

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 24 APRIL 1866

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 24 April, 1866.

Supply of Stores to the Government by Messrs. J. and G. Harris.—Exhibition of Queensland Products in Melbourne and Paris.—Hospitals of the Colony.—Imperial Protection.

SUPPLY OF GOVERNMENT STORES BY
MESSRS. J. AND G. HARRIS.

Mr. BROOKES asked the honorable the Colonial Secretary—Whether, as notified in the *Government Gazette* of 14th October, 1865, Messrs. John and George Harris, merchants, Brisbane, were tenderers for the supply of miscellaneous stores to the Government, and whether they have supplied, and whether they continue so to supply?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY answered—The Messrs. Harris have tendered for the supply of miscellaneous items to the Government, and their tender was accepted. The contract has since terminated, and a notification of the same has appeared in the *Government Gazette*.

Mr. BROOKES rose to move the adjournment of the House, for the purpose, he said, of bringing before the attention of honorable members the subject indicated in the question that he had just put to the honorable the Colonial Secretary. He did not know whether the answer given by that honorable gentleman was satisfactory to the House or not, but he did not consider it so himself; and he would therefore beg the forbearance of the House—.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he thought the honorable member was interfering with the privileges of the other House in bringing forward this question. He put it to the Speaker if it was not so.

The SPEAKER said he hardly knew what the honorable member intended to bring before the House.

Mr. BROOKES: He did not think Mr. Speaker would know, until he had stated what he desired to draw attention to. He hoped the honorable member would not consider that the question he was about to make a few observations upon was out of the reach

of the criticism of the House. The amount of money represented by the miscellaneous stores required for the public service of this country was very large, and he thought the House might very fairly be called upon to exercise some degree of vigilance as to the manner in which that money was spent; and if it should appear that a subject of this kind could not be introduced before the House without their being told by a Minister that they were in danger, by so introducing it, of invading the privileges of the other House, he submitted that there was a *prima facie* case that something was wrong. But, however, he would not go into the matter of Messrs. John and George Harris at present, because he believed that the transactions between that firm and the Government were so complicated and of such a multifarious kind that they required separate treatment; so that the Upper House might not fear anything on that score. He merely wished to point out to the House that ever since Separation there seemed to have been, on the part of the Government, a persistent effort made that, however large the public expenditure might be, it should benefit to the least degree possible the trade and commerce of this colony. That was the position he wished to take up, and which he proposed to illustrate by one or two remarks. In making those remarks he should not feel the slightest disposition to say anything severe against the present Ministry, because they came into office finding that kind of thing already in existence—it had been in existence ever since Separation—and he should have accomplished all he proposed when he pointed it out. The public generally, he felt, looked for some improvement. In thinking about bringing this matter before the House, he had felt a desire for it to be taken in hand by some other honorable member. Yet, again, he was perfectly satisfied to bear in his own person any personal remarks such as might seem to be invited on the present occasion. He remembered that, on a similar occasion, some time ago, he was told by the then head of the Government that no other honorable member would have had the assurance to have placed himself in the position that he occupied. It was such a position that he occupied to-day; and he might now be told the same thing. But he did not regard that. He did not speak in defence of his own personal interests. Were they to influence any remark he made, he should consider he degraded his position in the House as a representative of Brisbane. He spoke on behalf of the interests of the general public—not the interests of his own constituency, but those of the whole colony;—and he affirmed that the system of expending the public money in the matter of miscellaneous stores, and otherwise, had been such as to lead to the conclusion that the trade and the commerce of this colony were not to be benefited as they ought to be. He said this

