

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY 1901

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY, 1901.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. William Drayton Armstrong, member for the electoral district of Lockyer, took the oath of allegiance.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

ELECTIONS JUDGE FOR 1901.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter from His Honour the Chief Justice, intimating that Mr. Justice Cooper would be the judge to preside at the sittings of the Elections Tribunal for 1901.

PETITIONS.

LICENSING ACT—SUNDAY TRADING.

Mr. REID (*Enoggera*) presented a petition from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, protesting against Sunday trading by licensed victuallers.

Petition read and received.

Petitions of similar purport and prayer were presented and received, as follow:—

By Mr. CALLAN (*Fitzroy*), from the Independent Order of Good Templars, Mount Morgan;

By Hon. E. B. FORREST (*Brisbane North*), from the Young Women's Christian Association;

By Mr. KATES (*Cunningham*), from the I.O.G.T., Yangan;

By Mr. ANNEAR (*Maryborough*), from Frank Ward and Richard Scott;

By Hon. E. B. FORREST, from the Women's Christian Temperance Union (Central Union);

By Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*), from the I.O.G.T., Burketown;

By Mr. HANRAN (*Townsville*), from the Cleveland Lodge, I.O.G.T., Townsville;

By Mr. TURNER (*Rockhampton North*), from I.O.G.T., Rockhampton; and

By Mr. DIBLEY (*Woolloongabba*), from the I.O.G.T., Woolloongabba.

QUESTIONS.

DREDGING OF NORMAN BAR.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*) asked the Treasurer—

When he proposes to send the dredge to the Norman Bar?

The TREASURER (Hon. T. B. Cribb, *Ipswich*) replied—

A dredge will be sent to the Norman Bar within the next four weeks.

CONTROL OF THE LAZARETTE.

Mr. TURLEY (*Brisbane South*) asked the Home Secretary—

1. Has he received a report from the committee appointed to inquire into the control of the lazarette under Mr. Lewis, the late caretaker?

2. Will he lay such report on the table of the House?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*) replied—

1. Yes.

2. I do not consider it desirable to lay the report on the table of the House, but will be glad to submit it to the hon. member for perusal.

PAPERS.

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

(1) Report on the Jordan Creek Gold Field.

(2) Additional Regulations under the Mining Act of 1898.

(3) Annual Report of the Under Secretary for Mines.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*), it was resolved—

That on Tuesday and Wednesday, and after 7 o'clock p.m. on Thursday, Government business do take precedence of all other business.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was resolved—

That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cowley, Mr. Bell, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Turley, Mr. Curtis, Mr. Stephenson, and the mover: with leave to sit during any adjournment, and authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

The PREMIER moved—

1. That, in compliance with Standing Order No. 304, a select committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing to be executed by order of the House; and for the purpose of selecting, and arranging for printing, returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members.

2. That such committee consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Tolmie, Mr. McDonnell, Mr. Stephens, Mr. Jenkinson, Mr. Givens, and the mover.

Motion put and passed.

VETERINARY BILL.

Mr. BELL (*Dalby*) moved—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill to provide for the registration of veterinary surgeons.

Motion put and passed.

ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA AND HIS MAJESTY'S ACCESSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) moved—

1. That this House desire to express to His Majesty the King their sympathy in his sorrow for the loss of our beloved Sovereign the late Queen, whom they will ever remember with reverence and affection; to congratulate him respectfully on his accession to the Throne; and to assure him of their unalterable loyalty to his Throne and Person.

2. That this resolution be presented by Mr. Speaker in an Address to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, requesting that the same be transmitted to the Secretary of State for presentation to His Majesty the King.

This motion, I think, will meet with the approval of every member of this House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Although it is nearly six months now since the death of our late Queen, it is fitting, I think, that when we first meet such an address should be sent to His Majesty the King. I think from all parts of the civilised world only one note was expressed on the death of Queen Victoria.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: By nations which have not always been at peace with Great Britain, and even those which have not been on the best of terms with her, I think Her Majesty was beloved.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Her Majesty reigned for sixty-three years over the destinies of Great Britain and the British Empire. During that time Great Britain made enormous strides, and much of the greatness of Great Britain, I believe, is due to the wisdom and sagacity with which she was ruled over by Queen Victoria.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Statesmen from all parts of the world admit the Queen's wonderful influence over the destinies of this world. It is fitting also that we should pay a tribute to her goodness, not only as Queen, but as a woman. She was a good daughter, a good wife, and a good mother.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: And I believe that the Court of England during her reign was purer than during the reign of any monarch.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: To His Majesty, though it may seem irony, we, at any rate, should wish long life, and that he should rule over the destinies of this great Empire with the same sagacity that the late Queen did. He has had a great deal of experience, and he is not at all new to the responsibilities of his high office, because, owing to the late Queen's retirement, he took upon himself a great deal of her duties. I think he also is beloved by his people, and we hope that his reign will be long and prosperous, and that it will add to the greatness of the British Empire. I have great pleasure in moving the resolution standing in my name.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I cannot on this occasion altogether say that I have pleasure in seconding this motion, because the greater part of it deals with a subject that no one could take pleasure in speaking upon. Still, I can say that I have not the slightest hesitation in seconding the motion which has been moved by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. I think this has been done in every Parliament in all

the other colonies and in all parts of the British possessions where a Parliament has been sitting. This, however, is the first occasion that we have had the chance of doing it, and this motion has been submitted by the Premier at the very earliest opportunity. I think that no matter what opinions a man may hold in this House, whether he be on one side or the other, as to which is the most beneficial form of Government—whether the monarchical or republican—he will join most heartily in supporting this motion. This is a motion of condolence to a son on the death of his royal mother. I think there is one thing which shows, whether we look at royalty or anything else, that there is one bond of humanity all round—here is one thing which brings the highest and the lowest together, and that is death. On every occasion, and in every deliberative assembly, when misfortune or sickness or death comes, men of every shade of opinion are willing to join in expressions of sympathy or condolence. I think it is in that light this motion should be regarded. I am not going to add to what the Premier has said. He has very justly referred to the very long life of her departed Majesty, and I think there are very few men—there may be two or three of the oldest members of the community, but not more—who have any recollection of any other sovereign except our lamented Queen Victoria. I do not think there is any need for me to dwell further upon the matter. I heartily second the motion that has been moved by the Premier.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SITTING DAYS.

The PREMIER: I move—

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the despatch of business at 3 o'clock p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in each week.

Mr. BROWNE: I called "not formal" to this motion not with the idea of opposing it, but in order to have an opportunity of [4 p.m.] expressing the hope that we will not stick long at the three days a week.

Every session I have been in the House I have protested against members who are brought here from long distances being only allowed to do business for three days a week for a considerable portion of the session, and then being called upon during the latter part of the session to sit long hours and almost every day. Until there is a press of business we can scarcely go in for sitting four days a week, but I hope the hon. gentleman will let us have four sitting days a week as soon as possible so that we may finish our business and get away home instead of being pressed night and day at the end of the session as has been the case during previous sessions.

Question put and passed.

LEADERSHIP OF THE INDEPENDENT OPPOSITION.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*): I have to announce to the House that the gentlemen sitting around me have done me the honour of electing me as their leader.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. JENKINSON: We, as hitherto, will be prepared to give due consideration to the business brought under our notice, and in spite of the ironical cheers—perhaps I should not say they are ironical—

Mr. KEOGH: They are not ironical.

Mr. JENKINSON: At all events, whether they are or not, we shall be prepared to do our best in the interests of the country, independent of party.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Resumption of adjourned debate on Mr. Macartney's motion—That the following Address be presented to the Lieutenant-Governor, in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency, on opening this the fourth session of the thirteenth Parliament of Queensland:—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, His 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 State.

Mr. BROWNE: On resuming the debate on the Address in Reply, I would congratulate honestly the two gentlemen who opened the debate yesterday by moving and seconding the Address. No matter whether we agree with the opinions expressed by them or not, I think every member will admit that, judging by the way in which they put their opinions before us, they gave promise of being useful members, who can express their opinions in a way that will be understood by members generally, and add to its debating power. I do not intend to criticise those speeches. According to the authority of the best parliamentarians, the reason for the Address in Reply is to give an opportunity to criticise the events and the administration of the recess, and after that the practice has been to refer to the legislation which it is proposed to lay before us. I intend to adopt that course, and criticise some of the events that have taken place during the recess. Before entering into that, however, there is one thing I should refer to. It is not necessary that I should refer to the Royal death, because that has been dealt with in a separate motion, and we have given expression to our sympathy. Mention has been made in the Speech of the loss of two leading members of this House, Sir James Dickson and the Hon. J. V. Chataway. I want to say for myself, and I am sure I am echoing the opinions of every member of the House, that even though we may have disagreed with those gentlemen politically, yet we are fully sensible of the loss which the House has sustained by their death. On an occasion like this I hardly like to refer to a personal matter, but I cannot help remembering some three years ago, when I had a severe illness, the first night I came back to the House, although it was for the purpose of giving an adverse vote to the Government, yet Sir James Dickson, the then Home Secretary, and Mr. Chataway, the Secretary for Agriculture, even before my own colleagues could shake me by the hand, were the first two men to come across the Chamber and congratulate me upon my return. It says a great deal for politics when we find that even during our keenest struggles we have sympathy for each other in misfortune. In place of those two gentlemen there are two others who are fresh occupants of the Treasury benches, and I congratulate both of them. I heartily congratulate the hon. member for Bulloo on his elevation, though we all expected to see him there. The hon. gentleman for a long time has been the candid friend of the Government, and that is a certain passport to the Ministerial benches. With regard to the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Cribb, I may say that while congratulating him I feel a certain amount

of sympathy and a great deal of admiration for him—sympathy in taking over the Treasurership in a time of difficulty like the present, and admiration for his pluck in doing so. The Treasury coach has got itself right down into a heavy bog, and the hon. gentleman has got into the shafts and is trying to pull it out. I think, therefore, that he deserves the sympathy and admiration of all members of this House. As far as I am concerned, in a fair and legitimate way, I will be very pleased to help him and render him every assistance to get us out of the difficulties we are in at the present time. During the past recess we have had a very important event in the election of the members for the State of Queensland in the first Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, and I may say that I feel very pleased at the result of those elections. The result showed that all the great prophets of the newspapers, and of the Liberal League, which happened to have the name of the Premier at its head as president, knew absolutely nothing about the feelings and opinions of the people of Queensland. On that occasion it was one man one vote, and the country showed, more especially in the case of the Senate, which party they were in favour of representing them in the Federal Parliament. The Labour party scored splendidly on that occasion. We got five men elected, and we have not diminished our numbers in this House. I think the Labour party may feel thoroughly satisfied with that result, and that the country may be congratulated on the great advance which has been made in democratic opinions in this State. One thing I must refer to now, and that is the state the country is in at the present time. I do not want to make out an unnecessarily bad case, but I fancy the hon. members who spoke yesterday hardly recognised the state the country is in. During the recess, I think I have travelled over more of Queensland than any other two members of this House. I have gone from one end of the country to the other. Not going round receiving banquets and being interviewed by newspaper representatives, but mixing with people of all classes and shades of political opinion, in order to make myself conversant with the condition and wants of the people of the country. I am sorry to say that times are a great deal worse in the country than many people imagine. We have only lately felt the great effect of the drought; it has not come near the coast towns and the other large towns of the colony. It was simply confined to the West, and the men in the Western country have been thrown out of employment. The result is that now in every part of Queensland you can find any number of unemployed looking for work. Nearly every week I have had wires from different places on this subject, and during the past few days I received two wires protesting against police magistrates refusing rations to men who were out of employment. Another telegram I received from Mirani stating that seventy men in that place were out of work and wanted employment, and I showed that telegram to the Secretary for Railways.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have offered work to a great many, and they would not take it.

Mr. REID: Why did they refuse?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Perhaps you know.

Mr. STORY: They want it for other purposes.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BROWNE: I can quite understand that in some cases there may be men who would not work on the railways. A man in the country who has a wife and family to support cannot do a day's work as he might be expected to do on a

railway line. I may say at once that I am not blaming the Secretary for Railways at all in this matter. From all I can learn with regard to the initiating of day work and the starting of railways the hon. gentleman has done as much as he could do at the present time, and I hope he will continue doing so. But while giving the Secretary for Railways that credit, I would point out that although the country is in this hole, and it is now some eight or nine months since some of those private railways passed this House which were going to give the unemployed in the country work as long as they wanted it, yet so far as I can learn, not one single one of them has given one man employment. The only persons they have given employment to are those persons who go round the country trying to sell the concessions which were granted to the companies last session. With regard to the cause of the country getting into its present financial position, I notice that it is attributed to the drought. There is not the slightest doubt that the drought has a great deal to do with it, but it is my firm conviction that the hon. gentleman who has been in charge of the Treasury for the last three years is greatly to blame in the matter. Last year and the year before we knew that the drought was out West. If you look up *Hansard* you will see the speeches made by members, especially on the Government side of the House, with regard to the condition of the country owing to the drought, and yet not a single thing was done by the Government to provide against the evil which it was seen was coming. Not a single thing was done to reduce expenditure. The thing was clearly put by my hon. friend, the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, who I am sorry to say will not be here this session owing to his health having broken down. But that hon. member put clearly before the House what was going to happen. Yet the Premier increased his expenditure, raised high salaries, and engaged more experts, notwithstanding that for the last three years we have had a falling revenue. I am not going into the financial question now, even if I was able. When we have the Financial Statement and proposals of the Treasurer, we shall be in a better position to deal with that matter. I may, however, point out that last year the Premier, who was then Treasurer, expected a surplus of £12,402. Instead of that, according to the figures of the Treasurer, we have a deficit of £528,000, that is, the hon. gentleman was out in his estimate for the twelve months to the extent of £540,000. Yet we have newspapers telling us what level-headed business men we have at the head of affairs at the present time! Would any ordinary business man, when he saw bad times coming and his sales and profits falling off, increase his expenditure, raise the salaries of his highest paid officials, and put on a lot of new men? If he did, and went insolvent, people would say that it served him right, because there was no sense in what he did. Yet we have gentlemen in charge of the affairs of this colony acting in exactly that way. There has been a decrease in revenue all round, except in one item, that is in miscellaneous services, where there has been a refund from the Imperial Government and other States. A reference is made in the Governor's Speech to the decrease in mining, as follows:—

The mining industry continues to develop in a natural and healthy manner. Last year's gold yield was the largest in the history of the State, and whatever falling off has latterly been apparent is due to causes that in no way affect the intrinsic merits of the mines.

I thoroughly coincide with that. I say the falling off in the returns in no way affects the intrinsic merits of the mines. I am not going to say that the whole of the fault for the falling off is with the Government. One reason for the falling off

is the drought on the mining fields, and a second reason is that there has been a great falling off in the product of cyanide works at different places. But there is another reason that has had a great deal to do, and is still having and will continue to have a great deal to do with the depression in the mining industry, and that is the way in which the Department of Mines is being administered—the exemptions and everything that is going on. When the Act of 1898 was going through this House we contended that it was being passed to encourage big monopolists and to do away with the real legitimate working miners of this colony. We were told then that the labour conditions were too harsh. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, who was then Secretary for Mines, brought forward statistics to show that the result of the exemptions which were granted was that, instead of there being one man to every acre, as it was then supposed to be, there was only about one man employed for every four acres. I pointed out then, and mining members on both sides of the House pointed out, that unless there was some limit put to exemptions it would mean that instead of there being one man to every 4 acres, there would only be about one man to every 20 acres; and, if we take out the big mines which are employing large numbers of men, and which, of course, are included in the statistics, there is not above one man for every four that there should be employed on the land that has been taken up in this colony during the last year or two. There is not a gold or mineral field in the colony but what the same complaint is made. Every time there is the slightest appearance of a boom, and of things beginning to look up, we have just the same thing going on over and over and over again. These would-be capitalists—the men who talk so much about keeping capital out of the country, and are doing their very best to keep it out, or, if it does come in, to direct it into their own pockets, and prevent any of it going to the working miners—these men take up ground, and the same day that the applications for the ground are put in they lodge applications for exemptions for six months. There are mineral fields in Queensland where all the ground has been taken up for two years and the surface has never been broken. I ask if that is going to help the mining industry along? Those men are simply blackmailing the working miner and the man who is ready to do something with the ground and who has capital to invest. If a man goes to Croydon or some other field, and, in conjunction with his friends, is prepared to expend £20,000 in developing some ground, before he can take it up one of these sharks steps to the front and says, "I have that ground; I will sell it to you for £10,000." He wants half the money that man is prepared to spend on the ground; and, of course, in a great many instances capital is hunted away. In the mineral districts we have the same thing happening, and, more than that—I do not know whether the Secretary for Mines knows it, but I know it, and every mining member knows it—there is a large amount of ground that is being held year after year that is not only not being worked, but they do not even go through the formality of applying for exemptions, and by the alteration in the law forfeiture is practically stopped. Men can take up a block of ground, and they do not even apply for exemptions. A man has to become a sort of informer, and then the Minister may, if he likes, fine them £5 or £10, as the case may be. They quietly pay the fine, and go on again for another six, eight, ten, or twelve months till someone else gives information. But what satisfaction is that to the man who lays the information? In every case he has to plank down

a deposit before he applies for forfeiture, and then there is no forfeiture at all. The company is simply fined a few pounds, and it saves them the expense of applying for exemptions. If we want to develop our mining industry, we want to see that the altered conditions—which are liberal enough for anything—are fulfilled. There are many other ways in which the Government could have done as they have done in the other colonies. Within the last few days a paragraph has been going the round of the papers with regard to the cyaniding industry, to which I referred a little while ago. In Victoria the Government have bought the cyanide patents right out, and they charge the mining community 2½ per cent. royalty, and I see that the Victorian Government are getting their money back very fast, and they are also helping the mining industry in other ways. In this colony, on the other hand, men are paying 5 per cent. and 7½ per cent., and in some cases 8 per cent., to the patentees.

The PREMIER: Five per cent.

Mr. BROWNE: Some have been paying as high as 7½ per cent. when they have not had sufficient influence and have been afraid to fight against the company by going to law. In any case, that is a more legitimate way of helping the mining industry than a great many of the ways that have been tried by the hon. gentleman in charge of the Department of Mines. With regard to exemptions, there are petitions being got up and have been got up in different parts of the colony. Men are simply tired of going to a field and finding the land taken up in large leases without even the surface being broken, and of being told that it is exempted. It simply means that neither the working miner nor the genuine investor can get a chance at all. There is one other very important matter which came under my notice during the recess to which I wish to refer, as it has caused a great deal of trouble outside. That is one way that the present Government seem to think they are going to make up their falling revenue. I refer to the sale of the lands of this colony in large blocks to the present holders. I was in Hughenden in April last, and I may say that most of the leading residents—strong Ministerialists, as well as people who do not believe in the Government—came to me protesting strongly against this practice. Unfortunately it was too late to do anything, but I will just take this opportunity of quoting from the papers of that date. I am not going to quote from any of those horrible, terrible Labour papers. These are Ministerial organs, and they use words which, if I were to utter in this House, I would be called to order very quickly. The first quotation I have here is from the *Hughenden Observer* of 6th April. There is just an advertisement there of the sale of 111 country portions in the parish of Teleton, and there is just a short paragraph which refers to the limited advertising. They were only advertised four days before the sale, and before the paper came out again the lot were sold, and if anyone went to inquire about it he was too late.

Mr. LESINA: A put-up job.

Mr. BROWNE: The following issue of the *Observer*—which is by no means a Labour paper—had the following leading article. It is headed "A Smellful Sale." It starts—

We never did believe that the present Queensland Government was the purest in the world, but, if any doubt existed in our minds on the matter it was entirely removed this week over the Teleton land sale.

I am not going to quote the whole article, but it goes on to say that the people commenced to "smell on a rat," and then it says—

The more they inquired the more unsavoury did the matter become. We ourselves inquired at the local

land office, but notwithstanding the advertisement stated that plans and all information were obtainable at the local land office, they were in possession of none at all, and we believe we are correct in saying that no plans have arrived yet. They might come up to-night or Monday, which, considering the sale took place yesterday, is a very nice way of doing things.

