

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 17 JULY 1900

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 17 JULY, 1900.

The House met shortly before 12 o'clock, at which hour a message was brought by the Usher of the Black Rod from His Excellency the Governor, requesting the attendance of Mr. Speaker and hon. members in the Council Chamber.

The SPEAKER, accompanied by hon. members, accordingly proceeded to the Legislative Council, and, having heard the Address of His Excellency, returned to their own Chamber.

The House resumed at half-past 3 o'clock.

RESIGNATION OF A MEMBER.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) reported that since the termination of the last session, a vacancy had arisen in the House by the resignation of Mr. Thomas Glassey of his seat as member for the electoral district of Bundaberg, and that he had issued his writ for the election of a member to fill the same.

GOVERNMENT SECURITIES—QUEENSLAND NATIONAL BANK.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following letters:—

1. From the Agent-General on the subject of the Government securities held in trust for the Government Savings Bank in London.
2. From the Auditor-General, transmitting his report on the balance-sheet of the Queensland National Bank, as laid before the shareholders in general meeting on 15th February, 1900.

Ordered to be printed.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

CAMBOOYA ELECTION.

The SPEAKER further announced that he had received from the Elections Judge, a certificate of the determination of the Elections Tribunal in the matter of Henry Daniels and Austin McLaughlin *versus* Donald Mackintosh, together with a copy of the evidence taken, a copy of the notice of appeal, and a copy of the judgment on appeal, which he read to the House.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) moved that the certificate of the Elections Judge, together with the accompanying documents, exclusive of the evidence, be entered on the Journals of the House, and that the evidence be printed.

Question put and passed.

The SPEAKER also announced that he had received a letter from the Chief Justice, dated 2nd April, transmitting the judgment of the Full Court, on appeal, in the case of Daniels and McLaughlin *versus* Donald Mackintosh, on questions of law, which he read to the House.

The PREMIER moved that the report of the Chief Justice be entered on the Journals of the House.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): I do not rise for the purpose of opposing the motion, or even for the purpose of criticising or reviewing in any way the verdict of the Elections Tribunal, or the verdict of the Full Court in this matter. I have not the slightest doubt that, on the evidence adduced, the verdict was an honest one; but certain allegations have been made to me—indeed, I may say that I am in possession of certain facts, which reveal such a state of matters in the Cambooya electorate previous to the last general election, that I am constrained to bring the matter before the House. I am quite sure that the facts I refer to are of such an extraordinary nature that, when members of the House come to hear them, they will insist in some way being found to have the whole matter exposed and thoroughly ventilated. I have taken advice of what I consider the best authorities in the House in the matter, and I have been advised that this is not the proper time to raise the question. It has been pointed out to me that to attempt to raise this question now, would be, seemingly, to review a judicial decision. I have no desire to do that, or to ask the House to do that, but I think certain things took place in that electorate, previous to the last election, which it is to the interest of every honest member of this House—and I hope that is every member—who has the slightest desire to see purity of elections obtain in Queensland—no matter on which side hesitates—to have placed before the House, and that some action be taken in the matter. I may just say that this is a matter which does not particularly concern me; it is not a matter which particularly concerns members on this side of the House; it is a matter which, it seems to me, ought to be out of the region of party altogether, and I hope the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government will give some facilities for discussing it. I am quite prepared to submit the facts which are in my possession to him privately, and if he is prepared to take any action in the matter, that is all I want. I think it is a matter in which the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government is as much interested as I am, and I hope that when the matter is brought forward—and I shall consult the hon. gentleman as to the best way of bringing it forward—he will not only give an opportunity to bring it before the House, but that he will also show that he, as well as some members on this side of the House, desires to secure something like purity of election in Queensland.

Question—That the report of the Chief Justice be entered on the Journals of the House—put and passed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of the following reports:—

- (1) Report on Treasury bills to the 31st of December, 1899.
- (2) Report on Treasury bills to the 30th of June, 1900.
- (3) Report on Government Savings Bank securities to the 31st of December, 1899.
- (4) Report on Government Savings Bank securities to the 30th of June, 1900.
- (5) Report on the Public Debt Reduction Fund to the 30th June, 1900.

Ordered to be printed.

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table of the House, were ordered to be printed:—

- (1) Return of all the schools in operation on the 1st January, 1900, with the attendance of pupils and the status and emoluments of the teachers employed.

- (2) Twenty-fourth Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1899.
- (3) Regulations made and established under the provisions of "The Mining Act of 1898."
- (4) Despatch, dated 17th November, 1899, transmitting revised regulations for the entry of engineer students in Her Majesty's Navy, and for students in naval construction.
- (5) Despatch, dated 20th January, 1900, transmitting Order in Council recognising load lines fixed and certificates of freeboard issued by the Government of India to vessels registered in that possession.
- (6) Despatch, dated 15th February, 1900, and enclosures, respecting German Administration in the Caroline Islands.
- (7) Despatch, dated 27th February, 1900, transmitting declaration between the United Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg respecting the reciprocal protection of trade marks.
- (8) Despatch, dated 26th March, 1900, transmitting Order in Council for giving effect to the extradition treaty between Great Britain and the Republic of San Marino.
- (9) Despatch, dated May, 1900, transmitting Army (Annual) Act.
- (10) Despatches, dated respectively 24th November, 1899; 4th January, 1900; 6th February, 1900; 4th May, 1900; conveying Her Majesty's Assent to Acts passed during second session of 1899.
- (11) Despatch, dated 12th March, 1900, from Sir G. T. M. O'Brien, High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, transmitting Queen's Regulation relating to Gilbert and Ellice Islands.
- (12) Proclamation warning British subjects against assisting South African Republic and Orange Free State during war between those Republics and Great Britain.
- (13) Convention and Declaration between Great Britain and Germany for the settlement of the Samoan and other questions.
- (14) Publications of Berlin Imperial Health Office dealing with bubonic plague.
- (15) Correspondence respecting the Venice International Sanitary Conference and Convention relating to bubonic plague.
- (16) Order in Council, applying provisions of "The British Probates Act, 1898," to New Zealand.
- (17) Additional Regulations, dated 10th April, 1900, under the Defence Acts, 1884 to 1896.
- (18) Annual Report on British New Guinea for the year 1898-9.
- (19) Report upon the Civil Service Superannuation Account for the year ended 31st December, 1899.
- (20) Report of Royal Commission on Accidents in Coal Mines.
- (21) Report of the Public Service Board for the year 1899.
- (22) Annual Report of the Benevolent Asylum, Dunwich, for the year 1899.
- (23) Blue Book for the year 1899.
- (24) Report of the Official Trustee in Insolvency, Rockhampton, for the year 1898.
- (25) Report of the Local Deputy Curator of Intestate Estates, Rockhampton, for the year 1899.
- (26) Report of the Curator of Intestate Estates, Brisbane, for the year 1899.

