will come about if the cable company will spend the money and fix the charge, and the various colonies pay a subsidy out of general revenue. The British Government has approved of the proposal to have an all-British cable. Canada has practically withdrawn—that is, she has intimated that she withdraws entirely from the first proposition, and now a fresh suggestion is being considered. It must be borne in mind that if we touch Africa we touch a country which will have more business in the future with Australia than if we go through Canada. That will be an advantage. I have been furnished to-day with the various cable rates. It is too long to quote the article in its entirety; but it shows that the complaint as to excessive rates is altogether unfounded. The rate from London to Japan is 7s. per word, while it is very much less to Australia. The article to which I have referred says—

Coming to the proposed all-British cable, let me say that the Cape line would mean the expenditure of £2,500,000, and, as it will not tap new sources of revenue, the company will have no chance of obtaining any return on their outlay except from increased traffic. The company might be induced to give the colonies portion of any future growth in the Australian traffic, after first crediting themselves with a small return on the proposed capital expenditure, and the colonies might apply the amount either in a reduction of the subsidy or of the tariff, as they thought fit. The company are also prepared to reduce at once the Government rate to 2s. 6d. per word, and the Press rate to 1s. 6d. per word, if the subsidy be renewed for ten years. They will go further, and release the colonies from the guarantee obligation in respect of this traffic.

There is some very excellent information contained in this paper, but all I need add is that some years ago the Governments of the various colonies represented at the Postal Conference requested the company to raise the rate to 4s. 9d. per word, while the company expostulated and

contended that the rate of 4s. per word should have a further trial. Since then the various Governments have not spent a single 3d. for any message they have sent to the old country, and the higher rate per word which has been paid by private individuals has been absorbed in paying strange companies. What cheaper telegraphy can the Governments of Australia get than that? They have been paying nothing at all. I have nothing more to say on this question, but I shall call for the papers to which I have referred, as it would be a good thing, if the Government have no objection, to have them printed and distributed. I now come to the question of the Ministry—the Ministry that now sits on these benches. I think someone interjected that the Coalition Ministry began about eight years ago. There is no doubt that at that time politics were in a comparative state of chaos. Parties were fairly evenly balanced, and, particularly on account of the financial circumstances of the colony, it was thought desirable by one gentleman, who is not now in this House—I forget whether he was in the other House at that time—but he became, as it were, the foster-mother of a new combination, which resulted in the Coalition Ministry. That went on very well, and there was a fair proportion of all interests and of all the population and the various constituencies in that combination. It was arranged to have a strong Ministry, and it found favour, and has been carried on, y-e-a, even unto this day. We come now to the history of the Nelson Government anterior to the last election. I am not going to criticise their action in any way whatever except to express the opinion that the superabundance of their work and administration up to the general election in my opinion far outweighed their errors of judgment or circumstances of administration which did not entirely satisfy the public or meet with general approval. In the person of Sir Hugh Nelson the majority of the people of the colony had confidence. But the Nelson Government has gone. Sir Horace Tozer is gone. A day or two after my return from England, when Sir Hugh Nelson had just vacated the Premiership, he invited my opinion on the political position, to which I replied, "Well, I think, under all the circumstances, and seeing that you are now free from the shackles of office and untrammelled altogether, I should rather invite you to make a diagnosis of the political position." To that observation he made no reply, but laughed and began to fill his pipe. A few minutes subsequently the matter was brought up again, and he invited my opinion again. I then said, "It is impossible for me to give an opinion at present. When I joined you, I laid special stress on the fact that you were the leader of the Government, and that I intended to give you my hearty support. But the head of the Government has now gone, and there is neither head nor tail. The changes which have taken place are such that it by no means presents to my mental eye, or to the colony, or to my constituents, the appearance that it did when I pledged myself to follow you. I am absolutely and fully absolved from that pledge by the circumstances that have now been disclosed." The matter to which I refer is one of history. Governments are often referred to as a dog. Well, the head of the dog is gone, and that active personality, the late Home Secretary, is gone. The locomotivity is left, and there we are! And there have been still further readjustments. Now the question occurred to me: "Ought we to be content with these changes; are they desirable, considering the altered circumstances that surround us?" I say advisedly, after full examination of the subject, that what has taken place exonerates me unquestionably. And I may say that before I got back to Brisbane I had

a premonition of what was going on. I stand here and say that I am in no way called upon to confess that I will give the present Ministry a loyal support.

Mr. BATTERSEY: Why not go to the other side of the House?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I do not think any sensible man with a knowledge of what has taken place can say that I am taking up an inconsistent attitude in any way. Now, when the Premier was on his self-inflicted tour—and like all colonists I was pleased to see the reception he got from the grey-bearded man down to the delicate little girl—he preached the gospel of government by the people.

Mr. GLASSEY: We want him to practise government by the people.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He disclosed no policy—a course which I thought rather wise under the circumstances. But when I came to analyse the phrase “government by the people” I discovered that I had heard it first from the lips of John Bright. I take the hon. gentleman at his word; I am glad he believes in government by the people, but that has been a forgotten principle in Queensland for some time past.