Then we are told that, in answer to Mr. McDonald, the Secretary for Lands said that the "land was being sold for Treasury requirements"—

This of course is only a tale—although we admit money is wanted. If it was a sincere answer to our member, the land would have been fully advertised and efforts made to get more than the upset price of 10s. for it. In fact, we know one gentleman who would probably have bought 1,000 acres of it had he been aware of the sale in time. Of course our readers will understand that the land is of very superior quality; it will be close to the railway, and artesian water is obtainable at very low depth. The future of Hughenden, especially when the railway goes to Richmond, will depend on close settlement about the town. What, therefore, can be the fate of the place if the choicest country in its vicinity is to be alienated in this way? We say this sale is a monstrous proceeding, and one of the ugliest jobs perpetrated in the history of any Government. We learn that the land was sold yesterday and that it was purchased by the lessees—in whose interests of course it was put up—at the upset price.

That is the *Hughenden Observer*. I have also here an extract from the most prominent [4:30 p.m.] nounced Ministerial organ in the North of Queensland, *The North Queensland Mining Register*, published at Charters Towers. It is dated the 6th May last, and the article in that Government paper reads—

Teleton land sale has disturbed the composure of not a few of the public of Hughenden and of Western people. That it was a very improper transaction few doubt. Even the rottenness of it was made more apparent by the messing of the Lands Department. At least it is either messing, mismanagement, or a complete disregard of all constitutional action as laid down by Parliament. If such a sale was conducted in such a way by a private firm of agents for a landowner, the chances are ten to one the agents would end up in St. Helena.

Mr. LESINA: So they ought.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BROWNE: That is from a Ministerial organ. The article goes on to say—

The land, consisting of 35,000 acres, was, practically speaking, never advertised. At any rate, if an inch advertisement in a paper did appear, it was only four days before the land was sold. The land was put up block after block, sold at the one price, with only one buyer present, and the price was 10s. per acre. A magnificent estate of Crown lands, in close proximity to Hughenden, with frontage to the Flinders River, without one acre of faulty soil upon it, with artesian flowing water at a depth of 500 feet all over it; 35,000 acres of it, all in one block, changed hands for £17,000. The purchasers were the lessees of Teleton run. Of course, it was intended they should be. However, in exposing such corrupt practice, worthy indeed of the worst Tammany organisation in America, it cannot be hoped that any salutary effect will be produced, for practically the Lands Department has had no head for years. It is right, at any rate, that the public should know what they may expect.

Now, I think that is pretty strong language.

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members should be careful that the language contained in extracts quoted from newspapers is such that they themselves would be permitted to use in the House. The language in the passage just quoted by the hon. member is not such as should be permitted.

Mr. BROWNE: I bow to your ruling, Sir. I thought that, as it was an expression of public opinion in the Press, it was admissible in this House; and that is why I read the extract. However, the same paper, in a leading article in an issue dated 1st July—in which they deal

pretty roughly with the party which I have the honour to represent—admit, looking back to this case, that there is very little to be said for the Government. They say—

It is impossible to become enthusiastic in the enumeration of the Ministerial virtues. So far as we can see the colony has governed itself the last few months, the only important Ministerial acts being the sale of Western lands in spite of the denunciation of the Press and the people.

That's with regard to Telemon. It was, of course, too late for the protest of the people and the member for the district to have any effect. Mr. McDonald did protest.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A public meeting was held before the land was sold.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes; I think I said so in my previous remarks. The reply of the Minister was that the money was wanted for Treasury purposes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is perfectly correct.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes; but whether the proceeding was legitimate is a matter of opinion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The law allows the sale of 100,000 acres every year.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, in 360-acre blocks; not blocks of 35,000 acres to the lessees of a run, unknown to the general public.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The land was offered to the general public, and they held a meeting on the subject. It was sold in 320-acre blocks.

Mr. BROWNE: Shortly after that there was a raid made on the Central district. I was in Rockhampton at the time, and the feeling there about the matter was very strong. I have a lot of other papers here, the language in which I do not think can be construed as unparliamentary. I shall now quote the opinions of the *Rockhampton Bulletin* and the *Rockhampton Record* on this matter, and if there is anything too strong in either of those papers I shall withhold it and let hon. members know where they can see these papers. The *Rockhampton Bulletin*, dated 14th May, dealing with the selling of lands at Logan Downs, in an article headed "Selling Central Lands," says—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is there any particular reason why lands in the Central district should not be sold?

Mr. BROWNE: I have read from the Northern Press their protests and the protests of the people against the selling of Northern lands, and now I am going to quote from leading organs in Rockhampton—the *Rockhampton Bulletin* and the *Record*—and if the *Bulletin* is not the leading organ of Queensland it is pretty close to it. I think it is legitimate that these people should be allowed to voice their opinions too.

Mr. KERR: The whole of the Western people too.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about the South?

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, just the same in the South. I do not believe that the Government should sacrifice any of the lands of this colony in the way they have been doing, whether in the North, Centre, or the South. I do not think the district makes any difference in the matter at all. I will quote from the *Rockhampton Bulletin* of 14th May, which in a leading article says—

These sales are wrong in principle, and in law they are a practical, although not a technical, evasion of the Act. On the 4th of June next 103 blocks, each containing 320 acres, are to be offered at Clermont. The Government under the law cannot sell a larger area than 320 acres, but by putting up blocks in this way it is practically selling one block of 32,960 acres. The terms are cash, and the putting up of the land is something of an imposture. For the whole thing is

arranged. The Government knows who the purchaser will be and the exact date on which the cheque will reach the Treasury. The fact that the terms are cash shows that the Government intends to secure the money before the end of the financial year on the 30th of June. Practically the land has been sold privately. There have been negotiations in this case as there have been in so many similar cases between the purchaser and the Government, and when everything was arranged—the position of the land, the area, and the price—an empty compliance was made with the law by advertising a public sale and putting up the land into so many blocks of 320 acres instead of the one block which has been really purchased.

This is a very lengthy article and I will not deal with it any further.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am sorry to say that this land was not sold at all.

Mr. BROWNE: I know. I am going to deal with that presently.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were so anxious to buy it, that they did not buy it.

Mr. BROWNE: I will deal with the reason why it was not sold presently. I am quoting some of the public opinions on this matter which I think will make hon. gentlemen look round and wonder why the Government should be allowed to pursue the course on which they started. Here is an extract from the *Rockhampton Record* of 12th May.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Another Government organ.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, and it is very bitter sometimes against hon. members sitting on this side. The article is headed—"Further Mock-Auction Sales—Absentees Enlarging 'Freehold Estates.'" It reads—

The *Government Gazette* of last Saturday contains a proclamation of the auction sale, on 20th June next, of 199 portions of pastoral lands, the precise locality of which we have been unable to discover at the time we write, as no county map is available at the local land office, and the pastoral block maps supply no clue.

Even Rockhampton men, most intimately acquainted with the country, could not make out where the land was.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The land was surveyed and offered for sale years ago.

Mr. BROWNE: That is so. The hon. gentleman is only furnishing me with information I already have. I know it was offered for sale before under another name, but the residents in that district, with the exception of the lessees and those directly interested, do not know where the land is at the present time. I believe that the excuse was that the surveyors were to put in the name of the parish and they put in the name of another parish, and that is why people did not know where it was. The information not being sufficient to enable those who might have been inclined to buy this land to find it they had no chance of buying it. The editor of the *Rockhampton Daily Record* then goes on to say—

The presumption, therefore, is that a conspiracy has been entered into between the Government and the lessees to enable the latter to acquire the freehold of an additional 50,000 acres or so, in order that grazing farm settlement may be effectually blocked in that part of the country. This sale is no sudden inspiration, for the portions must have been surveyed in 320-acre lots purposely for the Lansdowne Company. There can be no question that the sale, although, perhaps, warranted by a literal construction of the Land Act, 1897, is a distinct evasion of its spirit.

In another issue of the same paper—the *Rockhampton Daily Record* of Tuesday, 28th May—there is another very long and very strong leading article. The editor is then referring to the reply of the Hon. the Minister for Lands to the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce, which had sent down a protest against the sale of the land. The Minister's reply, of course, was, that the money from the sale of the lands was wanted for Treasury purposes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did not want to eat it, or take it away, or anything of that sort.

Mr. BROWNE: The *Record*, in this leading article, says—

A weaker reply than that addressed by the Minister for Lands to the local chamber of commerce it would have been difficult to indite. "The Minister regrets," forsooth, that Treasury difficulties compel him to evade the law of the land Act, and inflict irremediable injury upon the community, the only comfort being that he is "using the sanction the law allows," and getting "relief" for the Treasury while securing an "excellent price." The thin veil of legality by which the evasive policy of the Ministry is covered will not save them, for everybody knows that if land is being offered to the public the object is not to sell to the public, but to the Crown lessee, and that the fraud is arranged before the land is offered at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was no fraud about it at all.

Mr. TURLEY: Never is.

Mr. BROWNE:

What we on behalf of the public protest against is selling 50,000-acre blocks by evading the law which prescribes that no one portion larger than 320 acres shall be offered for sale at auction, and by deliberately arranging with a pastoral lessee to survey areas so large as 78 square miles of land in one locality under prearranged terms of purchase with him the only buyer.

The editor, I may say, winds up the article by saying something to the effect that a Government which does like that is best got rid of. Of course we may not agree with him in that, but that is a matter of opinion. I have here another leading article, which appeared in the *Clermont Miner* of 31st May, 1901, dealing with the Logan Downs land, and there, evidently, the Minister had been sitting on the fence. In reply to the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce and others he had refused to withdraw this land, stating that they wanted to sell it for Treasury purposes; and then a day or two afterwards word came up that the land had been withdrawn, and the *Clermont Miner* wanted to know what the Minister for Lands meant—who was running the show, and what was being done? It went on—

Anyone reading the documents would come to the conclusion that the Minister for Lands had determined that the sale of the land must proceed, and yet forsooth two days later his factotum wires to Clermont, "Logan Downs land is withdrawn from sale." Which is the correct version? Has the Government at last recognised the strongly expressed opinion of the people of Central Queensland against these mock auction sales of resumed areas which were always intended for homestead selections and not for huge agricultural farms that would simply revert, in the course of time, to the original pastoral lessees, who have already enjoyed a reasonably long occupation of them at a most moderate rental? "Establish the people on the land" is an old cry in Queensland, but little heed has been given to it hitherto, and if Mr. O'Connell had had his own way we should have witnessed these Logan Downs resumptions passing out of the hands of the Crown in perpetuity. The Minister expresses his regret at the sale of large areas of land by auction; but why does he regret it? Is it because it means a robbery of the public estate for the benefit of bank or rich pastoral companies? If so, he could very easily get rid of his burden of regret by refusing to have a hand in the job.

I am not going to read any more of these extracts, though I may say that not merely the Labour or democratic Press, but the section of the Press which is always supporting the present Government, have denounced in unmeasured terms these transactions right through. Then the hon. gentleman says that these lands have been withdrawn from sale. What sort of position is that for the strong Government, as it is called, or for the Minister for Lands to be in? They put it before the country as their policy, and they tell the people distinctly that they are going to sell this land, and immediately a few meetings are held, and they see that the public

Press are antagonistic to the sale of this land, and knowing that this is the last session of an expiring Parliament, they back down and withdraw the land from sale. I am very glad that the land has been withdrawn, but I say that neither the Minister nor the Government come out of the transaction in a very creditable manner. If the Minister in the first place thought it was for the benefit of the country that the land should be sold—if he had been a strong Minister or if they had been a strong Government, they would have stood to their guns in spite of the comments of the Press and the protests of public meetings outside. But they did not do it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We may sell the land yet.

Mr. BROWNE: I dare say the hon. gentleman will, but I hope that he won't be long enough there to have an opportunity of selling it. I have had the opportunity of going about a great deal and acquainting myself with the feeling of the country on the subject; I have travelled through the Central and the Northern districts, and I did not meet with one individual of any shade of opinion but who expressed the same opinion about these matters. In Hughenden leading gentlemen, though they did not agree with me in other matters, and other members perhaps of this House, do not believe in the great aggregation of land. One gentleman said to me, "I am not like you. I believe it is a good thing sometimes to sell land, but this has been something monstrous." He told me that if the land at Telemon had been well advertised it would have fetched at least £1 an acre all round, so really there was a dead loss of something like £17,000, and that is a good bit of money when the Treasurer requires money.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You won't get £1 an acre more for land like Telemon.

The PREMIER: There is plenty more similar land.

Mr. BROWNE: In a year or two you will want to buy it back again, and we shall have to pay £3 or £4 an acre for it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Make agricultural farms out of it.

Mr. REID: Yes.

Mr. TURLEY: You might buy it for a seaport.

Mr. BROWNE: There is another matter I intend to refer to, but I would not have done so if it had not been that I believe that there are a lot of men suffering under an injustice. I shall not, however, refer to this matter in any carrying spirit, or even in a party spirit. I have already spoken to the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government about it, and I know others on both sides have spoken, of the trouble and discontent there has been among a lot of these contingents from South Africa. Now every man in this House knows that I was strongly opposed to the first contingent being sent to South Africa, because at that time I did not know that it was necessary that they should go. The party on this side strongly opposed sending those men out of the colony, but at the same time, as far as one can judge, a large majority of the people seemed to be in favour of their going. No doubt they did their work well, and what I contend is that these men, having done their work, should be paid for it. The labourer is worthy of his hire and should get it. A large number of these men have returned; many of them have no work, and they do not seem able to obtain the pay which has been promised to them. I refer particularly to the men who took service under General Carrington in Rhodesia, and who entered into an agreement by which they were to get extra pay. Those men reckon that an attempt is being made to block their Queensland pay, and I do not think that is fair. They left here under agreement to be paid 4s. 6d. per day;

and then, having undertaken very much harder work with the Rhodesian force, which was being paid at the rate of 10s. a day, they were promised an extra 5s. a day, bringing their pay up to 9s. 6d. a day. As soon as they return, they are practically refused the Queensland proportion of their pay. I think there has been a great deal of misunderstanding and mismanagement somewhere. I do not blame anyone in particular, and least of all the Government. The Premier, I believe, has the matter in hand; and I express the hope—and I am voicing the opinion of a great many hon. members—that he will see that justice is done to these men, and that the State of Queensland carries out its part of the bargain. There is one thing in the Speech to which I wish to particularly allude. I notice in the paragraph relating to mining the following sentence—

The advantages of the extension of railway communication to our mineral fields are now being experienced, and you will be asked to consider further proposals for securing to the remoter parts of the State the stimulating influence of cheaper freight and better communication with the coast.

It appears to me that that is an old friend of last session coming in here in a new disguise. As far as I can judge it means that we are going to have another batch of syndicate railways, and why the Government could not put it boldly to the forefront as they did before I cannot make out. I am not now going into the question of syndicate railways, but I think we have had enough experience of them for a little while. The records of this House show clearly that after the Chillagoe Act was passed the late Sir James Dickson expressed the opinion that we should at least await the result of the experiment before taking upon ourselves any further obligations. I shall be quite prepared to deal with the matter very fully when the proper time arrives, but I think, considering the way in which things are going, a far better way of dealing with it would be for the Premier to adopt the plan of his great chief, Sir Thomas McIlwraith. In 1883 Sir Thomas McIlwraith placed the matter of land grant railways directly before the electors of the country, and asked for an expression of opinion from them. There is not such a very great hurry in connection with these proposals. The Secretary for Railways is in good health, and is not likely to die just yet, and I would suggest that the Government formulate their system and leave it over for this session. Let them make the question of private railways a battle cry at the next elections, and ask the country's sanction to this departure from the settled railway policy of the colony. That is a fair and legitimate way of doing business. We have plenty to do this session in the way of domestic legislation without wasting time to the extent we did last session in the interests of private companies and company mongers. I will not deal with the matter any further at this stage; but, if these proposals should come before us, I will endeavour by the use of all legitimate forms of the House to prevent what I believe is a great injury to the country by having private railways foisted upon it. I have been very sorry to notice, and I hope it is not so bad as it looks, the great slump that has taken place in Chillagoe shares. On reference to the Victorian papers, I find that they reckon there has been a clear loss of a million of the capital invested. That is a very serious loss, and as a Northern man I can only hope that the mines have not deteriorated to that extent. Although I was strongly opposed to the construction of the railway by private enterprise, yet I should be very sorry to see any misfortune befall those mines. A very large number of people in one way or another have been attracted to them, and it would be a

terrible disaster to those people if there have been false reports about the mines. I think what has transpired in connection with Chillagoe should make us a little bit cautious before we actually pledge the country to any more of these privately-owned railways. I will not go through the whole of the Speech, but I should like to refer to one remark made by the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba in reference to retrenchment. I am thoroughly with him when he says that if retrenchment is going to take place it should not start at the bottom, but at the top of the ladder. The hon. member suggested beginning with Parliament. Now, as far as reducing the number of members is concerned, and speaking merely as a private individual, if the Government think it necessary to reduce the number of members I will not object. With regard to reducing the payment of members, I say at once that I think £300 a year is quite little enough to pay a man who devotes the whole of his time to the service of the country. I am not one of those who work only during the session. Since the House rose I have travelled over 10,000 miles by land and sea at my own expense, and I have not had the benefit of any special trains. At the same time, if there is to be retrenchment and a percentage is to be taken from the salaries of civil servants, I am quite willing to submit to a percentage being deducted from the salaries of members. When the hon. member refers to Parliament being the head of the State, let me tell him that it is not. If the hon. member is willing to assist in a scheme of retrenchment this is a very opportune time. We have now a very good opportunity, when we have no Governor, of reducing the salary attaching to that office to something like the salary paid to State Governors in Canada. We can also reduce the salaries of a good many other highly paid officials; and, with regard to any reduction in the number of members of this House, I would point out that since I have been a member of the House there have been two additions to the number of Cabinet Ministers. Now that several departments have been taken over by the Federal Government, I think we could do with a couple of Ministers less.

The PREMIER: There has been only one addition.

Mr. BROWNE: While there has only been one addition, there has been a large addition to the number of under secretaries and experts who have taken work off Ministers' shoulders. At any rate I think we could do with a couple of Ministers less. Then, if we are

[5 p.m.] going to retrench, let us start at the top of the tree and go down, and there will not be any dissatisfaction like there was on a previous occasion. Of course it may not be necessary to retrench at all. I do not know whether the hon. member for Toowoomba is in the secrets of the Government or not, but he appeared to think that neither retrenchment nor taxation was necessary, and that we should fund our debt, or something of that sort. At that famous banquet where the Premier was entrenched behind barbed wires, and he found with alarm that the enemy was at the gate, the hon. gentleman observed that saying which affirms that speech was made to conceal our thoughts, and did not let anyone know his intentions on this subject. Of course we had contradictory statements on the matter. The Secretary for Agriculture, in a speech he delivered at Mackay, almost admitted the socialistic platform; he could not see any get-away from a land tax or income tax. We will support the hon. gentleman in that. If he is prepared to go the whole hog in that direction, then there is a seat for him on this bench whenever he likes to

come over. Other Ministers have also spoken in public, but have not given us any light as to the intentions of the Government in this matter. However, I may say that we will give our support to any reasonable proposal to provide a remedy for the present financial depression, and any reasonable legislation the Premier may introduce for the relief of the pastoralists in the Western districts will have my hearty support, and also the support of members on this side of the House. But if the Government, in trying to extricate the colony from its difficulty, make it worse by calling in the adventitious aid of syndicates outside, then they will get my strongest opposition.

The PREMIER: I am very pleased with the very moderate speech made by the leader of the Opposition. I am very glad that he is in robust health, and I hope that we shall get through the business of this session without the great difficulty we experienced last session. I am also very glad that he has not taken the hopeless view of the country that some hon. members have done. Of course he has blamed the Government, but it is his province to do that. The hon. member has endeavoured to make out a case with the assistance of extracts from what he calls "notable Government organs." I do not take the advice of those newspapers. They do not always write in that strain, which only shows the independence of the supporters of the Government. (Opposition laughter.) If they think the Government have done wrong they blame the Government for doing it; but on the other side we find that, no matter what a member of their party has done, they never admit that he has done wrong. Of course we had from the hon. member the same old song about private railways, mining exemptions, and sales of land. We have heard that song for a number of years past, and it does not improve much as the years roll on. I can tell the leader of the Opposition that he himself is to blame for me of those private railways not having been started. Look at the opposition he gave to some of those private railway measures last year! I pointed out then that bad times were coming, that labour would be in want of employment, and that it was in the interests of the colony that those private lines should pass in order to provide work for the unemployed. But I was laughed to scorn, and the hon. member boasted outside it took six weeks to pass one little Railway Bill. The deposit has been paid in connection with three of the railways which were passed last session, and one of the companies has already commenced work, that is the line to Mount Garnet.