LEADERSHIP OF LABOUR OPPOSITION.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*) said: I have just a short statement to make to the House. Owing to the unfortunate and long-continued illness of my hon. friend, the senior member for Charters Towers—an illness which, I am sure, every hon. member of the House will regret—he has felt compelled to relinquish the position he held on this side of the House during the whole of this Parliament; and, in consequence, the members of this party have done me the honour of electing me as leader of the Labour Opposition in this House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, I quite feel the responsibilities of the position, and all I can say is that I will do my very best to show that I am fit to bear the responsibility. While still adhering to the principles I have always professed, both in this House and outside, and claiming for those who are supporting me all the rights and privileges of this House, I shall be only too pleased at any time to assist the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government in any matter which is likely to forward business in the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: On behalf of the party who are supporting me, I desire to say that we shall be at all times ready to support any measure which we believe will be for the benefit of the people, no matter by whom introduced or from which side it emanates. All I ask for myself is that I shall receive the same courtesy and consideration from the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government and those sitting behind him that has always been extended to gentlemen holding the position I occupy. I may say, in conclusion, that when this session ends, no matter what differences of opinion there are amongst us, I hope that we may be able to show the people outside that we are able to fight in a manly and straightforward manner, and that every man amongst us is anxious, according to his lights, to do the best he can for the people and for the colony of Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): While regretting the occasion for the appointment of the hon. member for Croydon to his present position, I must congratulate him on the very high honour which has been conferred upon him, and I can assure him that at all times I shall be most anxious and willing to work cordially with him.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

THE PREMIER: I recognise that the leader of a party can always assist the Government very much in expediting the business of the session, and, personally, I shall always give the hon. gentleman all the honour which his position warrants, and I am certain that the party behind me will not be wanting in respect to the hon. gentleman, and will assist me in all they possibly can to maintain the good feeling amongst members of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE OPENING SPEECH.

THE SPEAKER: I have to report that the House this day attended the [4 p.m.] Governor in the Council Chamber, where His Excellency delivered an Opening Speech to both Houses, of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy, which I shall now read to the House (*vide* page 1 of Legislative Council's proceedings).

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

* Mr. LEAHY (*Bullo*): Mr. Speaker,—I beg to propose that the following Address be presented to the Governor, in reply to the Speech

delivered by His Excellency at the opening of this the third session of the thirteenth Parliament of Queensland:—

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

“We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and Person of Our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present session.

“The various matters to which Your Excellency has referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, shall receive our most careful consideration, and it shall be our earnest endeavour to so deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and prosperity of the colony.”

On a motion of this kind, Sir, it is usual for the proposer to make a few observations. Before doing so, however, I wish to tender my congratulations and compliments to the hon. member for Croydon upon the position he has attained as leader of the Opposition on the other side of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: I think it is very pleasing to us all to hear the manner in which he expressed himself with regard to the conduct of business during the present session, and the manner in which the Premier reciprocated with him. I think that it must tend to the better conduct of the business of the present session.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: I will also remark that it is very pleasing indeed to see, after the very severe illness that he has gone through, the hon. member, Mr. Groom, able to attend to his parliamentary duties again.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: This session, Sir, is rendered more remarkable than the ordinary run of openings of Parliament for the conduct of business, inasmuch as that it is the first time that the new Ministry, headed by the Hon. Robert Philp, has had an opportunity of laying its policy before the country. Of course we shall be told that we have had the same Government for the last twenty-five years, but on that point the constitutional course is for a new Premier to lay before the country the policy which he and his colleagues propose to carry out, so that practically the Government is an entirely new Government, and the policy put forward is the policy of the Government, I presume.

Mr. STEWART: The old bogey cry.

Mr. LEAHY: I should have thought the hon. member for Rockhampton North had had enough of interruptions by this time. (Laughter.) At all events it is remarkable also, inasmuch as that this will be the last session in which this Parliament will preside absolutely over the destinies of this colony of Queensland. A great portion of its duties will be transferred to another Government. This Parliament will lose something of its dignity, but the people will lose nothing in dignity, nor in the manner in which their business will be conducted.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: The position of the Government is set forth fully—rather an unusual practice, I think—in the document which we have now before us—His Excellency the Governor's Speech. It must have been set forth, because it has been foreshadowed by the Premier and his colleagues in the different speeches they have made throughout the colony. I don't believe that this is what one of our late Premiers called an “Aunt Sally,” set up for hon. members on the other side to shy at. Of course, it gives the

opportunity to discuss the management of affairs during the recess, and it also sets out fairly and fully some of the principal items of the programme of the Government in the coming session. I think this cannot be over-valued. It is desirable, because frequently it has been commented on, by members on the other side of the House, that important measures have been brought in at the last moment, and there has been no time to give them the consideration which the importance of the matters demanded. The Government policy is contained in the Speech now before us, so that hon. members will have sufficient time to consider these matters before they come on in ordinary course for discussion. The discussion on the Address in Reply, as I have said, consists of the criticism of the administration of the Government since we parted last year—and perhaps the proposed action of the Government in the future. Now, before I proceed to offer any remarks on the policy of the Government for the coming session, I wish to make one or two observations on the administration during the recess. The most important event, as is laid down in His Excellency's Speech, has been the war which has been waged by the Dutch Republics against the British Empire. This matter was pretty well discussed, so far as the despatch of troops was concerned, during last session, but some troops have been sent since then. Knowing exactly the feeling of the House on both sides, the Government had no great hesitation in sending further troops to the assistance of the Empire, and I think very properly so, too.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: Still, had the House been sitting, or within a few days of sitting, the constitutional thing would have been to have brought the matter before Parliament, and I am sure that that would have been done, but under the circumstances the Government had not an opportunity to do so. I think they were perfectly justified in what they did. Not only had they the support of this House, but I feel sure that nine-tenths of the people of this colony were in fullest sympathy with them. I think even those who did not approve of the troops being sent to South Africa must admit that these men from Australia have conducted themselves admirably.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: They have rendered splendid service to the Empire, and they have shown the courage and the valour of Australia in no ordinary degree.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: Some of them, of course, have found their last resting places in South Africa, but the greater part will, I hope, return safe and sound; and the experience which they have received in practical military training, so to speak, will be of valuable service to this colony some day, if their services should be needed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: It has been said that the democracy of Queensland was opposed to the measure. I do not think it was. I think it has been borne out since that they were entirely at one in the matter. And not only was the democracy of Queensland in favour of it, but the democracy of every colony in Australasia was heartily in favour of it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Even New Zealand.

Mr. LEAHY: Yes; the colony of New Zealand which is strongly democratic, has entirely surpassed even the efforts of Queensland. She has gone so far as to offer to render assistance in the present crisis in China, but I think we should content ourselves at present with having sent our contingents to South Africa. No doubt we were justified in that, but we are a small colony and want every man we

have unless the interests of the Empire demand that we should send away more. I am not in love with war. I think it is to be regretted under every condition, but when the Empire calls her children to come to her assistance I am in favour of responding to the call of the mother country.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: If occasion arises—and there are signs that it may arise in the near future in the Eastern hemisphere—I say this country will support the Empire to its last pound and its last man. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. STEWART: More jingoism.

Mr. LEAHY: I may as well mention at this stage the unfortunate occurrence reported in to-day's papers, and of which I think particular notice should be taken. I refer to the very serious and lamentable state of affairs disclosed with regard to the murder of the foreign legations in Peking. I am certain that had this occurred previous to the preparation of the Speech the deepest sorrow would have been expressed on behalf of the Government for this terrible occurrence, and sympathy not only for those who have been murdered, but for their friends and relatives as well.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: Why do the Government bring these savages here?

Mr. LEAHY: I think this House will agree with me when I express the fervent hope that the European powers will take such steps as will render the recurrence of such a lamentable state of affairs an utter impossibility in the future.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Wipe them out.

Mr. LESINA: Hear, hear! Start here.

Mr. McDONALD: A mighty big contract.

Mr. LEAHY: I would like to make one other remark in connection with the war in South Africa. The speech goes on to say—

My advisers consider that every facility which the resources of the colony permit should be afforded to enable those among us who are willing and able to bear arms to acquire the necessary military knowledge.

