Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 26 OCTOBER 1880

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 26 *October*, 1880.

Correction.—Questions.—Formal Business.—Marsupials Destruction Bill—third reading.—Resignation of Mr. Hendren.—Railway Companies Preliminary Bill—third reading.—Treasury Bills Bill—second reading.—Duty on Cedar Bill—committee.—Customs Duties Bill—committee.—Duty on Queensland Spirits Bill—committee.

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

CORRECTION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Beor) said he wished to correct a statement that he made in presenting a petition last week from the constituency of Bowen. It was a petition asking for a railway from Bowen to Haughton's Gap, and he stated that the petition was signed by 400 people. He made a mistake in saying the number was 400: it should have been over 1,000 people.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. SCOTT asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. If a tabulated statement of "The Queensland Statutes" in conformity with a resolution of this House, passed on the 11th of September, 1870, has yet been published?

2. If not, when is it probable this will be done?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) said, in replying to the question of the hon. member for Leichhardt, this was a question that should have been asked of the Attorney-General, in whose department it was; but as he (Mr. Palmer) had been asked he had no objection to answer it:—

1. The tabulated statement showing the names and dates of all Acts published in the four volumes of the Queensland Consolidated Statutes, issued in 1874, distinguishing—

1st. Those Acts which have been wholly repealed;

2nd. Those Acts which have been in part repealed, particularising the clauses repealed either in whole or in part; and

3rd. Those which have been amended, particularising the clauses amended, either in whole or in parts;—has not been published, but in respect of all Acts passed since the session of 1873, the information required in a tabulated form will be found in each sessional volume.

2. The publication of the statement required in connection with the four volumes of the Consolidated Statutes will be undertaken as soon as the present pressure of work at the Government Printing Office is relieved.

FORMAL BUSINESS.

On the motion of the HON. S. W. GRIFFITH, it was resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a return showing the names of all tenderers for the last Government Loan, with the amounts tendered for and prices offered in each case.

MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, this Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council with the usual message.

RESIGNATION OF MR. HENDREN.

The SPEAKER: I think it my duty to announce to the House, at this stage of the proceedings, that I have received a telegram purporting to be sent by the hon. member for Bundanba, resigning his seat. I think I cannot take any action upon the signature of a telegram, and have not done so.

RAILWAY COMPANIES PRELIMINARY BILL—THIRD READING.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) moved that this Bill be read a third time.

Mr. MILES said that his object in making this Order of the Day "not formal," was the desire to get some information from the Premier as to whether he intended to take a trip to England for the purpose of floating a company in connection with this Bill; or did any of his colleagues?

The PREMIER: Whenever I make up my mind to go to England I will duly announce it to the House.

Question put and passed, and the Bill ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council with the usual message.

TREASURY BILLS BILL—SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said that in his Financial Statement he announced to the House that it was the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill to authorise the transfer of a certain balance which was spent in the construction of railways under the Railway Reserves Act. This was the Bill now before the House. In the Financial Statement, and in the discussion which followed, this matter was very fully discussed, and he therefore did not propose to go over the same ground again. He would shortly say that according to the opinions, as he gathered them, of the great majority of members of the House, the revenue which was taken wholesale from the Consolidated Revenue of the Railway Reserves Act of 1875 and 1876 should not have been so transferred. That the principle was wrong had, he believed, been admitted from all sides of the House since. The money for those lands should never have been taken from the revenue at all, and since the present Government had been in office they had done their best, not only to stop the operation of the Act, but also to transfer funds that were raised under that Act. There was only one point of the arguments urged which he found, on reference to the Financial Statement, he had not referred to, and that was an argument brought forward that the sales called abnormal sales should not be credited to the Consolidated Revenue. That argument might have had some weight four or five years ago, but not now; because the very lands which swelled the railway reserves account were just the very lands that would have been put to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue had they not been sold under the Railway Reserves Act. Another argument that was brought forward was pushing the principle to extremes. It was said that if the Treasurer felt himself justified at any time after money had been taken from the Consolidated Revenue and spent on certain works—that if he was justified in

taking it back and accrediting the Consolidated Revenue with an amount equal to what was spent on those works, and borrowing that money from the public creditor—if he did it in any case he could do it in all; and that any Treasurer would be justified in going through the items of expenditure for the last ten or fifteen years, and taking each of those items which had been spent on Consolidated Revenue on works and crediting the revenue to that extent. That was an exaggerated idea which was not worth answering at all. The reason for this financial operation was, that a general law was passed in 1875 and 1876 which had proved a failure, and which had the effect at the time of taking away a large amount of the general revenue. The effect on the revenue was not admitted by the majority, but it was by a considerable minority, and it had been proved that the only effect had been to take away from the Consolidated Revenue. That that course was not justified they saw now, and having repealed as much of the Act as they could, it was a legitimate consequence that they should pay back as much money to the original source from which it came as was actually abstracted. That was all that was intended to be done by this Bill. There was collected under the Railway Reserves Act £446,884 10s. 7d. While that Act operated, of course all the money that came from railway reserves was spent on the construction of railways. Afterwards, however, when that money failed, the balance that was required from loan to complete the construction of the railways was charged with an amount of interest at the rate of 5 per cent., and that amount was paid into the general revenue. The amount so paid altogether was £34,011 12s. 2d., and the expenditure on advertising surveys, &c., was £30,526 12s. 6d. These two amounts, of course, he deducted from the amount to be transferred. There was, in addition, balances to the amount of £129,821 1s. 4d., leaving, therefore, a balance now to be transferred of £252,525. This was a Bill to authorise the issue of Treasury bills, and was pretty much a transcript of a similar Bill that had been passed before. It authorised the Treasurer to issue bills to the amount of £252,525. Of course, the Treasury bills would be made; but as a matter of fact it was not likely that they would be sold, at least for a considerable time, because it would be absurd for them to have money at the bank getting little interest, and at the same time issue Treasury bills on which they would have to pay 5 per cent. interest. The Treasurer would invest a certain amount of the balance in hand in the purchase of these bills: if the time came when they would want to use them the Treasurer would have it in his power to dispose of them. When the first Loan Bill came into force a provision would be made for redeeming the amount that had been raised under this Bill. He had referred to the principal points, and he now begged to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. DICKSON said when he first looked at the Bill, before the Premier delivered his speech, he was under the impression that the hon. gentleman had very wisely abandoned the idea he announced during his Financial Statement respecting the issue of Treasury bills, for the purpose of providing for the money which was originally obtained from the sales of lands in the Railway Reserves which had been employed in the construction of railways, and which actually, long ago, had been expended; and that the intention of the Treasurer was to revive the money by the artificial means of Treasury bills. He was under the impression that the Treasurer had since the delivery of the Financial Statement adopted a much sounder system, and that he intended boldly to announce a deficiency in the revenue, and cover it by the issue of Treasury bills, without reference to the Railway Reserves Fund, which had been long ago exhausted. He was led to this conclusion because the amount stated in this Treasury Bills Bill had no relation whatever to the actual proceeds of lands accruing from the railway reserves; it, in fact, within a small amount, corresponded with the revenue deficiency that existed on the 30th June last. It was a singular coincidence that on the 30th June last the Auditor-General stated the revenue deficiency to be £247,340, and the amount proposed to be raised by this Bill was £251,160. He was glad to imagine the Treasurer had adopted a sounder system of finance, for he must say that the scheme of reviving moneys which had been long ago absorbed in construction was very faulty. If the fund had cash balances in hand he could recognise the propriety of transferring them from the special fund to the Consolidated Revenue fund; but he could not for one moment admit the principle which the Premier had attested in the Bill; if it were a correct principle the hon. gentleman ought to have adopted it when he transferred the cash balances available on the 30th of June, 1879. He then transferred £129,000 of money at credit of a special fund; but the Treasury exigencies not requiring any larger amount to cover the deficiency, he said nothing about moneys already expended. Surely, if the principle were a correct one, he ought to have transferred the total fund at that time, rather than resort to this very questionable expedient, simply because the deficiency in the Treasury had assumed larger proportions than he anticipated. He (Mr. Dickson) did not conceal from himself the fact that had the revenue last year been sufficiently elastic to cover expenditure, this mode of financing would never have been dreamt of or countenanced. And he regretted that the Colonial Treasurer, when he saw the state of the finances, did not adopt the proper course of boldly announcing his deficit, revising his tariff in such a manner that he might have obtained an increased revenue, and trusting to an increased revenue during the present year to have liquidated the deficiency. The Treasurer was not at the present time in straightened circumstances for money—in fact, he had more money than he could advantageously employ at the banks. It was well known that the hon. gentleman had not been successful in placing any surplus funds in the local banks, notwithstanding the invitations from the Treasury for them to take such moneys at a certain rate of interest. Such being the case, there was no present necessity to issue Treasury bills, and the Treasurer himself admitted that if his proposals were sanctioned by Parliament, it was not his intention to part with them, but to hold them, and to allow the interest to accrue upon them. The principle was not assented to, as the Premier had asserted, by a large majority on both sides of the House; on the contrary, it was pretty generally condemned, and in his (Mr. Dickson's) opinion it was entirely reprehensible. If the railway reserves fund had a cash balance in hand there would have been some justification for transferring the cash balances to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue; but that money having been long ago expended in construction, it would be just as wise to revive other amounts derived from other sources which had been similarly expended. If the Treasurer was straightened for money, it would have been wiser to have asked for the round sum of £300,000, and allowed the matter to stand on its own merits. That would have covered the deficiency on the 30th June, and provided additional funds for the increasing expenditure of the current year. At any rate, it would have been a better system than to have asked for Treasury bills for £251,160, a total which had been arrived at in a most fanciful manner.