as a statesman. It looked as though the Government from the very beginning had been narrowed and restricted in the administration of affairs; as though they had not time and intellect to grasp the higher question, that if this colony was to be any better than it was at present, whatever money was at the disposal of the Government ought to be so appropriated as to assist its development, and that we ought not to be so dependent on the home country as we were. He asked whether it was not desirable that, some time or other, there should be more manufactories here than there were at present? Yet, what was the fact? That if anything was required by the Government, the order went down to Sydney. It would be remembered that somewhat late last session, the sum of £2,000 was put down on the Estimates for the purpose of enclosing the Queen's Park with an iron railing and a dwarf stone wall. He was not the only member in the House who thought that, as they had heard so much about economy, the money was not then wanted, and that it might better be voted for some of the country districts. However, the Government pressed for the money with a degree of interest that was not warranted by its importance, and it was voted. On the following day, without going out of his way, he ascertained that the £2,000 had been spent some three months before, that the iron railing was in process of delivery, and that, had the House not voted the money, it would have had to come out of some unexpended fund—he presumed, out of the Railway Loan. But what he wished to say more particularly with reference to that matter, and his reason for bringing it forward by way of illustration, was, that an iron foundry had been already established in Brisbane, at considerable cost—he believed it had been very advantageous, not only to the colonists, but to the Government;—and he was justified in saying, that the iron railing for Queen's Park was such an order—it was not fine work—as was in the power of the foundry in Brisbane to execute; and that there was no need to send the order to Sydney three months before the House was asked for the money to pay for it. He maintained that it was an irregularity on the part of the Government; it was not the way the funds the House voted ought to be applied. There was another matter. Tenders were called for, last year, under a somewhat more favorable guise than usual, for police clothing. The public were given to understand that at last the Government were disposed to put business in the way of the colony, and that tenders from Sydney and Melbourne would not be invited—or, they were not, from Melbourne, in the first place—until the Brisbane tradesmen had sent in tenders. A local tradesman, who had had very long experience in the trade, had sent in a tender, but it was not

accepted: he found that the Government had gone to the old quarter—they had gone to Sydney. A gentleman was walking about the streets at the time, clad in a suit of blue material, so that the Government would have nothing to do but to ask him to step in and see what was suitable for them; and, how cheap! What he (Mr. Brookes) wanted to know, was—supposing the Government were asked to produce it; and he hoped they would be able to shew it—whether the tender they accepted from Sydney was really, not nominally, lower than the one they rejected in Brisbane; and whether the tender—and the remark he made would apply to almost every purchase they made out of the colony—had been fulfilled either with reference to the quantity and quality of the supply, or the time allowed for its fulfilment; and whether there had not been an amount of leniency shewn to the Sydney tenderer which had never yet been accorded to even a successful Brisbane tenderer. There was an establishment here which was dignified with the name of “our dockyard,” and a most trumpery affair it was. He believed the gentleman in charge gave it a very great degree of importance, and was at the same time, a persistent mendicant before the Government, and a most earnest advocate against the very low rate at which the heads of departments were paid. That gentleman was engaged in “inventing experiments” how to divert every shilling that was to be spent out of the colony. Everything he required came either from Sydney or from England; and yet there was nothing he used which was not in everyday use in the colony, or imported by the merchants of Brisbane. Again, he employed a larger staff than was necessary, and the men filled up their odd time—in fact, a considerable time—in making sails; and, he (Mr. Brookes) believed, if the time could be calculated that it took the Government men to make a suit of sails, it would be found that the sails cost three times more than, and were inferior to, those which could be got in Brisbane. He hoped that what he had stated would be sufficient for the present, and that the Government would see that there was something anomalous, something egregiously wrong, in the present order of things; that, while people in the colony were starving for want of employment, every means were taken to deprive it of the benefit of their industry by the withdrawal of their various chances of emolument. During this week, the House would, he supposed, be called upon to take part in a debate on the immigration question. Was it not absurd? Could immigrants be expected to come from England when they found that though there was plenty of land for them, it was the worst land; and that the sources of labor were diminished in volume, the Government having, from the very beginning, rather preferred to withhold than to contribute their fair share to the employment of immigrants?