Mr. GIVENS: They started on tick.

The PREMIER: It does not matter how they started, so long as they do the work. Every member of this House knows that in the case of a Government railway a number of surveys have to be made before it is submitted to Parliament, and that it takes some time after the line is approved of before the railway can be started. With regard to these syndicate railways, a running survey was made before the Bill was submitted to Parliament, and after the Bill was passed the company had to make a permanent survey before they could go to work to build the railway. I understand that the Callide Railway people have let a contract for the survey of their line, and that the Burketown people are surveying their line. I do not think the Glassford Creek people have paid their deposit yet. We were told by hon. members on the other side of the House that that was the only genuine line of the four, but I am sorry to say that it is not the genuine line we thought it was. However, if only one line

is started that is something; it will give employment to a number of people, and will do good to the district in which it is situated. I contend that notwithstanding the aspersions cast upon these private lines, so far they have done a great deal of good. We must remember, also, that where private enterprise undertakes the carrying out of a railway, if they fail the failure rests on their shoulders only, whereas if the Government undertake a work, and it is not a success, every man, woman, and child in the colony suffers. The gentlemen who engage in the enterprise of constructing private railways come here and spend their money, and if they lose that money it is not a loss to the colony.

Mr. GIVENS: Plenty of people in the colony lose their money.

The PREMIER: Yes; plenty of people in the colony lose their money in mining, in sugar-growing, in maize-growing, and in other kinds of business. In all kinds of business people lose money day by day, but the country does not undertake to refund all the money lost by all the people in the colony. The construction of railways by private enterprise is a good thing for the State, and I do not hesitate to say that if reasonable offers are made this year for such a purpose I should bring them down to Parliament, and ask Parliament to put them through. I deplore the great depression in the colony as much as any man can do, and I say that no person living could have anticipated the unparalleled drought we have experienced during the past twelve months. At this time last year there was nothing like the loss in stock that has since taken place. The greater portion of the losses took place at the end of last year or the beginning of this year.

Mr. REID: No.

The PREMIER: I know it, I have means of knowing it, and can bring fifty instances of stations which this time last year had not suffered to any extent, but which at the end of last year or the beginning of this year lost nearly all their stock. However, I have great faith in the future of the colony, and believe that it is not going insolvent, as some members seem to think. We have had bad years before, and have come round, and, if we do not lose our heads and go in for heroics, as some people want us to do, the country will come round again. I for one am not going to propose extreme measures, as I have been urged to do, to balance revenue and expenditure. I think that if we wait patiently—if we are careful in the spending of our money—

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear! That is the trouble.

The PREMIER: We will come round in good time. But all this will be discussed over and over again on the Budget Speech, and at the present time it is premature to discuss the financial position of the colony. Now, with regard to mining, I am very glad that the leader of the Opposition agrees with some part of the Speech, though he does not with the whole of it. Of course, I did not expect that he would.

Mr. BROWNE: When you are stating facts I must agree with you.

The PREMIER: Mining is an old trouble with the hon. member for Croydon, but I can assure that hon. member that if the country that he speaks of were forfeited to-morrow no one would pay the rent for it. In no case where lands would be worked by anybody else have there been exemptions granted. There are no lands on his field that are at present under exemption which would be worked if they were thrown up.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes.

The PREMIER: I do not know of any.

Mr. BROWNE: I am sure of it. There were exemptions before you a little while ago.

The PREMIER: There is a case in Gympie where calls have been made for the last year, and there is the greatest difficulty in getting people to pay the calls. A great deal of work is going on there, and it would be a great hardship if the Mines Department stepped in and forfeited the ground after a great deal of money has been spent on it. The same at Charters Towers and Croydon. The mining industry has suffered as well as all the other industries. If squatting is good, if sugar-planters and farmers are making money, they put their surplus profits into mining. But at the present time neither the pastoralists nor the sugar-planters have any surplus money, and the mining industry suffers in consequence. If the hon. member will take the trouble to look up the lists of shareholders in mines in his own field, in Charters Towers, and in Gympie, he will find that all the calls are not paid by the local people by any means. He will find calls paid not only in Queensland but in other parts of Australia. The mining industry has suffered because everything else has suffered. I fully believe that the intrinsic value of the mines is still there.

Mr. BROWNE: That is so.

The PREMIER: Of course cyaniding has fallen off, but that is because the tailings are being worked out. The reason that the Government did not try to make terms with the owners of the cyanide patents is because on Charters Towers three or four years ago the owners of the mines did not wish us to purchase the patent rights, although the owners of the tailing heaps did. It was pointed out that if we bought the rights and charged a royalty, the tailings would only pay a little portion of that royalty, but the mines would pay the royalty for ever. I think that the first extension of the patent expires in October two years, and it has not been a great hardship. I know a number of people who have made a great deal of money out of cyaniding, especially on Charters Towers. However, I only hope that the legislation that was passed three or four years ago enabling a private railway to be built to Chillagoe will lead to a number of our mineral fields being opened up and worked vigorously.

Mr. BROWNE: There is more land under exemption now than there was before the line was built.

The PREMIER: There is more land being worked than there has ever been before in the district. Smelters are being erected at Mount Garnet and Chillagoe which would not have been erected but for the Chillagoe Railway being passed by this House, and a further discovery has been made some 90 miles off the Chillagoe line—that is, the workings on the Einasleigh, which have been lying dormant for the last thirty years. That field has been rediscovered—if I may so term it—by some of the Chillagoe prospectors. It is owing to the advent of the Chillagoe people that that land is now being worked. So far as we know, the passing of that Act four years ago has given a great impetus to mining in that part of the country. Some people have gone to Cloucurry from Chillagoe; and they are working a copper-mine there, although they have to carry the ore 200 miles to port, at a cost of £10 or £12 a ton. All this has happened since we passed the Chillagoe Railway Act some four years ago. That has drawn the attention of the people in the south to the large deposits of copper in the Chillagoe district. We knew of them some twelve or fourteen years before that, but they were looked upon as valueless because of the want of railway communication.

Mr. BROWNE: Wouldn't a State railway have brought about these conditions just the same?

The PREMIER: We were not justified in building a State railway. In fact there are some doubts now about this great mine being as good as was believed. I hope it is as good as it was thought to be.

Mr. TURLEY: They are going to get dividends from their railway.

The PREMIER: I hope they will. With regard to selling land, I have no hesitation in saying that if more of our lands were sold we would have better times.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: We have too little of our lands sold.

Mr. BROWNE: Not in large blocks.

The PREMIER: In both large and small blocks. It will be a splendid thing for this colony when the whole of our lands are sold. The State landlord is the very worst landlord in Queensland. Look at the millions of acres now going to waste in the Southern parts of the colony owing to the prickly pear. You will find freehold land on one side with no prickly pear, and Government land on the other side covered with prickly pear.

Mr. REID: Why do you not get the tenants to destroy it?

The PREMIER: The trouble is to get tenants to pay the rent at the present time. In Victoria—which I suppose is one of the most prosperous agricultural States in Australia—nearly the whole of the land is held under freehold tenure. A great deal of land has also been sold in New South Wales—I think something like £2,000,000 a year comes from the land in that colony—£1,000,000 from purchases and £1,000,000 from leaseholds.

Mr. BROWNE: You do not want 25,000-acre blocks for agricultural purchases?

The PREMIER: No; but I do not think the land in the West will ever be fit for agriculture. If you ask the people that live out there—

Mr. KERR: They said the same thing about the Darling Downs.

The PREMIER: Never to the same extent. We know that there is a regular rainfall on the Darling Downs, but there is no regular rainfall in the West. It will be absolutely necessary, I think, to sell a great deal more of our lands. Some day a Treasurer will propose to sell sufficient land to pay off our national debt, which is growing very large; and I maintain that the more freehold we have the more they will cultivate, and the more they will improve the land and secure a bigger stake in the country. Why, nearly one-third of our leasehold lands have been thrown up now!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And it would give more employment.

The PREMIER: Yes, it would give more employment; and I think that this session the House will be asked to authorise the Government to sell more land than we have been selling.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In larger blocks, too.

The PREMIER: Yes, and in larger blocks. If the sales of land have not been sufficiently advertised so far, that is a mistake. We ought to give the fullest information with regard to all the land we sell. The Government are anxious to get the best price possible. I am very glad that the leader of the Opposition has stated that the Telemon land is worth £1 per acre, for we have hundreds of thousands of acres of land as good as Telemon.

Mr. BROWNE: I said business men in Hughenden said that.

The PREMIER: From Hughenden to within a few miles of Cloncurry the land is all good.

Mr. KERR: We have Northampton Downs, &c.

The PREMIER: Yes; but that land was leasehold; the holder of it had a lease of it for fourteen years, and if he had not surrendered it it could not have been offered for sale. It would pay the State to sell a large quantity of land at 10s. an acre instead of getting 1½d. or 1¼d. per acre for it. That Western land so far has proved to be unfit for agriculture, and 10s. per acre was thought to be a big price for it. We have plenty of land to sell, and if we are authorised to sell it I can promise that every publicity will be given to the sale; that it will be advertised in Sydney, Melbourne, and elsewhere.

Mr. GIVENS: And locally, too.

The PREMIER: Yes. It ought to be advertised locally, and if that has not been done, I do not know the reason; no doubt the Minister for Lands will be able to explain. I have no wish to detain the House. There is, however, one other little matter that I should like to refer to before I sit down. I am very sorry that any trouble has arisen about the pay of any of the men in any of the contingents. Every man who went to South Africa has done his duty faithfully, and as far as I know the contract that this Government entered into has been carried out. We agreed to pay the men of the first, second, third, and fourth contingents 4s. 6d. per day. We guaranteed that, and when they arrived in South Africa, they were to get 5s. per day; but they were not to get the 5s. in South Africa and the 4s. 6d. in Queensland.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Only when in Rhodesia.

The PREMIER: I think the third contingent was two months in Rhodesia. Personally, I do not object to them getting double pay for the two months they were in Rhodesia, but so far they have got all we promised to give them. The third contingent was started by the citizens of Queensland, but the Government had to take it up and send the men off.

Mr. REID: It is not your Government we are finding fault with, it is the Imperial authorities.

The PREMIER: The Imperial authorities took the responsibility in connection with the last three contingents off our shoulders altogether, and if they are willing to pay them 5s. a day, we are quite satisfied. We do not want to make any profit out of the men.

Mr. REID: Did not the Government get some of the money from the Imperial authorities?

The PREMIER: This Government has received no money at all from the Imperial authorities on account of the third contingent. I have received a statement from Major Tunbridge setting forth the case of his contingent as against a minute of the Attorney-General. The matter will be brought before the Cabinet again, and I can promise the House that every man will receive full justice at the hands of the Government.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: That's fair.

The PREMIER: I know that some of the men have not received their pay.

Mr. REID: Some of them are knocking about the streets without money.

The PREMIER: The fault cannot be laid to the charge of the Government. All the pay-sheets have not yet come from South Africa, and those that have come are in a very imperfect state.

Mr. REID: Has the Government not received some money from the Imperial authorities for these men?

The PREMIER: The Government has not received one shilling from the Imperial authorities for these men. I understand that the Imperial Government took them over entirely, and agreed to pay 5s. a day. They came into the Transvaal, fighting with other contingents, the men in which only received one pay. I think they were only in Rhodesia two months, some of them only one month; but the average was two months.

Mr. BROWNE: I think they should get extra pay for the two months.

The PREMIER: We shall find out what the other colonies are doing. As far as I know the men were well treated. In New South Wales and Victoria the men only got 2s. 3d. per day while in camp, while here we gave each man 4s. 6d. while in camp. In every case our desire is that all the men in every contingent from the first to the sixth should be treated alike, and as far as I know they have been. It was stated that a petition has been sent to the Governor, but I have not seen it. However, Major Tunbridge—he has written the case out for the men; this will be gone into carefully and ample justice will be done. I think that after the splendid service the men have performed it is a pity that any trouble should have arisen with regard to pay.

Mr. REID: Did the Government insure all the men?

The PREMIER: The men in the first four contingents were insured. The Government applied to the Imperial authorities for payment of the insurance money of the fourth contingent, but it was refused, so Queensland had to pay. The men in the fifth and sixth contingents are in the Imperial service, and no doubt if any death or accident occurs the Imperial authorities will make allowance in such cases. Before I sit down, I wish to say that I hope this debate will not be long protracted, because, for one reason, the Treasurer will be ready very quickly with his Budget Speech, and I think that that is far more important than the Address in Reply. I am very glad that the leader of the Opposition is going to help us all he can to get business through quickly.

Mr. REID: We always do. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: We have a great deal to do. I may tell him again that I am not so alarmed about the progress of the colony as some people seem to be. We have plenty of fine country, and I think that Queensland is the best State in Australia.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: We want more people here and we want the people to lean a great deal less on the Government than they have been doing in the past. I think the crisis of 1893 had its good and its bad results. One of its good results was to throw more people into the country; consequently more land was taken up, and I trust the present depression will have a similar effect. There is any amount of land in the colony, and we want more land under cultivation and occupation. I trust that the Federal Government will not in any way interfere with the prospects of this colony, and that Queensland will benefit by having federated with the other States. I think we have everything to gain and not much to lose, and I do not think that the State of Queensland will suffer by having federated with the other colonies. I feel sure that Queensland will be just as important a State in the future as it has been in the past, and I think it would be a pity if we started first by reducing the Governor's salary.

Mr. BROWNE: That will not keep up the position of the State.

The PREMIER: I think we ought to get men equal in status to the last three Governors we have had, and I am sure that no man of the status we want will come here under a reduced salary.

Mr. BOWMAN: It's too much.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member for Warrego were Governor to-morrow, I do not think he could keep up the same state as our last three Governors have kept up much under £5,000 a year.

Mr. BOWMAN: There is no necessity to keep up that state.

The PREMIER: Government House is there, and I don't think anyone would suggest that the Governor should take in boarders to keep the State going. I hope the colony will not lose its status, but that it will be as important and as prosperous in the future as it has been in the past. We have had one bad year and may have another, but still that should not dishearten us at all. With wise legislation—sometimes we have too much legislation—and if we offer proper inducement to people to come here, spend money here, and get value for their money, I think Queensland will continue to be a good and great colony. There is plenty of good country—any amount of good mineral and agricultural land, and too much pastoral land unoccupied. The desire of every hon. member should be, I think, to see all industries flourish.

Mr. REID: Where are there pastoral lands unoccupied?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are plenty unoccupied.

The PREMIER: I thought the hon. member for Enoggera knew more about the colony than to ask such a question. There is plenty of pastoral land unoccupied.

Mr. KERR: And if you want it, you cannot get it.

The PREMIER: I understand the hon. member for Barcoo has got a very good grazing farm.

Mr. KERR: Yes, and I want another if I can get it. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: I have nothing further to say on the Address. I am glad indeed [5'30 p.m.] that the leader of the Opposition has so little fault to find with what the Government has done in the recess. I thought he would try to show that our cup of evil was overflowing, but I find that it was only a little mild attack—much milder than usual.

Mr. BROWNE: It takes a lot to make some people feel.

The PREMIER: As soon as this debate is over, I believe the Treasurer will be ready with his Budget Speech.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: Hear, hear!

* Mr. GIVENS (Cairns): I hope that the Premier will remember that some of our members have gone to the Federal Parliament, and some of them have yet to arrive, so that I trust he will excuse a humble individual like myself rising to reply to him. I think it was the hon. member for Toowong, in moving this Address, who stated that since the last session of Parliament some extraordinary events had happened, and he enumerated the death of the late Queen, the accession of the new King, and the visit of the Heir-Apparent to the Throne, as being these extraordinary events, but he altogether missed the most extraordinary event of the whole lot, or at least it seems to have escaped his memory when he was addressing himself to the Speech. To my mind, the most extraordinary and the most unaccountable event which has happened since this House last met has been the refusal of the Imperial Government

to sanction a Bill passed by this House. I allude to the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Act, which was reserved by the Governor for the Royal assent, and was vetoed by the Royal authorities when it was referred to them. That Bill was a matter of purely domestic legislation; it was not a matter that affected the relations of the Imperial Government with any of the other nations of the world in the slightest degree. The provision for which it was alleged that the Bill was rejected did not say that this colony would not allow Chinese or Japanese or similar nationalities in the world to engage in the sugar industry. It only said that this colony would not subsidise them for engaging in that industry; and, therefore, I fail to see for what reason the advisers of the Imperial Government should have advised the King to veto that Bill. I will endeavour, before I sit down, to show why such advice was given. Hon. members must be aware, who have paid attention to the course of legislation in this House, that there was exactly the same provisions in the four private railway Bills which passed through this House last year as was contained in the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Bill, for which it was alleged that the Bill was vetoed. I would like to point out that none of these four railway Bills were reserved for the Royal assent. They were immediately assented to by the State Governor. What I want to know is, was the State Governor influenced by a partisan spirit of his own, or was he acting on the advice of his Ministers. My opinion of the late Governor is, that Lord Lamington would have thought it beneath him to show anything like such a partisan spirit, when he reserved one Bill for the Royal assent on account of it containing a provision exactly of the same nature as one which was contained in four other Bills, to which he gave his immediate consent. In order to show hon. members, and in order to get into the columns of *Hansard* what was the true position, I will read the provisions of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Bill, for which it was alleged that the Bill was vetoed. It was as follows:—

From and after the passing of this Act, no aboriginal native of Asia, Africa, or the Pacific Islands shall be employed by any company to which any advance has been, or may hereafter be paid, under the provisions of the Sugar Works Guarantee Acts of 1893 to 1900, in or about any sugar mill or permanent tramway owned or worked by the company; and the company, and every managing director, manager, superintendent, or person in charge of such Bill or permanent tramway shall be liable to a penalty, to be recovered in a summary way before any two justices, of one pound in respect of each such native for every day during which such native is employed contrary to the provisions of this section.

An exactly similar provision was contained in each of the four private railway Acts passed last session, yet none of them were reserved for the Royal assent. That was the provision in the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Bill, for which it was alleged the Bill was vetoed. It was alleged that it contained a prohibition against certain subjects of the King, and also against the subjects of certain powers which occupied friendly relations with the King, which could not be tolerated by the Imperial Government. It is very strange that the Imperial Government could tolerate exactly the same provision in four other Bills. The provision in the Callide Railway Act passed last session, hon. members will see, is contained in section 6, and it is as follows:—

No aboriginal native of Africa, Asia, or of the Pacific Islands shall be employed by the company, or any of its contractors or sub-contractors, in or about the construction, maintenance, or management of the railway, or in or about the mineral lands referred to in this Act, under a penalty of one pound for each such person for every day during which such person is employed. The

onus of proof that this section is being complied with shall rest with the person or persons charged with employing the same.

So that in reality the provision contained in that Bill was more stringent than the provision in the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Bill. Now, if hon. members will turn to page 7404 of the Acts passed last year, they will find in section 7 of the Albert River, Burketown, and Lilydale Tramway Company's Act a similar clause, which reads as follows:—

No aboriginal native of Asia or of the Pacific Islands shall be employed by the company in or about the construction, maintenance, or management of the tramway or subsidiary works referred to in this Act, or in or about any of the mineral lands, under a penalty of one pound for each such person for every day during which such person is employed.

And on page 7421 they will find clause 6 of the Glassford Creek Tramway Company's Act, which reads—

No aboriginal native of Africa, Asia, or of the Pacific Islands shall be employed by the owners in or about the construction, maintenance, or management of the tramway, or in or about the mineral lands referred to in this Act, under a penalty of one pound for each such person for every day during which such person is employed.

Then, again, if they will turn to page 7437, they will find clause 7 of the Mount Garnet Company's Railway Act, which reads as follows:—

No aboriginal native of Africa, Asia, or of the Pacific Islands shall be employed by the company in or about the construction, maintenance, or management of the tramway, under a penalty of one pound for each such person for every day during which such person is employed.

Now I think, Mr. Speaker, it is perfectly reasonable to ask, why is this extraordinary distinction drawn between the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Bill and the four private railway Acts? I will ask the Hon. Premier, who is in a position to reply, whether it was by the advice of the Executive Council, or the responsible Ministers, that Lord Lamington reserved the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Bill for the Royal assent, or if the Premier will say whether Lord Lamington did it "on his own"? I fail to draw a reply from the hon. gentleman. I think he is very wise not to reply. The Attorney-General is also listening from the front Treasury bench, and he makes no reply. I think both Ministers are very wise not to allow me to draw a reply from them. I think, however, I can show this House who was responsible for this being done.