That would have been understood by those who at some future time might be asked to lend money for the extinction of those bills. The issue of Treasury bills was at best a doubtful and undesirable system of financing, and when it arose from revenue deficiencies, the Treasurer ought to regard it as a temporary assistance to be ultimately liquidated by the increased elasticity of the revenue. The issue of Treasury bills would not tend to increase the credit of the colony in the eyes of the foreign capitalist, especially if the money to redeem them had ultimately to be borrowed from the public creditor. It would be far better to treat the debit balance of revenue as what was called unforeseen loan expenditure, which at the present time amounted to between £50,000 and £60,000, forming the nucleus of a new loan. That would have saved the necessity for Treasury bills. The whole system was an illusory one, and one that would not tend to raise the colony in the estimation of the public creditor, who would see that instead of putting their house in order and providing for increased revenue in times of depression, as they were bound to do, they were assuming that they would have no difficulty in borrowing to meet any deficiency whenever they wished to float a loan in the London market. He would point out to the Colonial Treasurer that he was flying in the face of his own professions. While disagreeing with the principles of the Railway Reserves Act to provide for the construction of railways out of sales of land, the hon. gentleman was always an advocate for providing for the interest periodically accruing upon such sales of land. They had at present a very largely increased amount of interest to pay to the public creditor, and yet they were now entirely upsetting the theory of the Colonial Treasurer in placing to credit of the Consolidated Revenue whatever proceeds from sales of land came into his possession. He objected entirely to the principle, and believed in the straightforward course, if there was any necessity for it, of asking for Treasury bills for £300,000; and then if, in the future, they found that the revenue was not sufficiently elastic to retire those bills—which it ought to be made to be, or, at least, the Treasurer ought to make an endeavour in that direction—there would be a justification in placing the bills before the public creditor on their own intrinsic merits. The Treasurer was in no immediate want of money. The last instalment of the two-million loan would be received in London during this month, and there would then be a large amount of money bearing no interest both here and in London. There was, therefore, no necessity for issuing Treasury bills. But seeing that the Treasurer intended to issue them, it would have been better to have made them bear interest at 4 per cent., seeing that the Government were going to hold them. Those were some of the objections he had to the Bill. He would rather that the Treasurer had adopted the more straightforward way of treating the amount as a debit balance of the Consolidated Revenue, issuing Treasury bills in a round sum therefor, entirely irrespective of the moneys expended four or five years ago under the Railway Reserves Act.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that before the Bill passed its second reading he had a word or two to say upon it, particularly as it was the only portion of the Treasurer's financial scheme which was worthy of serious debate. He had a word or two to say with respect to a communication made apparently by the Government to the English public with reference to their financial scheme. They were getting gradually initiated into a new system of Government—a system carried on to a great extent in England instead of in the colony. This was the information which he assumed had been sent to England by the Government;—if it was not sent by them of course he was wrong. The following telegram appeared in the *Times* of the 20th August, and was quoted in the *Telegraph* of last Thursday evening:—

"Brisbane, August 18.

"The Treasurer has introduced his Financial Statement in the Legislative Assembly. He estimates the revenue at £1,700,000, and the expenditure at £1,670,000. The debit balance on June 30 was £190,000. The deficit is to be covered by transferring under the new statute to the Consolidated Revenue the receipts of the Land Department, previously applied to railway construction. There is to be no increase of taxation except in the Excise duties upon colonial spirits. The Treasurer considered that it would be unjust to augment the public burdens in order to push forward the construction of railways in the interior, when the sale of a portion of the land made accessible would suffice to pay interest on the capital required. British capitalists were offering to complete the railway system in consideration of a Government grant of land, and a Bill to sanction that course would be introduced. The depressed state of trade was passing away, and there was a gradual increase of the revenue. Nothing was wanting for the restoration of the full prosperity of the colony but means for placing its surplus food and products within the reach of the British consumer. The Budget is approved."

And, under date of the following day, the subjoined telegram also appeared in the *Times* of August 20th:—

"Brisbane, August 19.

"In to-day's sitting of the Legislative Assembly a vote of want of confidence in the Government on account of the Budget was moved by the leader of the Opposition, but was negatived by the House."

Those telegrams contained some startling information, and were certainly calculated to mislead the English public. He would take this sentence:—

"The deficit is to be covered by transferring under the new statute to the Consolidated Revenue the receipts of the Lands Department previously applied to railway construction."

Anybody reading that telegram would understand that there was some new scheme of legislation introduced this year by which the ordinary revenue of the Lands Department was to be transferred from one kind of expenditure to another. No one could possibly infer that money expended two or three years ago was to be renewed by means of a loan, or that the proceeds of the loan were to be applied to make up the deficiency in the revenue.

The PREMIER: They would be wrong if they did.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the only inference to be drawn was that some new kind of legislation was going to be introduced with regard to the land system. The public of Great Britain would understand that at the present time there was a statute in force by which the proceeds of the land revenue did not go into Consolidated Revenue, and that a new statute had lately been passed by which they would be diverted into Consolidated Revenue; and that the Consolidated Revenue would in future be increased by that change in the law. As they all knew, such was not the fact. What opinion the public of Great Britain would have formed if the truth had been telegraphed might be inferred from the comments made in the neighbouring colonies, where the Press had with one accord condemned the propositions of the Treasurer, to which this Bill was intended to give effect, as being unworthy of a statesman, and not very creditable to the colony.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that all the criticisms he had seen were to that effect, and he should be glad to see one favourable criticism in papers

published outside the colony. All that he had seen spoke of the proposition only in terms of the strongest reprobation. There was another statement in the telegram to which he would allude :—

"The Treasurer considered that it would be unjust to augment the public burdens in order to push forward the construction of railways into the interior, when the sale of a portion of land made accessible would suffice to pay interest on the capital required."

He wondered where that land was to be found. They had to go to England for the information. Then it was said—

"British capitalists were offering to complete the railway system in consideration of a Government grant of land."

The only British capitalists who had made any offer of the kind were Messrs. Kimber and Company's syndicate, and that appeared now to have disappeared. He was afraid, therefore, that the statement about the British capitalist was scarcely accurate, especially after the Premier had told them, as he did the other night, that he had made up his mind to have nothing to do with that syndicate long before the telegram was sent to England.

The PREMIER : I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that that was certainly the impression left on the House. The hon. gentleman said he had made up his mind to have nothing to do with Baron Erlanger, who was the head of that syndicate, and he said he had come to that conclusion before leaving England. He (Mr. Griffith) pointed out that the hon. gentleman must have made up his mind after hearing the commencement of the debate on the second reading of the Bill. The hon. gentleman now said he had not made up his mind before the Financial Statement was made. He had also observed a telegram published in the *Courier*, whilst the second reading of the Railway Companies Bill was being discussed, in which it was stated that there was great excitement in England respecting it. It seemed a very strange thing that there should be excitement in England over such a matter as the second reading of that Bill. For his part he did not believe the telegram, especially when he considered that the Premier had said that the negotiations did not bind the Government to anything, and that, as a matter of fact, they were at an end. The telegram sent to England from Brisbane on August 19 concluded as follows :—

"Nothing was wanting for the restoration of the full prosperity of the colony but means of placing its surplus food and products within the reach of the British consumer."

He trusted that they would not have to wait until that result was attained before they recovered that measure of prosperity to which they had been accustomed. Then they found it stated that he (Mr. Griffith) had moved a vote of want of confidence in the Government. In a sense he supposed that was true, but it certainly was not using the words in the ordinary sense. The telegrams from beginning to end would convey an entirely erroneous impression to the mind of any reader not perfectly cognisant with what had taken place in the House, and not able to contrast the statements with an actual knowledge of the facts. He did not know who sent the telegrams. He presumed that it was done by the Government. He had been informed that the *Times* had no agent in Brisbane, and it was known that it was the practice of the present Government to send telegrams to the Agent-General for publication from time to time. The Premier told them the other day that he did not word a telegram so as to make it as he (Mr. Griffith) considered strictly accurate—a telegram which asserted as a fact that which was at least a question of considerable doubt—because of the extra cost, which would have been 10s. 10d. The telegrams he had read contained 212 and 37 words respectively, so that those remarkable telegrams must have cost from £120 to £130. He protested against the affairs of the country being managed in that way. They did not want to bolster up their credit in England by telegrams of that kind. If the House sanctioned the transaction proposed the credit of the colony in Great Britain and elsewhere would not be improved. He wished that the House could be brought to such a sense as would induce it to refuse to sanction the scheme proposed. He had no objection to the issue of Treasury bills. He would have no objection to the Bill if it were not for the preamble. In the body of the Bill the Government had omitted any reference whatever to the nature of the transactions incidentally referred to in the preamble. He had no objection to their tiding over their difficulties by means of Treasury bills, but he objected to that, which in fact they were doing—that was borrowing money to meet a current deficiency. That was what it amounted to—all the argument, all the financing, all the surrounding of the matter with clouds would not conceal the real fact that they were borrowing money to pay their debts. He did not intend to say any more then. He supposed if the House would have have it so, it would be so. He thought the credit of the colony would be far better maintained if they contented themselves with simply borrowing money on Treasury bills without paying their debts by loan.

Question put and passed, and committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

DUTY ON CEDAR BILL—COMMITTEE.

The House resolved itself into Committee to consider the details of this Bill.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—"Export duty on cedar"—passed.