How could it be expected that the class of labor, which was most disposable, skilled labor, would continue to come here? The streets of the towns in the colony, but particularly of the seaport towns, were now occupied with skilled labor, walking about—labor which could make our dredges, our machinery; which came out for the purpose of making them. He hoped that some improvement would be made, and, at all events, that the principle he urged would receive some respectful acknowledgment. He did not go in for protection; he did not say that the Brisbane men should have absolutely all the Government employment; but he did say—if their wares were as good and their labor as skilful as could be found in Sydney, they should have the preference before anybody else. If that were accorded by the Government, it would remove a very discreditable public grievance.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he must first apologize to the honorable member for interrupting him, for he had thought the line of argument he was going to take would be very different from that which he had pursued. He could assure the honorable member that the subject had received great consideration from him and also from his honorable friend, the late Colonial Secretary; and he had come to the conclusion that the honorable member was perfectly correct that tenders should be invited for the articles required by the Government of this colony—that was, when they had direct importations from England, and when those articles that were required by the Government could be supplied here as cheaply as in Sydney. The honorable member, being himself an importer, could say whether he was prepared to provide all the articles that the Government required at the same prices as the Government could get them. He had the character—he (the Colonial Secretary) did know from his own knowledge—of putting on very large percentages upon goods coming from England. However, he was rather surprised that the honorable member should base this question on a tender taken from Messrs. Harris. He believed that the department of the colonial stores, and the whole system of importing goods, was radically wrong, and that it should be done away with. When the Estimates came on for discussion, he would explain this, and the honorable member would find that the attention of the Government had been given to the subject.

Mr. PUGH asked if it was correct that the Commissioner of Police had gone to Sydney, as that officer said, deputed by the Queensland Government to purchase horses? Judging from the *Statistical Register*, he thought there were horses in the colony to meet the demand for the police.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY explained that the Commissioner of Police was now in Brisbane, and that tenders were to be called for the supply of horses.

Mr. McLEAN said he wished to draw the attention of the House to the circumstance of the honorable member who moved the adjournment being a contractor under Government. This shewed at once the great danger of giving to honorable members of the Assembly a pecuniary interest in the work of the Government. In a return made by the Colonial Architect, he saw that Messrs. J. and G. Harris, W. and B. Brookes, and Alexander and Armour were the parties to supply the new Parliament Houses with all the material from England that was required. He presumed that, under the circumstances, the House must look upon the honorable member for Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, as a contractor, and he believed that the honorable member was disqualified from sitting in the House.

Mr. HERBERT observed that the honorable member for North Brisbane had referred to him rather pointedly when he stated that, not under the present Ministry, but under the late Ministry, had the circumstances arisen which led to the present system to which objection was made; and he would say a few words about his (Mr. Herbert's) connection with those contracts for the provision of Government stores, as the honorable member had rather invited him to do so. He believed, quite differently from the honorable member, that it was the first and imperative duty of the Government to spend the public money in the most economical manner; with this exception to the rule, that when it was the case that distress prevailed in the country, the money might be expended at a slight disadvantage for the purpose of relieving that distress. He would give the House one illustration, familiar to himself, as shewing how necessary it was for the Government to observe the strictest economy. When the telegraphs of this colony were first contracted for, the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, then holding a seat in the House, was, as he (Mr. Herbert) was very well aware, and as the House was aware—though, as the House did not notice it, he did not care to notice it—directly interested in the contracts. The contract price was £40 or £50 a mile, to erect the lines. The bushmen's work was about the same figure then as now; and the whole difference between the present cost of £26 to £30 a mile, and £40 or £50 the then cost, consisted in the profits made by the person who supplied the wire to the bushmen by whom the contract was carried out. That led him to inquire what was the cost of the wire in England, and he found that it could be purchased very much cheaper than in Brisbane—at something like half the cost. The honorable member actually held a seat at the time he was making those large profits and compelling the bushmen to have their contracts refused because they could not get the wire from anyone but him. That was the case. He (Mr. Herbert) thought the