The PREMIER: You speak for yourself, and you will do very well.

Mr. GIVENS: I am speaking for myself, and I do not want anyone to speak for me. I am particularly interested in this matter, because the constituency which I represent is particularly interested in it, and I am particularly interested, because, although it was the Premier himself who moved the provision which was objected to, yet it was practically an amendment of mine which the hon. gentleman adopted. I would like to point out that it is evident to any reasonable man that the Governor must have had some special reason for reserving one Act for the Royal assent, while at the same time giving his assent to four others containing the same clause. Well, I say the only reason the Governor could have had for acting in that way was because he was acting on the advice of his responsible Ministers. They are on the horns of this dilemma: that they must either admit having advised His Excellency to reserve the Bill for the Royal assent, or they must acknowledge that His Excellency acted in a grossly partisan fashion. They must take the blame themselves, or put it upon an individual who I do not think deserves it, and upon whom they are not game to put it. Now, it may be

asked what motive any Ministry could have in inducing the Governor to reserve the Bill for the Royal assent while advising him to assent to the four other Acts I have mentioned. It is evident on the face of it what the motives were which induced the Government to act in that way. Hon. members will be aware that last year the taking over of the control of all alien and coloured emigration by the Federal Government was imminent, and there was a certain class of people in this colony who were specially interested in obtaining a continued supply of cheap coloured aliens for the purpose of enabling them to engage in the cultivation of sugar. The present Ministry have always adopted a most kindly attitude towards that section of the community, and they have spared no effort to obtain for that section the necessary supplies of cheap labour. But, while they were interested in doing that, they do not appear to have been so much interested in obtaining cheap labour for the private railway companies which are about to engage in the construction of railway lines under the private Acts passed last session, and, therefore, they have allowed the Governor to give assent to four private Railway Acts, while at the same time they tried to force the hand of the Federal Government by advising Lord Lamington to refuse to give assent to the Act amending the Sugar Works Guarantee Act. It is evident that Lord Lamington did not act on his own, and, therefore, must have acted on the advice of his Ministers, and Ministers have given him that advice, as I say, for the purpose of forcing the hand of the Federal Government in dealing with the question of coloured labour. In fact, the Premier, when he came from South Africa, was interviewed upon the subject, and in the most innocent manner told the public that the Federal Government could do nothing to interfere with coloured labour in face of the fact that the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Bill had been vetoed on account of this particular provision. I would point out that the Act which has been vetoed was not in any way an Act which imperilled the relations of the Imperial Government with Japan or any other country. It was purely a domestic Act, and did not say that the Japanese or Chinese, or any other "ese," were not to be allowed to grow sugar in Queensland. It only said that this colony would not lend them money to do so. We say that we have a perfect right to supply money to any individual to enable him to do anything he likes, and of which we approve; and we have a perfect right to refrain from lending money to anyone to do anything that we do not approve of.

The PREMIER: It said they should not work on the tramlines.

Mr. GIVENS: Yes, and the four private railway Acts said that they should not work on the tramlines.

The PREMIER: You will get that explained.

Mr. GIVENS: The Premier, in speaking just now, said that work had already started under the provisions of some of the railway Acts passed last session. Well, if that is the case, I am sorry for it; and I think, if the Premier did his duty, he would issue a warning to these private railway companies against commencing any work until the fate of their Acts is decided. I have shown that the provisions in the four private railway Acts are exactly the same as the provision relating to this matter in the other Act, and as the Imperial authorities have power to veto any Act within two years of its passage, even though the Governor may have assented to it, I say the fate of those four private railway Acts is not assured. The Governor's assent is merely tentative, and therefore it is quite on the cards that when the Imperial Government

understand the true position they may refuse to give assent to the four private railway Acts passed last session; and, as far as I am concerned, I can assure the Premier that the Imperial Government will have full information supplied to them on the subject. If hon. members will turn to page 206, vol. I., of the Queensland Statutes, they will find that section 13 of the Constitution Act reads as follows:—

The provisions of the before-mentioned Act of the fourteenth year of Her Majesty, chapter fifty-nine, and of the Act of the sixth year of Her Majesty, chapter seventy-six, entitled "An Act for the Government of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land," which relate to the giving and withholding of Her Majesty's assent to Bills and the reservation of Bills for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure thereon, and the instructions to be conveyed to Governors for their guidance in relation to the matters aforesaid and the disallowance of Bills by Her Majesty, shall apply to Bills to be passed by the Legislative Council and Assembly constituted under this Act and the said Order in Council and by any other legislative body or bodies which may at any time hereafter be substituted for the present Legislative Council and Assembly.

Then, turning to page 202, the following, which is the provision referred to, is to be found in the preamble of the Act:—

And by the thirty-second clause of the said last-mentioned Act it was enacted as follows:—"That whenever any Bill which shall have been presented for Her Majesty's assent to the Governor of the said colony shall by such Governor have been assented to in Her Majesty's name the Governor shall by the first convenient opportunity transmit to one of Her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State an authentic copy of such Bill so assented to, and that it shall be lawful, at any time within two years after such Bill shall have been so received by the Secretary of State, for Her Majesty by Order in Council to declare her disallowance of such Bill, and that such disallowance, together with a certificate under the hand and seal of the Secretary of State certifying the day on which such Bill was received as aforesaid, being signified by the Governor to the Legislative Council of the said colony by speech or message to the said Council or by proclamation in the *New South Wales Government Gazette* shall make void and annul the same from and after the day of such signification."

Thus you see that the fate of these four private Railway Acts passed last session is yet in the balance. I am perfectly satisfied that the Imperial Government, when they are made acquainted with the true position, will advise His Majesty to disallow these Bills. I contend that they are in honour bound to do so; they cannot escape from the position, because they have rejected one Bill, simply because it contains a provision prohibiting the employment of coloured races under certain conditions, and these four private Railway Acts contain exactly the same provision. These four private Railway Acts are still subject to the Royal assent, and I contend that in order to protect the interest of the people, who do not know any better, seeing that the measures are now in a precarious predicament, the Premier ought to issue a warning to the general public not to invest any money in the enterprises until the fate of the Bills is decided. The Premier may argue that the promoters of these private railway enterprises are quite capable of taking care of their own interests. I suppose they are, but there are many of the public who, because they may not know the facts, are not capable of taking care of their own interests, and their interests may be sacrificed if no warning is issued. I hope the hon. gentleman will issue that warning; at any rate I trust that the report of this debate in the House will serve as a warning to innocent persons who may be tempted to invest their money in these enterprises. A similar provision prohibiting the employment of coloured aliens is contained in the Mining Act of 1893, under much more stringent conditions, because under that provision a coloured alien, even if

born in Queensland, would have no right under the Act. The regulations relating to pearl-shell fishing in Torres Straits also contains an equally stringent provision, and there are plenty of other Acts which contain such a provision. Then why was the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Act the only one singled out to be refused the Royal assent? It is because it is wished to retain that class of labour in connection with the sugar industry, and to tie up as much as possible the hands of the Federal Parliament in dealing with the matter; but I think that although the persons responsible for the refusal of the Royal assent in this case were very clever individuals, their cleverness this time has overreached itself. There is another aspect of this matter which I would like to draw attention to, and that is that although hon. members who occupy the front Treasury benches are very fond of protesting on all occasions their great loyalty and love for the British Empire, I do not think an action such as this on their part is calculated to prove their loyalty and love for the Empire. There is not a single individual in Queensland, or perhaps in Australia, who feels the slightest irksomeness with regard to our connection with the mother country, but if there is anything in the world which may cause irritation and the final severance of the connection between this State and the mother country it is the refusal of the mother country to allow us to manage our own domestic affairs. I claim that in a piece of domestic legislation like the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Act we should have the right to manage our own affairs, and that in doing so we do not jeopardise in the slightest degree the interest of the mother country. Therefore the Premier and his colleagues, in advising the late Governor to refuse the Royal assent to that Bill, as I maintain they must have done, utterly failed to show their loyalty and love to the mother country, because the refusal of the Royal assent to such a measure is calculated to cause a feeling of irritation between this State and the mother country which may bear bitter fruit by and by. In going behind the backs of this Parliament and getting the late Governor to refuse his assent they have been disloyal to the House and the people of the colony. It should be the pleasure of hon. members who have the privilege to lead the House and guide the destinies of the country to carry out the behests of Parliament and the wishes of the people; and the behests of Parliament and the wishes of the people are best expressed in the Acts of this House. When the responsible advisers of His Excellency advised him to refuse his assent to that measure they acted disloyally towards the members of this House and towards the State of Queensland. After the Bill was reserved for the Royal assent it was in the usual course of things sent home to the Imperial authorities to be dealt with, and, as everybody here now knows, it was vetoed. I should like to ask why it was vetoed. I maintain that the Imperial authorities did not veto that Bill without some good reason, and that good reason cannot be on account of the prohibition with reference to coloured aliens, otherwise they would have vetoed the four private railway Acts. The good reason, therefore, which influenced them must have been that there were such representations made to the Imperial authorities by interested individuals in this State as induced them to veto the Bill. I say that the Ministers or other individuals, no matter who they may be, who went behind the backs of the people and advised the Imperial authorities to disallow the Bill, were traitors to the colony and traitors to the mother country, because they have produced a feeling of irritation which may be productive

of more serious consequences than they imagine at the present time. Their action was not the result of blind chance; it was a well-thought out scheme by some individual. We know that the sugar industry is very largely represented by some members in this House who claim to be among the most influential members of the Chamber, and I believe they have pulled the wires in order to secure the fruition of their wishes. But I am pleased to say that I believe their action will be like a boomerang, which will rebound on them and hurt their feelings most, that is in connection with their beloved private railway schemes. Now, I wish to deal with some matters which are mentioned in the Governor's Speech, and also with some matters mentioned by the Premier. Of course, one of the most serious things we have to consider at the present time is the very great depression from which every industry throughout the colony is suffering. Although the Governor's Speech states that the mining industry is flourishing, and that we have nothing to fear, yet the result in the past half-year has been somewhat alarming. We have an alarming falling off in the yield of gold, and of several other minerals as well. While I am not inclined to take a pessimistic view of the matter, yet I think some measures, or some alteration of policy, will be necessary to obviate a further decline in our mineral output. The Premier stated, in reply to the leader of the Opposition, that he did not think that exemptions had anything to do with the decline in our mineral production. I might tell the hon. gentleman that from all the mineral fields in the colony there is a great and bitter outcry against the continuous exemptions which are being granted wholesale on all our mineral fields without the slightest justification. I know from my own personal knowledge that several mines which have been offered to be taken on tribute have been held under continuous exemption for something like two or three years.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where are they?

Mr. GIVENS: In the Herberton district. I drew the attention of the Premier last year to the exemptions in the Herberton district. It has had a disastrous effect upon tin-mining in that district. Some four or five years [7 p.m.] ago, when the price of tin came down very much, the men who owned many of the mines there were forced to abandon them—or, at any rate, they were forced to cease working owing to the tin not bringing a remunerative price. Since then the price obtainable for tin in the local market has practically trebled, and many of those mines would pay handsomely were it not for the fact that they are held by men who will not work them themselves, but simply hold them in order that they may demand enormous sums from those who are prepared to work them. There have been wholesale exemptions up there. I know of three or four cases of men last year who tried their utmost to get hold of some of those mines, and could not, simply because they had been held under continuous exemptions. I contend that the old system we had in Queensland was infinitely preferable to the present one. In the old days after a man had taken up a lease he was expected to put in six months' legitimate work before he was entitled to any exemption. That six months' work was considered evidence of his *bona fides*. It was a sufficient guarantee that he desired to work the ground for legitimate purposes. But the effect of the amending Act of 1898—or the effect of the administration of that Act—has been, not to develop our mineral resources, but to enable private individuals—sharks, speculators, and people of that ilk—to extract money from those people who desire to develop our

resources. If, as was pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, a man comes along with £20,000 to invest in a mine, he has to give the greater portion of it to some shark who is holding the ground for speculative purposes before he can put 1s. into the mine. I would like to point out to the Premier that he has had these facts brought under his notice on several occasions. On behalf of the tinminers of Herberton, I spoke to the hon. gentleman last year on more than one occasion, and there has been no redress for that. As a matter of fact, at the present time there is a petition being signed by the miners of Herberton against the continuous wholesale exemptions there, and I hope that the Government will refuse to grant any more of these exemptions unless some *bona fide* work has been done on the ground. The Mining Act of 1898 was introduced for the set purpose of booming our mining industry. It was a part of the policy of boom which has been the chief characteristic of the "continuous" Ministry; and I would like to point out that the result of that policy of boom has not been anything like what was predicted. It was predicted in 1898 that the conditions were what was called liberalised to such an extent that there would be a great boom in the mining industry, and that people would rush in to take up our mineral lands, and would introduce a large amount of capital in order to develop those lands. With that object in view, the security of tenure was very largely increased. The area of gold-mining leases was doubled, and the labour conditions were reduced to one-fourth of what they were formerly. Now, if that policy was going to have the effect that was predicted, one would imagine that there would be an enormous expansion in the output of gold and other minerals since the passing of the Act. Now, what has been the result? I shall quote the official returns for the last six years, so far as the goldmining industry is concerned. In 1895 there were produced in this colony 631,682 oz. of gold; in 1896, 640,385 oz.; in 1897, 807,928 oz.; in 1898, 920,048 oz.; in 1899, 946,894 oz.; and in 1900, 963,071 oz.—thus showing that the rate of increase was infinitely greater before the passing of the Act of 1898 than it has been since. We find from these figures that the industry has not shown the same capacity for expansion since the passing of the Act that it showed before its passage, although it is admitted on all hands that only the fringe of our mineral resources has yet been touched. Such a result is a biting commentary upon the policy of boom which has been characteristic of the Continuous Ministry. After doubling the area which could be held, after reducing the labour conditions to one-fourth, we find that there has been nothing like the same expansion in the gold-mining industry that there was before that Act was passed; and the last few months shows that, instead of there being an expansion, there has been a most decided contraction of the output from our gold mines.

The PREMIER: Is that the fault of the Act?

Mr. GIVENS: Well, if it is not the fault of the Act, it is of the administration of the Act, and one of the main reasons of it has been that the very best of our mineral lands and the very best of our gold mining lands have been allowed to be locked up and not made accessible to the men who are prepared to work them. Again, I would point out that within the last three or four years the price of tin—a mineral in which Queensland is very rich—has trebled so far as the price available to the colonial seller is concerned.

The PREMIER: That is not true. It has doubled only.

Mr. GIVENS: It has doubled in price in the home market, but the price available to the

Herberton tinminer has trebled. For instance, where the Herberton tinminer would formerly get £50 per ton for black tin, he has in later years got £93 or £94.

The PREMIER: That is not trebled.

Mr. GIVENS: I am quoting now the old country price; and where formerly he got £93 or £94, of late times he has got up to £143 or £144.

The PREMIER: For black tin?

Mr. GIVENS: No—that is for smelted tin. If black tin is supposed to be 70 per cent., that tin in the old country used to fetch about £50 a ton; but the miners would only get 70 per cent. of that price, and out of that had to pay a very high price for carriage and other things, which brought it down to very much less. Now that the price has doubled—and the Premier admits that it has doubled—they have only to pay just about the same amount as they formerly did for carriage and other charges. Thus, if you got £40 for the tin at the port—which was the price three or four years ago—you had to pay £10 per ton to get it to port, and when it is £90 per ton you still have to pay only £10 per ton to get it to port. That means that it is worth about three times as much now to the local producer on the tinfields. One would have imagined that such a stimulating influence as that would have made the output of tin increase by leaps and bounds. But what is the result? That miners who went back to the fields abandoned years ago could not get a look at them, because all the mines were held by speculators, whose sole object is to extort blackmail from those who desire to work them. The consequence is that these men who desired to invest their labour and capital in working the mines have been kept idle all the time this magnificent price has been obtained for tin, which is such an important industry for the colony. The same sort of business is going on in every branch of the mining industry. The most valuable mining country that we have, except at Charters Towers, Croydon, and Gympie—nearly all of it is held under continuous exemption. That is a very bad policy indeed. The Ministry profess a desire to find work for the unemployed. That is a very laudable desire, and I say that they can provide them employment in large numbers, without it costing the State one penny, by throwing open the resources of the State to these men instead of locking up these resources by means of these exemptions, which are given, not for the development of the industry, or to enrich the people, but to put money into the pockets of people whose only object is to levy blackmail on those who desire to develop our great resources. That is one direction in which I think the Ministry could easily find a remedy for the present depression. From my knowledge of the mining industry and of the resources of the colony, I can honestly say that there is room for infinitely more men than there are now in Queensland who could find profitable employment in this industry. We cannot have development under these exemptions. No property is of use to anybody unless it is properly worked. You can never enrich people or extract the wealth from the mines while you have these continuous exemptions. The people who have these continuous exemptions do not dig the wealth out of the mines, but they dig, or try to dig, money out of the genuine investors' pockets. That is the worst policy that could be pursued, and no Government should encourage that sort of thing. If the Mines Department reverted to the old system of refusing all exemptions, except some genuine work has been done, it would be infinitely better for the mining industry at large and for

the colony. But so far from that being the case, the department has given exemptions for three and four years in cases where not a rap of work has been done, where a pick has not even been inserted in the ground. There is another direction in which I think the policy of the present Government is open to legitimate criticism. On the one hand, they are buying back large estates formerly alienated by the Crown at a largely increased cost on the price received in the first instance, and, on the other hand, the Ministry is trying to get out of a temporary difficulty—that they themselves are largely responsible for—by selling huge areas of these lands yet in the hands of the Crown. Now, that is a most fatuous policy—a policy that a fourteen-year old school boy would not be guilty of—selling public lands in large areas, and at the same time they have evidence in front of their eyes of the evils of pursuing that course in the past. The position is this: A squatter desires to obtain possession of certain portions of runs which will give him the key to the whole position—which will give him the command of all the adjacent lands; he applies to the Minister for Lands to have these lands sold to him. The Minister says, "All right. You surrender the portions, and I will put them up for sale." He does this simply to oblige the squatter, who, of course, secures the land without competition. That is a most fatuous policy, and should not be pursued by anyone who has the welfare of the people of Queensland at heart. I maintain that the land should not be sold except for the purpose of genuine settlement, and not for grazing purposes, because leases are quite sufficient guarantee for those individuals who desire land solely for grazing purposes. Our lands should always be kept available for agricultural settlement, or closer settlement, by grazing farmers, when they desire to settle on these good lands. I repeat, that it is a most fatuous policy to offer large blocks of land for sale when there is palpable evidence of the evil results of that policy in the past. I believe in the policy of buying back large estates. I believe the Repurchase Act is a good one in this respect, but that it has been very much abused in its administration—that estates have been repurchased that should never have come under the Lands Repurchase Act at all. However, that matter has been thrashed out before, so I don't intend to occupy any further time in dealing with it to-night. I would like to say here, that if there is such a stern necessity for parting with Western lands to replenish the Treasury—which I do not agree with—but, granting there is this stern necessity, why not do it in the proper fashion? We know that it has been done in an underhand fashion, without sufficient publicity, to the people likely to buy these lands, but solely to enable the big squatters to buy them without competition. That is palpable on the face of it. The sales have not been advertised locally, and there has not been sufficient time between the date of the advertisement and the time of sale to allow intending purchasers to inspect the land and see if they thought it good enough to buy. Under the present fatuous system, it is the rich squatter who moves to have the sale held for his own ends. I think that may almost be called palpable jobbery. Some of the chief Ministerial papers have stigmatised it as such, and I don't think they are far wrong.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GIVENS: At any rate it is a system that is calculated to arouse suspicion. The suspicion may be unjust; still it exists in the minds of very many people, and it is not a wise policy to excite suspicion of that kind. Looking over the Governor's Speech, I find that there are a good many measures promised, and out of the

number no less than eight of them are amending Bills, showing that instead of the House going in for original legislation this session we shall be engaged chiefly in tinkering up old legislation. And yet some hon. members on the other side say that we don't do business fast enough in this House. I say that if the Bills which it is proposed now to amend had received full and fair discussion—if they had been properly considered and debated—I contend that there would be no necessity for this patchwork legislation. Why this necessity for amending Bills? Simply because former Bills are faulty in some respects. That must be the only palpable reason, and I maintain the greatest contributory cause towards the faultiness of these Bills has been insufficient discussion or not sufficient thought bestowed upon them in the framing or the passage of them, thus showing it is no aid whatever to facilitating the business in this House to simply rush it through, because we will have to go back a year or two afterwards and amend the legislation which has been hastily passed in former years. Amongst the Bills to be introduced are Bills to constitute certain harbour boards, and I am very pleased indeed to see these Bills mentioned. So far as the port of Brisbane, which is the principal port in point of trade and in other respects, is concerned, I shall be very glad to see its affairs put under the control of a harbour board. I think that the river and port will be more efficiently managed by a harbour board—who should be allowed to manage their own affairs in their own way—than by the present Government. I believe it will save the colony a very large expenditure. I do not see why they should not have one, though I believe that while some individuals sing out very loudly for a harbour board they do not very much desire it. They would much rather continue to have the State as a milch cow. We want a harbour board at Cairns; we do not want to continue to hang on to the coat tails of the colony and have to depend upon it whenever we want a dredge. We want to be in a position to manage our own affairs; to dredge the bar in our own way, and at our own expense. We do not ask one-tenth or one-fifteenth of the endowment that has been given to other boards. All we ask is that our harbour board shall be allowed to manage our own affairs in our own way. Although the Speech generally is rather colourless, yet, reading between the lines, I think you will find that the Ministry are just as much in earnest as they were last year in forcing on the attention of this House certain Bills which are objectionable to a considerable percentage of the members of this House, and very objectionable, I believe, to a very large percentage of the people of this colony—namely, private railway Bills. They are not mentioned in so many words, but I think anyone could feel them with a stick in the dark. Referring to the mining industry, the Speech says—

The mining industry continues to develop in a natural and healthy manner. Last year's gold yield was the largest in the history of the State, and whatever falling off has latterly been apparent is due to causes that in no way affect the intrinsic merits of the mines. The advantages of the extension of railway communication to our mineral fields are now being experienced, and you will be asked to consider further proposals for securing to the remoter parts of the State the stimulating influence of cheaper freight and better communication with the coast.