MEMBERS of the Opposition side: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The time was when government by the people flourished. All the Governments up to a certain period were ultra-conservative, pure merino Governments. By-and-by—after many fights, often hard and long—those who were backed up by overdrafts and monetary resources had to give way, and ultimately the Liberals got a show. They, however, had a very short shrift. Another combined Government came in, and it was still government by the people. At that time there was no North—the Centre was really the North—and we began to have government by geography. Territory was considered, and the Government was more or less geographically selected. The first acknowledgment that the North should have representation in the Ministry was when Mr. Ramsay was appointed Colonial Secretary and Mr. Fitzgerald became Colonial Treasurer. The latter gentleman, long since deceased, was member for Kennedy, which then embraced a good many of the electorates that exist now. In the Lilley Ministry was included Mr. Thomas Henry Fitzgerald, who represented an outside constituency, and then with the Palmer Ministry there was a further and very proper enlargement of representation of distant places by the inclusion of Mr. William Henry Walsh—who represented Wide Bay—and Charles James Graham, a gentleman I knew well, who represented the Centre. We then come to the Macalister Ministry, and there was not a single Northern or Central man in it. That was the Southern or Queen-street Ministry. In the Thorn Ministry there was no Northern man either. In the Douglas Ministry there was no Northern or Central man. The McIlwraith Ministry came into power in 1879, and a very strong combination it was. Mr. McIlwraith was really the first to fully recognise the geographical aspect of the colony, and included in his Ministry Mr. Archibald Archer from the Centre; Mr. Arthur Hunter Palmer, who represented Port Curtis; Mr. John Murtagh Macrossan, who ably represented the North; and also Mr. Charles Hardie Buzacott, a Central man, as Postmaster-General. There were really four Central men in that Ministry, including Mr. Albert Norton, who afterwards became Secretary for Public Works. That was a very fair share of representation, but the Centre had to pay for it afterwards by being unrepresented in any Ministry for many years. In the Griffith Ministry there was no Northern man. There was one Wide

Bay man, the Hon. B. B. Moreton, and one Central man, Mr. Dutton. Subsequently Mr. Hodgkinson, representing a Northern constituency, succeeded Mr. Dutton, and Mr. Sheridan succeeded Mr. Mein as Postmaster-General. Then followed the McIlwraith Ministry of 1888. The only Northern man in that was Mr. Hume Black, and the Central representative was Mr. William Pattison. In the Morehead Ministry the North and the Centre were well represented—the Centre by Mr. Pattison, the North by Messrs. Black and Macrossan, and Wide Bay by Mr. Charles Powers. I have a few figures by me which bear directly on the representation in the Ministry of the various districts of the colony. The total population of the colony, as supplied to me from official sources, is 485,000 persons. And I make this observation in consequence of the great dissatisfaction which exists, in Southern Queensland particularly. There was a meeting called during my absence some time ago by leading men here who, strange to say, were strong supporters of the Nelson Administration, and they expressed themselves as being extremely dissatisfied at the aspect of things and the changes that had recently been made. Out of this population we find that the South has one Minister to 110,000 persons, and the North—before a Central Minister was appointed—one Minister to 32,000 persons. Taking the adult males we have in the South one to 30,000, in the North one to 14,000, and in the Centre only one to 21,000. It is only the other day the Centre had a Minister, and I would respectfully say that if Sir Hugh Nelson had adopted the advice of others besides the *Courier* newspaper—which has always been consistent in that respect—he would have had a Central Minister in his Cabinet long ago. The recent appointment of the hon. member for Normanby to that position has not soothed the Centre by any means. The aggravation is as bad to-day as it was, if not worse. There is no question about that. I do not receive correspondence from some of the oldest residents there—men of weight and standing, who take a deep interest in political matters—without believing they are writing me the truth.

Mr. CROSS: Who else could have been appointed?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I am not going to mention any names. I say the Centre has not been soothed, or its political feelings made kindlier to the Ministry by the recent appointment of the hon. member for Normanby. The appointment came too late for that part of the colony.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: “Better late than never!”

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: As to the composition of the Ministry. We have in round numbers thirty Liberal constituencies represented on those benches; that is to say, constituencies that have always sent members here to support the Liberal party—the party of the people. Out of the members of the Ministry we find, despite that fact, that there is a disparity of Conservatives as against the Liberals, both Conservatives and Northern men greatly preponderating in the Cabinet.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Who are the Conservatives?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I have no hesitation in saying the hon. gentleman himself is one of the strongest of them.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am much more Liberal than you are.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The hon. gentleman was not taken into the Ministry for his Liberalism. They are, in fact, all Conservatives, excepting the Secretary for Lands and the Home Secretary.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about the Secretary for Agriculture?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The Secretary for Agriculture is a Conservative. We know his colour quite well. It is not a question of the programme they proffer to bring forward now. Did ever Mackay send a Liberal to this House?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, when they sent me.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I am informed they sent Mr. Campbell once. Those are the proportions, and the question everyone should ask if an election were to take place next week or next month—and I would strongly advocate that course to be taken—should be, according to my view—

Mr. HOOLAN: You are taking a very wrong view, let me tell you.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I say unhesitatingly that a man who declares himself an unwavering adherent of the present Ministry is bound in all honour to go to his constituency under the same pledge. If he pledges himself at the present moment to support the Ministry as at present constituted, he is bound to adhere to that Ministry then; and it is a very serious responsibility. I was told by a very strong supporter of the Government the other day, "It is no use having a dissolution. The Labour party would never stand it. What is the good of bothering?"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did he only say he was a supporter of the Government?