I think that is very desirable; but I think also we have to be very cautious in connection with such a matter, that it does not develop into a military caste. It will need our strictest care and watching to prevent that. During the recess also the matter of federation has been consummated. It had a very narrow escape, and federalist and all as I am, and always have been, if the Bill had come back to the colonies and we had any say as to whether we could accept it or reject it, if it had been passed in the form suggested in the second compromise, I should have seriously considered whether I would have agreed to its acceptance. However, the measure will now come back to us in what, I think, may be regarded as a satisfactory condition, and I think too much credit cannot be given to the Executive of Queensland for the firm and determined stand which they took in demanding that the present form of amendment should be accepted.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: And our best thanks are due to the Chief Justice of this colony, because it was his able exposition of the clause in dispute which convinced Mr. Chamberlain that the alteration of it to its present form was absolutely necessary.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: While I am on the subject of federation, I may as well continue it. Federation, we are told by Ministers, through His Excellency, is very near accomplishment—that is to say, that as soon as Western Australia decides whether it will come into the federation, a Bill will be introduced providing for the elect on of representatives to the Federal Parliament.

Mr. McDONALD: Why wait for Western Australia?

Mr. LEAHY: I am of opinion that it is absolutely necessary to wait for Western Australia.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Can we not go on without Western Australia?

Mr. LEAHY: I am not prepared to undergo a cross-examination at this stage, but when the Bill comes before us I will be prepared to answer questions.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is all right.

Mr. LEAHY: I do not object at all to intelligent interjections; in fact, they are an assistance to me. I should like very much, in dealing with this question, to get a glimpse at this Federal Bill, because the bald assertion that it will be necessary to pass a Bill does not mean that it must be supported in every detail. First and foremost, the colony will have to be divided into electorates for the purpose of choosing representatives for the House of Representatives. It will probably be the proper thing to do to group a certain number of the electorates together, thereby enabling us to use the present rolls and prevent gerrymandering. With regard to the election of senators, it will be remembered that at the Conference of Premiers it was provided, and eventually embodied in the Constitution, that Queensland, and Queensland only, had the right of dividing itself into six divisions for senatorial purposes. That was considered a grand concession at the time. I do not consider it so much of a gain after all. I do not regard it as essential; and I think it is the duty of Queensland to fall into line with the other colonies, and have her senators elected by the whole people as one electorate.

Mr. STEWART: No.

Mr. LEAHY: It is entirely a matter of opinion. That is my opinion, and the hon. member for Rockhampton North, when the proper time comes, is at liberty to express his.

Mr. STEWART: He will, too.

Mr. LEAHY: There is no man in the House more capable of expressing his opinion.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He has had an opinion expressed for him in his electorate.

Mr. LEAHY: I can only say it is to me a matter of extreme regret that in any portion of the British dominions any man who has anything to say should be denied the right of saying it.

Mr. DAWSON: There are a lot of your colleagues who object to a man expressing his opinion.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Ditto.

Mr. LEAHY: There is another matter in connection with federation which I wish to refer to. In some of the other colonies it has been provided that any man who is a member of the Federal Parliament shall not be a member of the local Parliament.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Only one colony.

Mr. LEAHY: If only one has passed such a measure, others are at all events contemplating it. Now, Sir, there is a good deal [4.30 p.m.] to be said on both sides of this question; but certainly Queensland is placed in a very different position to the other colonies, inasmuch as she is further removed from the seat of the Federal Parliament than Victoria, New South Wales, or South Australia. Any person leaving his home to attend the Federal Parliament in Victoria, could get there in ten or twelve hours—very little longer than it takes to come here from Toowoomba, or that you, Sir, take to come from your home to this House. If a member from Queensland has to attend the Federal Parliament, who has a responsible position in business—and there are few who attain to that standard of excellence

necessary for a legislator in the Federal Parliament, who have not some business to attend to—such members will have to spend the whole of their time in Melbourne during the sittings of the Federal Parliament, and for these reasons, I think it will be extremely hard to get trained and intelligent men to represent Queensland in that Federal Parliament, unless the selection is made, to some extent, at all events, from members sitting in the local Houses of Parliament, or who have had experience in some one house of representatives.

Mr. KIDSTON: Nonsense.

Mr. LEAHY: The hon. member for Rockhampton says, "Nonsense." That is a very summary way of disposing of a matter that does not happen to suit your taste, but it does not alter the facts in the least. They remain exactly as they were. I say that that is a very strong difficulty indeed in the way of getting proper men to represent us in the Federal Parliament; and we shall require the very best men that Queensland can produce to represent us in that first Parliament under the Federal Constitution, when the foundation-stone, so to speak, of things which will last for years, will be laid down there and then the tariff will be framed.

Mr. GROOM: A very important question.

Mr. LEAHY: Yes, a very important question. I thank the hon. member for Toowoomba for emphasising it, and the public appointments will be made. The present temporary appointments will go on for some time, but the permanent appointments in the Customs and the Post and Telegraph offices will be made by the Federal Parliament, and I say that it is to the interest of Queensland to see that our present officers shall have a fair show under the new administration. I have as much confidence in my Australian fellow colonists as any man, but it is in human nature that we should all fight to get the most we can for our districts, and I think that when the new Federal Government is formed, federated colonies will try to get as much as they can for their respective colonies, consistent, of course, with the broad principles of justice. Therefore we must be prepared to meet those gentlemen by sending down men who have experience, men who have training, men who understand parliamentary proceedings under the Standing Orders; otherwise we shall be placed at considerable disadvantage. We must send representatives holding strong opinions on the question of the tariff. Now I believe in trade being as free as possible, but I say that the conditions of this colony do not admit of free-trade.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: We must look for many years to come in Queensland, and I think in Australia, to a large portion of our revenue being derived from the Customs. There are no other means by which we can get it.

Mr. McDONALD: What about a land tax?

Mr. LEAHY: The hon. member for Flinders asks, "What about a land tax?" Well, I will tell him. If you have freetrade—that is no revenue from Customs and excise—Queensland would lose about £850,000 per year—that would be the loss through the Customs.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: From revenue.

Mr. LEAHY: Yes; and it would have to be made up in some form. There would be a deficit amounting to £850,000. Does the hon. member for Flinders, who talks about a land tax, know the value of freehold land in Queensland? Every single acre is taxed under the local authorities, and, according to the Auditor-General and the Registrar-General, the total value amounts to £29,000,000. One penny in the £ on that would give £120,000, and 3d. in the £—a rate

of taxation that would never be heard of in these days—would only give £500,000. Sevenpence in the £, or about 3 per cent. of the value of the whole of the freehold property in the colony, would be required to make up this loss of £850,000 from revenue. But the conditions of the colony will not justify this. There would be a revolution.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: A revolution?