Now, I am going to ask what has the unfortunate miner done that should induce the Government to hand him over to the mercy of a private railway syndicate, while the Government are prepared to build railways for every other industry in the colony? The mining industry has saved the colony from insolvency on more than one occasion. It was the discovery of gold at Gympie in 1867

which saved this colony from disaster. As a matter of fact, it is the mining industry that is saving this colony from disaster at the present day. Under these circumstances, I ask why should the miner be treated as a social outcast who has only to get railway communication on the terms which would allow the railway companies to charge 300 per cent. more than is charged for the carriage of goods over the State railways?

The PREMIER: Draw it mild. Why don't you say 1,000?

Mr. GIVENS: I say what is true, and if the hon. gentleman disputes my word I am prepared to take him to the railway office to-morrow morning and convince him that I am right.

The PREMIER: You are quite wrong.

Mr. GIVENS: When I first heard the matter stated in that way I thought there must have been a mistake. When I was told that for certain goods the Chillagoe Railway Company charged 300 per cent. more than was charged by the Government lines, I took the trouble to go to the railway office at Cairns to verify the statement, with the result that I found it was absolutely and perfectly true. It is quite true that the Chillagoe Railway and Mines Act only allows the Chillagoe Company to charge 50 per cent. higher than the rates which were chargeable on the Government lines at the time of the passing of the Act. At that time perishable products were charged at a certain rate, but since that time the Government have reduced the rate chargeable on these goods by one-half. Yet the Chillagoe Railway syndicate very religiously exact 50 per cent. over the Government rates at the time the Act was passed. For instance, if you could get a certain quantity of perishable goods carried over the Government lines, at the time the Act was passed, for £1, it would cost 30s. to carry it the same distance over the Chillagoe line, supposing it had been in existence. Now, the Government have reduced the rate by 10s., whereas the Chillagoe Railway Company still maintain the rate at 30s., which they would have charged originally. They are, therefore, charging 300 per cent. over and above the amount that the Government at present charge for perishable products, and perishable products comprise a great number of articles. The Hon. Premier knows that, because he was Minister for Railways for a considerable time.

Mr. BROWNE: Two hundred per cent. higher than the State railways.

Mr. GIVENS: It is three times higher, and three times higher is almost as bad as 300 per cent. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: Surely there is some mistake!

Mr. GIVENS: I will give you what was charged on a small parcel of ice, which is one of the perishable products. To take 1 cwt. from Cairns to Mareeba, that is forty-six miles, the charge according to the Government rate was 6d. To take the same quantity for fifty-five miles on the Chillagoe railway the charge is 2s. 8d., making the total charge 3s. 2d. If that was a Government railway right through, the charge would be only 11d.

The PREMIER: What would it cost by bullock team?

Mr. GIVENS: One of the largest items used in the mining industry—

The PREMIER: Is ice. (Laughter.)

Mr. GIVENS: One of the most necessary things for the development of a mining property is dynamite. You can carry that by pack-horse from Cairns cheaper than you can carry it over the railway. My opinion is that if a railway cannot beat a pack-horse, then the railway is of very little advantage. Of course I admit that dynamite is an exceptional commodity, and that the Government charge very high rates for it, and as the Chillagoe Railway Company charge

proportionately high, it makes a very high charge indeed. The result is that pack-horses can take dynamite cheaper from Cairns than it can be taken by railway.

The PREMIER: They can carry maize sometimes cheaper by pack-horses than by railway.

Mr. GIVENS: It is totally unfair to the mining community that they should have to labour under this disadvantage. The public debt of this colony has been mainly incurred for the construction of State railways. It has been borrowed upon the credit of the whole community, and on it the whole community have to pay interest; but in many instances the miner pays more than his fair share of that interest, because he has to pay taxation on everything that he consumes. He produces nothing that he can either eat or wear, with the result that he has to pay taxation on every item that he consumes.

The PREMIER: He need not use them unless he likes.

Mr. GIVENS: The Premier says "he need not use them unless he likes." Of course nobody need stop in the colony unless he likes, but I say that it is not necessary, in order to develop the mining resources of this State and make it one of the first States in the Commonwealth, to make the conditions such that people will clear out and engage in other industries.

The PREMIER: I did not say so.

Mr. GIVENS: I am pointing out that the miner is about the most heavily taxed individual in the community, and pays more [7.30 p.m.] than his due share of the interest on the public debt, which is chiefly contracted in the building of railways. I ask why should the miner be singled out for this unfair treatment—why should the mining industry bear so heavy a burden, and be the only industry which is to have its railways built by private enterprise?

The PREMIER: In what way does the miner pay more?

Mr. GIVENS: Simply because he has to consume dutiable products, and produces nothing which he consumes himself. He is taxed upon everything he eats and wears and uses in his trade. The miner is the only individual who is taxed for the light by which he works. It is essential that he should have light by which to work, and candles are about the only articles giving light which the miner can use. The result is that the poor unfortunate miner is taxed for the very light by which he works. The candles which he uses are not made locally.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes, 95 per cent. of them are.

Mr. GIVENS: I have been mining for seventeen years, and I never saw a locally-made candle worth working with under ground.

Mr. FORSYTH: Go to Charters Towers now and see what is used. Not 5 per cent. of candles are imported.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. member for Carpentaria is evidently a great authority on candles. I would point out that it does not matter whether candles are made locally or not. The result of the duty is that the miner has to pay, and therefore he is taxed for the light by which he works.

The PREMIER: The mineowners always buy the candles.

Mr. GIVENS: Yes, and very often the working miner is at the same time the mineowner.

The PREMIER: Not often.

Mr. GIVENS: As a matter of fact I believe 90 per cent. of the miners are shareholders in the mines of Queensland.

Mr. BROWNE: It is a tax on the industry, no matter who pays it.

Mr. GIVENS: As the hon. member for Croydon says, it does not matter who pays the

tax, it is a tax on the industry, and I again ask why the miner should be singled out for this invidious treatment? Why should his industry be the only industry which is not provided with railway communication, the cost of which is borne by the whole community? Until the line from Maryborough to Gympie was handicapped by a lot of side lines, it was one of the best paying lines in Queensland. The line from Rockhampton to Mount Morgan is one of the best paying that we have, and the line from Townsville to Charters Towers is undoubtedly one of the best paying lines of railway in Australia. It seems to me, therefore, that to place the mining industry at the mercy of private syndicates is taking a very unfair advantage of that industry, and handicapping it to a very great extent. If it is a good thing to build private lines of railway, why not build them in the agricultural districts? If it is a good thing, I submit to the House that the colony should make the best terms possible, and the most money possible out of it, instead of handing over concessions of this kind to one set of favoured individuals. Why not make a list of the concessions which the colony is prepared to give, and call for tenders from the big syndicates, asking them what they are willing to give for those concessions. I think that would be a business-like way of going about the measure, instead of giving these concessions to one set of favoured individuals. I am opposed to giving concessions to any individual, whether rich or poor, unless we get an adequate return; and the way in which to secure that adequate return is to call for tenders, by which means possibly the Treasurer would be able to wipe out the deficit with which he is now troubled. Of course the Premier is a great believer in private railways, and members generally will give him credit for holding honest convictions upon the subject. I do not blame him. Possibly he cannot help it, and probably believes that privately-owned railways are the best railways for the development of this colony. But in other parts of the world they are beginning to look upon privately-owned railways as an out-of-date system, and they are going in for buying back those railways. I take exception to one remark made by the Premier when he said that so far the colony has gained immensely from the construction of private railways. I grant that in the Cairns and Chillagoe district there has been a considerable revival of trade owing to construction of that railway, but I contend it would be infinitely better for that part of the colony if the State had undertaken to build the railway, and I further contend that a great part of the activity which has been in evidence has been due, not so much to the building of the railway as to the enormous increase in the price of minerals. Had it not been for that increase in price, the proposal to build the railway would never have been made or entertained. Then the Premier says that the colony will not lose money by building private railways. I disagree with the hon. gentleman entirely, because I know that in the city of Brisbane there are plenty of people who have lost large sums owing to the building of private railways. I know of men in Brisbane who mortgaged everything they had to invest in Chillagoe shares, when they were at £2 5s. a share, with the result that they are stranded and helpless now that those shares have gone down to 12s. 6d. Who are the people who have got the money invested in Chillagoe shares? It is the holders of the original concession who unloaded their shares on to a trusting and confiding public, and who now do not care a straw whether they get a single ounce of copper since they have made themselves secure. That is always the case in connection with great mining flotations. The usual procedure in

floating a mine is for a few individuals to float it amongst themselves; then to obtain glowing reports from so-called experts, make a big boom, and put the shares on the market. By this means the trusting public are induced to give fancy prices for the shares, after which there is a huge collapse, with the result that the public are invariably taken down. I do not think it is advisable for this Government or any other Government, in this colony or any other colony, to offer facilities to people of that class to take the citizens of the colony down. Then, again, with regard to the deficit, the Premier said it was almost wholly to be attributed to the unprecedented drought. Of course, Providence is very convenient. We can always shoulder our burdens upon Providence; but I maintain that there are individuals who could see this bad time ahead, and it was mentioned very often in this House last session, especially by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston. It was mentioned last year, when the then Treasurer, who is now Premier, stated that he had good ground for anticipating a surplus as the result of the year's operations. The hon. member for Rockhampton then pointed out that the year's operations were far more likely to result in a considerable deficit.

The PREMIER: That is said every year.

Mr. GIVENS: It is not said every year. At any rate, hon. members can read Mr. Kidston's speech for themselves, and if they do so they will find that his statement of the case has been more than justified by events. In the face of a falling revenue I maintain that it was not a proper thing for the Ministry to do to increase expenditure; they should have waited for more prosperous times before they launched out in expenditure. But, instead of doing that, last year they increased the salaries of highly-paid officials, and acted in several ways with more extravagance than was justified by the occasion, and now they come along and blame Providence for the drought. As a matter of fact, we were suffering from the drought for two or three years before; and if the hon. gentleman possessed that amount of business ability and sagacity with which he is credited, he should have made provision for what was then anticipated. The Premier has expressed a hope that this debate will not be too long; and, as I do not wish to deprive other hon. members of the same privilege as I have enjoyed myself, I think I will allow somebody else an opportunity of saying what he has got to say. If I have spoken strongly about some matters it is because I have felt strongly. I do not go behind anybody's back to say what I have got to say. If any hon. member has a grievance this is the proper place in which to ventilate that grievance. I have endeavoured to do that, and I hope that some hon. member opposite will get up and make a defence against some of the serious charges which I have brought against the Government, that is if any such defence is possible. At any rate, I should very much like to hear an explanation of some of the matters which I have brought under the notice of the Ministry and the House. I may add that, as far as I myself am concerned, I desire to give no factious opposition to the Ministry during the coming year, or in fact in any other session of Parliament. I trust that the interests of all parts of the colony will receive fair consideration from the Ministry, and not only small portions, as we have seen during the past year or two. I am glad to know that in making a statement of that kind I can do so on no less an authority than the Attorney-General. In speaking to his constituents at Roma recently, as reported in the Press, the hon. gentleman stated that it was very fortunate for Roma that it had got

a Cabinet Minister representing it, and that as a matter of fact a member of the Cabinet had as much influence as twenty ordinary members. I should like to know if that is the principle upon which the Ministry work. I always understood that it was the duty of the Ministry to do a thing simply because it was desirable that it should be done, and not because a certain individual represented a constituency; but we have, on the authority of the Attorney-General, an entirely new principle laid down. The constituency represented by the hon. gentleman has, according to his own statement, the finest courtroom in the State. I hope the statement that it is specially fortunate for a constituency to have a Cabinet Minister representing it was not made seriously, and that when the hon. gentlemen gets up he will assure us that he was only joking.

Mr. TURLEY: When he speaks the truth you will not believe him.

Mr. GIVENS: I should not like to believe that he was speaking the truth on that occasion. I hope that a higher principle guides the Ministry in their administration of the affairs of the colony. It does not matter who represents a district, or if it is not represented by anybody, if it is necessary and desirable that certain works should be undertaken in that district, those works should be undertaken. I thank hon. members for the patient hearing they have accorded me, and trust that before the debate closes we shall have a little light thrown upon various matters that require a good deal of explanation, and that the debate will tend to show some way out of the difficulty in which the present Ministry have landed the colony.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*): I should like to be permitted to add my congratulations to those of the leader of the Opposition and the head of the Government to those hon. gentlemen who moved and seconded the Address in Reply yesterday afternoon. All must agree that the utterances of both hon. members were such as to give indications that they will be most useful and capable members of this House, and that they will be able to contribute very materially to the elucidation of any question that may come before the House for discussion. I should also like to be permitted to congratulate the leader of the Opposition upon presenting himself at the commencement of this session in apparently greatly renewed health. It was a matter for sympathy all round when we found that the labours of the session last year had an exhausting effect upon the hon. gentleman, as they had upon my late hon. colleague, Sir James R. Dickson, whose death I attribute to no inconsiderable extent to the exhaustion which he experienced as the result of the very prolonged and arduous session of last year. I had expected from the hon. member who leads the Opposition something more than he has furnished the House with this afternoon. The hon. member for Cairns has referred to speeches made out of doors, and he was charitable enough to assume that possibly members do say something to their constituents which they do not expect everybody to take literally. I do not say that that applies to myself, but I cite the remark for the purpose of exercising a little charity towards the hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition. If he has not been misreported, after the victory which he says was scored by the Labour party in connection with the elections for the Federal Parliament, he, in his elation, declared that he was prepared to eject the present Ministry from office within three months. There is no doubt we must make a little allowance for the exhilaration which victory produces on certain occasions.

Mr. BROWNE: You put off the meeting of Parliament for three months.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Although the hon. member may not have intended all he said, still this is just an illustration of the way in which sometimes there is attributed to members a meaning which they do not altogether intend, and I shall have an opportunity later on of referring to the necessity for exercising a similar charity in the case of the hon. member for Cairns who has just sat down. I did anticipate from what fell from the hon. member who leads the Opposition that he would on the assembling of Parliament at this time have launched a thunderbolt that would have had the effect of annihilating the Ministry.

Mr. BROWNE: Plenty of time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: But I have been disappointed. I have found that his criticism has been of the mildest and most inoffensive and almost apologetic character. The hon. gentleman who talks so strongly to his constituents elsewhere has in this House roared as gently as any sucking dove, and the only thing that he has really found occasion to take exception to in his criticism of the Speech, and his criticism of the administration of the Government during the recess, has been that the Government, in the face of an anticipated deficit, increased expenditure. In that he has been followed by the hon. member for Cairns. Well, I do not think I can fix my mind upon any particular case, except one, to which he refers as an increase of salary. That is the only instance of that kind; and when we take into consideration that increase, and compare it with the salaries paid elsewhere for the same kind of work, we shall find that the great department over which the efficient officer whom I have in my mind at the present time presides can well afford the salary which is paid him. But I do plead guilty to having been a party to having increased expenditure in another direction at a time when we knew that the revenue was not likely to increase. I plead guilty to that, and I want to know whether any gentleman on the other side of the House is prepared to impeach the Government on that ground. The case I refer to is this: A grievance recognised by the Government to exist for some time in the case of the great body of men working in connection with the maintenance of our railways was dealt with by the Government—(Opposition laughter)—and during the past year the last instalment necessary to make up the original amount of wages paid to railway maintenance men, prior to the calamitous year of 1893, was paid to these men, amounting to a total, if I am not misinformed, of about £12,000 a year. That was expenditure incurred by the Government last year in order to do what they considered an act of justice towards those men. Is that an instance of the extravagance of the Government? Is that an instance of the wrongful expenditure of public money under such circumstances as the country has passed through in connection with the existing drought? Another thing has been done—the raising of the salaries of certain teachers, of whom we have heard a great deal in this House to the effect that they were not properly paid. That was done last year; and I do not know how many thousands a year of increase of expenditure that has necessitated. If these are two illustrations of the means by which expenditure was increased so that we have a larger deficit than we might otherwise have looked for—

Mr. REID: That is a poor excuse.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is a poor excuse when it does not suit the views of the other side, but is a very proper excuse to make. It is so easy to generalise, and say, "Why have

the Government, in the face of a falling revenue, and in the face of adverse circumstances, expended money? Why have they launched out on the right hand and on the left?" Well, the fact is that when we come to analyse some of these gentlemen's statements we shall find that there is very little real substance in them. It is very easy for hon. members who cannot answer a point that is made to pretend to treat it as of very little weight, but I take it that if those hon. members who go about the country, and who talk a great deal of the grievances of some of those who are engaged in the service of the country, are prepared to say that the Government did wrong in the act of generosity—or, rather, of justice—which they displayed in restoring wages to their original extent—if they are prepared to say in the presence of those men that the Government did wrong in that, then I make them welcome to the kind of reception they will meet with from their audiences. A great deal has also been said by the leader of the Opposition and by the hon. member for Cairns with respect to the sale of land. The Government have been challenged for selling land at all. Well, those hon. members failed to discriminate between the different classes of land that exist in this country. We have lands that are very suitable for agricultural purposes, lands which are within a comparatively reasonable distance of the coast, lands that enjoy a comparatively regular rainfall. It is very improper to alienate such lands in large areas. But there are some of the lands which have been sold which do not come within any of these conditions at all.

Mr. TURLEY: And some of them do.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Government are spending a lot of money at the present time in endeavouring to encourage and develop some of these lands by the establishment of a State farm in the Western country, a very considerable distance inland from Rockhampton. I do not know whether that is an expenditure that hon. members are prepared to condemn—whether they say that the Government ought to have refrained from this work at the Ginghi State Farm, and not encouraged any agricultural pursuits out there. I do not know whether hon. members are prepared to take that ground or not, but, at all events, we know that there is the greatest possible difficulty in endeavouring to establish the agricultural industry in some of these far distant districts, and, in cases where the Government find an opportunity of replenishing an exhausted Treasury by the sale of certain lands, the alienation of which will not have any deterrent effect whatever upon the enlargement of the agricultural industry, I do not think that that is a matter about which any serious alarm need be felt. I find that everywhere hon. members are clamouring for expenditure. Everywhere, and every day, almost, there are deputations waiting upon one Minister or another asking that there should be expenditure in this or that form for the development of this or that industry; and yet, when there are some means suggested by which money may be provided from other than the ordinary sources in order to enable money to be provided for these purposes, hon. members cry out. Every hon. member says, "Yes, you may sell land, but don't sell it in the district to which I belong. You may have revenue if you like, but don't ask my constituents to contribute that revenue." The Government cannot carry on in that way. There must be some means of finding the money by which the Government is to be able to maintain every department of the Government in a state of absolute efficiency, and it is idle for hon. members, when they refrain from indicating any way by which assistance can be afforded to the

Treasury, to condemn each and every proposal made by the Government for the purpose of finding revenue to carry on the government of the country. I do not suppose I should have risen just now but for the fact that the hon. member for Cairns has shone out in a new light. He has been devoting his attention apparently during the recess to a study of constitutional law, and he is here to-night to impeach the Government for—as he considers—having been guilty of breaches of constitutional law. The hon. member seems to have been made very

angry by reason of what took place with reference to a certain Bill which was passed by this House.