Mr. HOOLAN: He did not speak authoritatively.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: "It is only for seven months." I said it was a period of gestation that was not popular. I call attention to the actual position of things in regard to the *personnel* of the Ministry. They are all gentlemen of most excellent repute in the colony. Personally they are the equals of any in Australia on all grounds. Politically I view them as a conglomeration of accidents. Whatever measures come before the House I shall regard as measures, not caring for the instrumentality of the administrators of the country at all. I shall pass them to one side; and then, if there is no early dissolution, let the House continue to the natural term of its life. And when that time comes, I unhesitatingly declare that I shall go before my constituents, if they ask me—if they do not, there will be, of course, no need for it—and tell them I cannot possibly give my support to the Ministry as at present constituted.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member has touched on two matters with which I shall first deal—cable communication and the constitution of the Ministry. He referred to the relative merits of cable communication under the auspices of the Eastern Extension Company, and communication under the auspices of any other company. If I had not thought that such a thing was altogether beneath a member of this House I should have been inclined to think that the hon. member held a brief for the Eastern Extension Company.

Mr. DAWSON: Who is the agent?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I don't know. I have nothing to do with that, but the hon. member endeavoured to show how much better it would be for us and for the whole of Australia to have cable communication across the Pacific under the ægis of the Eastern Extension Company rather than any other company.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: No. I did not say that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I understood the hon. member to say so, and I think when the hon. member reads what he said he will find that it bears that construction.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am glad to hear that, but it appeared to me that that was what his remarks led up to. At all events, I think he will not deny that he has advocated the establishment of relations with the Eastern Extension Company which this colony has for many years contended against. He advocated that this colony should join the rest of Australia, and that the whole of Australia should place its neck under the yoke of a huge monopoly on the ground, apparently, that we already enjoy very large advantages in the shape of cheap cable communication with the mother country. I have always been of opinion that it should be the policy of Queensland to bring about competition with that company, of which the hon. member is so strongly enamoured. I believe that cheap, rapid, and efficacious as our cable communication may be now, under circumstances admitting of fair competition, Australia would benefit to a much greater extent. I think that is a complete answer to the arguments of the hon. gentleman on that subject.

Mr. DAWSON: Not at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am surprised to hear the hon. member for Charters Towers advocate anything in the shape of monopoly.

Mr. DAWSON: I am not advocating anything of the kind. I said you had not answered the hon. gentleman's arguments.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think it is a sufficient answer to say that we should be free from a monopoly which is apparently paying huge dividends and putting by to reserve account enormous sums of money which will be used to its advantage, and possibly to the detriment of those with whom it has to deal in future.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I want it to go from Cape York.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But still under the same monopoly without competition. It would be a very difficult thing for the hon. member to persuade me, and Queenslanders generally, that as long as we are under the foot of that monopoly we shall be better served than if we had some other equally strong company competing with it for the business we are able to give it. The hon. member endeavoured to minimise the traffic which would accrue along a Pacific route between this country and America, and instanced Africa as giving a very much greater volume of business, but I think the possibilities of trade and telegraphic communication between this country and America are simply unknown at present. Let us have cable communication under any circumstances. If it is British, so much the better. Let us have cable communication with America, and a very large volume of trade of immense benefit to this country will accrue. The hon. gentleman referred, secondly, to the question of the Ministry, and said that as at present constituted he for one could not give it his unswerving support. Well, the hon. member, like every other hon. member, is at perfect liberty to do just as he likes. He is responsible to his constituents like every other hon. member. His constituents have entrusted to him a valuable trust for the period of three years, or such shorter period as the majority of hon. members may determine by their action. If he and other members desire to do so, they can force a dissolution of this House to-morrow; and I think it is well that the country should know that it rests with the majority of this House to

say whether the present Government shall remain in office till the general election, or at what particular time that election shall take place.

Mr. HOOLAN: There is not the slightest fear of it. Calm your mind.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: My mind is not disturbed. It appears to be the mind of the hon. member for North Brisbane that is disturbed.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I am one of the calmest men in the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member has played the rôle of some other members who sit on the other side, and give advice as to what ought to have been done by the Government when the Premier assumed the direction of affairs on the resignation of Sir Hugh Nelson. The hon. member's advice is gratuitous, but I am not sure that it is of any very great value. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating of it." As long as the present Government commands a majority in this House that in itself is a perfect justification for the course which has been pursued. It is said that this continuous succession of Premiers is unconstitutional. At the last general election the country returned as a majority of this House members who hold the opinions roundly speaking of those who sit on this side, and their verdict has not since been reversed. It would be quite competent if a majority had so decreed in this House by their votes for Sir Hugh Nelson to have resigned and advised His Excellency to send for any member on the other side who he thought could command a majority, and it would have been competent for that member, though associated with a party returned at the last general election in a minority, to have formed a Government, and to have met this House and carried on the business of the country until Parliament expired by effluxion of time—always assuming as a condition precedent thereto that he was able to command a majority of hon. members. If this is so, it would have been perfectly constitutional, and that being so, how much less unconstitutional is it for the hon. member who now leads this House to have succeeded Sir H. M. Nelson as Premier, seeing that he still presumably commands the majority which Sir H. M. Nelson himself commanded in his time.

Mr. CROSS: Where are the Liberals?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am one of them, and the Home Secretary is another. I do not know whether the hon. member for North Brisbane considers himself a Liberal, but he was at one time. Just now he has developed a Rip Van Winkle position. He seems to have awoken from a long sleep to find that the old Liberal party is not here after all. If I am a Liberal because my constituency was a Liberal constituency when it returned me ten years ago, then the hon. member must be a Conservative, because less than that time ago Sir Thomas McIlwraith—who never called himself a Liberal—occupied the seat that the hon. member now occupies. Constituencies change, so that the hon. member's Rip Van Winkle notions as to who are Liberals and who are not do not apply.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Sir Thomas McIlwraith left the Liberals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He sat for North Brisbane as a distinct Conservative, as the leader of the "National party"—but I shall not pursue that subject any further. Although it is a somewhat delicate subject to touch upon, I do not think it is out of place for any Minister to make reference at the present juncture to the New Guinea question. I may say at once that I and all the members of the Government are entirely in accord with the views expressed by the Premier, which appear

to have met, not only with the approval of hon. members, but with the approval of the country. But there are one or two points which it is desirable should be further emphasised. I wish, first of all, to call attention to the fact that the authorities in Downing Street have been a constant stumbling-block from the very first day when Sir Thomas McIlwraith, as Premier of this colony, caused the British flag to be hoisted in New Guinea. Strictly speaking, that was beyond his functions, and his action was promptly disavowed.