On clause 2—"Master to report at nearest Custom house to place of loading ;" "Master to deliver bill of lading of cedar on board to collector or principal officer prior to clearance"—

Mr. GRIFFITH pointed out that there was no provision in the clause to the effect that notice should be given before a ship left ; consequently a ship might be loaded to a greater extent than she was entered for. The only penalty in the Bill was for shipping cedar for exportation contrary to the provisions of the Act, but there was nothing in the Bill about the mode of shipping. Was it intended that the Customs officers should be present when the timber was shipped ? He did not see how otherwise there could be any practical check.

The PREMIER said that the practice at the present time would not be much changed under the Bill. Suppose a master of a vessel wanted to ship 100,000 feet of timber from the Mulgrave River, he could go to Cooktown and Townsville and get his clearance before he actually had the timber on board. He would then proceed to the place where he intended to load and take the quantity of timber on which he had paid duty, and for which he had received clearance. The Customs-house officer would see that he did not take any more timber than he had clearance for.

Mr. BEATTIE : Am I to understand that that is the usual practice ?

The PREMIER : Yes.

Mr. BEATTIE did not see why the vessel should not call at the port of entrance after having loaded so as to obtain clearance. If a vessel were cleared at Townsville to go to the Mulgrave

to load 100,000 feet of timber, it was just possilbe that she might be loaded with 150,000 feet. He could not understand why the duty should be limited to cedar over four inches in thickness. It was possible that 9-inch timber might be cut down, and, if it could be done, he should like to see provision made that timber of small size should not be cut on Government land. A great deal of good would be done to the cedar industry if some such regulation were in force.

The PREMIER said he could not introduce such a provision into the Bill.

The HON. J. M. THOMPSON could not understand why timber of a certain size only should be taxable. Why should not timber of any size be taxable?

The PREMIER said the object of the Bill was to tax log timber, and everything over four inches thick was to be considered log timber.

Mr. THOMPSON: Why not make it three inches?

The PREMIER said because it would have to go through saw-mills to be reduced to that size, and to tax sawn timber would be antagonistic to the object of the Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITH said there was no doubt that a clause relating to the size of timber to be cut would be beyond the scope of the Bill, but there could be no objection to a clause providing that small timber should not be exported. He was anxious to see in the Bill some safeguard against a vessel leaving with a greater quantity of timber than she had been cleared for prior to being loaded. There ought to be a forfeiture.

The PREMIER pointed out that there was a safeguard in the provision that the master had to deliver certain documents at the port where the timber was to be landed. He could not well load more than he had cleared for without the circumstance being detected. Suppose a vessel was to be loaded for Sydney on this side of Cooktown, it would be very hard to compel the master to go back to Cooktown for the purpose of obtaining clearance.

Mr. THOMPSON said the clause actually provided that the bill of lading was to be given up at the nearest Custom house.

Mr. BEATTIE said that in the event of a ship loading at Bribie Island the master would have to come back with his bill of lading to get his clearance from the Customs. The master would come himself; it did not follow that he must bring his vessel. The same rule would obtain with respect to vessels loading in the Johnstone and Mulgrave Rivers. The master must pay the duty before he left, and he must, therefore, go to the Customs and produce his bill of lading.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the clause was so worded as to make it necessary that any timber vessel proceeding to a place in the colony where no Customs officer was stationed should notify an intention to ship cedar for exportation. But a master might not want to ship cedar. He might want to ship ironbark or some other description of timber. Every possible safeguard should be adopted; but as the clause was worded, it appeared to him that it would be easy for a master to evade it if he wished to do so.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it would be impracticable to keep an officer to measure all the timber shipped. When the bill of lading was produced, the Customs officer would soon see whether a ship was likely to have the quantity specified. The notice of an intention to load was quite sufficient.

Mr. BEATTIE desired to know if the Premier would introduce a clause prohibiting the exportation of cedar logs under a certain size?

The PREMIER said he was quite willing to insert a clause of that sort. It might be provided, for instance, that it should be penal to export any cedar logs which had been cut down under a diameter of eighteen inches. The clause before the Committee appeared to him to be rightly worded: if a master intended to ship ironbark, gum, or any other timber but cedar, upon which he had not to pay an export duty, he would not be required to report his intention to ship.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he perfectly understood that that was what the clause intended to convey; but it was drawn to apply to any timber vessel. Why should notice be given before the ship went to the river? A master might, after going to a river, alter his mind and determine to load cedar.

Mr. MACFARLANE thought the following portion of the clause might be omitted:—

"Before any timber vessel proceeds to any place in the colony where no Customs officer is stationed, the master of such vessel shall duly report his ship in the usual way at the nearest Custom house, and notify to the collector his intention to ship cedar for exportation."

The clause would then read—

"Before any timber vessel is cleared out from Queensland the master thereof shall deliver to the collector at the nearest Custom house an export entry, together with the bill of lading, or a copy thereof, for the cedar timber laden on board, such bill of lading to contain the exact quantity in superficial feet an inch thick of all cedar timber in the log, and of all such timber sawn over four inches thick laden on board such ship; and if the master of any timber ship fails to report his ship or to clear his ship as aforesaid at the Custom House nearest to the place where such ship may have been laden, or to produce his bill of lading as aforesaid, or if such bill of lading shall in any particular be false, such master shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanour."

Mr. BEATTIE said the hon. member's suggestion would not answer. He saw no objection to the clause. It only required the masters of timber vessels to do that which was ordinarily required of masters of other vessels.

Mr. GRIFFITH agreed that it was perfectly clear that a master would have to go to the Customs-house after his ship was loaded. The clause only provided that notice should be given before the cedar was shipped; it did not require notice of shipping at any particular place.

The PREMIER said notice would be given that a ship intended to load with cedar in a certain river. A more definite notice could not be given, when it was not known how many superficial feet of cedar a vessel was likely to carry.

Mr. BEATTIE said he did not see how the duty could be collected, unless the provisions of this clause were carried out.

Mr. GRIFFITH: How can any timber be forfeited under this Bill? Can it be forfeited after it has left the colony?

The PREMIER said he questioned very much whether under the third clause cedar could not be forfeited at Sydney or at the first port out of the colony to which it might be taken.

Mr. GRIFFITH: How is the cedar to be shipped "contrary to the Act?"

The PREMIER said cedar would be shipped contrary to the Act if it were shipped without notice being given that a vessel was going to a certain river to ship. Supposing, for instance, a vessel gave notice at Cooktown for a shipment in the Mulgrave, if that vessel were caught shipping in any other river the timber could be forfeited. Vessels would have leave to ship timber in certain places.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that was evidently what was meant, but it was not expressed. If

a master reported that he was going to ship cedar for exportation there was nothing to prevent him from going anywhere. What was required was that the master should give notice of the place of shipment, and that if he shipped in violation of that notice, or without it, the timber should be forfeited. That was not provided for.

Clause put and passed.

Mr. BEATTIE said he should move the following new clause to follow clause 2 :—

That no cedar timber in the log of less dimensions than eighteen inches in diameter at any part, and no cedar timber sawn from a log of less dimensions as aforesaid, shall be shipped or exported from the colony.

Mr. NORTON said he would point out that under the proposed clause the head of the tree could not be utilised. The butt might be much larger than eighteen inches in diameter, but the other part might be smaller.

Mr. BEATTIE said the clause would meet the idea he had in view, which was to prevent the destruction of cedar. The top branches of cedar trees were very little used—he never saw any of them shipped. Cedar was always squared, and consequently fixing the dimensions at eighteen inches diameter meant that the tree would be nearly two feet in its native state.

Mr. GRIMES said the objection taken by the member for Port Curtis was a good one. If the clause were passed it would increase the waste of cedar, because the cedar-cutters would not be able to utilise the branches, which were often valuable, there being a demand for them for veneering purposes.

The PREMIER said that no doubt the objection brought forward by the member for Port Curtis was very strong against the clause as drafted. He wished to accomplish the object that the hon. mover had in view, and therefore offered no objection to the amendment, but it went a great deal further than he had contemplated. The best thing to do would be to let the matter stand over, and if a suitable clause could be framed he would endeavour to have it inserted in another place.

Mr. GRIFFITH : It cannot be done. This is a money Bill.

The PREMIER said that, then, he should make provision for the matter by regulation. The clause might condemn a great deal of cedar to waste.

Mr. BEATTIE was understood to say that he had never seen the top branches of a tree which were worth anything, and he considered the objection taken to the clause an absurd one. The branches, unless they belonged to a monster tree, would be useless for anything, and he was certain that no one in Queensland would go to the expense of exporting them, or that anyone in New South Wales or Victoria would import them for veneering purposes. He believed the regulation was that no cedar less than eighteen inches in diameter should be cut down.

Mr. NORTON said there certainly were cedar trees which gave two cuts, and it was very possible that the second one would be under eighteen inches. If the objection he had raised was an absurdity, then the regulation prohibiting the cutting of trees under eighteen inches was also an absurdity.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he understood that what was intended to be provided for was that trees under a certain dimension should not be cut down. It might be very hard to trace from what sort of tree a log came, but that difficulty being in the way he could see no better way of providing for the matter than by saying that no timber from cedar trees of less than a certain dimension at the butt should be allowed to be exported. He would suggest to the member for Fortitude Valley to propose the clause in that form.