[8 p.m.] He went to his constituents, and, unless he is wrongly reported, he made a very formidable deliverance with regard to the action of the Government. Unless he is misreported, he declared that it was his intention to carry his opposition to the action of the Government—his condemnation of their action—even to the foot of the Throne. (Laughter.) I do not know whether he seriously contemplated a journey to the old country to protest against the action of the Government—the terribly illegal and unconstitutional action of the Government—but if he should contemplate any such journey or proceeding, the only advice I can give the hon. member is that which was so briefly and incisively given by *Punch* many years ago to persons about to embark on the unexplored sea of matrimony, “Don’t.” (Laughter.) The hon. member for Cairns says that the Government acted unconstitutionally. Of course he speaks without knowledge—I do not blame him for that—of the kind of procedure which is followed here on occasions when Bills pass through this and the other House. Most hon. members know that when a Bill passes this and the other House the next stage in the process is to send it on to His Excellency the Governor. Now, before the Governor deals with this Bill in the way of giving assent to it or otherwise, he sends a communication—not to the Premier, not to the members of the Government generally, but to the Attorney-General, who is the responsible legal adviser both of the Governor and the Government. A copy of the Bill is sent to the Attorney-General, who is asked the specific question whether, in his opinion, there is any constitutional reason or any reason in connection with the Royal instructions or otherwise to prevent that Bill being assented to by the Governor; and if the Attorney-General advises that he knows of no reason why the Bill should not be assented to by him, that assent is accordingly given. But if the Attorney-General advises him that, because of the Royal instructions—or on some constitutional ground—the Bill is one that should be reserved for the signification of the Royal pleasure, then the Governor does not give his assent, but the Bill is sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to be dealt with by the Imperial Government. I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the policy which has been recognised and adopted by this House ever since an attempt was made to have railways constructed by means of private enterprise. I think the first proposal of this kind was made early in the eighties—I forget the exact date—when the hon. gentleman then leading the Government brought down a proposal contained in a Bill, well-known as the Land Grant Railway Bill. When that Bill was passing through this House, of which I was then not a very old member—I think I had been a member for three or four years—I drafted and introduced a clause which became incorporated in that Bill to this effect: That no person not of European descent could be employed in the construction of any of these lines

of railway, under a very severe penalty. This was the first serious proposal made for the construction of a line of railway by private enterprise, and ever since that time a similar provision has found a place in every Bill which has passed through this Assembly dealing with the construction of railways by private enterprise. There was a similar provision in the Mareeba-Chillagoe Bill, and in all of the railway Bills which passed this House last year; and this is all in accordance with the settled policy of this House. And let it be remembered that never, as far as is known, has any aboriginal native of Asia or the South Sea Islands been employed by the Government of this country in the construction of its lines of railway.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You might say in all Australia.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, yes, they have, in Australia.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am dealing with Queensland now. I believe that in some other parts of Australia something of the kind was permitted. At all events, this has been the settled policy of this State, and I say that the introduction of this special provision into the Bills passed by this House last year with regard to the construction of lines of railway was in perfect harmony with what has been recognised as the settled policy of the country, not only here, but also by the Imperial Government, which advised the Queen to give her assent to Bills containing this provision. But, when we come to the question of sugar-mills and the sugar industry, quite a different set of considerations arise. We must remember the great difference there is between prohibiting by legislation persons who have never been recognised as having a right to have anything to do with a certain class of industry from engaging in that industry, and a provision by which persons who have acquired by usage a right to engage in a certain class of industry are to be excluded henceforth from having anything to do with that industry. Take, for example, the pearl-shelling and bêche-de-mer industry. For many years—whether rightly or wrongly is not for me to say—Japanese and other Asiatics were permitted to engage in this industry in Torres Straits. That was recognised as a legitimate industry for these persons to be engaged in, or in connection with, in the State of Queensland; but when this House resolved to limit or, more correctly speaking, to abolish the rights of these people who have enjoyed these rights heretofore—then I say a new consideration prevailed. It is one thing to say to a man never employed in a certain industry, “You are not permitted to work in this industry,” and quite another thing to stop another man who has been engaged in an industry from being engaged in it any further. When this House passed the Pearl-shell and Bêche-de-mer Fishery Act in 1898, a provision was contained in it by which—it did not specifically mention them, but it included them clearly—Japanese were not to be permitted to continue to engage in this industry. Some of them who had boats were permitted to get renewals of their licenses, but no more were to be allowed to engage in the industry. That was a new departure. That was a proposal to exclude persons recognised previously as having a right to engage in the industry from continuing to engage in it. Under the circumstances what was to be done? Why, that Bill was reserved for the signification of the Royal pleasure.

Mr. JENKINSON: Was that done with the Mining Act too?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not dealing with the Mining Act. I am dealing with this Fisheries Act.

Mr. JENKINSON: The same provisions apply to each.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will refer to that later on to satisfy the hon. gentleman. That was a new thing. It was intended to abolish the right, which had by implication been recognised as having been vested in these persons to go and engage in that industry. Although it dealt with precisely the same persons as are mentioned in these private Railway Acts, that Bill was reserved for the signification of the Royal pleasure. It went home, and it was not until the year following its passing that it came back with the Royal assent. When we passed a Bill last year amending the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, and there was inserted in it a provision to the same effect as that contained in the private Railway Acts, with regard to the exclusion of Asiatics from any right to be engaged in connection with the sugar industry, a similar new departure was being made. The Japanese, and we know very well other Asiatics, had been for many years employed—I am not saying whether rightly or wrongly, I am speaking of the fact—they had been engaged for many years in employments in connection with our sugar industry, and when last year it was proposed to take away from these people a right which they had heretofore enjoyed, it was incumbent upon me—and I am the person responsible for the advice given to the Governor—it was incumbent on me to advise the Governor, which I did; and my advice was that this Bill was essentially one that should be reserved for signification of the Royal pleasure. That is why this Bill went home. There was no conspiracy between the Government and anybody else with regard to sending home this Bill. The Premier had nothing to do with it. My colleagues had nothing to do with it. I am the man who had to do with it, and the result has shown that what I did, not from any political motive—for I am bound to act according to what the law directs, irrespective of parties or predilections—was right. Whether it affects my colleagues according to their liking, or whether it does not, is neither here nor there. I have to give advice according to what I believe the law and the Royal instructions prescribe. That is the advice I gave to the Governor, and these are the circumstances under which that advice was given, and the result has shown that the advice was sound.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: We question that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I say the result has shown that it was sound advice, because the Royal assent has been withheld.

Mr. GIVENS: What representations were made to the Secretary of State for the Colonies?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And if any disadvantage has arisen, as I imagine, from the speech of the hon. member for Cairns, there has arisen to his constituents owing to the refusal of the Royal assent to that Bill, then on that hon. gentleman rests the responsibility, for it was at his instance that the Premier—without consulting me, or consulting anybody—accepted the amendment which was suggested by the hon. member for Cairns, and I say his constituents must blame him.

Mr. GIVENS: No; they must blame the Government.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And he must not blame anybody else if they suffer by reason of that Bill not being assented to.

Mr. GIVENS: The railway Bills were sent home and they were not vetoed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I really must have failed to make myself understood if there is any doubt in the mind of any hon. member after what I have said. The provisions in the

two classes of Bills were of an entirely different character—in this sense, that they dealt in the one case with a settled policy, and in the other case with a new policy.

Mr. GIVENS: They were all the same in the eyes of international law.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not wish to say too much, because I do not think it is incumbent upon, or proper, for the occupants of the front Treasury bench to speak more than is necessary in reply to the arguments that have been advanced by gentlemen on the other side. I would like to refer to the hon. member's observations with reference to what he called the meagre list of proposed Bills contained in the Speech. He signified the Bills mentioned as mostly amendments of former Acts, and went on to say that if the former Acts had not been rushed through with indecent haste, or something to that effect, and if they had had the opportunity of being fairly and properly considered by this House, there would not have been any need for amendment. That is not an argument to address to a thoughtful and intelligent assembly like this, but rather it is the sort of argument to address to a debating society of young men who are learning to speak but who have had no legislative experience. We all know that all kinds of Acts require amendment. There was an Election Act that took a considerable time going through the House. I was not in the House when it was passed, but I am in a position to know that it occupied a great deal of the time of the Assembly, and that the best thought and deliberation, and the best consideration, were given to that measure. Well, hon. members over there think that there should be a Bill introduced into this House for the purpose of amending it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is the worst Bill in Australia.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Men's ideas grow, and the necessities for legislation increase with the lapse of years, and the different phases which are assumed by the various industries in the colony, and the various conditions of its people; and there must always be amendments of existing laws. It will be a very long time before, by the amendment of existing laws, they can be made as near perfection as they can be expected to attain under the limitations to which we are subject. The hon. member also made a pathetic appeal on behalf of the poor miner. Well, I am not one of those persons who are indifferent to the claims of the miners. I had the privilege of representing the premier mining constituency of this State for ten years, and I do not think I was ever accused, while I was their representative, of failing to take an interest in all that pertains to their affairs. I do not think we should sit here calmly and hear the hon. member indulge in a great outburst of declamatory eloquence in order to impute to the Government that they are making a victim of what he calls the poor miner. I have generally found that the poor miner is a man of sufficient intelligence and force of character to be able to defend himself. He is not generally a poor and helpless creature who cannot use his voice. He is generally very vigorous in the denunciation of everything that he considers is an injustice; and, as I say, he is well able to hold his own. Why should the hon. member single out the miners as being victims of legislation such as we passed last year? I really am under a very erroneous impression if I am not right in my belief that the sending of a line of railway, for example, from Mareeba to Chillagoe had not the effect of opening up a very considerable field of advantage to the poor miner. We know mining areas in this State now that are allowed to

remain untouched and unexplored, simply because of the difficulties of carriage and owing to the primitive methods of transit they have to fall back upon. You cannot employ miners in the task of unearthing the products of the ground unless facilities are given to them by means of railway communication.

Mr. GIVENS : Build them a railway.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : All our experience does not go for much if we do not know that to construct a line of railway to a place and to offer facilities for the rapid carriage of goods proves an advantage to the people. If that is not so I fail to understand why the people should demand increased facilities for the carriage of goods and passengers by means of railways. Even in connection with our mining laws that has been recognised to the satisfaction of the hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition, because mining companies have the right of constructing lines of tramway from their mineral leases to other places where they would like to go—either to the coast or to tap some other line of railway.

Mr. BROWNE : That is a different thing to giving a corporation power to construct a private line of railway.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : It is not surrounded with such safeguards to the public as are contained within the four corners of what are called the private railway Acts. Indeed, the construction of such tramlines is an absolute monopoly, and the owners can charge what rates they like. The miner may be at the absolute mercy of the capitalist, who can afford to construct a tramway for thirty or forty miles to the coast, or to connect with some other line, but when the miners' interests are so well guarded and protected as they are under the private railway Acts, if these railway facilities are given even at a slightly increased cost, then I say that no injustice is done to the miner, but that his highest interests are conserved.

Mr. KEOGH : Why not extend those facilities to the farming districts ?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I am not one of those who would bury the miner away in the interior, with no facilities for finding his way to the centres of civilisation, but in cases where the Government cannot undertake the construction of a railway, or would not be justified in doing so, I am in favour of placing the miner on the same level as his fellow-citizens, so that he may enjoy all the advantages which railway facilities afford to other portions of the community.

Mr. KEOGH : Are the farmers to be ignored ?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I do not wish to trespass at greater length on the time of hon. members, but I thought, in view of what was said by the hon. member for Cairns with respect to the legal aspect of the Bills passed last year, and the reasons for sending one of those Bills home for assent, that I ought to give him, and the House, and the country, the benefit of such information and such reasons as it was in my power to afford.

* Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*) : I desire to make a few observations on this Address in Reply, although I have no intention of speaking at any very great length ; but before I address myself to the principal points of the Speech, I would like to remark that the Attorney-General has cleverly avoided a question I put to him. He has either deliberately done so, or he has forgotten to answer a question which he promised to answer.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I forgot.

Mr. JENKINSON : I accept the hon. gentleman's statement. Seeing that the two cases are parallel, and that there is a prohibition in the one Act just the same as in the other, therefore the Attorney-General, on his own showing, has

been guilty of a grave dereliction of duty in not pointing out to the Governor that it was just as well that the Royal assent should be withheld from the Mining Act with regard to that particular clause as that it should be withheld from the Sugar Works Guarantee Act.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I was not Attorney-General then.

Mr. JENKINSON : As the present Government are in the habit of taking to themselves all the credit of past members of the Ministry during the last ten years, then I say, by the same process of reasoning, they must take all the blame. They say it is the same Government, and hence that follows as a natural corollary. Before proceeding further, I desire to offer my congratulations to those two hon. members who have moved and seconded the Address in Reply. They have acquitted themselves in a very able manner. There is plenty of room in this House for intelligence and ability, and I welcome those two hon. members as useful additions to the ranks of members of this House. I also congratulate the Premier on his return to the colony in better health than when he left. We all know the strain put upon members of the Ministry, or indeed upon private members, who desire to do their duty conscientiously, and I believe the Premier was badly in need of a rest. At the same time I hope the journey across the ocean and back again has not made the hon. gentleman lose that gentle courtesy which he usually extends to members of this House. In spite of the statement that has been made by me at the request of the gentlemen constituting the party to which I belong, the hon. gentleman and his colleague, the Attorney-General, deliberately referred to a member of this House as leader of the Opposition. I for one am not bound by any such statement as that. We are a party who cannot conscientiously ally ourselves to the present Ministry, nor can we fully endorse the actions and sentiments of the Labour party.

Mr. LESINA : You have not been asked to do so.

Mr. JENKINSON : We can exercise our privileges just as we like, and no member of this House is bound to vote in any other manner than his conscience dictates. That is the position we take up.

Mr. KEOGH : We are not muzzled.

Mr. JENKINSON : I desire to endorse the sentiments expressed in the Speech read to us yesterday by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, with regard to our loyalty to the Throne, and also with regard to the demise of Queen Victoria. The mover of the Address in Reply, during the course of his speech, made a statement which was somewhat ambiguous, and to which I wish now to refer. He said—

I think it would be an advantage if our representatives in the Federal Parliament, particularly at this period of our history, would hasten the adjustment with reference to the properties to be taken over by the Federal Parliament.

I take it his meaning is that he desires that the money that is to be paid for these properties is to be handed over to the State of Queensland. We do not know what action will be taken, but I would point out what I hope will not be the action of the Government of this colony. Despite our present financial position, when the money is paid over I hope it will not go to the revenue account. These properties were built out of loan expenditure, and I maintain that when that money is repaid, if it is placed to the credit of revenue, that will constitute one of the biggest steals that has ever been recorded in the history of parliamentary practice.

The PREMIER : No one ever proposed to do such a foolish thing.

Mr. JENKINSON: It has been mooted, at all events, not in this State but in other States.

The PREMIER: You are the first man I ever heard say so.

Mr. JENKINSON: I have seen it in some of the southern papers. At all events, the Government have made so many blunders that I would not be surprised if they did something like that. The Speech states that, in all probability, this State will be the greatest gainer from federation. That may be so in years to come; but it appears to me that we have to pass through, first, a time of tribulation until things settle down.

It is necessary for us to look round [8:30 p.m.] and square our yards before we proceed any further. Measures have been indicated whereby a reduction in expenditure could be made, and thus probably balance expenditure with revenue. I am quite in accord with the opinion expressed by the hon. member for Croydon, that we could very wisely reduce the salary of the Governor, especially as there is no occupant of the office at the present time. Speaking last week at Maryborough, Sir Samuel Griffith said it would be unwise to reduce the salary attached to the position of Governor, because it would probably lead people to believe that the status of the office was going to be reduced. I do not think that opinion can be entertained. We have in the person of the Lieutenant-Governor himself a gentleman well qualified to fill the position. There is Sir Frederick Darley acting as Lieutenant-Governor in New South Wales, and Sir John Madden in Victoria, who has acted as Lieutenant-Governor since Lord Brassey departed from the colony, and, as far as I can learn, there has been no dissatisfaction at those gentlemen occupying the position, neither has there been any outcry that the dignity of the position has been lowered through the office being filled by those Chief Justices. I have no sympathy with those people who cry out that it is absolutely necessary to get some high and titled gentleman from the old land for the position of Governor, merely because the vice-regal establishment must be kept up so that functions may be attended. Who pays for all that? The colony at large. Who benefits by it? The people of Brisbane. The people in outside localities have no chance, even if they had the desire, to attend those society functions. The benefit is simply confined to the people of Brisbane. I think that a reduction in the salary of the Governor would be well received throughout the colony, and it would not cause any injustice to anyone. I wish also to bear my testimony to the loss which this Chamber has suffered through the demise of Sir James R. Dickson and the Hon. J. V. Chataway. I am sure that every member of this House looked upon each of those gentlemen as a friend, no matter what view he took in politics. We have also to regret the loss of several other members of this House. Many of us, apart from our political feelings, form friendships in this House, and when those friendships are severed we naturally feel it, and we shall at times miss some of our colleagues who have gone to a larger sphere in the Federal Parliament. I believe they will do good work for the State in their new position. The paragraph in the Opening Speech referring to the condition of the public finances does so in a hopeful strain. I have a great belief in the resources of the colony, and agree with the Premier that there is not the slightest reason for forecasting panic legislation. The position can be well met by a little wise forethought and statesmanlike ability, and I am quite sure that any proposals the Government make on this subject will be received with an open mind by members on both sides of the House. It has been well

said that the greatness of a country, like the greatness of an individual, is shown, not in times of prosperity, but in moments of adversity, and I believe that that is so. If, as forecasted by the Secretary for Agriculture, it is necessary in the interests of the Treasury to impose a land tax as well as an income tax, the people of the colony will receive any such proposal in a proper spirit, and be prepared to bear the burden which it might impose, as they will realise that it is absolutely necessary that the credit of Queensland should be maintained. I believe that every member of this Chamber entertains that opinion, and that it will be endorsed by the people outside. We are told that the pastoral industry is in a bad state, and that proposals will be submitted whereby those engaged in the industry will secure some relief. No member, no matter what his position may be with regard to that industry, will refuse reasonable relief to it. At the same time I consider that strong resistance should be made if the Government attempt to overstep the mark, more particularly if the effect of their proposal should be to lock up lands in the coastal districts. The Premier stated this afternoon that the Government were going to sell more land in large areas in order to make up the deficiency in the Treasury. I hope he was not in earnest in making that statement, and that is not the policy of the Government. I trust that the protests which have been made in various parts of the State, when the proposals of the Government to sell land in the different districts were made known, will cause them to halt and see that such action is a step in the wrong direction. It is not wise for any Government to sell the people's heritage. It is far better for us to try to settle the people on the land, even if we have to give the land away. While we are told by the Premier that he is going to sell land in large areas in order to put money into the Treasury, we are told by other members that they are anxious that the Government should pay away money to repurchase estates on the Darling Downs. These two statements are in conflict. How can money be paid out for the repurchase of estates if it is not in the Treasury? And how can the two statements to which I have referred be reconciled? There are lands in the Burnett district which are equally as good as the lands on the Darling Downs, and on which hundreds of families could be settled. If the Government, instead of selling land on the Baramba run at 10s. an acre, as they did the other day, only advertised the sale properly and let the people know what was going on, it is said on reliable authority that much of that land would have realised £5 per acre. Such action as the Government took in that instance is not the way to fill a depleted Treasury. It is frittering away the heritage of the people, and on that account the Government have been guilty of a dereliction of duty, because they are placed in their position as trustees of the people, and they have not served the interests of the people. If, instead of spending money on the repurchase of estates on the Darling Downs, an Advance to Settlers Bill was brought in, and money advanced to farmers on easy terms, much greater good would be done to the colony. It is not a wise thing to settle people in one corner in any State; they should be distributed, and in that way the revenue would be greatly augmented. I am quite sure hon. members who represent mining districts will read with pleasure the short statement in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech with regard to that industry. I do not know whether hon. members realise what the mining industry has done for this State. The hon. member for Cairns referred to the fact that at one time in its history the discovery

of Gympie was the salvation of Queensland. That is so well known that it is a truism; but I would like just to read for the information of hon. members what this State really owes to the mining industry. To the end of 1900 there has been 14,837,049 oz. of gold won, valued at nearly £52,000,000. Other minerals amounted in value to £10,300,000—making altogether over £62,250,000 that had been won by the working of the minerals in this colony. Why, to the 30th June last year the public debt of this State was only £36,000,000, and we had actually got from the mining industry over £62,000,000. Therefore the mining industry stands, over and above the public debt, over £26,000,000 in credit. And yet the present Government and past Governments have never given the encouragement to the mining industry that its importance deserves. It has been left to work out its own destiny, and right nobly has it done it up to the present. But the time has now come when I believe it will require more fostering care than it has received in the past. I trust, therefore, that that portion of the Speech contains an indication that the Government have repented of their past neglect of the industry, and that they will endeavour in the future to foster this great industry more. Just in passing, I desire to refer to the recent appointments to the Legislative Council, and also to those which were made some time ago. I am not at all in accord with the principle of the Government appointing members to another branch of the legislature after they have been rejected by some constituency. I believe it is actually flouting the constituents, and telling them—"You will not have that man, but we will make you have him." That is not the sort of appointment that will gain respect for the Government in the constituencies. It is not as if we were wanting in good men. There are plenty of good men, I am quite sure, if the Government had cast their eyes around, who would have done just as much credit to them and to their policy as some of the gentlemen who have been appointed in recent years.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: One of the constituencies might have rejected a man, but others might have returned him.