Mr. DAWSON: A pity it was.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Quite so; but it was the proper thing to disallow it lest it should have been made a precedent in other cases in which it might have been inconvenient. But it should have been followed by annexation by the Home Government. And if I remember rightly, Lord Derby, who was then Secretary of State for the Colonies, shortly after the disavowal of Sir Thomas McIlwraith's action, declared that any annexation of any portion of that part of New Guinea which was not already under Dutch rule, by a foreign power, would be regarded as a distinctly unfriendly action. Shortly afterwards came the annexation of the northern shores of the island by Germany, and yet nothing was done. I do not remember whether any protest was made, but if so it had no practical result. The British had to be content with assuming a protectorate over the part which Germany had left. That was a significant thing to begin with, and I confess I felt thoroughly indignant at the way in which Australia had been treated. It seems to me that it is almost a necessary consequence that such things should happen when affairs are to be directed from such a distance as Downing Street. I need not follow the whole history of New Guinea affairs, but shall come down to the time—nearly ten years ago—when the three eastern colonies of Australia undertook to guarantee £15,000 a year towards the Government of the island. Clearly it was the intention—notwithstanding what has been said by those whom I cannot regard as otherwise than interested in what they allege—that all legislation and administration which was out of the ordinary course should be subject to the direction of the Executive of this colony. "Direction" was the word used. The Executive of Queensland was to consult with the Premiers of the other contributing colonies, and it appears to me that a certain amount of wilful disregard of that arrangement has taken place somewhere. It has been put to me—and I desire to refer to this now as a delicate subject—that a Minister ought to be precluded, at all events by etiquette if nothing stronger, from mentioning the fact that he personally had not been consulted by Sir H. M. Nelson in regard to this matter. It has been stated by the Premier that he and his present colleagues were not consulted, and so far as I am concerned I have no hesitation in endorsing and emphasising that remark. The question has been put to me whether we are acting with strict propriety in making such statements. I think we are. If Ministers had been consulted, it would, of course, have been a breach of propriety to have said anything thereafter as to what had taken place between them and their chief; but when they are not consulted it seems to me that they are at liberty to say so.

Mr. DAWSON: Why should we not know the truth, anyhow?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Quite so. Supposing the matter had come to my knowledge before the resignation of Sir H. M. Nelson, and after I had acquired that knowledge I had remained a member of his Government, then my mouth would have been closed. If his action did not meet with my approval,

and I felt very keenly about it, it would have been my duty to resign. But those are not the circumstances which have happened, for Sir Hugh Nelson had resigned and I had taken office under a new chief before I was aware of this matter in any shape or form. I therefore think it is due to myself and my colleagues to put my view of the point of propriety before the country in order that I may justify myself, although it may not be entirely to the satisfaction of those who have raised the question. The Government have been twitted on the other side—and not, I think, with perfect disingenuity—with having known what was taking place, because Sir Horace Tozer and Mr. Thynne, who were both members of the Government at the time, had initialled certain papers. But I would point out to hon. members that that was as far back as October last, when the matter was in its purely initiatory stages. It was then a vague proposal, and it assumed no definite form until the arrival in Brisbane of Mr. Lowles and Sir Somers Vine—two months later than the time when Sir Horace Tozer marked the paper for “Cabinet” and Mr. Thynne marked it as having been “read.” The proposal only took concrete form in Sir Somers Vine’s letter of the 23rd December. From that time a certain amount of—I think I may use the word—secrecy was preserved, possibly with the very best intentions on the part of those who preserved that secrecy, but it has since been admitted by Sir Hugh Nelson that it was unfortunate—that it should not have been done. Then we come to the alleged knowledge of the matter by the present Premier and the Treasurer. In the case of the knowledge of the present Premier, hon. members on the other side, by their interjections, professed not to believe him when he stated that he merely dealt with those papers by looking at the covering letter in the usual way, and that when he saw it was proposed that the drafting of the Ordinance should be done at the expense of the Queensland Government for the benefit of New Guinea, he very properly decided that the work should be done by the New Guinea Government. The same members on the opposite side professed not to believe that statement. I think the country will believe it.

Mr. DAWSON: We did not deny it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Some hon. members opposite, by their interjections, unquestionably did so, otherwise I should not have referred to it. I will not mention their names, but the statement of the Premier was received almost with derision by some members on the other side. Then as to the knowledge of the Treasurer, that hon. gentleman had no knowledge of the agreement until it was all cut and dried and signed. It seems to me that the later negotiations—speaking of those before the public, of course—have assumed a somewhat peculiar form, inasmuch as somebody holding a brief for the syndicate appears to have a very strong influence with the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Mr. DAWSON: He is holding the brief himself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: With regard to the attitude of Mr. Chamberlain and his apparent change of front—one speaks with bated breath of people of such high standing as Mr. Chamberlain—but it appears to me there has been a change of front on his part. I point out that in his cable of the 24th May, to the Deputy Governor of Queensland, he says—

I do not see that your Ministers can now oppose allowance of Ordinance without breach of faith and I presume Nelson and MacGregor fully informed Premiers Victoria and New South Wales at Melbourne conference as to agreement which was matter of notoriety and was

I am informed freely discussed agents for syndicate with prominent public men and Ministers at Sydney and Melbourne.