Mr. MESTON said that what the member for Port Curtis had stated was perfectly true. One might take half-a-dozen logs from a cedar-tree ; the butt might be six feet in diameter, but near the branches the tree might be eighteen inches, and probably less, and, according to the clause, people would be prevented from cutting it next to the branches. The member for Fortitude Valley had said that the branches were of no value ; but he might state that those of old trees, and especially the elbow-branches, were valuable, and that in Sydney and Melbourne a considerable demand had arisen for them. The diameter of the tree should be fixed at the butt end, and he should say two feet would be about sufficient.

The PREMIER said he would suggest to the hon. mover to make the clause agree with the timber regulation, which said that no cedar tree of less girth than seven feet six inches at six feet from the ground should be cut down.

Mr. BEATTIE said the regulation proved that the member for Rosewood's suggestion that the size of a tree should be fixed at two feet at the butt was fallacious. From such a tree a log six feet in length would not be got. He should be very happy to make his amendment agree with the regulation.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said that after the timber was cut and shipped it would be impossible to prove that it was taken from a tree of a certain size unless there was an official on the spot empowered to fine any timber-getters who cut timber under a certain size.

Mr. BEATTIE said there were inspectors employed by the Government. With the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his clause, and propose it in the following amended form :—

No cedar timber cut from trees of less girth than seven feet six inches at six feet from the ground shall be shipped or exported from the colony.

Mr. MESTON said the clause just proposed would be perfectly useless. After taking the first log it would be impossible to say how far from the butt the second log was cut. The first log could be identified by its appearance and the saw marks, but only the cedar cutter could tell how far from the butt the other logs were cut.

Mr. BEATTIE said he would point out that the clause was virtually that no log cedar less than two feet six inches in diameter should be exported.

Mr. FRASER said the amendment had created a difficulty. The restriction as to size should be left to the officials who overlooked the cutting of timber, and when any cedar of any size was passed by them it should be allowed to be exported, whether it was the main trunk of a tree or the branches. There was a regulation which should be put in force, and should be a sufficient check.

Mr. MACFARLANE said they were losing sight of the main object of the amendment, which he took it was to prevent the cutting down of young timber. If he was correct, a far simpler way of carrying out the idea would be to propose that not a single log should be exported which was less than eighteen inches in diameter at the centre of the log.

Mr. MOREHEAD thought the hon. member for South Brisbane was perfectly right, and had made the most sensible speech that had been de-

livered on the subject. Were the owners of trees to be debarred from exporting the branches, or any portion which was of less diameter than was proposed to be laid down? The thing was perfectly absurd. If a large tree was cut down, surely the whole might be utilised either for exportation or for anything else.

Mr. NORTON thought the clause utterly useless, and that the effect would probably be that all the best timber would be exported and the smaller kind would be used in the colony. They ought to depend upon the timber regulation prohibiting the cutting down of cedar trees of a certain dimension; if it was of no value, then the clause would be of no value.

The PREMIER said it was easy enough to make regulations to prevent timber-getters from cutting down trees of less than a certain diameter; but it was a difficult matter to say what were the dimensions of a tree from which timber had been cut. The only effect of this amendment would be to prevent the exportation of any but the best timber, leaving the inferior for home use. He should therefore advise the hon. member to withdraw his amendment, leaving the protection of timber to be accomplished as hitherto by proclamation. According to the present regulation no trees were allowed to be felled which were less than eighteen inches in diameter six feet from the ground, and that had been found to be a real protection. If the amendment were agreed to, the provision could only be enforced by tracing the timber back to the place where it was cut.

Mr. BEATTIE: I will withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by permission, withdrawn.

On clause 3—"Cedar shipped contrary to the provisions of this Act to be forfeited"—

Mr. MACFARLANE suggested that timber-getters and shippers should furnish the Custom-house officers with duplicates of freight notes, as a check upon improper exportation.

The PREMIER: That is provided for in clause 2.

Question put and passed.

On clause 4—"Governor in Council may make rules and regulations"—

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not see the necessity for this clause. Forfeiture could not be imposed by regulations, and the Customs Act of 1873, with which this Act was incorporated, gave ample power for making all necessary regulations.

The PREMIER said it was necessary to give power to make special provision with regard to the kind of permit to be used for the exportation of timber.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the regulation for prescribing the form of permit was provided for under the Act of 1873. It was idle and misleading to say that such regulations should have the force of law, and he objected to giving unnecessary power to make regulations. The Colonial Secretary, when in opposition, had invariably objected to the insertion of clauses giving unnecessary powers to make regulations, but now he apparently saw no objection to this proposal.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6, and 7—passed as printed.

On clause 8—"Punishment for misdemeanour"—

Mr. GRIFFITH pointed out that the expression "may be prosecuted accordingly in a summary manner," did not define the mode of prosecution.

Mr. BEATTIE said that according to this clause and clause 3 a man might be punished twice for the same offence. In the case of the captain of a vessel taking cedar in contravention of the Act the vessel might be forfeited under clause 3, and the captain fined £200 or imprisoned for six months under clause 8.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the word "accordingly" was omitted from the clause, and the words "before two justices" were added at the end of the clause.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

On clause 9—"Short title"—

The PREMIER moved that August 13th be inserted as the date from which the Act would come into operation.

Mr. DICKSON said he noticed that was the day following the delivery of the Financial Statement. Had the duty been collected from that date?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Question put and passed.

The preamble agreed to.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL—COMMITTEE.

The House went into Committee to consider the Bill.

The preamble was postponed, and clauses 1, 2, and 3 passed as printed.

On clause 4—"Duties on articles contracted for before passing of this Act"—"Purchaser may abandon contract"—

Mr. GRIFFITH pointed out that provision was made in the clause for cases in which the duties were increased, but none for those in which the duties were diminished. The clause had evidently been taken from a Customs Duties Bill for increasing duties, but he did not see why provision should not be made as well in one case as in the other.

The PREMIER said the clause was the same as one in the Customs Duties Act of 1874, in the schedule of which various duties were altered considerably, some being raised and others lowered. There was not the same necessity for provision being made in the case of diminished duties. There might be a reason for relieving a man from a contract when the price of articles had been raised by the Government; but where a man had made a good contract he saw no reason for interference.

Mr. GRIFFITH said no doubt the clause had been copied from the Act of 1874, and that had been copied from a still older Act, the tendency having probably been to an increase of Customs duties. If, as he had understood, some of the recent alterations were in the direction of diminishing duties, some change ought to be made in the clause.

After some further brief discussion which was indistinctly heard in the gallery—

On the motion of the PREMIER, the clause was amended by the omission of the words "on or before the passing of this Act."

Mr. GRIFFITH moved that the following be inserted to follow the word "purchaser" at the end of the first paragraph:—

And every person who shall have made or entered into any contract or agreement for the purchase upon or at any time after the aforesaid date of any article

whereupon any diminished duty shall be payable under the provisions of this Act, shall be at liberty to deduct from the price contracted for so much money as will be equivalent to the difference in the duty which shall by reason of such provisions have been paid or made payable on such articles, and shall be entitled by virtue of this Act, if the same shall have been paid, to recover the same from the vendor.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put and passed.

The clause was further amended verbally, and agreed to as amended.

Clause 5 put and passed.

On schedule No. 1—

Mr. KING said he understood the Premier would consent to take the items—acids, boats, leather, and screws—one by one.

The PREMIER: I cannot do that; you can move amendments.

Mr. KING said he would begin by moving the omission of "acids." He thought that in passing a measure to alter taxation the Treasurer should give some reasons for it. In the case of acids the proposed alteration in the duty would, according to the returns furnished by the Customs Department, reduce the revenue by £175 a-year. At the present time they did not want to reduce the revenue, and that could not be the reason for the alteration. If the present duty was complained of as operating injuriously in any way, he thought the Committee should know who were affected by it injuriously, and on what grounds the Treasurer had come to the conclusion that the complaints of those persons who considered themselves injuriously affected by it should be listened to and their demands granted.

The PREMIER said the reason why he had taken acids from the fixed duties and put them under *ad valorem* was because the present duty was most unequal, there being a number of acids varying in price from 1½d. for sulphuric to 1s. 7d. per lb. for tartaric. Although the alteration might not yield so much revenue it was a much more equitable duty.

Mr. DICKSON said he quite concurred with the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough with reference to the duty on acids. He did think that the hon. the Treasurer should have given a better reason for the introduction of this alteration in the tariff with regard to these articles than had been given by him. When an alteration of this sort was made some good reason should be given for the change, whether it was caused by the circumstances of the Treasury or at the request of the business public who might consider that the impost at present levied upon acids was an exorbitant and improper one. When the Treasurer's Financial Statement was under consideration, he (Mr. Dickson) submitted to the Committee the view of large importers of this commodity, and when information of that special character was given to the Government it would be at least courteous on the part of the Treasurer to make some statement showing that he had fully investigated the circumstances for himself, and that the representations made to him were not accurate. He (Mr. Dickson) would again for a short space take up the time of the Committee to refer to what he had then stated, and he might state that while he did not himself possess any special knowledge of acids, yet the information given to him was given by several large importers who gave this information with the view of enlightening the Committee upon the question, and he might almost say that it was in opposition to the interests of the parties themselves inasmuch as the alteration of the existing tariff on acids to an *ad valorem* of 5 per cent. was clearly in the interests of the importers of this article, and, therefore, adverse to the interests of the Treasury. What he then stated was that he was informed that—

"Acids comprised a large number of articles of different value. He was informed that sulphuric acid, which at present paid 4s. per cwt., would pay under the proposed 5 per cent. duty only 1s. 4½d.; acetic acid, also paying at the present time 4s., would pay but 1s. 7½d.; tartaric acid, now paying 4s., would pay 8s. 5d.; muriatic acid, paying 4s., would pay only 1s. 2d.; nitric acid paying 4s., only 2s. 9d.; citric acid, paying 4s., as much as 9s. 5d.; and the poorer qualities of carbolic acid, paying 4s., only 1s. 2d. and 2s., while the better qualities, which also paid 4s. now, would pay as much as 22s. and 36s. So that out of the seven descriptions of acids he had enumerated, only tartaric, citric, and the better qualities of carbolic acids would contribute any increase of revenue; and the amount they would contribute was so insignificant that it was almost puerile to discuss it seriously."