honorable the Colonial Secretary should as far as possible invite tenders in this country; but he hoped he would not do so in order that persons in this colony—principally members of the House—should make a profit out of the necessities of the Government; because, he thought, if the Government must get the best articles, they could not get them in colonial houses, and they must get them at the most moderate, or at the ruling rates. He might mention another instance: there was an article he required, and he went to the honorable member's store for it, and was charged three and sixpence for what he could obtain in England for sixpence. His private experience being of that character, the honorable member could not expect him to give him a preference, or to employ him rather than get what he wanted from England.

Mr. BROOKES observed that he was perfectly aware of the kind of remarks that his observations would draw from the honorable member who had just sat down, and from other honorable members. He could only say that he had spoken in the public interest. It made no difference to him whether the Government went to his place of business or not. He never asked them to come. He was just as independent of them as they were of him. But it was very different with other people; and he brought this subject forward only that the Government should be made acquainted with the strong feeling about it outside. He agreed with the late Colonial Secretary, that it was the duty of the Government to supply themselves with the best article; but he maintained that the Government got a bad article at a long price; and if he were put to it, he could shew that the Queensland Government was no exception to the rule, but that all Governments were the very worst contractors, and the very worst business men, and the worst financiers in the world.

The motion for adjournment was then, by leave, withdrawn.

EXHIBITION OF QUEENSLAND PRODUCTS IN MELBOURNE AND PARIS.

Mr. HERBERT said: Mr. Speaker—I beg to move—

That this House do, to-morrow, resolve itself into a committee of the whole, to consider an address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates the sum of £2,000, to defray the expense of exhibiting the products of this colony at the approaching Exhibitions in Melbourne and Paris.

I fear, sir, many honorable members may be disposed to consider that the sum which I have asked for in this motion is somewhat excessive; and it may perhaps be as well that I should explain to the House why I have asked for that sum. On the last occasion of the representation of the produce and industry of this colony, at the exhibition in London, in 1862, I believe the total

amount expended from first to last for the purposes of that Exhibition was about £2,290 or £2,300. I have every reason to believe that considerable economy was practised in that expenditure, particularly in England; and, here, the expenditure was under a committee of practical men, who are not likely to have exceeded what should be a fair amount of expenditure, although the expense of medals and prizes was somewhat larger than need be incurred a second time—though that is only a small matter of detail. The exhibitions now proposed to be contributed to by this colony are two—not one, as on the former occasion;—and Queensland is to be represented both at Melbourne and at Paris; and I cannot, therefore, believe that the expenditure on this occasion will be less than at the time of the London Exhibition. There are several items of expense which are quite inevitable. In the first place, arrangements are to be made for exhibiting our products here before shipping them to Melbourne; then arrangements are to be made, after the Melbourne Exhibition, for their shipment from Melbourne or Brisbane, or both, to Paris; and then there is the expense of fitting up the space allotted to the colony for the display of our products in the Paris Exhibition, so that we may fare well amongst our neighbors. Another expense—which I think may fairly be incurred by the House, and which will ultimately reduce the amount that is required—is the amount that the Commissioners propose to lay out in the purchase of valuable products of this colony for exhibition, which will be subsequently disposed of in England or on the Continent, and thus repay this expense. For instance, it is desirable that the gold of this colony, from the different gold fields, should be represented on a tolerably liberal scale; as, if we only send a few small specimens for exhibition to Paris, it will be thought that our gold fields are not of very much importance, and as Victoria will be exceedingly liberal in this respect. It is thought that about £500 or £600 can be expended in purchasing gold of this colony, from the different gold fields; and as the gold will be sold at home, the Treasury will be re-imbursed the cost. If £500 is expended in this way, the expenditure that I ask for on account of the Exhibitions will in reality be reduced to £1,500, and I believe that sum will be the very least that will be required; at the same time, I consider I have asked for a sum that will cover the necessary expenditure. It is not an instalment, but it is what in my opinion will be the sum absolutely required, and will suffice for the purposes it is asked for. The Commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor for the purposes of the exhibitions have not received very much encouragement as regards the articles to be exhibited; and unless Queensland is to be what one cannot but call disgraced in the Inter-