The point in connection with that is that it is in acknowledgment of a cable from the Deputy Governor on the 20th May, in which this occurs—

With reference to British New Guinea Ordinance enclosed in Despatch No. 195th April my Government requests me to inform you that as far as can be ascertained Governments of New South Wales and Victoria were not consulted with respect to terms of contract with syndicate prior to Governor of Queensland giving directions for introduction of Ordinance.

With that plain intimation from the Deputy Governor, the Secretary of State still assumes that the Premiers of the other colonies were consulted; and that he was then of opinion that they ought to have been consulted there is no doubt at all. That was the opinion of everyone except, apparently, Sir Hugh Nelson and Sir William MacGregor.

Mr. DANIELS: You can kick him now he is out of danger.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Cambooya, with his characteristic lack of good taste, implies that I am kicking Sir Hugh Nelson, but I am not saying a word concerning him that Sir Hugh Nelson has not himself admitted. He has expressed regret that the other contributing colonies were not consulted and admits that they ought to have been consulted. I cannot help thinking that there were those associated with Sir Hugh Nelson who probably prompted him not to consult the other Premiers. He appears to have commenced in London with the knowledge that they ought to be consulted, and why should he change that opinion? I have not had a word with him on the subject; I am speaking only from the evidence in the correspondence. Why should he have changed his views, unless at the instance of Sir William MacGregor or the members of the syndicate? I cannot suppress the feeling in my mind that Sir Wm. MacGregor and the members of the syndicate were cognisant of the fact that the other Premiers had not been consulted, that Sir Hugh Nelson had been of opinion that they should be consulted, and that they knew they should have been consulted. Whether they prompted Sir Hugh Nelson or not, the correspondence shows that they knew that the other Premiers had not been consulted, and that brings me to this: We are charged by Mr. Chamberlain that if we do not assent to the Ordinance, or if we press for its disallowance, we will commit a breach of faith. But, I say, what about the knowledge of other persons that the Premiers of the other colonies should have been consulted, and were not? Does not the breach of faith rest with them? It certainly does if my surmise is true, and my surmise is justified by the correspondence.

Mr. DAWSON: Admitting all that, we are in the difficulty, and what are you going to do now?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member will understand that I am not in a position to say what the Government is going to do now.

Mr. DAWSON: You are the only Minister who has spoken.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Premier has spoken.

Mr. DAWSON: But there has been discussion since he spoke.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member should know that it would be gross impropriety on my part to even foreshadow what is going to be done. A conference of Premiers is to meet at the end of this week, and I cannot forecast what will be done there. I know the views of my leader, but I cannot, of course, disclose what they are. But no matter

what the fate of that Ordinance may be, it appears to me that one benefit will be derived from the proposals of the syndicate and from this discussion. Whether that Ordinance be confirmed or ratified or not, it means that the present divided control of New Guinea must go. Of course I am giving my individual opinion on the subject, and it seems to me that it is impossible to go on the lines on which we have been going up to the present. All the difficulty that has taken place would have been prevented if any question had previously arisen as to the administration of New Guinea of sufficient importance to raise the question; but this important matter—which has exercised popular feeling throughout Australia—having been raised, the weakness of the present system is apparent to everybody. The direction which the Executive has to give to the Administrator of New Guinea and his Legislative Council ought, in my opinion, to be something more than a mere form, but apparently it has been nothing more than a form in the past. Then, again, the delays which have occurred, and probably will continue to occur in future, in obtaining replies from some of the contributing colonies in regard to matters concerning New Guinea, preclude the possibility of this Government giving directions within anything like reasonable time. I believe it is a fact that a great number of letters on this subject have not yet been replied to by one of the contributing colonies, although the letters are some years old. The whole system is too cumbersome. The question then is, What is to become of New Guinea? Apparently it must either become a portion of Queensland or of one of the contributing colonies, and be administered by the colony, or it must become a Crown colony. I do not think the Imperial authorities will ever abandon a possession which they have once assumed a protectorate over, and as long as they are not prepared to pay the cost of administering New Guinea from the Imperial Exchequer, and throw upon Australia the responsibility of maintaining that possession, Australia ought to have a very large, indeed an absolutely controlling, voice in its government. In other words, if we find the means to carry on that government, New Guinea must be governed by Australia or some portion of Australia under our system of responsible government on a rational basis, and not on the absurd one which exists at the present time—not be controlled by secret cabals, whether in the old country or here. I shall not refer at any length to the question of the Japanese invasion—if I may use that expression—but I should like to point out that hon. members, on the other side especially, and I dare say a very great number of people throughout the colony, have assumed that this Government is perfectly apathetic with regard to the introduction of Japanese. It is somewhat difficult to convince those who hold strong opinions of that sort to the contrary—to persuade them that such is not the case—but I am sure that I express, not only my own opinion, but the opinion of every one of my colleagues, when I say that the Government are distinctly and strongly opposed to the introduction of Japanese in anything like large numbers. To go so far as to say that no Japanese man or woman shall set foot upon Queensland soil would be to go much too far, because we in our turn desire—as tourists at all events—to visit Japan, and there is no reason why any persons coming to this colony as tourists or for business purposes should not have perfect freedom of access here. But to say that they are to come as they have been introduced of late is not what the present Government are prepared to allow at all.