He was informed that that statement was substantially correct, and that the result of this alteration of the tariff would really be a loss of revenue, while at the same time it would not afford any relief to the purchasers or consumers of these articles. The higher qualities of acids were consumed in such small quantities that, even though 5 per cent. on the higher qualities of acids might give an increased revenue, still it would be a very small increase, from the limited consumption of those articles; while on acids, such as sulphuric and other low-priced acids, there would be an actual reduction in the revenue, while at the same time the price of the article would not be diminished to the general public. There should be some stronger reason given, therefore, for the change of the tariff on acids than merely the convenience of the Customs to facilitate the passing of entries without occupying time in investigating them more fully. The information he had given was deserving of consideration, and he would again commend it to the Treasurer, because if they made any change of tariff on these articles they should see it was done through one of two causes, either to increase the circumstances of the Treasury or out of respect to a general representation made by the community that the existing tariff was disproportionate to the value of the article, or that it interfered with the consumption. Therefore, he was inclined to support the hon. member for Maryborough in the omission of acids if he put it to a division. At the same time, he would suggest to the Treasurer whether it would not be better to have the *ad valorem* of 5 per cent. confined to the higher-priced acids and allow the existing tariff to apply to the lower class of acids.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman was mistaken. The alteration was not for the convenience of the Customs Department at all. The reason he (Mr. McIlwraith) had given was that the proposed alteration would make the duty on acids more equal. The present duty of 4s. on acids was very unequal, and it was to overcome that inequality, and not because it was a matter of convenience, that this change was proposed. He was quite sure that it was not worth while splitting the two and charging a fixed duty upon one class of acids and an *ad valorem* duty on the other.

Mr. DICKSON said the matter was so paltry that it was hardly worth while discussing, but the course the Treasurer had adopted was not a good one. The public were not dissatisfied with the existing duty on acids, and it seemed to him when he looked over the list of seven acids that there was such a marked difference in their market value that the present rate, while it afforded a large revenue to the Treasurer, was not oppressive with regard to public consumption. He would not press any further objection, but he thought the remarks of the hon. member

for Maryborough were well chosen, and it would have been better to allow these acids to remain as they were.

Mr. KING said it would be a good plan to let well alone, and not throw away £175 of revenue when no one wanted it done. No one would be benefited by remission in revenue to that extent, and it was really not worth while to disturb the tariff unless there was some necessity for it. He would suggest to the Treasurer that, as an alteration had been made in taking the duty off hemp, he might well keep the duty on acids, as it was to make up for it. He noticed that the amount collected on acids was almost the same as that collected on hemp.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he confessed he could not understand why this was done. In previous years demands had been made to amend the tariff on small items, but hon. members were always told to wait until a general revision of the tariff. When such paltry articles as these were brought up at a time when Parliament should devote itself to weightier matters, he could not help wondering what it all meant. He could not think that the Treasurer would bring forward a proposition of this kind without sufficient reason.

Question put—That schedule 1 be schedule 1 of the Bill.

Mr. KING: But I moved the omission of the word "acid."

Amendment, accordingly, put.

The Committee divided :—

AYES, 18.

Messrs. Palmer, Macrossan, McIlwraith, Perkins, Beor, Kellett, Cooper, Swanwick, Archer, Amhurst, H. W. Palmer, Hamilton, Baynes, Stevens, Weld-Blundell, Lumley Hill, Low, and Norton.

NOES, 14.

Messrs Griffith, Dickson, McLean, Garrick, Rutledge, Meston, King. Beattie, Fraser, Macfarlane, Miles, Douglas, Garrick, and Rea.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. BEATTIE said he intended to move, if the Treasurer would agree to it, the omission of the word "boats." The alteration proposed would result in a loss to the Treasury. The revenue last year was £111 11s. 3d., representing imported boats to the gross length of 892 feet. At 5 per cent. the amount the Treasury would receive would be £44 12s., and he could not understand by what calculation the hon. gentleman expected to receive £132 odd. To bring up the revenue to the amount of last year, according to the Treasurer's calculation, the percentage should be 12½. It was not a matter of such vital importance to justify an alteration which would result in, not only a loss of revenue, but in giving advantage to no one. The pearl-fishers, certainly, introduced some boats into Torres Straits—for which he presumed they paid duty at Thursday Island—but there were a large number of boatbuilders in the colony, and if the duty of 2s. 6d. per foot was any encouragement to them there was no reason to make the change. Where the boats of shipwrecked crews had been sold for the benefit of the crew, he had always considered it a great stretch of the law to charge duty upon them. The only advantage that he could see would be gained by immigrant ships, which generally had one or two boats to dispose of, but the alteration would be a loss of revenue, and he therefore moved that the word "boats" be omitted in the schedule and that the duty should remain at 2s. 6d. per foot.

The PREMIER said there was no intention to decrease the revenue by this alteration. He had stated in the returns laid upon the table that it would result in a gain to the revenue, if the fixed duty of 2s. 6d. per foot were altered to an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. ; in addition to which the alteration would be a fair and equitable distribution of the duty.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that, as far as the information before the Committee went, the alteration would decrease the revenue.

Mr. BEATTIE said that if the 5 per cent. duty would bring up the revenue to the extent the Colonial Treasurer said it would, boats must be introduced to the value of £2,500. He could understand how a portion of the amount might be made up. A steam launch was imported the other day ;—by the fixed duty the yield would have been £7 10s., and by the *ad valorem* duty £10. But very few boats of that kind were introduced; the run of imported boats were worth from £1 to £1 10s. per foot.

The PREMIER said the duty collected on boats last year under the fixed duty was £111, while their value was £2,640, which at 5 per cent. meant £130. The change, therefore, besides being a more equitable duty, would be a clear gain to the revenue.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. KING, in moving the omission of the word "leather," said the case of leather was very different from any of those which had been hitherto considered. By the proposed alteration more harm would be done to colonial industry than could be done by any other alteration in the tariff which could be proposed at the present time. In Fenwick's stock and station report for August 19th—six days after the resolutions had been announced in the Committee of Ways and Means—it was stated—

"Hides: The proposed change of duty on leather seems to have had an immediate effect on hides, particulary, on heavies, best only fetching up to 4d. per lb. ; ordinarly 3¼d. ; medium, 3¾d. to 3¼d. ; light, 3¼d. to 3¾d. per lb."

He had been informed that one large boot and shoe manufacturer in Fortitude Valley—Mr. Neighbour—had to import all his leather, excepting sole leather, from New South Wales, owing to the alteration of the duty. Another firm—Messrs. Lampard—had 50 tons of bark ordered from Sydney; but owing to the information they received from their customers, the tanners, they immediately countermanded the order, the tanners saying they would not require the bark if the duty was reduced. There were thirty-three tanneries in Queensland at the present time, and the leather made there passed into consumption at a very cheap rate. There was no complaint from any section of the public that they were injured by the small amount of protection that had been given to the tanners ; and an industry which employed such a large number of men was certainly entitled to some consideration. Even taking the low estimate of ten persons to each tannery, that meant 330 men, who with their families represented a population of 1,500, which was a considerable number in a total population of 230,000. The proposed change would cripple a flourishing industry, was not required by the public, and would produce a loss to the Treasury of £150. He could see no reason why the Colonial Treasurer should be anxious to secure the passing of the motion in its present form. All that the industry wanted was to be let alone, and it would be very hard to see it stamped out by a capricious alteration in the tariff.

The PREMIER said it was a mystery to him how an alteration in an item which produced only £595 last year could have such a wonderful effect on the industry. As to protection, he thought the change worked the other way. At the present time the tariff worked in such a way as to prevent labour in the colony being em-

ployed in that industry. The existing duty was a fixed duty on all classes of leather, and it was very heavy on the leather that was imported for the purpose of making boots used in the colony. The consequence was that those boots and shoes which should be made in this colony were made in the adjoining colonies. Boots were imported with an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent., whereas 2d. in the pound, which was equal to 20 per cent., was charged on leather. They were thus actually putting a duty on the raw material. That was one of the difficulties in which protectionists sometimes got involved. This particular matter appeared to be a fight between the tanners and the shoemakers; but the proposed duty would not do injustice to either of them. If the hon. gentleman would show him how tanners would be affected—as he had said they would be—he (the Premier) would be open to conviction; but at present he could not see it. As to there being no demand for an alteration, this was the only item in the tariff in which an alteration of the duty had been demanded.

Mr. KING said the Colonial Treasurer was wrong in stating that boots in which cheap leather was employed were imported largely into the colony. He believed he was right in stating that that class of boots was generally made in the colony, and that the boots imported were principally ladies' and children's boots and boots in which fancy leather was used.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he could not agree with the Colonial Treasurer as to his estimate of the way in which the proposed duty would work. This was one of those duties which would be alike disadvantageous to two very large classes of the community—namely, the pastoral tenants on the one hand, and on the other hand the large number of men employed in the production of boots, shoes, and saddlery. The larger proportion of the boots and shoes manufactured in the colony were made from heavy leather, which was valued according to weight, and which produced a considerable duty, but which if valued according to the price of a pair of boots imported would not add much to the revenue. The leather was of the commonest kind, and paid far more than the 5 per cent. *ad valorem* proposed by the Treasurer, It was clear that a duty of 2d. a pound would yield a larger revenue than the proposed change to 5 per cent. *ad valorem*. From what he had heard from those engaged in the production of leather, the proposed alteration would seriously affect the industry.