Mr. LEAHY: Yes, and therefore I say that we shall require to send our best men to the south, and every hon. member of this House should take this matter into serious consideration. I may be diverging to some extent, but this question is a very important one, and I think I may properly introduce it in connection with the Federal Parliament—on the question as to whether it is desirable that members should hold seats in both Parliaments. There is one objection to that, of course—the Federal Parliament will be conducted on party lines—on the responsible system. If seven or eight members on this side go to the Federal Parliament, that will be an opportunity for hon. members on the other side to oust this Government, and have another try at carrying on the business of the country. Then supposing they leave the Federal Parliament to come here to discharge their duties, on whichever side they sit in the Federal Parliament, that will be the opportunity of the other side to upset the political apple-cart of the Government. So that you will see that there is likely to be serious inconvenience whichever way you take it. I just mention these things; I don't know that it is necessary, but I have to say something, and I might as well say this. (Laughter.) I think, really, the most distressing thing in His Excellency's Speech is the reference made to the ravages of the drought in Western Queensland. In this connection, there is one point in the Speech which I do not agree with. I do not agree that the drought is anything temporary. There may be isolated cases where the rain has given relief for a week, or perhaps a month; but the losses will be so accelerated by the very severe wind and cold weather, following those rains, that they will be as heavy as if rain had not fallen. Of course, about Muttaburra and Hughenden, where they have had about three or four inches, considerable relief has been afforded; but in the extreme West—in Cunnamulla they had half an inch, and at St. George a little more—and in those districts from Wyandra to the boundary of South Australia, no relief whatever has been given by these rains. I had lately the pleasure of listening to the very able speech of the hon. member for Enoggera—from his point of view, and he put the matter very impartially. I was in the body of the hall. I wished to hear what he had to say, because I thought it would assist me very considerably in dealing with a question of this kind.

Mr. JACKSON: Were you not on the platform?

Mr. LEAHY: I was not.

Mr. FOGARTY: It is so reported in the *Courier*.

Mr. LEAHY: I have a little political principle, if the hon. member has not. (Laughter.) But I had a very excellent opportunity of listening to the hon. member from where I was, and to the picture that he gave of the condition of the Western country and of the hardships that the men there are undergoing.

Mr. REID: Don't you stretch it now.

Mr. LEAHY: The picture the hon. member gave of that Western country ought to make him sympathetic for the rest of his life with the people who have to live in that part of the colony. The hon. member told his hearers that no language that he was master of, or that the English could produce, would enable him to paint the horrors of the Western district at the present time, or

at all events of the district that he travelled over. He said he only saw a small patch of grass in the 900 miles he visited, and he feasted his eyes upon it. I will say this much for the hon. member for Enoggera, of whom we have had a good deal of experience in this House in the past, that we know him to be a man of strong opinions and convictions, and one who never hesitates to express his opinions, even though they may be against the views of his party. On the occasion to which I refer he did not say that everything was dead in those districts, but he said that in substance, because he said that the condition of things in those 900 miles over which he travelled was such that he did not see a single blade of grass, except in the one patch to which he referred; and he described everything as being practically dead, because all the matter upon which animal life could possibly exist had entirely and completely disappeared. It is with deep regret that I have to announce to this House that in the greater portion of the Western districts the drought still continues with unabated severity, and that nearly every man engaged in pastoral pursuits in that part of the colony is practically ruined.

Mr. REID: They can restock.

Mr. LEAHY: I am obliged to the hon. member for interjecting that remark, because it has been said that if the pastoralists did not get the relief they sought no financial institution would give them the necessary assistance to restock their runs. The hon. member for Enoggera said that that was so much moonshine, because, and there was some truth in what he said, with the large numbers of our flocks and herds that were exported it would be impossible for them to get sufficient stock to restock their runs in the near future. But the hon. member must know that if we had a good season there are different ways of increasing our herds quickly. Although we cannot do it by multiplying them like a child on a slate, still there are different methods of increasing them. Good breeders, I understand, do not allow their ewes to increase until they are about eighteen months old, but if there is sufficient inducement for them to breed quickly they can in a good season get what they call a "double lambing." If there is sufficient inducement, and capital is available, sheep will be supplied by those stations which have enough to spare instead of sending them to the meatworks and exporting them to England. But if capital is not available for those who require to purchase them, the sheep will go to the meatworks. That is the position the hon. member lost sight of, and I would point out that wethers grow just as well as ewes, so that breeding is only one phase of the sheep-producing industry. What are we to infer from all this? Undoubtedly fully one-half of the sheep in Queensland are gone at the present time. What is going to be the result of that upon the commercial community, or upon the community generally? That is what I want to get at. A controversy arose here last year as to the number of men employed in the pastoral industry in the West. I said, quoting from Coghlan, that there were a certain number—I forget the exact figures just now—but the leader of the Labour party at that time said there were 10,000 in the bush unions alone. Any person who is not an expert in these matters knows that it does not take as many shearers to shear 10,000,000 sheep as it does to shear 20,000,000 sheep, or as many carriers to bring their wool to the railway, or as many carriages on the railways to bring that wool to the market, or as many rouseabouts, or boundary riders. And the same principle applies to cattle stations. If, then, one-half of our sheep and cattle are gone, does it not follow that one-half of the persons employed in conducting those industries must be thrown

out of employment? I think that is so obvious that it is down to the level of a calculating monkey. This will not be felt until the rainy season sets in properly throughout the whole of Queensland. At the present time, as the hon. member for Barcoo knows, there are forty or fifty men employed on some stations cutting mulga, where they have mulga to cut. The whole of the mulga, however, has been almost destroyed by the late drought, and it is a question whether it will ever recover again, except in some places where branches have been left standing.

Mr. REID: They ought not to be allowed to do it.

Mr. LEAHY: The hon. member says they ought not to be allowed to do it. It is very nice for a person who has got no interest in this question to sit down here and make those remarks, but I think that an industry which supplies more than one-half the exports of this great colony—more than £5,000,000 out of £9,000,000—deserves more sympathy and consideration than we can infer it gets from the hon. member opposite, judging from his remarks and interjections.

Mr. McDONALD: They say themselves that it ought not to be done.

Mr. LEAHY: I am dealing just now not with the details of a Land Bill—when such a measure comes before the House for consideration I shall be prepared to deal with that question—but I am dealing particularly now with the leading features of His Excellency's Opening Address. The deduction we have got so far is that, according to the statement of the leader of the Labour party last year, at least 5,000 of those engaged in the pastoral industry in the Western districts of Queensland at the present time will be thrown out of employment as soon as rain sets in thoroughly, because they will be no longer required. In fact, a relative proportion of the men hitherto employed will not be required, because retrenchment will set in to the fullest extent that it can be enforced.

Mr. LESINA: There are more immigrants coming.

Mr. LEAHY: I know what the hon. member is driving at. But I ask, what are we going to do with those 5,000 men? Are we going to allow them to drift into New South Wales or the other colonies to find employment? The proper thing to do, of course, will be to find employment for them in Queensland. It is from our population that we derive our revenue principally—that is through their consuming powers—and we cannot afford to let these people go to the southern colonies if we can find them employment in Queensland. I had very strong hopes from the different speeches made by the Premier throughout the length and breadth of the colony that the vigorous public works policy which he would get Parliament to put in motion would give employment to those people, but we are not always the controllers of our own destinies, and in this particular instance the Treasurer found that the English money-lender was not quite so ready to fork out his shekels as the hon. gentleman contemplated. It is beyond all question that we cannot go on with the vigorous public works policy conducted by the Government in the near future that we contemplated we would be able to do last year, whatever is the reason of it.

A MEMBER of the Opposition: Federation.