colonial and European Exhibitions, it will be necessary for the Commissioners to make considerable purchases of the leading staples, to shew what this colony can produce. I can state, having been in England at the time, in 1862, that the expenditure by this colony in the London Exhibition was far more efficient for the introduction of capital to the colony than any proportionate sum spent on immigration or lectures. This is a matter, therefore, that we must not shrink from, if we do not wish to see Queensland altogether in the back-ground; for, if this colony should make a bad show beside the other colonies, at the Paris Exhibition, it would cause a bad impression on the minds of all Englishmen, who are sure to be there. I trust, therefore, that the House will not consider that I ask for too much in asking for £2,000.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS said: Mr. Speaker—I merely rise for the purpose of observing that I concur entirely in the observations that have fallen from my honorable friend. If £2,300 was necessary for the last Exhibition, it must appear to the House that in making preparations for forwarding subjects for exhibition to Melbourne as well as to Paris, £2,000 is not too large a sum; and it is not to be forgotten, as has been pointed out by my honorable friend, that the public is at this moment somewhat apathetic in forwarding products for exhibition. If the exhibition is to be of any use to this colony—and honorable members must admit that all exhibitions of this kind are conducive to the welfare and prosperity, and to the development of the various resources and products of a country—if it is to come to anything at all, the Commissioners must have power to buy such articles as will be of some use for exhibition. It must not be forgotten, as was very properly observed, that a very large amount of what is now asked for will be transmitted to the exhibition in gold. It will not only be placed in the exhibition here, but it will be available for exhibition in Melbourne and Paris, and afterwards for other purposes. I am not aware that there is any probability of this motion being opposed. I trust that it will not be, and that the House will unanimously agree to appropriate, to dedicate, this sum of money to an exhibition of the products of Queensland.

The motion was agreed to.

HOSPITALS OF THE COLONY.

Mr. GROOM moved—

1. That a select committee be appointed, with power to send for persons and papers, and leave to sit during any adjournment, to inquire into the working of the hospitals of the colony, and whether any and what amendments can be made in the various Acts relating to such institutions.
2. That such committee consist of the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Watts, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Coxen, Mr. Herbert, and the mover.

He expressed his regret that some other honorable member more capable than he of doing justice to the subject involved in the motion had not undertaken the duty of bringing it before the House; but it was one of those things which ought not to be any longer neglected, and another session ought not to be allowed to pass without putting the hospitals of the colony on some substantial and definite basis. It would be remembered that, last session, in consequence of certain proceedings on the part of the medical officer of the Toowoomba Hospital, the interference of the Government was invoked; but, in the opinion of the Attorney-General, under the Acts then in force, the Government had no power to interfere in such a contingency. The result was, that a special Bill had to be introduced to enable the Government to take charge of hospitals in certain cases. The case of that particular hospital had been brought prominently before the notice of the country by recent events; and it was that as much as any thing else which had induced him to take the subject up thus early in the session, so as to get as much information as possible, to enable the House to judge whether it would not be best to repeal the whole of the existing Acts relating to hospitals, and to pass one new Act to regulate them. In the case to which he more particularly referred, the Toowoomba Hospital, when the committee appointed by the Government took charge of it in October last, they found it in a state almost unparalleled in the history of such institutions. The patients were in the most filthy and degraded state, from the badness of the food, the badness of living, and other matters; and the committee had been obliged to say that unless the Government gave them more funds, they would have to give up. It had cost in the aggregate some thing like £1,200 to put that institution into working order. Since that time the committee had taken in between two and three hundred patients; and the monthly expenses of the hospital averaged £300. An appeal had been made to the public, and about £300 had been subscribed in the Darling Downs district; but that was found inadequate to meet the necessary expenses of the institution; and the funds now in hand would only keep it open for something like two months;—so that, unless the Government were prepared to give, and the House to vote, between £2,000 and £3,000, the institution would have to be closed shortly. He could scarcely apprehend such an event, because, at the present time, the number of patients averaged between fifty and sixty a week, independently of fourteen or sixteen paupers, who were totally incapacitated for life, and who must remain in the hospital, or in some other institution that might be provided for them hereafter;—and, in addition, there were the claims of the out-door patients. That state of things, at Toowoomba, involved a large