Mr. REA said he remembered that when the question was discussed in Victoria, even the extreme protectionists were very desirous that French uppers should be allowed to come in with as little taxation as possible; and it will be found that a fixed duty will now be more favourable than an *ad valorem* duty.

Mr. FRASER said no doubt the question resolved itself into that of protection *versus* free-trade; but apart from that view of the question he did not think it desirable that at the present time the Colonial Treasurer should disturb an industry of that kind. A few years ago there was no local market for hides, which were all sent to Sydney or elsewhere. Now from the establishment of those numerous tanneries of late years a very successful local market had been formed, and a change of tariff would not only cripple the industry but in many cases put an entire stop to it. Until the industry had attained a position of strength and comparative independence, he did not think it desirable to disturb it, especially as the new tariff was not calculated to benefit the Treasury in any way whatever. It might be replied that it interfered with an industry which would employ a larger number of hands than that particular industry. His reply to that was, that he did not think it fair to injure one industry for the benefit of another. For the present, he hoped that matters would be allowed to remain as they were, as he was sure from information he had received that if the proposed change were made it would be a serious blow to the tanning industry of the colony. It must be borne in mind that, although the tax might to all appearance be an unequal one, the great bulk of it was imposed on the common article, as very little of the superior article upon which it would press heavily was introduced into the colony.

Mr. DICKSON said that the whole of the articles included in the Bill would produce such remarkably insignificant results, viewed from a Treasury point of view, that it seemed almost a waste of time to discuss them. But there was some principle involved in the proposed alteration of duty on leather. He could hardly understand the position of the Premier in the matter. If the Premier wished free-trade to be the principle of his tariff he ought to have gone further. Tanners used a large amount of Tasmanian bark, on which they paid an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent., and they also consumed large quantities of oil, on which they paid heavy duties. To carry out the free-trade principle in its integrity, the Premier, whilst proposing to reduce the protective duty on leather, ought to have reduced the duty on the raw materials which assisted the tanner in the manufacture of leather. He did not wish to treat the matter so much from a protectionist or free-trade point of view as from the point whether it was advisable or necessary to interfere as proposed with existing industries. The tanneries had been established after years of struggling, and the tanners alleged that the duty of 2d. a lb. on leather had contributed largely towards that result. There had been no great outcry about the price of leather, and in view of the requirements of the Treasury he believed the public mind would be more inclined to an increase of the tariff on manufactured commodities imported than to a reduction in the direction proposed. It would appear that the reduction of duty would press most heavily upon the class of leather manufactured in the colony. The higher classes of leather imported—such as French calf—would, under a 5 per cent. duty, produce about the same amount of revenue as they did at the present time. A dozen French calfskins weighed about 33 lbs., their value was about £5 per dozen, and the 2d. duty would produce 5s. 6d., or little more than 5 per cent. The average weight of heavy harness leather manufactured in the colony was about 15 lbs., and its value was about 1s. per lb. The duty of 2d. per lb. on that would amount to 2s. 6d., whilst the *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. would amount to 9d. only. The result of the proposed alteration would be that the producers of that class of leather would feel the competition most keenly. His contention was that the alteration of the tariff as proposed in this direction was meagre and unsatisfactory. It was a sort of menace to the existence of industries which had been established at considerable expense, whilst it would not assist the Treasury to any appreciable extent. Why should they disturb existing arrangements if some substantial benefit to the Treasury was not to accrue? He should like to see the tanneries maintained—although not solely on a protective basis; and if the existing duty acted as an encouragement to them, why in the name of common-sense disturb it?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the line of argument adopted by hon. members opposite had astonished him not a little. They generally set themselves up as the poor man's friend, yet they were now insisting on the reten-

tion of a tax on the poor man's leather. The tax of 2d. a lb. on kip and sole leather, which was used in the manufacture of poor men's boots, was out of all proportion—it was a tax of nearly 20 per cent.; yet hon. members opposite had endeavoured to show that it would benefit the poor man and the whole colony to allow that tax to remain. The arguments of those hon. members were founded on particularly false bases. The importation of the lower classes of leather had been virtually *nil* during the last year or two—since the duty of 2d. per lb. had been imposed—and when they calculated the quantity of the lower classes of leather which would be imported under the new tariff, he believed they would find that it would result very much in favor of the Treasury instead of entailing any loss. He did not see why tanneries should be protected any more than other industries. It was a perfect farce. If they were to have protection let them have it. Let the protectionists range themselves and propose a protection tariff, and see whether or not it would be carried. They were trying to introduce protection by a sidewind. It was a gross mistake. He hoped the Treasurer would not give way one particle. He was perfectly certain that when the Treasurer came to make up his returns next year he would find that, instead of a loss as he anticipated, he would have a considerable gain on the amount of duty collected last year.

Mr. KING said that if there would be such a gain there would be an increase in the price of leather, and the workmen of Queensland would be thrown out of employment; so that what was gained in one way would be lost in another. The Colonial Secretary said that the leather used by the working men was taxed 20 per cent., but that was not so. It did not pay a single farthing of duty, because the duty secured the market to the Queensland leather. The working man thus got his boots made from leather on which no duty was paid, in addition to which the colony was benefited by the large amount of work done in the colony which would be done out of it were it not for the duty.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said it was a poor argument that if they could not get all they wanted they should have nothing. He thought a slight modicum of protection, if the word was to be used, would be very much better than none at all. The present duty on leather was a justifiable one, and it tended in the direction towards which the people of the colony were looking. It was all very well for the Colonial Secretary to talk about the protectionists ranging themselves. They had been doing so;—every attempt made to resist the fostering of industries tended to the creation of a distinct protective party, which in itself was not desirable. He did not think it advisable that elections should be fought either on the protection or the free-trade ticket—he was not sufficiently advanced in protectionist ideas to hope for the time to come when those questions would be the tests at elections. The way to create an intense feeling in the minds of a large body of working men was to say that they would not have anything that savoured of protection. The existing duty on leather operated in favour of the producers of hides—the squatters, and it also operated in favour of the persons employed in the conversion of hides into leather. When they could blend the two interests in one, why should they not do so? The argument that the poor man paid a high price for boots because there was a duty on leather, was not justified by facts. They knew that in Melbourne, where almost prohibitive protective duties were imposed, they could get boots cheaper than they could in free-trade Sydney, for the reason that the competition amongst local manufacturers was so great that the prices were kept down, and the market was not flooded with shoddy and refuse from manufactories in Sydney and other free-trade places. A letter appeared in yesterday's *Courier* respecting the state of things in England, the evidence in which he hoped hon. members would weigh well. In free-trade England, that which ought to be the foundation of all commercial prosperity—the agricultural interest—was almost extinct. England had become a veritable nation of shopkeepers, and that which was said by Napoleon in sarcasm and as a reproach was verified by the circumstances of the present day. England was now a vast mercantile community instead of being supported by farmers—who were the bone and sinew of a country. If free-trade was carried to the extreme which some people were disposed to carry it in the colony—where above all places a little protection was necessary—the result would be the extinction of the agricultural class. They ought not to exhibit so much fear and timidity in respect of a thing which was supposed to be based on protectionist principles. He did not think the poor man of this colony was such an article as the poor man of Great Britain. He believed there was no poor man who would not pay a fraction of a penny more for a pair of boots, and thereby benefit a large number of his fellow-creatures by regular employment, rather than have that fraction of a penny knocked off, knowing that as the result a large number of persons would be thrown out of employment and some promising industries crippled in their inception.

The PREMIER said that while deprecating any action which would make the question of free-trade or protection a party question, or one upon which an appeal would be made to the constituencies, the hon. member for Enoggera had made as nice an election speech as he had ever heard. Neither the hon. member nor the hon. member for Maryborough had given them the ghost of a shadow of an idea as to why the consequences they predicted would follow from the proposed alterations in the tariff. The price of boots would not be affected any more than the price of sugar would be affected if the duty were taken off to-morrow, because they exported both sugar and hides. He was asked to suppose that the Sydney hides would rush into the Brisbane market against all commercial principles. They had nothing to do with an immense quantity of hides, and as a consequence they were sent to England. He believed that no hon. members who were arguing this matter upon protectionist principles would have the appreciation of their constituencies. He proposed to protect shoemakers, while hon. members opposite proposed that it would be better to protect tanneries. The *ad valorem* duty was proposed to remedy the inequality of the tariff. At the present time a great quantity of goods made of kip and sole leather were handicapped by a duty of 15 per cent. on the raw material, whereas the articles themselves came in duty free. It was plain, therefore, without adducing any statistics, that they were handicapping the workmen of this colony in favour of the workmen of other colonies.

Mr. GARRICK said that, while he admitted that there was a great deal in the arguments of the Treasurer, he thought the hon. gentleman might have proceeded in another direction. It was true that the duty of 2d. per pound might have been equal to a duty of 18 per cent. on some of the lower classes of leather, whereas the Treasurer proposed to impose a duty of 5 per cent. The Treasurer was correct when he said that that state of things led to the manufacture outside the colony of boots into which the lower

classes of leather entered, and to the introduction of the boots here as manufactured goods. But he thought the hon. gentleman might have increased the duty upon boots above an *ad valorem* of 5 per cent., so as to prevent their manufacture out of the colony. That might have been done without disturbing any interest or proceeding upon protective lines.