Mr. LEAHY: It may be federation, or it may be, if you like, the damaging statements which are made by some of our friends opposite throughout the country—and hon. members opposite no doubt believe what they say—that the capitalist does not deserve any sympathy whatever, and that, if he goes and if the banks

go, the country will be better off than if they remain. If capitalists think that is the treatment that is to be meted out to them, they may think it is better to invest their capital in another country. That may be a factor to a small extent, or it may be a factor to a large extent; but I am not at present concerned as to what caused this factor, but with its results. It is impossible for us to go to the English money market to find employment for these men, so what can we do? I think I agree with no portion of the Speech more than with that which tells us that we shall have to fall back upon private enterprise.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: If men, whether they are Englishmen, or whether they are Americans, or whether they are Australians, come here to develop our natural resources, and to give employment to our people, and help in building up our country, and making this into a great nation, provided they come on equitable lines, we should welcome them with all our heart.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: So that I cannot be accused of shirking the issue, I say at once that I am referring to the proposal in His Excellency's Speech to enable persons to make railways to our mining districts. I am not in favour of a land grant policy, by which we give away our best lands. But there is no parallel between the railway policies of the past on the land grant principle and railways based on the principle which this House established, and which the country ratified, as illustrated by the Chillagoe railway line. We give them a chain or two on which to lay their rails. We do not give them the minerals, and we do not give them the mines, because the best portion of the mines were freehold long before the railways were thought of, although it has been circulated through the country that we give them the mines. In no case that I know of can they build a railway where they can get the mines. I shall be very pleased to give the Government any assistance I can in this direction on reasonable lines—lines such as those that were laid down in connection with the Chillagoe railway. I shall assist them in building lines on that principle to mining districts where they cannot see their way to build the lines themselves. Generally such lines pass through very poor country. The wealth of those districts is generally not on the surface of the ground, but underneath it, and where the surface soil is very rich very little mineral wealth is found beneath the surface. Any person who has been over the line to Chillagoe, or over the proposed line from Normanton to Cloncurry, must know that that is all very poor country, and that no man, if he got 100 square miles of it for nothing, could make a living as a grazier or as an agriculturist.

Mr. KIDSTON: I believe there is some beautiful country between Gladstone and Glassford.

Mr. LEAHY: There is some beautiful soil about Atherton, but the Chillagoe line does not go there.

Mr. KIDSTON: No, I mean on the Boyne River. I appeal to the Secretary for Railways if there is not one of the most beautiful stretches of country in Queensland there.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LEAHY: There may be a bit of good country. I heard the hon. member for Enoggera also the other night alluding to this question. I should not be able to adopt this style in discussing this question if I had not heard the hon. member for Enoggera, and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Higgs, dis-

cussing these proposals in reply to the speeches which the Premier has made throughout the country. I think I may assume that they gave utterance to the policy of their party. I heard the hon. member for Enoggera say the other night, in speaking about the Chillagoe railway, that he was told by experts—old miners, who had been resident in the district for years—he did not say that the Chillagoe was a farce, but he said that the indications were surface, and there was nothing to justify the enormous expenditure of the Chillagoe Company. He went so far as to say it was a bogus syndicate, and yet he contended that the Government should have built the line.

Mr. REID: I did not say so.

Mr. LEAHY: The hon. gentleman said so.

Mr. REID: I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. LEAHY: Did the hon. member not say that practical miners, who had been up there for years, told him that there was very little there except surface indications?

Mr. REID: I said that the indications were surface indications.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Is that not the same thing?

Mr. REID: I never said that the Government should build the line.

Mr. LEAHY: No.

Mr. REID: But you said I did.

Mr. LEAHY: The hon. member asserts, as a general principle, that the Government should build all lines, and it has been stated by other members of the party throughout the country that the Government should not have allowed a syndicate to build the line. So far as influence goes, I think that at the present time the hon. member is the party. He is the power behind the party. He says the line is a farce, but I do not think it is a farce. The contention against land grant railways was that they were land grant railways, which was a very strong contention indeed. But we are not called upon to take that position at the present time, and the argument now is that it is a syndicate railway, and anything that is a syndicate railway must be bad. Now, what is a syndicate? A syndicate, as I understand it, is a union—

The Hon. D. H. DAIRYMPLE: A co-operation.

Mr. LEAHY: A co-operation, as the hon. gentleman says.

A MEMBER of the Opposition: A co-operation of boodlers.

Mr. LEAHY: Is there any man in Queensland who does not know that many of the mines on Charters Towers are owned by syndicates?

Mr. GIVENS: You will hear plenty about the Chillagoe syndicate directly.

Mr. LEAHY: I hope the hon. member will say in this House what he has said up North, and I think he will get his answer, and I hope he will also bring that friend of his who gave him such confidential information.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: Don't put a red rag in front of the bull.

Mr. LEAHY: At all events, I gathered from those hon. members' speeches that they were very seriously opposed to this portion of the policy of the Government which was explained by the Premier outside, and which is confirmed in the Address which we have before us for consideration at the present time. I think that any Opposition would be justified on a great policy of this kind, if they thought it was opposed to the opinions of the electors throughout the country, in opposing it; but what is the position? Is that so?

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, most decidedly.

Mr. LEAHY: It is three years since this House passed a Bill authorising the Chillagoe railway line, to be built on the exact principles on which I understand from the Premier it is proposed to deal with any companies that may apply for permission to build railways just now. We have been before the electors of the colony since

then, and the action of the Government has been ratified by an overwhelming majority. The opinion of the electors was given with no uncertain sound in the return of the party to power that had brought that measure forward and laid down the precedent as to the way in which these companies should be dealt with. We have had a general election since then, and the people by a very large majority approved of the policy of the Government which passed that measure.

Mr. MAXWELL: They got defeated. We have a new Government now.

Mr. REID: You burst that Government up.

Mr. LEAHY: The Government may have been burst up, but the verdict of the people was not burst up, and it remains still. I confess it perplexes me sometimes to follow the speeches of hon. gentlemen opposite, especially outside this House. They talk of "the heritage of the people," and tell us that we must not part with the "heritage of the people." The people must have it for ever, but unless someone comes to assist them in developing it they might starve on their heritage while they are enjoying it. It seems to me that we cannot explain clearly the issue with regard to the heritage of the people, without marking distinctly the dividing lines that exist between our policy and that of some of the gentlemen who sit on the other side. So far as I can gather from the hon. member for Enoggera, who appears to be the chief exponent of their policy, they believe that the proper thing to do with a working man is to keep him so all his life, so long as you give him fair and reasonable wages, and when he is so old as not to be able to work any longer, you pension him off like an old draught horse, on half-allowance.

Mr. BROWNE: Where do you get that view?

Mr. LEAHY: It is all right so long as you give him an old age pension when he gets worn out. We take an opposite view. I take this view at all events: that as we have great resources in this country I would like to see those resources open to every man in the country, rich or poor. We see thousands of instances in Queensland of men who are not worth 2d. today, worth £10,000 or £20,000 in a year's or two years' time by taking advantage of the liberal laws of the country with regard to mining and other matters, and we will have more illustrations of men holding extreme doctrines on one side who, as soon as they get a certain amount of money, hold the extreme doctrines of the other side.

Mr. FISHER: Is that your experience?

Mr. LEAHY: I believe in men being given these opportunities, and the policy of the Government leads up to that. I believe that every man in the country should have an opportunity of advancing his condition in life. It is not a man's destiny to remain a working-man all his life. I think a man should endeavour to get out of that stage, and become an employer of labour. He should endeavour to lay something by for his old age, that he should then enjoy his own loaf under his own fig-tree instead of enjoying a pension under an old age scheme. That is a very desirable thing to bring about if we can do it, and I consider that the system advocated by the party on this side will have that effect. I think the new generations arising should have opportunities of improving their position in life, and a system which gives to people, however humble they may

be, an opportunity of arriving at that state of things is a good system, and one which should be advocated by all.

Mr. GIVENS: A system which makes a few rich and the many suffer.