expenditure; but in Brisbane, Ipswich, and Rockhampton—though as to the last mentioned town, he could not speak definitely—things were much in the same state. He found that in 1864, £5,000 was voted for hospitals; in 1865, the sum voted was, in the first place, £7,000; but, on the motion of the honorable member at the head of the Government, an additional £1,000 had to be voted for the purpose of keeping the Ipswich hospital in existence. And, he was credibly informed that, at this early period of the year, the whole of that amount was expended, and that if something was not done to keep the Ipswich hospital in funds, that institution would be closed. It would be interesting for the committee to find out the amount of destitution in the centres of population in the colony. That destitution had been attributed to the inferior character of the immigration lately received into the colony; and it would be interesting to know if that were true. But this fact could not be denied, that, ever since the commencement of the railway works, the patients in the hospitals had increased, and the calls upon them continued increasing; while the country had been called upon to vote sums of money that were never before required. The amount of destitution now existing overcrowded and overburdened those institutions; and it might very properly come within the province of the committee to inquire into the various causes of that destitution—whether it was the late dry season which had caused the dissemination of colonial fever throughout the colony, or whether a great deal of disease had not been introduced by the unsuitable immigration that the colony had received. He thought that must be patent to those who took any notice whatever of the reports of the hospitals. He found that in the Brisbane Hospital, last week, there were ninety in-door patients, and one hundred and twenty-three persons receiving out-door relief; in the Ipswich Hospital, there were seventy patients, and an equal number receiving out-door relief; in the Toowoomba Hospital, there were sixty patients and a large number receiving out-door relief; while in the Warwick hospital there were only four persons. That spoke in favor of what he had stated in reference to the immigration and the railway works and the desirableness of immediately finding a remedy for the existing evils. Another thing he proposed for the committee was, to take into consideration the Acts relating to hospitals. The first, 11 Victoria, No. 59, was an Act passed by the Governor and Legislative Council, when New South Wales was a Crown colony, which had nothing whatever to do with the internal management of hospitals; of three other Acts in existence, one, passed in New South Wales, was merely to authorise voting "by proxy; another, passed by the Queensland Parliament, simply provided for the management of hospitals by committees; the third

he had before explained. Therefore, he proposed that the committee should take the subject into consideration, and draft a Bill for the future regulation of hospitals. It would be also for the committee to take into consideration, whether it would not be better to have in Brisbane an establishment for the reception of persons who were disabled for life, rather than to leave those unfortunates scattered all over the country, a burden on the local hospitals. At present the Government had no building to receive persons of that description who were in the Toowoomba hospital. Another matter for consideration, which was of some importance, related to the sites of hospitals. In the case of the Toowoomba hospital, it would be necessary, even if the committee should not be appointed, to take steps for the removal of that institution. Its present site had been fixed upon by the Government of New South Wales, twelve or fourteen years ago, and it was now, by force of circumstances, in the centre of the town. It would be observed in the report on the National Schools that several parents had been compelled to take their children away from the school in Toowoomba, on account of the fever in the hospital, and the close proximity of the building. The site was certainly a very valuable one; and if the land were subdivided and sold, together with the material of the buildings, it would yield a large amount to the Government wherewith to provide a new hospital in a suitable locality. He had thus shadowed forth the functions of the committee, and he hoped the House would accede to the motion. He took it that Toowoomba, Ipswich, and Brisbane were the three most important places; and by all the Government would be asked for a larger grant of money than was ever previously voted. He thought that when such large sums of money were asked for, the colony should know in what way it was to be expended, and that the Government should have some hand in the expenditure. It would be found that in nearly all the colonial hospitals nearly three-fourths of the expenditure was provided by the Government; yet the Government were not represented in the management. He thought the Government should be represented. He should leave the motion in the hands of the House, with the hope that it would be treated in the way he thought it deserved; for the subject involved in it was well worthy the notice of a parliamentary committee, which, if properly conducted, would result in a great deal of good.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the Government would offer no objection to the appointment of the committee; in fact, he thought it was very desirable, at this juncture, that there should be some inquiry as to the hospitals. Although, as a rule, there were not many complaints of the working of these institutions, there might be some such as had been mentioned by the