Mr. JENKINSON: Quite so. I am not a believer in that policy. As I told one of those gentlemen himself, I do not believe it is a right thing, when any constituency has said to a gentleman that they will not let him in by the front door, for the Government to open a back door for him. There is also another matter that I desire to draw attention to that I believe is not in accordance with strict etiquette, and that is the part that Ministers have taken in the recent elections. According to the words of the Attorney-General himself—because he did not give a denial to the statement—a Minister carries more weight than any ordinary member of Parliament.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I did not say that.

Mr. JENKINSON: I think the hon. member for Cairns was a little bit out. As I read it, the Attorney-General said that he carried as much weight, I think, as ten members of Parliament.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. JENKINSON: Never mind. It is only a question of degree. The implication was that he did carry more weight. We can quite understand that, from his position, having control over the destinies of the colony and the expenditure of money, he does carry more weight than an ordinary member of Parliament, and, consequently, as an honourable man he should refrain from taking part in the election of members of this House. Many years ago the House of Commons passed the following resolution, which I commend to the consideration of the

members of the present Government. We generally look up to the mother of Parliaments for precedents, and in this respect I believe that their action could very wisely have been adopted. The resolution was as follows:—

That it is highly criminal in any Minister or Ministers or other servants under the Crown of Great Britain, directly or indirectly, to use the powers of office in the election of representatives to serve in Parliament.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Quite right.

The PREMIER: That was never done.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Secretary for Agriculture says, "Quite right," while the Premier says that it has never been done. I do not know what the hon. gentleman means by saying the it was never done.

The PREMIER: "Use the powers of office."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That means bribery.

Mr. JENKINSON: I am quite satisfied that all the members of the present Ministry, or any gentleman who may occupy a position in the Ministry, is cute enough not to place his foot in a hole. Yet, at the same time implied promises may be given, and it appears to me that the Attorney-General himself went perilously near it when he was speaking in Gympie. I shall read the reply he made to a deputation—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Surely you are not going to bring that up?

Mr. JENKINSON: I had no intention to use this if the Premier had not denied that anything had been done in that direction.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You know very well that I told them I regarded it as a most indelicate thing to ask me to carry out a promise made by a previous Premier when I was not there as Acting Premier but as a politician advocating a certain cause.

Mr. JENKINSON: I have the hon. gentleman's words, and I have explained before that I believe he went perilously near it. I am quite sure that he has too much acumen to put his foot in any big hole like that. What he said was this—he was then the Acting Premier of the colony as well as Attorney-General—a doubly responsible position—

He was here not as Acting Premier, but as a politician, to address a public meeting, and was therefore on delicate ground. In regard to the application, they had his and Mr. Leahy's sincere sympathy and genuine anxiety to assist, and he thought he might go so far as to say that the Government would redeem the promise made.

Those words were used on the eve of an election. I have said before that I admit that a deliberate promise was not made. The hon. gentleman is too astute for that, and so are his colleagues. I have some other statements here which were made, but the mere fact of gentlemen travelling around constituencies with the halo of Ministerial office around their heads is in itself sufficient to add a deal of weight to the arguments they may use in support of the candidature of any particular gentleman seeking the suffrages of the electors. That is what I complain of. I am very sorry indeed that the Secretary for Railways is not here, because I desire to repeat some of his utterances as well as those of the Attorney-General, and I would prefer any member of this House to hear what I have to say before his face. At all events, what the Secretary for Railways said, speaking at Stanwell on 11th April, prior to the election, I believe, of the hon. member for Normanby, Mr. Fox, was this—

As Minister for Works and Railways he held two of the great spending departments of the country, and if he could see his way clear to do anything to benefit Central Queensland he would do it.

That statement was received with rapturous applause by the audience.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Let me tell you that Mr. Fisher was the gentleman who introduced that deputation to me.

Mr. JENKINSON: It does not matter if the deputation was introduced by forty members of Parliament. I have nothing to do with that: I am simply referring to the utterances of the hon. gentleman. On 12th April the Hon. J. Leahy and the Hon. J. Murray received a deputation with regard to the grant of £300 for the Mount Usher road. Mr. Leahy was speaking, and he said—

It would have his most favourable consideration.

Of course we know it is a common thing for any constituency, when they get a Minister among them, to try and bleed him. At the same time I say it is the duty of a gentleman occupying that position to keep them off, and not to make any promises that would be likely to influence an election.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not a promise at all.

Mr. JENKINSON: With reference to the Gladstone road, Mr. Leahy said—

He did not think the board had established a *prima facie* case.

And I want the members of the House to bear that in mind—Mr. Leahy also said—

But if the money were available and Mr. Murray approved he would not oppose the grant; in fact, he was inclined to favour it.

Mind, the hon. gentleman said that, although he was of opinion that no *prima facie* case had been made out by the board. But where I consider the Minister over-stepped the mark altogether was in the following statement, which is the most serious of the lot. This is in regard to the Gladstone railway connection—from Gladstone to Rockhampton North. Mr. Leahy said—

He was not prepared to say what engineering difficulties were in the way; but he was prepared to press it strongly upon the engineers that the low-level line would suit. He would promise to have calculations made as to what a low-level bridge would cost, and if there was a sum of only £2,000 or £3,000 between the cost of that and the connection at the 4-mile he would be strongly in favour of it, and would recommend it to the Cabinet.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That was only saying that if justifiable he would recommend it to the Cabinet.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You don't understand that.

Mr. JENKINSON: No; in my innocence I do not.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You know that the other side promised to do it.

Mr. JENKINSON: There are several other statements I could refer to, but I have just quoted these for the purpose of giving colour to the statement I made—that it was not right for any Minister to take an active part in assisting the candidature of any gentleman seeking the suffrages of any set of electors.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are seventeen members of Parliament to be allowed to do so? (Laughter.)

Mr. JENKINSON: I wish to goodness the Prime Minister would put a muzzle on the Secretary for Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I dare say you do.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Attorney-General gets highly indignant when any hon. member interrupts him; but now he is sitting there smiling, while his colleague is deliberately interrupting a young member like myself, trying to throw me off the track.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why! You're the leader of the Independent Opposition.

Mr. JENKINSON: I quite understand that it is owing to the added dignity placed upon my shoulders by my colleagues that hon. members

are paying so much attention to my remarks. I thank them on behalf of my colleagues, and I trust that they will not continue to throw slurs at this party, as they have been doing in the past. I have very little more to say now, and hon. members will see that the Secretary for Agriculture has put me off the track a little bit. Before re-suming my seat, I would like to say a few words with regard to the proposed legislation of the Government. I agree with some hon. members, who have already spoken, that the Speech, as forecasting the legislation for this session, is virtually colourless in many of its proposals. I regard the hon. gentlemen who occupy the front Treasury benches at the present time as politicians, and not statesmen. When I was speaking at Maryborough, I quoted from a work that I had read, and defined the difference between politicians and statesmen. The Secretary for Agriculture groans, so probably he has heard the definition before, and he probably finds himself included in the category which has the least honour attached to it. The difference is this: a politician thinks only of the success of his party, a statesman of that of his country; a politician thinks of the next election, a statesman of the next generation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You do the next generation part.

Mr. JENKINSON: I am doing my best to create the next generation. (Laughter.) A statesman is not content unless he is guiding the destinies of his country; a politician is willing to drift. It appears to me that the latter is the policy of the Government. The Secretary for Agriculture may take whatever view he likes; but for my own part, I desire to see every occupant of the Treasury bench rise to the occasion and act as a statesman. The country has a right to demand that these hon. gentlemen should be statesmen, and that they should exhibit statesmanship. Now, we may get adult suffrage, but we have been promised that before; it is merely another portion of the bunch of carrots which has been dangled before the elections for years. But even if the Government are in earnest in the matter, we have not got much to thank them for. Other hon. members have been advocating the enlargement of the suffrage, and now apparently the Government are acquiescing in that demand. I have no patience with that class of persons called politicians who will not move until a mustard plaster is applied to their feet, and that appears to be the state of the present Ministry. This action is virtually forced upon the Government, and I can only hope that this measure will be brought forward, and dealt with in such a manner that it can be used at the next election. We are also promised a Local Government Bill, but that has also been dangled before us for so many sessions. I find that the seconder of the Address in Reply in another place even stigmatised this as a chestnut. I wonder at any hon. member stigmatising any measure brought forward by the Government—especially an hon. member supporting the other side—as a chestnut. Surely that is hardly a proper term to apply to such a measure? An amendment of the Mining Companies Acts is essentially necessary. Those who are conversant with the operations of mining companies know that this is a long-standing grievance; and as a matter of fact, on the goldfield I have been so long identified with—Gympie—I know that capital is being withdrawn by outside investors owing to the bad Act under which companies are working. I trust that the Government will bring forward this measure and give the desired relief to mining investors. By that means I believe a great deal more money will be brought into this colony than has been introduced during the last year or so.

The measure dealing with advances to farmers is anxiously looked for by the farmers throughout the colony. I hope it will be a much more liberal measure than that introduced by the late Secretary for Agriculture. I think it was the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, Mr. Tolmie, when speaking yesterday afternoon, who said he thought the number of members of this House could very well be reduced to fifty, making a reduction of twenty-two. I believe that it would perhaps be well if some reduction were made in the number, but I am not confining myself to any particular number. Another hon. member—I think it was the hon. member for Toowong—mentioned that coupled with the question of adult suffrage would be that of equal voting power. I take it that that means that members should represent an equal number of constituents.

We have in that connection to consider the tremendous area that is embraced in the State of Queensland, and the sparse population in some parts of

[9 p.m.] it. It is a matter of impossibility for some members now to visit their constituents more than once in two or three years. I know I have not a very large electorate, and yet to thoroughly canvass it takes me eight weeks to go from one end of it to the other. The hon. member for Gregory could be going from the time the House rises to the time the House again sits—a period of from six to seven months—in thoroughly canvassing his electorate. I maintain that this must be taken into consideration when any such scheme is brought forward or promulgated in this House. If we are to have reductions we must commence at the top of the tree, and gradually work down. Those gentlemen who are in receipt of large salaries are in a better position to bear reductions than those in receipt of comparatively little. At the most, it will only mean to them the curtailment of some luxuries. It is when you come to the necessities of life, when the wages of working men are cut down, that you see how obnoxious the all-round principle is. I hold that the Ministers can very wisely be reduced. We see at various times that the Hon. Mr. So-and-Sohas gone away, and that his duties are being performed by someone else, and on some occasions we see one Minister attending to the duties of four other Ministers. That being so, and seeing that the permanent officials of the departments virtually run the departments, I maintain that a reduction in the Ministers may very wisely be provided for. I also believe that there can be a big reduction in the military establishment of this State. Although that establishment has gone over to the Federal Government, yet on representations being made from this Parliament or the Government, I believe big reductions could be made, for we are altogether over-manned in that direction. Our military expenditure is too large altogether; it is out of all proportion to the population of this State, as compared with the population of the other States. We had an instance of the glitter of gold-laced officials at the opening of Parliament, and I was very sorry to see it. We could very wisely dispense with a lot of these gentlemen, who though they may be a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, while they have their clothes on, still at the same time they cost money which might very well be expended in some other way. It is a standing joke in America that you can hardly meet a dozen men without one of them being a colonel. I am afraid from the military craze that has struck people in Australia that the same conditions are likely to obtain here, perhaps in the near future, unless it is stopped.

Mr. LESINA: We are spending more on military here than any other colony, in proportion to our population.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They pay for their uniforms.

Mr. JENKINSON: Yes, I am perfectly aware that they do that, but still it is out of the salaries that they receive from the Government. They might not be able to pay for them in the majority of instances if they had not the position or the salary. I believe if the Government encourage close settlement, if they study economy, and if they keep a much closer grip upon the expenditure than they have done in the past, we will have no cause of complaint here. I am not one of those who look with disquietude upon the position of our finances. Certainly it is a big deficit, and I shall have more to say upon it when the Financial Statement is submitted. I maintain that if these three principles are carried out by the Government, the ship of State here will soon be riding on a wave of prosperity. I have said before that we expect from the occupants of the Treasury bench that they shall in this particular crisis act as statesmen, and, if they do that, they will get the support of the majority of the members on this side of the House in their proposals. If they will cast away their sloth, if they will put aside that scientific indolence that they seem to have exhibited lately, it will be much better for this colony, and we shall be enabled to get over our difficulties. If in their wisdom they should think it necessary, instead of adding to the national debt, by one means or another to place additional taxation on the shoulders of the people of this colony, I maintain that the democracy of this colony, on whose shoulders mainly the consequences of the misgovernment will fall, will bear themselves with dignity, and will pay willingly their proportion of whatever is necessary to place the State on a right footing once more. I believe that with the resources we have, both the partially developed and the undeveloped, that there is no reason whatever to despair. I desire to sound here a note of hope. I believe that the people throughout the colony from end to end, from the East right over to the plains of the West, from the North and from the South, will bear their burdens cheerfully, if the Government will only rise to the occasion. We have the right to expect that—nay, we have the right to demand that—they shall do that, in order to help the colony to get out of the difficulties which mainly their lax administration has landed us into at the present time.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

* HON. G. THORN (*Passifera*): It is not my intention to speak very long. I am one of those who believe in brevity, and I am not going to depart from a wholesome rule. With regard to the Governor's Speech, I intend to speak about it, and about other matters not contained in it. First, as regards the Government, I must make the statement that its members are all very strong supporters of the Commonwealth Bill, and that is my great objection to the Government.

Mr. REID: How do you know they are?

HON. G. THORN: I know they are, from a paragraph in the Speech, and because they are inclined to do more for the "feds" than the "anti-feds." The hon. gentleman for Enoggera accused the Hon. the Attorney-General of spending a large amount of money in his electorate; but there are other Ministers of the Crown who have spent money in their own electorates. I cannot get anything for my people, and I presume that is because I am not a Minister. I know there are other members who can get nothing or next to nothing. I might point out that at Mackay there is a large Custom-house being erected there, though the present Custom-house is ample for all the requirements of the

place, and is likely to be so for the next fifty years. The new building is as fine a Custom-house as the one in Brisbane. I would like to ask the Government where the money is to come from to build that Custom-house? Then in Stanthorpe, which is in the Carnarvon electorate, represented by the Home Secretary, I find that a new post and telegraph office has been built. I do not remember that money being voted. Where is the money to come from to pay for the building of that post and telegraph office, and to pay for works in other decayed towns? I do not want to say a word against Stanthorpe, but I must say that its present post and telegraph office is ample for all requirements for the next fifty years. Going to the Maranoa district, which is ably represented by the Attorney-General, a new courthouse, one of the finest buildings in the colony, has been erected. Where is the money to come from to pay for these improvements? I do not remember the money being on the Estimates.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes, it was on the Estimates.

HON. G. THORN: It must have been voted then. I merely point to these items to show that the Government ought to look after their own supporters. They ought to remember that there are other members on this side of the House who have constituents as well as those who have already been favoured, and who are not unlikely to lose their seats if attention is not paid to their demands. What is the use of a Government unless they have supporters? There are also members on the other side whose claims ought to be considered. I like fair play to be meted out all round, and that the claims of each constituency should be given due consideration.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Gympie was given a courthouse.

HON. G. THORN: That was provided for some time ago, but I am glad to know that Gympie is not being neglected. Now with regard to the matter of federation. The Government state in the Speech that Queensland will be the greatest gainer. I deny that *in toto*. I consider that federation is one of the greatest incubuses ever foisted upon this colony, and I am at a loss to know how the Commonwealth Bill was ever carried. The Southern part of Queensland pronounced emphatically against it, but the North voted solidly for it. The Government are now spending a large sum of money in their endeavour to improve the navigation of the Brisbane River. That I do not object to so long as the people are taxed to pay for it, yet I consider that the vessels coming from the other colonies will give Brisbane the go-by. That was the intention of the scheming, greedy, hungry lawyers who framed the Commonwealth Bill. They seem to have looked after themselves, and did not care two straws what became of others. They framed the Bill to give themselves good fat billets, and they have shown what their intentions are to a small extent already. The barristers in the other colonies are, as a matter of fact, getting all the plums, and we find they even go so far as to object to the appointment of Mr. Scott as Under Secretary to the Post Office, and of Mr. Oxenham his assistant, although it is well known that Mr. Scott is simply unequalled for that position. They consider that a barrister ought to have been placed in the position of Under Secretary to the Post Office, and although we have secured that position to this colony, yet that is all we are likely to get. It is said, of course, that the Premier is to be Chairman of the Interstate Commission, but I will believe that when I see it. I am afraid that the Queensland people will have no show of getting any of the plums,

although, perhaps, some of the lawyers of Queensland may secure a few of the lesser appointments.

Mr. REID: The Attorney-General is in for something.

HON. G. THORN: I have not heard that, and do not know anything about it, but I have no doubt that the Attorney-General will jump on to the Supreme Court bench. I would like to see him there, because in my opinion he would make a very excellent and impartial judge, and no doubt his time will come very shortly. Now, with regard to the appointment of Governor: My opinion is that we should keep up, as far as possible, the individuality of this State, and that we should get our Governor from the old country and pay him well. Failing that, I believe in popular election, both for the Governor and the Deputy Governor, but more especially for the Deputy Governor, when there is an interregnum such as exists at the present time. In that respect I am a supporter of the Labour party, who believe in the system of the election of Governor. I contend strongly that it is preposterous that lawyers should as a matter of course jump all the good positions. I should like to know how it came about that Sir Hugh Nelson was elbowed out of the position of Lieutenant-Governor, although he had acted in that capacity on one or two occasions. How is it he lost the position, and that a judge was appointed in his place? I fail to see why the judges should secure all the plums, while the common laymen get nothing or next to nothing. It seems to me only fair that every man should have a chance of securing some of these plums as well as the lawyers. I have no particular desire to say anything disrespectful of lawyers, but I consider they are the favoured members of the community, and they appear to consider that no one can do anything properly but themselves. They do not care who sinks, so long as they swim. Why, I was at a banquet given the other night in honour of our late Governor, and I found the common judges, the District Court and Land Court judges, at the top of the table, while Executive Councillors were placed at the bottom. I am at a loss to understand how that arrangement came about, for I was always under the impression that an Executive Councillor took precedence over a judge.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: So they do.