Mr. LEAHY: I do not think the hon. member will ever put up with being amongst the many if he has the opportunity to avoid it. I want to say one word more on this particular question. If we adopt the policy brought in in the Speech before us, and we give employment during the present depression, by developing our goldfields, and our copper-fields, and we can there find employment for 10,000 or 13,000 men, as on Charters Towers, and as a director of Chillagoe told me there would be on Chillagoe inside of seven or eight years, it must react on the industries of the country, and it must increase our credit, and then, if we want to borrow money on the English market to lend it out to farmers or spend it in developing the country by the extension of our trunk lines, we can do so. I say there is no course so admirable at the present time as that proposed to develop our country by means of private enterprise, and after a time, when we have thus enriched the country and have better security to offer, we can go upon the London market and borrow money for other schemes of development. I am not sorry that about £5,000,000 was not tendered for the £1,400,000 we put on the London market. I believe that it may have been a very good thing. We are being continually told that we are the heaviest taxed community in the world per head of population, and I believe we will be taxed to the extent of about £75 per head after this loan is floated. We are asked why the Government should do this and that and the other thing, and why they did not run the country differently. Why should the Government borrow money when we are the most heavily taxed community in the world? I think it is a good thing that the Government should not have sufficient funds to place them in a position to be continually hampered by the different industries wanting assistance, because when that is the condition of things and a general election or by-election comes on the Government cannot be dealt with on the merits of their policy, nor will the voters vote upon their merits or according to their judgment, but will use the position they occupy to extort unfair concessions from the Government. The Government may thus be reduced to the position of socialistic evictors, a position which no Government should take up.

A MEMBER of the Opposition: No, but Royal Commissions would do as well.

Mr. LEAHY: That seems a kind of joke, but I do not think the Government are altogether to blame with regard to Royal Commissions, because if I recollect rightly this House authorised the Government last year to appoint a Royal Commission, which they have not yet appointed. So that if they were extremely anxious to appoint Royal Commissions they have one up their sleeve yet which they have the sanction of this House to appoint.

Mr. McDONALD: They have appointed four that they were not authorised to appoint.

Mr. LEAHY: Reference is made in two places to land legislation, and in one place we are told it is contemplated bringing in a Bill to deal with a particular subject. I presume that will be the Bill which the hon. member for Gregory North is in charge, or half in charge of, dealing with Western lands. I think it time they were dealt with, and that Bill should be brought forward as one of the first measures of the session. I think that Bill is not quite comprehensive enough. There are, I admit, good provisions in it, but certainly the land lying on

the south-western border, and west of Grey Range, is far inferior to and has a far smaller rainfall than some of the lands contained within the schedules which were brought before the House in that Bill. The other scheme is rather indistinctly dealt with, and I only hope that the information which the Government desire upon the subject will be available for perusal. I confess it is a difficult scheme. There is a demand from pastoralists for an extension of their leases, and another section of the community claim that the land will be required for closer settlement. Before we can arrive at a conclusion upon the matter, we must define what "closer settlement" is. At the present time what we are getting as closer settlement is not closer settlement at all, but dummied on a huge and unparalleled scale.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: A man comes up here from Victoria, and represents four or five of his friends, and takes up five or six 20,000-acre selections under different names, and you put a new squatter in, and put an old squatter out, and the new squatter gets the old squatter's improvements at one-third of their value.

A MEMBER of the Opposition: The squatters themselves are the biggest sinners.

Mr. LEAHY: It does not matter who are the biggest sinners. Those are the facts, and the Government should deal with them. It is one of the blots on their administration that they have allowed this system to run on so long, when there is ample provision in the Land Act for dealing with it. I trust, however, that they will take immediate steps. If they do, then this question will be settled to a very large extent indeed, because if the resumptions are confined to *bona fide* settlement, and not allowed to be dummied wholesale, they will meet the requirements of the *bona fide* settler for many years to come. But it is not close settlement in any shape or form that is going on at the present time. We are told that twenty-one years are too long to give in certain cases. I am not arguing the question; the matter is in embryo at the present time, and if it assumes distinct shape in the mind of the Government, any suggestions that they may get may be of value. I say that twenty-one years' leases are not too long in certain portions of this country, considering its climatic conditions and the sparse population, and considering the number of people that are likely to require it. In New South Wales, with relatively six times the population of Queensland, and with about one-half the area—that is to say, with six times as dense a population as Queensland, what do we find with regard to the legislation in the last three or four years? We find that the country to the west of the Darling has been leased for twenty-eight years, and the results have been beneficial. These are positive facts, and I challenge any hon. member on the other side of the House to say that they are not.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Devastated by rabbits.

Mr. LEAHY: So is portion of the Western country here devastated by rabbits.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Not to the same extent.

Mr. LEAHY: At all events, I think that this question really will require the very serious consideration of the Government; and I hope that they will be able to construct some scheme which will give satisfaction to the pastoralists, which will enable them, to some extent, so far as security is concerned, to restock their holdings and give satisfaction to their creditors in the very impecunious position they are placed in owing to the late droughts: and, at the same

time, will do nothing which is unfair or that will prevent a full number of holdings being available as fast as closer settlement demands it.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is a hard job.

Mr. LEAHY: It is not a hard job. The unfortunate thing in dealing with the land laws from the beginning has been this: I say, with all respect to the Land Board, a body of men for whose honour and integrity I have the highest respect, that we never had men dealing with our lands who understood the value of the very best land and the very worst.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: That is the position. That is where they fail altogether. Here we have hundreds and thousands of square miles of our worst land which no one is taking up—a howling desert abandoned to the dingoes; and we have our best lands being snapped up, so to speak, ten to twelve times over. That shows that there has not been a desire to equalise between the best and the worst land. That is the principle laid down in dealing with settlement—that you must equalise these matters as much as possible. I have no hesitation in saying that if we can settle this question to the satisfaction of the parties concerned, we shall get a fair revenue from our public lands that we are not getting at the present time. There is no question about this, because if you have good laws and numbers of people on the land the rent is a mere cipher. It is all these conditions that require to be taken into consideration—the securities and other things; and I say if we can evolve a scheme that will give satisfaction to the residents of the colony, whether large settlers or small settlers, it will be the means of increasing our revenue, and the sooner we do that the better.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: Even hon. members on the other side of the House have expressed their sympathy with the pastoralists in the condition in which they are placed. I have heard them also express their anxiety to develop the resources of the country. But I find it hard, exceedingly hard, to believe in the *bona fides* of men who have no scheme to propose themselves, or will propose no scheme themselves, and who object to every possible scheme that is proposed to give effect to this or any other purpose.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: You often say the same thing.

Mr. LEAHY: There are one or two things in this country which one cannot but remark. It is this: either those gentlemen are deficient in observation and in the capacity of generalization or of drawing deductions from principles—which are the highest qualities that a legislator can possess—or there is some other power which prevents them giving free and unfettered expression to their judgment. (Ministerial applause and Opposition laughter.) Why do hon. members laugh? Hon. members on this side of the House or members on that ought not to make any sweeping accusations, and I do not wish to say disagreeable things. We come here to fight, and if we do it in a manly, decent, and intelligent manner there is no harm in it. If I have anything to say I like to do it as mildly as I can. But, Sir, in making the remark that I made just now, I had in mind that a gentleman, who was for many years president of the Labour Executive, told us that the hon. members on his side cannot give play to their unfettered judgment. The hon. gentleman not only said so, but he constituted the electors of his constituency judge and jury, and challenged those gentlemen to come into court and have the matter decided.

Mr. MAXWELL: With Government assistance.