honorable member: there were complaints by the committees of the manner in which the hospitals were overcrowded, and requests made for more money. As was very properly observed by the honorable member, a very large proportion of the expenditure was provided by the Government, who had no hand in directing or controlling it; and it was a matter for consideration whether the hospitals, or, at any rate, the Brisbane Hospital, as a general hospital, should not be wholly under Government control. The public were, indeed, very backward in contributing to the support of those institutions; and they were at present in a very peculiar position, because, without appealing to the Government, they could not provide for half the cases brought to them. What the cause of the prevailing sickness was, the House did not of course know—whether it was generated in the country, or whether it was brought hither by immigrants. He thought a new Act for the regulation of hospitals might be desirable—to put them under one head;—but that was a question which the committee would consider very particularly; also whether the Government should take charge of the hospitals altogether.

Mr. FORBES said he desired to make a few suggestions to the committee, knowing that those persons who benefited most by the hospitals of the colony never contributed anything towards their support. He thought that every class should contribute to such charities. It was seldom that more than one hundred names were found on the subscription list of any of the hospitals, and most of the names were those of persons who usually subscribed; and there were instances where a laboring man from the interior came to town, and by some accident lost a cheque for £50 out of his pocket, yet such a man got into the hospital as a pauper, on the order of some subscriber. He (Mr. Forbes) thought it was the duty of the Government to provide by some special means—he would suggest a capitation tax on every person arriving in the colony, and even the raising of a fund by the levy of a small contribution from the wages of every laborer who was in receipt of £50 a year, and who could well afford to give a half or one per cent.—for the maintenance of public hospitals. It was a duty every man owed to society to contribute to the support of such institutions. A small commission of that sort would amount to a very large sum in the aggregate, which would relieve the Government to a very great extent of the expenditure they now provided for, both for the support of hospitals and for the maintenance of paupers. It was the duty of every man in the early and more important period of his lifetime to make some provision for his old age. He hoped he should not be wrongly accusing the community, or disparaging or degrading Queensland, but he must say

that this colony was the most improvident colony of the Australian group; more so by far than even New South Wales. Any person who was acquainted with the character of the people of New South Wales, and who would compare their frugal habits and close and persevering industry with the want of frugality and industry in the people of this colony, must speak wholly in favor of our neighbors. He should like further to suggest that the committee might bring the improvements and amendments for the regulation of hospitals into the Health Bill; for it struck him that there were many matters relating to the management of hospitals that must be comprised in that measure. For instance, the Health Bill provided for the suppression of contagious diseases; yet there was no provision made in it for the vaccination of children born in the colony. He recommended that the resident medical men in hospitals might be allowed to supplement their incomes,—which, generally speaking, were very small,—by vaccinating children; for, he thought that, under a judicious arrangement, vaccination would be more generally resorted to than at present. For this year, £700 was voted for public vaccination; and he thought, if it were possible to get a return of the number of children vaccinated, whose parents were unable to pay for them, they would scarcely amount to what was represented by the one-hundredth part of that sum. He recommended that the public vaccinators should be called upon by the Government to make returns to the Central Board of Health of the number of children they vaccinated, that were proper objects for the Government to pay for. He saw £50 put down for one medical man, and £60 for another; but he believed that some of those gentlemen who received that money never vaccinated a child during the whole year. The committee would no doubt have some valuable evidence before them; they were all gentlemen well versed on the subject; and he had no doubt their report would be approved of, and would be very beneficial to the colony.