Mr. BEATTIE said the Treasurer asserted that the Government were protecting the shoemakers; but he was in possession of information from the shoemakers themselves to the effect that they complained bitterly of the proposed duty. Before their tanneries were called into existence the shoemakers used to pay for the thick imported leather 1s. 6d. per lb.; but since the establishment of the tanneries they had been able to purchase equally good leather at 1s. 1½d. and 1s. 2d. per lb. The consequence was that they were able to sell boots for less than they used to do. The proposed alteration would not, therefore, be an advantage, and he thought the Treasurer should agree to the amendment of the hon. member for Maryborough. The proposed duty was in reality a duty upon cheap leather.

Mr. MACFARLANE also hoped the Treasurer would withdraw the proposed alteration in the duty upon leather. It was well known that the tanners, without exception, were engaged in the manufacture of the coarser descriptions of leather chiefly used in making workmen's boots. The fancy classes of boots and shoes were imported from England, Melbourne, or Sydney. The proposed duty would therefore press heavily upon the tanneries. It seemed to him that the proposed equalisation of the duties would have the effect of improving the tanneries out of the colony, in which case some hundreds of men would have to go elsewhere in search of employment. A great number of working men had already left Ipswich in consequence of the proposal of the Government to import their railway carriages from home. There were two tanneries at Ipswich, but they would also be shut up if the Government gave effect to their policy. The Colonial Secretary said the effect of the proposed alteration would be to increase the revenue; but they did not want an increase of revenue from this source. It would be far better to employ their own workmen than to employ the workmen of other colonies. There were two ways of looking at these matters, and it appeared that the present Government wanted everything brought from home.

Mr. KELLETT said he believed in giving some slight encouragement to native industries. The tanneries had been increasing from year to year from the time of their introduction, and one consequence was that workmen were able to purchase better and cheaper boots than before. At one time time workmen had to buy two pair of blucher boots for every pair which they bought at the present time. A pair of boots made in the colony would last double as long as a pair of imported boots. They had assisted the woollen industry; they had given a bonus to sugar-growers, and had protected them with cheap labour; and he did not see why they should not give some assistance to the tanneries. If after a time the duty were found to be unnecessary it might be removed; but it would be no advantage to the colony to remove it at the present time.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the schedule—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 11.

Messrs. A. H. Palmer, McIlwraith, Perkins, Archer, Beor, Norton, Low, Stevens, Hill, H. W. Palmer, and Baynes.

NOES, 19.

Messrs. Garrick, Griffith, Dickson, McLean, Rea, Douglas, Miles, Macfarlane, Fraser, Kellett, Amhurst, Rutledge, Meston, Paterson, King, Thompson, Beattie, Grimes, and Cooper.

Question, consequently, resolved in the negative.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Bill was really becoming an admirable one. The Government telegraphed home about an alteration of the tariff, but when the measure got through committee it simply amounted to an alteration of the duty on acids, boats, and screws; the one would yield about £170, the other about £100, and the alteration respecting screws he would put at something like £100; so that the Bill dealt with a matter of less than £500. Was there ever an instance of a Government scheme affecting the tariff being solemnly pressed upon the attention of both Houses of Parliament, and being found to involve an alteration of only £500 a-year! The Government, he presumed, were showing that they could condescend to small things as well as great. The House had the gigantic schemes at the beginning of the session, and now the very small ones were coming. He should like to know the reason of the alteration of the tariff respecting screws, and whether it would yield £50?

The PREMIER said he thought there was a great deal in the alteration of the tariff by the way the hon. gentleman's colleague, the member for Enoggera, had occupied the time of the House, and by the long speeches he had made on the item that had been left out. Although the hon. gentleman did not consider the Bill worth much, he (Mr. McIlwraith) thought it important, for it would bring in £2,000 a-year. There were other items besides acids, boats, and screws.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he had asked for information about screws?

The PREMIER said the alteration was to make legal what was the practice now. Screws were invoiced by the dozen, and were generally packed with other ironmongery which passed as *ad valorem*, and it had always been the custom, instead of weighing the quantity imported, to charge an *ad valorem* duty on screws instead of a fixed duty of 2s. per cwt.

Question—That schedule 1, as amended, be the schedule of the Bill—put and passed.

Schedule 2, and preamble, passed as printed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments; the report was adopted; and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

DUTY ON QUEENSLAND SPIRITS BILL —COMMITTEE.

The House went into Committee to consider this Bill.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—Interpretation clause—passed with verbal amendments.

On clause 2,

Mr. GRIFFITH said the clause implied that there was a reference to the subject of the Bill in the Licensed Distillers Act of 1849. He could find no reference in that Act to the amount of duty.

The PREMIER said there was no reference in it.

Mr. GRIFFITH pointed out that the clause provided that the duty should be paid to the proper officers of Customs at the ports where the spirits were warehoused. Was that the practice in the case of excise duties?

The PREMIER said the provision was the same in the present Act.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked the Premier whether he was sure that under the present law all those duties were collected by the Custom-house officer?

The PREMIER said there was no other officer to collect them. The Custom-house authorities deviated from the strict letter of the law in not insisting that the rum should go into bond at the warehouse at the port; the owner of the spirit paid duty at the port, and received an order on the Inspector of Distilleries to allow the delivery of a certain quantity, thereby saving the expense of carting to bond. As a matter of fact, therefore, all duties were collected at the port.

Mr. GRIFFITH said this was the only clause to which objection could be taken, and he hoped it would not be allowed to pass without discussion. A proposal to equalise the excise and import duties was a very important one, and he was sorry that those hon. members who usually discussed questions in connection with the tariff had not taken the matter up. If the Colonial Treasurer required additional revenue, he might have raised both excise and import duties. It was a subject-matter of taxation which would have very well borne an increased duty, and the hon. gentleman would have met with no objection from the Opposition side of the House and very little from the country. Considering that the manufacture of colonial spirits was an increasing industry in the colony, he could not see the advantage of endeavouring to discourage that industry any more than the one in connection with leather. He hoped the clause would be negatived.

The PREMIER said the passing of the Bill would not have the effect of destroying a native industry, because as much spirits would be manufactured as before; but it would have the effect of discouraging a branch of industry which had not been beneficial to the public. The existence of a differential rate had been to produce an immense amount of bad spirit which had taken the place of good.

Mr. GRIFFITH: How?

The PREMIER said that under a duty which was 50 per cent. in favour of the colonial distiller spirits had been manufactured cheaply and used to adulterate spirits upon which 10s. per gallon duty had been paid at the Custom house. It was perfectly well-known that an immense amount of spirits consumed in the colony as imported was really manufactured within the colony, and made up in imitation of imported brands. The evil results were, that the Government lost revenue, and the public drank worse spirits than they paid for and had a right to expect.

Mr. KING said he had no doubt the Colonial Treasurer was right when he said the increased duty would not interfere with the production of colonial spirits. He held that the home price was regulated by the export price. But he differed entirely from the hon. gentleman when he said that the effect of stopping the consumption of colonial spirits would be to encourage the importation of spirits of a superior class, because he believed that the home-manufactured spirit was at least as good as the imported article, if it was not better. He very much regretted that the Colonial Treasurer had not seen his way to accept the proposal he (Mr. King) had made to make the duty on all imported spirits 12s. per gallon. Had that been done the excise duty on rum might have been increased to 10s., and the colonial distillers have still retained the advantage of 2s. per gallon, while the Colonial Treasurer would have obtained the additional revenue which he required. Unfortunately, the Colonial Treasurer did not accept the proposal. Under those circumstances, he could not consider himself justified in voting to strike off an increase of duty from which the Colonial Treasurer expected to derive £18,000 per annum. In the present state of the Treasury, anyone who took it upon himself to diminish the revenue would incur a very great responsibility. He would, however, ask the hon. gentleman, before he finally decided upon this matter, to consider whether in increasing this excise duty he was exposing the Government to any claims for compensation on the part of the distillers of the colony. When the Colonial Treasurer's proposals were first before the country there was a report that in New Zealand, when the excise and import duties were equalised, a very large amount had to be paid in compensation to the owners of distilleries in that country. If there was any possibility of such claims being established, it might be worth the while of the Colonial Treasurer, even now, to reconsider the question.

The PREMIER said he had received claims from two firms of distillers up to the present time—Messrs. Quinlan, Fitzgerald, and Company (of the Milton Distillery), and the owners of the Normanby Distillery: he forgot the amount of the claims. He had not admitted their claims in any way.

Mr. DICKSON said he should like to have seen some slight distinction maintained between the duty chargeable on colonial rum and that imposed upon imported spirits. That result might have been attained by making the duty on all imported spirits 12s. per gallon, as recommended by the hon. member for Maryborough, or by increasing the duty on colonial rum to 9s. per gallon. The change from 6s. 8d. to 10s. appeared to be a very great advance, and calculated, by equalising the duty on colonial rum with that of other spirits excepting brandy, to discourage its consumption. The Colonial Treasurer argued that the enhanced duty would be the means of giving the public better spirits than those colonially produced, but he was of opinion that the change would rather have the effect of encouraging illicit distillation. However, it would have been wise in the Premier to have maintained some distinction between colonial spirit and the imported article. And, while he did not feel justified in moving any amendment simply out of regard to the Treasury requirements, it would have been better if the duty proposed had been 9s. on colonial rum, allowing the duty on the imported article to remain as it was. He took it that under this clause brandy distilled in the colony would be subject to a duty of 12s. a-gallon. The clause said "there shall hereafter be paid upon spirits distilled in the colony the same duties of Customs as are from time to time payable upon spirits of the like description imported into the colony." So that if brandy was manufactured in the colony it would be subject to a duty of 12s. per gallon. But that was opposed to the resolution they came to in Committee of Ways and Means, which was that a duty of 10s. per gallon be collected on colonial rum and nothing else; and if this 12s. a-gallon on colonial brandy and all spirits distilled in the colony were imposed, then they were travelling outside the resolution adopted in Committee of Ways and Means.