Mr. LEAHY: They met within the electorate of Bundaberg, and it was decided, by an over-

whelming majority, that on great questions of public policy certain members cannot express their free and unfettered judgment. If that is so, the sooner we know it the better. There is much in the speech that I should like to refer to, but I have already spoken much longer than I anticipated. Hon. members opposite are responsible for that to a large extent, but if they are satisfied I am perfectly so. Now, we are told we are to have a Bill dealing with parliamentary elections. That, I presume, will abolish plural voting, and extend manhood suffrage. I am pleased to see that Bill being brought forward, notwithstanding that the hon. member for Rockhampton North challenged me last year for not being in favour of the measure. I have been accused, too, by other members on the opposite side with not being in favour of it, but I defy any man to point to an occasion during my eight years' service in Parliament when I have not solidly supported such a measure, and I intend to vote for it again. I hail with great satisfaction the introduction of such a measure. The principle has been tried in various portions of Australia; the people have been trusted, they have risen to the occasion, and I do not see that there is anything to be feared from such a Bill being passed. I should like much to say something about the Harbour Boards Bill, but the Hon. Mr. Forrest will, no doubt, handle that subject in a very capable manner later on. I will only now say to the Government that if they desire to protect the trade of Queensland, if they desire to see this port compete on equal terms with the other ports of Australia, they will have to so improve the port as to enable the largest ocean-going steamers to come up to the wharves. Brisbane is the port for two-thirds of the population of Queensland, and those two-thirds will insist on this harbour being put into proper condition. At the proper time I shall have a great deal more to say on this important subject. There is a Bill mentioned in the speech which we recognise as an old friend, one of the stock Bills of every Government. I refer to the measure dealing with aborigines. I think the sooner the Government abolish the present Act the better for the aborigines. These poor creatures, who have been bred and reared in the dry climate of the West, are not capable of resisting a severer climate, and they develop chest complaints and die off very rapidly. In my opinion they should be left where they are born and bred. They cannot accommodate themselves to the new conditions under which they are now asked to live, and if the present policy is pursued they will follow the course of all other aboriginal races and gradually become extinct. As far as I can judge the best and wisest thing is to alleviate their sufferings as well as possible by supplying them plentifully with food and blankets. Now much has been said in the country between the two different parties as to why a greater amount of business has not been put through the House within the last few sessions. The Government say that the Labour party block business; they talk, talk, talk until nothing is done. The Labour party in reply say that when private business is introduced the other side do not show a good example, but stonewall the business without cause. I regret exceedingly that that accusation is true to some extent.

Mr. MAXWELL: Don't look at the ex-Minister for Lands.

Mr. LEAHY: I say that that is not a proper position to take up in any country possessing representative government, although I admit that the other side are the greatest sinners. It is, however, this side of the House that carries the responsibility, and, therefore, a better example should be set. If it happens that a

majority of members are in favour of a measure being passed, that majority has a right to pass it, and no person is justified in stonewalling. If business is brought forward which members on this side are opposed to, then they should vote against it; and if measures introduced by the Government are stonewalled we will have a right to say, "You have no right to take the business out of our hands when we are a majority of the House, and we will teach you that the business of the country must be carried on whether you like it or not." The majority must rule, and I sincerely hope that we are going to do more business this session than we did last. I hope that, during the session, business will be carried on with fair discussion and with a fair regard to the interests of the country.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: I was exceedingly glad to hear the leader of the Labour party state that that was his view. I certainly reciprocate the views of the hon. gentleman, and I believe that every member who wishes to see work done will reciprocate his views. Of course we cannot agree with everything. If we did we should do very bad business. Environment and surroundings in politics have a very powerful effect upon our actions, but when we meet here and have thrashed things out, and said what we have to say on both sides, it is our duty to come to a division and give a sound judgment, free from prejudice. If we do that we shall be able to say to the people of the country at the end of the session, in the words of His Excellency, that our "deliberations have conduced to the moral and material advancement of the people of this great colony."

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CAMPBELL (*Moreton*): I rise to second the motion proposed by my hon. friend, the member for Bulloo. I take it that it is the wish of the House that my speech should be brief, so as to enable members to get home by 6 o'clock. The hon. member who has preceded me has taken up a little more time than I understood he would take, and more, I believe, than he himself intended, and I will necessarily require to concentrate my remarks more than I had otherwise intended. The opening paragraph of the Speech deals generally with the question of the trouble in South Africa. This recalls to my mind a memorable morning during last session, the 19th of October, at 4:30 a.m., when we came to a decision, after a lengthy debate, that it was a wise thing to consent to a contingent being sent to South Africa. It is now a matter of history that hon. members opposite were not in sympathy with that idea, and they were largely responsible for the time which was wasted on that occasion. I hope now that they recognise fully and fairly that the people of the colony were at the back of the Government in the proposals which were made at that time. I take it that the men whom we sent away have acquitted themselves well. They have displayed first-class skill and indomitable pluck. There

[5:30 p.m.] is no question about that. Some hon. members tried to decry the pluck of these men, and said that they were practically going for a holiday; that there was nothing else in it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That's what the Major said.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Hon. members on the other side said that. I take it that the action of the Dickson Government has been magnificently endorsed by the fact that it was necessary to send three more contingents to South Africa—that altogether four had to go; and I am perfectly convinced that if more were required they would be forthcoming. I, in common with my hon. friend, deplore the fact that it is necessary to go to war

at all; but in this case, beyond all doubt, the necessity was there. The penalty will be a heavy one, but I take it that after all we must feel our blood pulsating through our veins when we see this indomitable pluck demonstrated so frequently and so splendidly by our friends in the Transvaal. They have demonstrated that British pluck is as good to-day as it was at any time in the history of the race. And the lesson to the world will be of immense advantage to this colony. The world has learned that the British Empire is solid to the core in all matters that affect its interests. The advantages that will accrue are too numerous to particularise, but no doubt we will feel the benefit of these advantages for many years. In this connection, I hope the House, when the measure is laid before hon. members, will deal in a generous mood with the proposal to assist the formation of rifle clubs and to support them throughout the colony. This war has demonstrated clearly the importance of the rifle in modern warfare, and I think that in the past the Government has been altogether too parsimonious and too shortsighted with regard to rifle clubs. For the future, I hope that will be remedied. I am quite sure I echo the sentiments of all hon. members when I say that I deplore most sincerely the appalling disaster which has befallen the foreign legations at Peking. Of course, it will mean an enormous amount of bloodshed, but retribution must be exacted to the fullest, and matters put on a footing to render such atrocities impossible in the future. It must be recognised, as it always has been in civilised countries, that ambassadors should be safe under all conditions; that when war breaks out they will be conducted safely to the frontier. Hon. members agree generally that our friends the pastoralists are entitled to sympathy with regard to the present disastrous drought. There is no question about that, because I have heard from hon. members on the other side of the House that the condition of some of the Western country is unspeakably bad. The losses sustained by individuals are most serious, and no doubt will, for the future, make their conditions of comfort more straightened than they have been. But, more than that, we are concerned with it as a national calamity. Through this drought there will not be the same export trade, and there will not be the same quantity of cattle at the freezing works. Still, I am not prepared to take the same pessimistic view of the matter as my hon. friend, the hon. member for Bulloo, for I believe it is a disaster that we will get the better of, with fairly good rain. Otherwise the colony is progressing favourably. The Chillagoe mines will help very materially to make amends for troubles of this nature. I am satisfied that they will make a great deal of difference to the prosperity of the colony. Time will prove that the exports from these mines will be a very large item indeed, and the consumption of coke from the Southern portion of the colony will be of great benefit to Brisbane. The question of tenure seems to be one that will have to be taken into consideration, and I am quite satisfied that the House will consider this matter fairly in the interests of all parties concerned, because there are various interests to be considered. I have no desire to go into details; that had better be left till the Bill comes before the House. I would like to say a few words with regard to the price obtained for the last loan in London. The figures should make us pause, for they show that the finances of the colony are not being considered by capitalists across the sea. But I take it that the reason for this is the trouble existing throughout Africa and the eastern portion of the world. I don't believe there was anything else affecting

the matter. One hon. member said federation had something to do with it, but although I am an anti-federalist I don't believe federation has had anything to do with it at all. When all these troubles throughout the world are over, I am sure that our credit will rebound to its old state, and that we will be able to get money at a reasonable price. In the meantime, it is evident that we are not to borrow money except at a huge price—too hot a price altogether to justify borrowing.