Mr. McDONALD: Do you get free access when you go there?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: To a very considerable extent we do; I know Englishmen who have travelled Japan from one end to the other.

Mr. SIM: I have been there, and I know.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member has been there, and he was not put in gaol.

Mr. SIM: No, I was supervised by the police everywhere I went.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Possibly it was for the protection of the hon. member that he was supervised. However, I venture to say that twelve months hence, when the provisions of the treaty are in full operation, there will be nobody in this House, or rather in the next House, who will continue to sneer at the provisions of the treaty as some hon. members have done, because I can foresee that its operation will tell tremendously in favour of this colony as distinguished from the other colonies. When the machinery of the treaty is in proper working order—and that ought to be very soon now—we shall be able to prevent the introduction of any class of labourers or artisans unless they come here with passports, and the control of those passports will rest with the Government of the day. Up to the present, owing to the roundabout method by which we have to communicate with Japan—first of all with the Colonial Office, then through the Foreign Office, and then with the Japanese Embassy in London, and possibly with the English Embassy in Japan—the machinery for carrying the treaty into effect has not been completed. But I should imagine that before the House meets again it will be in working order, and the introduction of Japanese in numbers in the shape of indentured labour will cease altogether.

Mr. CROSS: Under articles 3 and 19 you cannot stop them from coming without passports.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not know what articles 3 and 19 are, but I venture to differ from the hon. member.

Mr. CROSS: I have read the articles.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the substance of the articles you refer to?

Mr. CROSS: I gave them the other night in my speech.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not hear them. At all events I do not agree with the hon. member, whatever he says. I do not remember at this moment what articles 3 and 19 say, but I venture to say that the treaty, as a whole, is ample for all purposes. We have the right of excluding labourers and artisans. The hon. member cannot get over that. Apparently he has constituted himself the champion of Japan with the idea of getting the Japanese in here and breaking the treaty.

Mr. CROSS: Certainly not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: So far as we know, the Japanese Government is willing to adhere to the portion of the treaty referring to labourers and artisans, and that being so, and the Government of Queensland being desirous of excluding them, I do not see how they can come here. Some reference has been made during this debate to that portion of the Land Act of last year which deals with the renewal of leases in the settled districts. A question was asked on the subject to-day. I hope I shall not be considered out of order in referring to the answer given to that question, but I would like to supplement the information I gave. It transpired by the answer I gave to the hon. member for Leichhardt that thirty-five applications have been made for renewals of leases in the settled districts. Of that number

nine are still undealt with by the Land Court; eight have been recommended for renewal by the court; and in eighteen instances the court has refused to make any recommendation.

Mr. LEAHY: That is a single member court?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not know how it was done. The court regulates its own affairs. This is the record of the court, certified to me by the registrar, and I do not want to know how they act. Of the eight which were recommended by the court for renewal, five were in the Gladstone district, one in the Rockhampton district, one in the Bowen district, and two in the Ingham district. Acting on the information which I received from the officers of the department, in whom I place implicit reliance in this respect—I allude to the commissioners—I have taken upon myself to recommend to the Executive the refusal of four out of the five of those recommended in the Gladstone district; so that, as a matter of fact, only four out of thirty-five have up to the present been granted. Of course there are still nine undealt with, but I may venture to point to the action the court has already taken with regard to eighteen applications as indicating the spirit in which that body is dealing with these cases. I think I may also take credit to myself for having been able to predict, during the debates on the Bill last session, the nature and scope of the action which would be taken by the court in dealing with these applications. A great deal of evil was to accrue to the colony from these renewals, though they are only for five years.

Mr. HARDACRE: A great deal of danger it was said was to be feared.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was predicted that a great deal of evil would accrue, but the result has shown that the clauses which were inserted by the Council, and accepted by this House under my persuasion—if I may put it so—were perfectly justified, because if there were four cases in which the lessees were entitled to renewals—or even if there had been only one—it would have been a justification for the passing of those clauses, seeing that the interests of the public have been so fully protected. I ventured to predict that there would be very few south of Rockhampton, and that has been the case.

Mr. HARDACRE: There is no limit; the Governor in Council may give the lease at any time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Governor in Council would rather stultify itself, if, after having passed an Executive minute refusing to grant a renewal, it subsequently passed another granting it, especially in the face of the recommendation of its own officers that it should not be granted. Last year many hon. members were inclined to distrust the administration of the Lands Department to an extent which was scarcely deserved. While on the subject of land, it might interest hon. members if I gave the figures with regard to land selection since the Act of 1897 came into force. The Act only came into force on the 1st of March, and, as at least thirty days have to expire before a proclamation can take effect, it was the 5th of April before the first lands were thrown open under the Act. From the 5th of April to the 30th of June is a little less than three months. As a matter of fact, however, it took nearly the whole of April to get the lands proclaimed, so that—taking it all round, the period to which I refer is a little over two months. The total area selected during that period was no less than 1,075,703 acres. Of that I rather take pride of the fact that agricultural homesteads represent no less than 53,211 acres. Those are in small farms, and represent 253 selections. In every one of those

instances there must be personal residence, and venture to say that the result of that must necessarily be a very large increase in the *bona fide* settlement of the lands of the colony.

Mr. LEAHY: How many scrub farms have been taken up?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Up to the 30th June I believe there has been only one scrub farm of 5,000 acres taken up, but a number of other applications have been made, and I think up to the present date a good many more have been taken up. The scrub farm sections of the Act are not yet thoroughly understood, because in travelling about I find great misapprehension in regard to them. As they become better known there will be more business done under them.