The HON. J. M. THOMPSON said it was a very good principle not to disturb existing industries unless good cause could be shown. The present proposal was a discouragement to the initiation of new industries, and also a discouragement to those already started, and un-

less some very good reason could be shown why it should be agreed to he should certainly vote against it.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said it seemed to him that the equalisation of the excise with the import duty on spirits would not discourage but would foster the production of adulterated spirits. Persons who manufactured spirits in the colony would require to find customers for the article they produced, and they could only hope to find customers in proportion as they were able to supply it at a cheaper rate. There were very few people who were not fascinated with the idea of getting pure stuff when imported; and although, so far as he knew, that was not very pure, people seemed to be captivated by the idea. The only hope, therefore, of the colonial producer finding anything like a market for the sale of the stuff he manufactured was that he could undersell the man who imported spirits. Then how could the other sell his spirits? Simply by adulterating them and palming them on the customer as the unadulterated article, and really producing the very evil the Premier seemed anxious to avert. He certainly thought there was no good reason why they should depart from the principle they had all along recognised of having a differential duty, and he was quite prepared to give his vote in favour of negativing the clause as it stood.

Mr. DICKSON said to make this Bill agree with the resolution they had adopted in Committee of Ways and Means the words "the same duties of Customs as are from time to time payable upon spirits of the like description imported into the colony" would have to be omitted, with a view of inserting "an excise duty of 10s. a-gallon." It might have been better to make it even 9s. a-gallon, and he believed there would be no actual loss to the Treasury through decreased revenue.

Mr. GARRICK said there might have been a larger increase of revenue from this source. The Treasurer might have got even a higher increase from spirits than he had got by placing an equal increase of duty on the imported article. That would have raised the revenue and still have given encouragement to the local industry. No doubt those industries had been brought into existence by the encouragement they had received, and had invested their capital in pursuance of the encouragement held out by statute, and the Treasurer said the result had been the manufacture of a very indifferent article. He (Mr. Garrick) thought this was hardly correct, for he was sure much of the stuff imported into the colony under the name of spirits was very inferior to much that was made here. He believed the spirit made in the colony was, on the whole, more wholesome than that which was imported; and he hoped the Colonial Treasurer would yet see his way to accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Enoggera, and make some differential duty, even if he consented to take 9s. instead of 10s.

The PREMIER said he did not see his way to do so. He did not believe a differential duty was wanted at all, and, as he had said before, the only effect of a differential duty was to lead to the adulteration of spirits produced in the colony. He quite admitted what hon. members on the other side said as to their being able to make as good spirit in the colony as anywhere. It was not that there was not such good spirit made, but it was used a great deal too soon. It came into consumption before it was fit. The colonial rum of Queensland would be as good spirit as was manufactured in any part of the world; but the effect of the differential duty had been to force into consumption a great quantity of raw spirit.

Mr. GARRICK said he was not personally sufficiently familiar with the cost of producing rum to say whether the colonial article would be able to compete with the imported. He had heard it stated by persons who manufactured rum themselves—and he believed he could place reliance on their statements—that the result of equalising the duties would be to close many distilleries. After they had held out inducements to those people to expend capital they ought to enable them to compete with the imported article. In New Zealand, where something of the same sort occurred, it was a fact that the Government, upon equalising the duties, gave compensation to the distillers whose establishments, he had no doubt, were obliged to be closed. He was informed the same result would happen here. It was hardly fair to invite men to invest capital, and, without allowing them sufficient time, to withdraw assistance; in other words, to destroy the capital they had been invited to invest. It should be done gradually, and the difference for the time being should be at least halved. A duty of 9s. would be a great help to the Treasury and at the same time afford help to the distillers.

The PREMIER said he would rather buy up the distilleries that claimed compensation. He was by no means admitting their claim, but it was very small in comparison with the £18,000 a-year he expected to get this year from the increased duty. He believed he was right in saying that it was the opinion of the distillers themselves that the duty should be equalised. The export trade, of course, it could not affect. In New Zealand, he remembered, there was a compromise made by the Government, who purchased the distilleries and abolished them altogether.

Mr. GARRICK said the Colonial Treasurer might have taken the £18,000 from both, and not from the excise alone. Why did he not make the import duty 11s. and the excise 1s. more? He would have received the same amount of revenue. He thought everything might have been done without disturbing the industry.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he did not think there was much disturbance to be apprehended to the industry; in point of fact, the bulk of the trade of those distillers was not carried on in the colony at all. The greater portion of what they produced was exported. He held in his hand the statistics of the year 1878, and he found that in that year there were 216,395 gallons of rum distilled, and there was excise duty paid on 105,000 gallons only. Consequently more than half of the rum produced in the colony was exported; and therefore he did not think it likely that the trade would be much affected. It had to pay the same duties as other spirits in the other colonies. Besides that, he believed the price charged for our colonial rum in Victoria was less than in Queensland.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that, surely, the remarks of the Colonial Treasurer relative to the manufacture of bad spirits did not apply to the manufacture of Queensland rum, which he believed was as good as any made. The manufacture of rum had, at any rate, one advantage—it was made from colonial produce, from produce which would otherwise be wasted, because molasses could not be exported to any great extent; so that it was an industry it was very undesirable to discourage or diminish. But there was another industry in the colony—the brewing of beer, which was not made from the produce of the colony. They were told the other night that there was no colonial product fit for making beer, and that that industry did not in any way encourage other industries. It appeared to him (Mr. Griffith) that the distillation of spirits

tended more to the settlement of the country than the making of beer, and he was unable to follow the hon. gentleman's argument—which did not appear to him to have anything like fair-play about it. It struck him that, considering the known proclivities of the Treasurer towards protection, whether it was not possible, when he proposed to alter the tariff in this way, that he was actuated by some deep design to depopulate the settled districts of the colony of these obnoxious people. Although it might appear a matter for joking, still, when they found everything going the same way, they could not help thinking there was something in it. All the arguments used were inapplicable to the purposes for which they were used.

The PREMIER said if he had brought in a tariff to reduce the excise duty on colonial-made spirits from 6s. 8d. to 3s. 4d., the hon. gentleman might have charged him with some deep design of decreasing the population. What he wanted to do was to put all the bad spirits out of the way.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL was surprised when he heard the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) talk about beer. Beer was taxed quite as much as anything.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Not colonial beer.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the hon. member knew very well that there was an import duty upon malt and hops, and what were they used for but the making of beer? He (the Attorney-General) did not know that they put a tax upon anything that was used for the manufacture of rum.

Question—That the words "a duty at the rate of 10s. per gallon" be inserted—put and passed.

After a verbal amendment altering "duties" to "duty," the clause was put as amended, and the Committee divided :—

AYES, 20.

Messrs. Palmer, McIlwraith, Perkins, Beor, Cooper, Macrossan, Archer, King, H. W. Palmer, Hamilton, Amhurst, Grimes, Kingsford, Baynes, Kellett, Stevens, Weld-Blundell, Hill, Low, and Norton.

NOES, 12.

Messrs. Garrick, Griffith, Dickson, Rea, Macdonald-Paterson, Rutledge, Thompson, Beattie, Macfarlane, Fraser, Douglas, and Miles.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 3—

Mr. GRIFFITH pointed out that while the clause was limited to colonial distilled spirits, the resolution of the Committee of Ways and Means referred to spirits generally. Was there any reason for this?

The PREMIER said at present there was no duty on spirits methylated in the colony, unless it was the same duty as was on other spirits. The duty on imported methylated spirits was 5s. a-gallon.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked why should there be a differential duty on colonial methylated spirits any more than other spirits?

The PREMIER said he had given a good many reasons why there should be no differential duties on spirits going into consumption for drinking purposes; but methylated spirits were used a good deal in manufacture, and this would be an encouragement to manufactories, as the duty on imported methylated spirits was 5s. a-gallon, and it was proposed by this clause that the duty on spirits methylated in the colony should be only 2s. a-gallon. The hon. member might call it protection if he liked, but that would be the effect.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was worth while, according to the Treasurer, to encourage the manufacture of colonial spirit to the extent of methylated spirits, because they were not used for drinking purposes but for painting and in other ways. There was no argument in that at all—it was simply a statement that he would have it so. The hon. gentleman used all his arguments to show that there should be no differential duties, and then he proposed a differential duty.

Clause put and passed.

On the preamble—

Mr. DICKSON said he would take that opportunity of asking the Treasurer if he had any objection to lay the tables connected with his Financial Statement upon the table and move that they be printed? They had been circulated, but he (Mr. Dickson) had only that afternoon discovered that they did not form any part of the "Votes and Proceedings," and, as they contained useful information, he thought they should be printed in the "Votes and Proceedings," as in previous years.

The PREMIER replied that he would lay the papers on the table to-morrow.

Preamble passed as printed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill to the House with amendments. The report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at seventeen minutes past 9 o'clock.