HON. G. THORN: They certainly did not do so at that banquet. I should like the Attorney-General to draw up an order of precedence so that the laymen might have some kind of show; otherwise you will eventually make the colony more strongly imbued with Labour principles than even the Labour party themselves could desire. We shall have everything carried to the lowest level, and all respect for authority will go to the wall. I trust the Attorney-General will see in future that all classes are treated alike, and that fair play is meted out not only to members of Parliament but to all classes of the community. I do not desire to occupy very much more time, but it is necessary that I should refer to the action of the Federal Parliament, which, although it has only been in existence for a few months, has usurped the functions of the State Parliament in three important matters. Under the United States Constitution the State Parliaments were at first all powerful, but each decade has seen them divested of more and more power. What has taken place in America is beginning to take place here. One important matter which they have taken over which they had no right to take over, though I do not say they cannot do it by means of a certain interpretation of one clause of the Constitution, is the control of

Pacific Island immigration. So far as black and alien labour is concerned, that undoubtedly is for the Commonwealth Parliament to deal with, but I consider that Pacific Island labour is for the State Parliament to deal with. Then, again, the Commonwealth Parliament has begun, through the Postal Act, to interfere with Tattersall's sweeps, to the detriment of the State of Tasmania, which will lose a large amount of revenue if the particular clause in the Postal Bill to which I refer is passed. One House has already passed it, and it is very likely that it will go through the other House. Another matter they have taken in hand is that of the regulation of the shipping on our coast. The Interstate Commission will have a big say in the regulation of the shipping on our coast, and I contend that that is an interference with the mercantile marine, which should not be taken in hand by the Commonwealth. Those are three matters which they have taken over, and if we do not resent their action thirty other matters may be taken over by the Commonwealth Parliament. We must endeavour to protect our rights and guard against encroachment by the Commonwealth Parliament, or everything will become subservient to that body. In my opinion the tariff that will be framed by the Commonwealth Parliament will be lower than our own tariff, and we shall never know how we shall stand financially. That is the reason why I opposed the Commonwealth Bill. There is no doubt in my mind that after a year or two they will begin to make ducks and drakes of the money, and give us what they think proper, and we shall require no end of taxation. We shall require a land tax, a property tax, and an income tax to keep us on an equal footing with the other States. I am astonished that the hon. member for Carpentaria was gulled into supporting the Commonwealth Bill, because he ought to have known that it would wipe Queensland out.

Mr. FOSYTH: You are joking.

HON. G. THORN: I am not joking. The only thing I am pleased about in the matter is that that part of the colony which went solid for federation is going to get its reward—that is, in the abolition of black labour. They will soon get their reward, for, notwithstanding that the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Act, which passed this House last session, did not receive the Royal assent because it contained a certain prohibition in regard to coloured labour, we shall find that kanakas and other coloured races will be wiped out in the northern part of Queensland. The British Government were afraid to give assent to that measure, as they did not wish to give any offence to Japan; and that is the reason the Attorney-General sent the Bill to the old country, knowing well that it would be thrown out. There are several matters in the Speech of which I heartily approve. One of those is the proposal to grant an extension of tenure to pastoralists in the Western country. Hon. members must bear in mind that that land in the West can never be taken up for close settlement. I can remember well that during my time there have been three droughts in the Western country. The reason why droughts were not so disastrous there in former years was that there was no stock in that portion of the country, and in my opinion that portion of the country will never carry a large amount of stock. I think the pastoralists there ought to be treated liberally by this House, and that, seeing that this land will not be wanted for close settlement, they should have long tenure, like that which is given in South Australia. I do not say that I would support a reduction in their rents, but I certainly think they should have a long tenure. That is the only way to secure the expenditure of capital in that country.

Mr. REID: Some of the leases have nineteen years to run now.

HON. G. THORN: I would give them thirty-eight years if they paid the rent, because, as I have said, the long tenure is the only inducement for the expenditure of capital. If the leases are extended the pastoralists will get the financial institutions to assist them. I see a great danger to this State in consequence of the majority of the people voting for the adoption of the Commonwealth Bill. This colony is large enough to be an empire by itself, and I contend that instead of our being great gainers by federation we shall always be losers, and time will show that before very long. With regard to the black labour, I knew very well what the result would be when it was decided to join in federation. I knew when one daily metropolitan paper raised the question, and made it a shibboleth, black labour would be wiped out in Queensland. The Labour party knew what they were about, and knew that many others who were not supporters of their party would vote with them on this question. I noticed with amazement that in the district north of Mackay the people returned an anti-black labour candidate, who beat an old resident like Mr. Brown. Cairns also returned an anti-black labour politician, although there is a good deal of coloured labour employed in that district. The industries there all depend very largely upon getting reliable labour—I do not say cheap labour, because I always look upon kanakas as not being cheap labour. I believe that a white man can do quite as much work in sugar-growing as the kanaka. From Mackay southwards to Brisbane cane can be grown by white labour just as well as by kanaka or any other coloured labour. It is no worse for whites in the portion of the colony comprised in that area than it is in Brisbane. I got that from a sugar-planter at Mackay, who informed me that he only employed white people, and that he made more money out of sugar-growing than other people who employed kanakas. When an inhabitant of Mackay talks in that way, I think that it is time we gave the matter a little further consideration, and agreed with the Labour party on this question. There is one other item in the Speech to which I would refer, and that is the Harbour Board Bill. I hold the opinion strongly that the sooner Brisbane has a harbour board the better—the same as Townsville and Rockhampton—

[9:30 p.m.] and that the landholders about Brisbane should be taxed for the improvement of the port of Brisbane just the same as the landholders at other ports are taxed. I think this Bill is one of the first that should be brought forward, and that a harbour board for Brisbane should be constituted without delay. We know very well that the Minister for Railways, Mr. Leahy, and the Hon. Mr. Carter have been continually planning to get the port of Brisbane improved, and we know that the present Government are doing more for the Brisbane River than has been done by all previous Governments. When the Brisbane Harbour Board is formed, I should like the Lindon Bates dredges, which cost about £200,000, to be handed over to the board, and charged to that body. In dealing with shingle beds and clay bottoms, I think they will prove not to come up to expectations; but in removing silt, I believe they are up to the mark. Those two dredges should improve the port of Brisbane to the depth of 30 or 40 feet before very long. There is 30 feet of water at low tide in Sydney, and I don't see why we should not have that depth here. But even if we get that depth the big steamers will pass the port all the same. They may drop the mails at the mouth of the

river the same as they do at Keppel Bay for Rockhampton, but the big steamers will not come up to Brisbane. With regard to the promised legislation affecting parliamentary elections, I may say that I do not object to one man one vote, but I am afraid it may have the effect of wiping the Labour party out of existence. That has been shown already in the south, where electorates that formerly returned Labour men rejected them after one man one vote became law. I notice that the Bill to provide for advances to farmers is at the bottom of the list of Bills mentioned in the Speech, but I hope it will be one of the first brought forward by the Government for consideration. I remember that in my day I went in for a Railway Reserves Act under which land was sold, not for 10s. an acre, but 30s. an acre, for the purpose of railway construction. The next man that came in cancelled that Act, and put the money into the consolidated revenue and made the railway with loan money. I am referring now to the Western line. At the time this was mooted, I could not get the House or the country to agree to the development of the country by this means, and when Sir Thomas McLlwraith came in he took the money, which I and others had obtained from the sale of land under the Railway Reserves Act, and put it into the consolidated revenue, and went in for a loan to build the Western line. I point this out to show that what was done then could be done now. I believe the amount of surplus revenue which has accumulated in past years amounts to about £500,000, and I think the Government might see their way to cancel the Act under which that money has been put in trust, and devote it to wiping out the present deficit, and thus avoid placing burdens on the people. My opinion is that we shall never know our financial position under the Commonwealth, and probably next year, even with all the clipping down of the Estimates, there will be a bigger deficiency than there is this year, especially if the Government go in for dealing out the money to favoured electorates. I like to see fair play, and I trust that the Government will mete out even-handed justice to all the electorates—Labour electorates and others as well as my own. I shall support the motion for the adoption of the Address.

Mr. PAGET (*Mackay*): As a new member I would crave the indulgence of hon. members of this House for the few remarks I have to make upon this Address.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAGET: Before saying anything on the Speech, I must refer to the loss which the colony has sustained by the deaths of the late Sir J. R. Dickson and the late Hon. J. V. Chataway.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAGET: I had not the pleasure of knowing Sir James Dickson personally, but I do know that some nine years ago, when the Government decided that it was advisable to bring in a Bill providing for the reintroduction of kanakas for the sugar industry, the late hon. gentleman was our friend, and I have always felt grateful to him ever since. The late Mr. Chataway was a personal friend of mine, and I very much regret and deplore his death. I feel that in him the agriculturists of this colony have lost a very sincere friend and a very earnest helper.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAGET: The Speech says that the deficit is largely caused by the drought which has been prevalent in the Western parts of this country. I do not think that the deficit has been entirely caused by the drought. I think there are one or two other causes. One of those, I believe, is the expense that the country has been put to by the sending of the contingents to

South Africa. Another one is that during last year the output of sugar did not reach by some 30,000 tons, I believe, what it was the year before. The exports show a reduction of something like £500,000 on the export for the year 1899; and, when one of the chief branches of the agricultural industry shows such a deficiency in its output, I take it that the expenditure in that particular industry cannot be what it would be if it were in an exceedingly flourishing condition, and, therefore, the revenue must suffer; because when people have not the money to spend they cannot go in for the improvements that they would otherwise. It is with much gratification that I see that the Government propose that greater attention shall be given to the agricultural industry, and that land shall be thrown open where the rainfall is more regular. I think that there are other ways by which the agricultural industry can be assisted. One of those methods is forecast in the Speech—by a Bill to provide for advances to farmers.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAGET: This is a matter that deserves the earnest attention of the whole of the members of this House, and I trust that it will be on rather more liberal lines than the Bill that was introduced last session by the late Hon. J. V. Chataway, for the reason that, since that Bill was introduced, we have had a sugar expert appointed in the person of Dr. Maxwell.

Mr. REID: At £3,000 a year.

Mr. PAGET: I may say that Dr. Maxwell's £3,000 a year is not going to be paid by the ordinary taxpayers of the colony.

Mr. JENKINSON: A portion of it will be.

Mr. PAGET: One-half of it is to be paid directly by the sugar grower and manufacturer.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is quite right.

Mr. PAGET: I may say here, also, that I am personally responsible for the resolution that was passed at the sugar conference asking that, in the event of this expert being appointed, and in the event of a Bill being passed to start sugar experimental stations, the Government should subsidise our voluntary contributions by an endowment at the rate of £1 for £1. The reason that I, I may say, forced this resolution on the conference in spite of a considerable amount of opposition was because I considered that the country has a direct stake in the sugar industry. It has a financial stake to the extent of something over £500,000. I would desire that this Bill should go a little farther than the advancing of money to farmers to make improvements on their land. In view of our having this sugar expert amongst us, I would desire, if it were possible, to safeguard the advances made under this Bill to enable the sugar-growers—I speak especially for them—to obtain money at a low rate of interest to carry out Dr. Maxwell's suggestions.

Mr. JENKINSON: Their deeds are lodged in all instances now with the Government.

Mr. PAGET: That is only where they are growing cane for the guaranteed mills.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is a great proportion of them.

Mr. GIVENS: The Government for their own protection will have to do something to protect the sugar-growers in connection with the guaranteed mills.

Mr. PAGET: There is also a Bill promised to amend the law relating to dairy inspection. That is a Bill which is very seriously needed. The dairying industry of this State is one that is expanding very rapidly, and one that I feel sure in the future will be of very great importance. We have now passed what I may term the babyhood of the industry. I have not the figures with me, but I understand that during the past two or three years very large quantities

of butter have been exported from the Southern part of the State over and above the quantity required for home consumption. When we export a product we must see that the product is of the finest possible description that can be made. We have found that out with sugar, and the dairymen must find out, with regard to their butter, that if they once create a name which is a bad one for their product it will take a very long time for them to overcome the prejudice against their brands. In the same way, if from the jump they send out a good article under certain brands, those brands become favourably known, and always command the very best price in the home markets. In connection with this matter also I trust that the Government will see fit to reintroduce the Sugar Works Amending Act that we have heard so much about to-night. It is not for me to criticise what the hon. member for Cairns has said. Perhaps I am unable to do it; but I think one of the mills is in the hon. member's electorate.

Mr. GIVENS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAGET: And the other is in the electorate of the hon. member for Woollahakata.

Mr. GIVENS: No—in the electorate of the hon. member for Herbert.

Mr. PAGET: I am referring to the Mulgrave and Mosman mills. Last year the Mosman made 5,992 tons of sugar, and a profit of £6,832. The Mulgrave turned out 5,231 tons of sugar and made a profit of £7,226. The Royal assent having been refused to this Bill, has placed a very large number of landowners and settlers in a very awkward predicament in connection with the Russell and Johnstone River mills, which were to have been built under the provisions of that Act. They have gone to some considerable expense in clearing the land and starting plantations. As most hon. members know, a sugar plantation or farm is not properly started in three months. You can't put the plough in the ground at once, break it up, cross-plough and seed it down, as in the case of wheat and oats land. We require small plantations formed first to provide the plants for the larger areas that are necessary to keep the mills going. I understand that the Auditor-General cannot permit any further expense in connection with these mills until the Royal assent is given to the Bill passed last session or until a new Bill is brought before the House. The electorate that I have the honour to represent has some interest in this Bill, although it is not another new mill promised.

Mr. GIVENS: All the central mills are interested in it.

Mr. PAGET: Yes, the whole of the central mills are interested. My reason for remarking this is that the whole of the central mills under the Sugar Guarantee Act either now or will, from time to time, require further advances to complete their machinery or their tramway systems. In some instances they are able to make their improvements from the money they make out of their sugar products, but times have not of late years been such as to permit them making large profits; therefore they are unable to meet their interest, and probably a great number of them have not been able to find the money to make really necessary improvements. I understand that the Nambour is very much in want of a small addition to its tramway system, and I know that, in the Mackay district, the Plane Creek mill desires to borrow a further sum of £3,000 in order to cultivate a large area of very good sugar land. I believe that in the North there is one mill which owes its banker £10,000. They borrowed this money in order to make certain improvements in their mill, on the understanding that they could repay the bankers from advances made under this Act.

This money they are now unable to get, and if it is not the intention of the Government to bring in the amending Act again, I trust that some means will be found by which small advances can be made to enable the existing mills to complete their machinery and tramway systems. There is another matter that I think could well occupy the attention of this House in connection with the agricultural industry of the colony, and that is a Bill for the protection of tenants, commonly known as "A Tenants' Rights Bill." I am not aware that any very large areas of land are rented in the more temperate parts of the State for the purpose of growing agricultural products, but I know that in the North there are a very large number of small areas which are let to tenants for the purpose of sugar-growing. In the past these tenants have had no right to compensation at the end of their term for any improvements they have put on the land; and as a landlord and tenant myself, I know that the system which has been pursued in the past is absolutely ruinous to the land.

Mr. KEOGH: They take everything out of it.

Mr. PAGET: Yes. That is it; simply because they have no right at the end of their term to any compensation for any improvements or manures that they have put on the land. This matter deserves very serious consideration at the hands of the Government, for we must all admit that our system of agriculture in the past has not been a good one—not nearly as good as it might have been. It means taking all out of the land and putting very little back. If some measure such as I have outlined were passed, the tenant—I am speaking more particularly of the sugar industry—would, instead of, during the last two years of his tenancy, when he probably intends giving up the farm, not caring to get an extension of his lease, as he has a right to get if he chooses—instead of doing nothing in the way of keeping the crop up to the mark, he would plant right up to the end of his term. And not only that, but if he knew he was going to be paid for his improvements and the manuring, he would go on with the manuring right up to the end of his term. At present the tenant says—and rightly so—"We won't put in any more plants or manure, because on the 31st December the landlord may say, 'Oh, well, I'm going to put another fellow in here; I don't want to renew your lease.'" If the landlord said this to the tenant under a Tenants' Rights Bill, the landlord would be compelled to pay the compensation as agreed upon under the terms of the Bill. It was not my intention to refer to kanaka

labour this evening, but the hon.

[10 p.m.] member for Fassifern, in his speech, said he considered that the question of kanaka labour was purely one for the State Parliament, and should not be interfered with by the Federal Parliament. I must say that he endorsed my opinion. I think that a very strong protest should be made by this House if any attempt is made by the Federal Parliament to interfere with the labour which we sugar-growers at the present juncture consider necessary for the carrying on of our business.

Mr. GIVENS: On what grounds should that protest be made?

Mr. PAGET: On the ground that if you do away with the kanaka, who after all is meant, who does not interfere with the white man, but provides work for him, you very probably will leave a loop-hole and a door open for the coming in of very much more undesirable aliens.

Mr. GIVENS: The people, who are their own masters, have given their own, and there is no necessity for us to say anything.

Mr. PAGET: I do not agree that the Federal Parliament are our masters. The Constitution

Act I believe—I am speaking now from memory—says that the Federal Parliament shall do certain things. It shall take over the Customs and Excise and various other matters that have hitherto been controlled by the State Parliaments, but it does not say that the Federal Parliament shall take over the regulating of kanaka labour. The Act says the Federal Parliament may take it over.

Mr. GIVENS: It says nothing about regulating kanaka labour.

Mr. PAGET: Making laws for the regulation of races for which special laws are required, or some words to that effect. The only race for which special laws have been required in the past in this State is the kanaka, as we sugar-growers know to our cost. I see in the opening Speech reference to the fact that some private railway Bills will probably be brought forward during the present session. I may say at once that I am in favour of private lines being built to centres where it is considered inadvisable to build lines by public money.

Mr. GIVENS: Not the Cattle Creek line.

Mr. PAGET: The Cattle Creek line is being built by public money. It does not run to a mine, but into a very big agricultural district; and I have the pleasure of having been partly instrumental, with the ratepayers of the Pioneer district, in voting in favour of the local governing body borrowing money to build feeders to that line. I may also say that I have been very greatly interested for years past in the building of light lines in agricultural districts, and I believe that is the true means of opening up agricultural and mining districts. In fact, I am not at all sure that it is necessary, where you have mining districts that are a long way from seaports, to build very extensive lines to them. I think it would probably be very much better—I do not wish to teach people their business—if, instead of building lines on the Government gauge of 3 feet 6 inches, more were built on a 2 feet gauge. We have in the Mackay district something like 120 miles of 2 feet line, and those 120 miles, built by private people, carry a very large tonnage of agricultural produce every year. Those light lines can carry all our material just the same as they can carry sugarcane, wheat, maize, or anything else, and they can carry passengers as well. I see also that the Government propose to introduce some Bills to constitute certain harbour boards. I trust that also means that the Government intend to introduce the Harbour Boards Amending Act for Mackay. We have been waiting for this Bill for the past two years, and I may say that the amending Act is in favour of extending the franchise. It is to lower the contributions from the payers of dues, giving a vote for every £1 instead of £5, and to enable the ratepayers of the district to elect more members to the harbour board than they are able to under the present Act. There is another matter that I think might well occupy the attention of the House this session, and that is with respect to a Fertilisers Bill. It is not a contentious matter. I believe the late Mr. Chataway did introduce a Bill which was carried through this House, but rejected by the Upper House. At present the farmer in this State, when he buys artificial manure, is obliged to rely upon the analysis supplied to him by the importer. Under this Bill he would not have to rely on that analysis, but would buy his manure under Government analysis. That is, there would be a Government certificate attached to each parcel of manure that is purchased. In other countries, where such legislation is in force, the honest manufacturer does not object. It is the dishonest man who objects. It is a matter of very vital interest to agriculturists generally

in the State, and I trust time will be found to pass such a small measure, and one that is so very necessary. I have to thank the House for having given me such a kindly hearing.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*): I move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate made an Order of the Day for tomorrow.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter from Mr. W. G. Higgs, dated 17th July, resigning his seat as one of the representatives of the electorate of Fortitude Valley.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) moved—

That the seat of William Guy Higgs hath become and is now vacant by reason of the resignation thereof by the said William Guy Higgs since his election and return to serve in this House as member for the electoral district of Fortitude Valley.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): I move that this House do now adjourn.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): Just a word. When the Premier spoke at an earlier stage this evening he said that very likely the Financial Statement would soon be delivered. I would like him to say if he will have the Auditor-General's report tabled before the Financial Statement is delivered, and also when it is likely that we shall see the Electoral Reform Bill?

The PREMIER: I have not seen the Auditor-General, who is now in charge of the Treasury, but I will make inquiries as to when his report will be ready.

Mr. TURLEY: It is necessary.

The PREMIER: Well, before the Estimates it is necessary, but I would not like to delay the Financial Statement, because I think it should be delivered as soon as possible. The Electoral Reform Bill will come on as soon as possible. It is one of the first on the list, and there will be no delay in bringing it forward after the Financial Statement.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past 10 o'clock.