Mr. HARDACRE: Have you got the number of grazing farms taken up?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Ninety-nine grazing farms, and thirty-three grazing homesteads. The grazing farms represent 709,000 acres, and the grazing homesteads 353,563 acres. I had that return prepared, because I thought it would be interesting to hon. members. While on the question of land, I should like to say a word or two as to what has been done in regard to dealing with the far western country, in what I may describe as the arid area of the colony. I allude to that portion of the colony which lies north and north-west of Hatton Corner, stretching to the eastern boundary of the Northern Territory. Hon. members will know that there has been a sort of sliding scale throughout the tenure of the lease with regard to the rent—that most of these blocks of country are held by separate lease, and are supposed to pay at the rate of 15s. per square mile. I do not hesitate to say that for a large proportion of that country that is an excessive rent. Proof of that is to be found in the fact that a large number of these blocks have been forfeited; and it is admitted by the former lessees that they are still in occupation of these blocks to a large extent, but that they do not pay rent on them because they do not fear competition in the shape of applications for occupation licenses, the fact being that all the forfeited blocks have been thrown open to occupation license at a sum so low as 5s. per square mile. It would be far better for the colony in every way that these large runs should be consolidated at a reasonable rental, rather than that a portion of them should be held at an excessive rental and the rest occupied without any rental at all. With that view I have taken upon myself, with the approval of my colleagues, to request the Land Court to send out one of its members to inspect that country and report upon it. The gentleman selected by the board for that duty is Mr. Hume, and he will be accompanied by Mr. Woodbine, a gentleman who has been engaged in examining runs for the purpose of reassessment on behalf of the Government during the last six months. He has had a very large experience, not only as a run assessor in New South Wales and a member of the local Land Court there, but also as a pastoralist in the Riverina, and his knowledge cannot be questioned in any way. It was at Mr. Hume's request that some gentleman having special pastoral knowledge should accompany him, and they will report to me by wire from the district which they are visiting after they have examined it thoroughly. I hope to be able to submit to the House, before the session closes—probably at the end of a couple of months—a Bill which will effectually deal with this question, which I think, both in the interests of the pastoralists, and especially of the colony, requires settlement on some satisfactory basis.

Mr. LEAHY : They will have to examine a lot more than you mention.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : They will do that at present. The other people seem to be able to take care of themselves very well. Before leaving the land question I should like to say a word to the House on the operation of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act. I think the dealings under that Act have fully and thoroughly justified its enactment. There is a very small proportion of the land still remaining unselected. It is true that on one or two of the best estates it has happened—oddly enough—that some of the selectors are somewhat in arrears, but I have caused it to be intimated to them that they have entered into a contract with the Crown of a different character altogether to that which the ordinary selector enters into—that they must adhere to their contracts or submit to forfeiture. I will not say that they will be dealt with summarily—turned out of their farms at a moment's notice simply because they happen to be slightly in arrear—but anything like allowing them to get deeply into arrear cannot be tolerated, because it must be borne in mind that the land which they have selected has been bought and paid for in hard cash by the public, and the contracts which people enter into for the purchase of that land from the Crown must be honourably kept. I think that any Minister for Lands who failed to see that these contracts were properly kept would be failing in the duty which he owes to the public.

Mr. W. THORN : What about the hard cash the sugar-planters have got, and do not pay interest upon?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : They do pay interest.

Mr. KEOGH : Most of the purchases have been made on the Downs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : A great deal of money has been expended in the neighbourhood of the hon. member.

Mr. KEOGH : Very little, except at Rosewood, and the land was not very eagerly sought after, let me tell you.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : Most of the land has gone, but the Government would be held responsible by the House for making bad purchases. I have heard them blamed for making a bad purchase in the Rosewood, but there is very little, if any, land left there.

Mr. KEOGH : The college took it all up.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : What the college took up would have gone in any case, but there were certain portions not considered good enough for the college which other people would not take. I am very glad to have some of the land for people to take when they do want it.

Mr. KEOGH : There is plenty of better land in West Moreton than that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : If the hon. member will cease from interruptions he will find that I shall be able to explain that matter to him very satisfactorily. There are certain people of West Moreton who desire to sell their land at a very considerable profit to themselves. But very fortunately there is in this Act a provision that the Land Court shall examine it, and certify as to the price which the people demand for their land; and unless the Land Court certifies that the price asked is a reasonable one, the Government is not at liberty to buy. It so happens that in the hon. member's district there are certain people who want more for their land than the Land Court is willing to certify for, and consequently I am unable to do business with them. I shall be only too glad if I can get any estate in the hon.