Mr. TURLEY: That's a nasty jar for the jingoes.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I say that the colony is not to blame, but the troubles throughout the world are affecting the prices. For instance, consols were standing at 113, now they are 99, so that a first-class security of that kind is even affected by these troubles all over the world. That accounts, to my mind, for everything in connection with the price obtained for our last loan. I think, with my hon. friend, that this, of course, will mean some trouble in the colony. We shall have to go slower than we are going, or intended to go, and it will be wise to entertain any proposals, based on fair lines, for the construction of private railways. I believe, and have always believed, that there are abundant opportunities for private capital in this way. I believe that all trunk lines should be built by the Government and controlled by the State; but I ask how the £25,000,000 worth of railways, spoken of by the Minister for Railways last session, are going to be built by the State? I do not believe they will be built in twenty-five years. And, then, it is not only railways that are required. There are piles of railways that could be built by private capital. The Government are not able to build all these railways.

Mr. KIDSTON: Why?

Mr. CAMPBELL: Because they have not sufficient money. How long are we going to wait until they get the money?

Mr. KIDSTON: It depends upon what they are going to pay for it.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The price is a great deal too low at the present time. I saw the other day that the hon. member was trying to capture the seat for Bundaberg.

Mr. BROWNE: But your syndicate had more money than we had.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The syndicate on the other side dropped in, and they will drop in more if they do not take care what they are about. I notice that the Government intend to construct some light lines of railway to open up agricultural land, and I think that is a most desirable thing to do. They are also prepared to do what they can in the way of advancing the necessary money to local authorities to enable them to build lines of that character. I am very pleased to observe that, and I hope they will be able to do something tangible in that direction. I should like to point out a difficulty that is experienced by local authorities in this matter—I experienced it myself the other day—and that is, that geographically the divisions are cut in such a way that sometimes the interests of one, as far as a railway or tramway is concerned, clash with those of another, and when a poll of the ratepayers is invited for the purpose of saying whether money shall be borrowed from the Government for building a railway the proposal is frequently defeated, or has a chance of being defeated, owing to this clashing of interests. I would suggest to the Government that this matter be taken into consideration, because I believe that in many cases the local authorities would be justified in building railways if they could get authority to borrow the money. I do not know what would be the best way of dealing

with the difficulty; but it appears to me that it might be met by the Government proclaiming a benefited area, and providing that the poll should be taken in that area only. If that were done, I have no doubt that the other portions of the division would be content. With reference to the Bills that are shortly noticed at the conclusion of the Opening Speech, the first is a Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to parliamentary elections. From the opinions expressed by the Premier during his recent tour, I understand that that measure will deal with adult suffrage. I may tell hon. members—and I think they gained the information last session—that I am thoroughly in accord with that.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. CAMPBELL: A lot of other Bills are mentioned, but of course we have no possible chance of knowing in what way they will be drawn. With regard to the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to fire brigades, that is a very necessary measure. I suppose it is intended to deal in some way with the volunteer fire brigades which exist in different towns in the colony. I know that in Brisbane such brigades are not recognised by the central brigade, and I hope that in the measure which is to be introduced, some provision will be inserted dealing with that difficulty. I am very pleased to see that the Government propose to amend the laws relating to insolvency. The law on that subject has been a crying evil for the last ten years. For ten years the Chamber of Commerce in Brisbane have brought suggested amendments under the notice of the Government, and it is only to-day that life has been infused into the matter, though the Government have been well posted as to the lines on which amendments should be made. As there are some necessary formal motions to move this evening I shall curtail my remarks, so that hon. members may get away by 6 o'clock.

Mr. McDONALD: There is no hurry.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I wish to set hon. members opposite an example of brevity by making my remarks as brief as possible. Hon. members opposite have, in my opinion, set a very different example. And that leads me to what I wish to say in conclusion. I venture to express a hope, though it may be a slender one, that the present session will be characterised by a just observance of the rights of each member in the House. During last session members on this side had to be absolutely dumb on many occasions in order to enable the business of the House to be carried on. We were not doing our duty to the country, I think, in allowing hon. members opposite to pose as martyrs to their bleeding country. My opinion is that we have consented to this farce going on long enough, and that it is time we took a stand. Hon. members opposite know that I am a friend of any measure that is an advantage to the country; I have given evidence of that already, and hon. members on this side are just as earnest, and just as sincere in their desire to help the country along as the hon. members opposite possibly can be, but we get no credit from them for our good intentions. Everybody on this side is, in their view, rotten in some respect or another. If you take up *Hansard* you will see that three parts of it is occupied by speeches of hon. members opposite, notwithstanding that they are in the minority. I take it that they are not doing a fair thing to us in taking up so much of the time of the House, and I believe the country will see that they are not their best friends. I only ask hon. members opposite to show us fair consideration in this matter.

Mr. DAWSON: We did not talk on the last Address in Reply.

Mr. CAMPBELL: If hon. members did not talk then they talked during the session. What I wish to say is that if in the conduct of business we have discussion from both sides of the House better legislation will result, and that if members on this side are tied down by their anxiety to get business through legislation suffers to some extent. Hon. members opposite have not all the brain power in the House, and our legislation will be all the better for discussion from this side, but very frequently the tiresome speeches of hon. members opposite prevent members on this side from speaking. I congratulate the hon. member for Croydon on his election to the responsible position of leader of his party, though I pity him to some extent, because I believe he has a rather disorderly team to pull with.

Mr. BOWMAN: He has got a live team anyway.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I hope, at any rate, that he will maintain discipline, and insist upon discipline in the ranks. I thank the House for listening to me, and I hope the session will be characterised by really good business, and not too much talk.

Mr. BROWNE: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): I move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until to-morrow at 3 o'clock p.m. There was a matter that I purposed referring to, but for two reasons I refrain for the present. It is rather too late an hour to-night to refer to it—it is a personal matter—and I see the hon. member for Cairns is not in his place.

Mr. DAWSON: He can be found.

The PREMIER: So far as I am concerned, I have no desire to postpone reference to the matter.

Mr. DAWSON: You ought to do it by written notice of motion.

The PREMIER: Perhaps, as it is nearly 6 o'clock, and as I do not want to throw an apple of discord into the Assembly on the motion for the adjournment of the House, it is as well to let it stand over till to-morrow. It is only a personal matter, and it does not affect the House very much; still, it is a matter I wish to have cleared up, and I shall have an opportunity to-morrow to deal with it when replying to the leader of the Labour Opposition on the Address in Reply.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move that this House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed; and the House adjourned at five minutes to 6 o'clock.