member's district, which the Land Court certifies is good agricultural land, and can be bought at a fair price, to recommend it to my colleagues for purchase; and I can assure the hon. member that it shall be bought. There is one condition, however, which, from my experience of the operation of this Act, I should certainly put upon any proposal of the sort, and that is that it shall be within reasonable distance of some market or railway station. From what I can understand, it is useless to hope to get land satisfactorily taken up under this Act and worked either for agricultural or dairy purposes at very much more than ten or fifteen miles from railway communication. I believe fifteen miles is too far, but possibly an estate, the nearest portion of which was ten miles, and the furthest fifteen miles away, might be considered. There are one or two estates the hon. member knows of in his district which are just outside the limit I have mentioned, which otherwise I should be very glad to purchase. The point I want to mention with regard to the operation of the Act is that, not counting Headington Hill, which has been so recently dealt with, there has been at least £30,000 worth of improvements put on the repurchased land by the selectors. That speaks volumes. It means that expenditure or improvements by practical men could not have taken place unless there was *bond fide* settlement on the land behind it. And I may state with regard to Headington Hill that, according to an estimate made by the commissioner about a fortnight ago, there was very nearly £10,000 worth of improvements; and I know that contracts have been let for perhaps £2,000 more since then. Where that is going on I do not think the Government can possibly go wrong in making further purchases where there is a chance at all of their being taken up. I will not say any chance at all, but even if there should not be a demand for the whole of those estates. I am by no means dismayed that there are still 4,000 acres at Headington Hill unselected. I am rather glad to see it than otherwise, because men who come here wanting to select land in that particular locality will be able to satisfy themselves. It is not desirable that we should advertise those estates largely in the southern colonies and attract men to our shores and then have to tell them we are very sorry, but the whole is selected, and that they must either return or wait for another estate. I shall not occupy the time of the House much longer, but I think I ought to refer to something which fell from the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston. Perhaps I am wrong in singling that hon. member out, because others spoke in the same strain, though not perhaps as bitterly. The hon. member said that while individually he regarded the members of the Government as fairly honest men, yet politically he would hardly believe them on their oath. The Premier treated the remark with silent contempt, but it is not my nature to see a colleague attacked without trying to defend him. The hon. member went on to speak of razzle-dazzles and guzzlings by which the Premier had bribed the people by paying for their drinks. I can only say that I was at what the hon. member calls a razzle-dazzle the other day, at which the Premier was present, and I can quite understand, from the enthusiasm displayed, why the hon. member should be so very sore about it. When the hon. member says that we are honest individually but that we are dishonest in our collective capacity, I hardly know what he means. An honest man is an honest man, whatever he may do, and the converse holds true; but no man ever attributes to another higher motives than those by which he

himself is actuated, and I ask the hon. member to take home that remark and reflect upon it. I understand the hon. member, Mr. Kidston, was at no other razzle-dazzle except the one at Yeppoon. Yeppoon has established for itself a record that will not easily be excelled. I understand that the Premier and the Secretary for Railways and another member of the Government accepted, at very considerable personal inconvenience, an invitation from the Progress Association of Yeppoon to visit that place. They were taken down in what appeared to them to be private equipages belonging to their entertainers. It so happened that the members of the Government had a private invitation to a sugar plantation in the district, and did not drink anything at the expense of the Progress Association. After receiving deputations, they were driven back in the same equipages. The hon. member for Rockhampton was there, and so, I understand, was the hon. member for North Rockhampton, who had something very strong to say on the proceedings of the Premier in this respect. Probably they are of opinion that what was done at Yeppoon was done throughout the colony; but the whole of Queensland is not like Yeppoon. Pittsworth is not like Yeppoon—not a bit; the hon. member for Cambooya will bear me out in that. After the Yeppoon affair a bill was sent in to the Premier for the whole of the entertainment, including the hire of the private equipages.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: After that, I think Yeppoon "takes the cake" for business. Whatever may be said about Yeppoon's hospitality, as business men—as downright hard-headed Scotchmen—I do not think they can be beaten in the colony.

Mr. KEOGH: They must be a mean lot.

Mr. STEWART: They are strong supporters of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If they are, all I can say is that I am very sorry for it. The hon. member for Flinders in an artful sort of way made reference to some hon. member who had, to his knowledge, conducted certain business with regard to the passage of the Chillagoe Railway Bill. If that business was of a legitimate character, why should the hon. member refer to it in that marked way? The only inference is that it was a disgraceful transaction deserving of censure, and I am surprised that the hon. member for Flinders should have made such a statement concerning an hon. member whom he and other hon. members like to call a colleague. The hon. member said he was prepared to substantiate what he had said before any committee of inquiry the Government might choose to appoint, but until he formulates a specific charge there is no necessity for any committee to be appointed. I am indeed surprised that he should have made that inuendo in reference to an hon. member sitting on the benches opposite.

Mr. DANIELS: That is an assumption.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am entitled to assume, when the hon. member for Flinders maintains silence and will not give the name, that it was one of the members sitting over there, because as far as I know it could not possibly apply to anybody over here. The circumstances would not fit—but there are three or four members on the other side to whom his words could apply. If that is mateship as understood by the hon. member for Flinders, it is a sort of mateship I do not want to participate in. What I have said has evidently gone home, and I will not detain the House longer.

Mr. SIM: Do you believe members on this side were guilty?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member mistakes me. When I said it

has "gone home" I was speaking of the conduct of the hon. member for Flinders. I again assume that the statement of that hon. member cannot be substantiated, and I shall continue to assume that there is no foundation for it until he is in a position to prove it.

Mr. DAWSON: Give him a chance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Let him formulate his charge, and then it will be time for this House to take it up. The House cannot take action on an inuendo. That inuendo is a reflection on every hon. member indirectly; and I say that no man is justified in giving speech to such an inuendo without going further and taking the responsibility of what he has said by making a direct charge. I intended to have said more, but as it is getting late I shall not detain the House longer.

Mr. SIM: I move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. BATTERSBY: I should like to know when this debate is going to end. It might have ended a fortnight ago for all that has been said. Hon. members found fault with the Premier for adjourning over last Wednesday, and yet they are prepared to keep us here listening to the rot that has been talked during the last three weeks. No amendment has been moved, and I think after one or two speeches from this side of the House, and several more from the other side, the debate might have been closed. Certain matters had to be referred to, such as the New Guinea question and the resignation of Professor Shelton, and I should be prepared to allow every latitude in a discussion upon them; but now I am prepared to sit here and finish the debate to-night, although I shall have to walk home some six or seven miles.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at twenty-two minutes past 10 o'clock.