Mr. PUGH said he had a decided objection to serve on this committee, and if the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba did not wish to have the committee balloted for, he begged him to be kind enough to substitute some other name for his.

Mr. GROOM said he had no objection to the ballot.

The first part of the motion was then put and passed; and the ballot having been taken, the following members were declared to have been duly appointed to serve on the committee:—Mr. Groom, Mr. Coxen, Mr. Herbert, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Forbes, Mr. Mackenzie, and Mr. Watts.

IMPERIAL PROTECTION.

Mr. WALSH moved, pursuant to notice,—

1. That this House having respectfully taken into its consideration the copy presented to this

honorable House by His Excellency the Governor, of his despatch, No. 30, dated 18th May, 1865, addressed to the Right Honorable Edward Cardwell, Secretary of State for the Colonies, relative to the military defence of Queensland, is moved, by finding in paragraph No. 4 of said despatch, the following assurance, viz. :—

“That nothing can be further from the desire or intention of the Government of Queensland, than to ask the mother country to make any sacrifice for the defence of the colony, even against external attacks by a foreign enemy, such as the costly sacrifices of blood and treasure which have been made for the internal defence of other provinces of the British Empire.”

2. That this honorable House, representing the inhabitants of this loyal British colony, feels called on, in discharge of its duty, solemnly and emphatically to assert, that the people of Queensland have never expressed, nor do they entertain, any desire to relinquish their claim to protection by the Imperial Government of England from external attacks of a foreign enemy; and this House hopes that the Imperial Government will never, in time of any peril from a foreign foe, withhold its protection.

3. That His Excellency the Governor be respectfully requested to transmit to the Secretary of State for the Colonies a copy of these resolutions.

The honorable member said that he considered it his duty to remonstrate against such an expression of opinion as the paragraph contained, to which he had called the attention of the House. He had been surprised and pained to read the despatch. He could not conceive that Queensland had arrived at such a state of independence—such a state of grandeur and power—as to be able to tell the Home Government that she could without assistance guard herself against foreign aggression. When he read the despatch he could hardly understand the paragraph relating to Queensland. One portion of the despatch stated clearly that assistance had been rendered by the Home Government, first to one colony and then to another. The expenditure of blood and treasure in the internal defence of New Zealand was pointed out, and it was also pointed out that a very powerful friend or foe, the Emperor of France, had large possessions in the near neighborhood of the colony. The despatch also referred to the expenditure incurred by the Home Government in the sister colony, and he contended that the people of Queensland had, as English colonists, an equal right to their share of Imperial protection. He would not refer more particularly to the wars into which England had been led in defending solitary individuals out of the country, in her determination to see justice done to all her subjects. There was an old adage that “wherever an Englishman goes the flag of his country protects him.” He hoped honorable members would not allow a statement to go forth to the world without contradiction, which meant, in fact, that if the Home

Government would only grant certain things asked for in this and other despatches, the colonists of Queensland would forego all claim to protection from the mother country, "even against external attacks by a foreign enemy."

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS said he felt much pained at being called upon to defend the course pursued by His Excellency the Governor—a course which he maintained was not only legitimate, but the only legitimate course which he could have adopted. He must express his regret that the high talents which the honorable member for Maryborough possessed were not devoted to some better purpose than what he (the Secretary for Lands and Works) could only designate as a personal attack upon Her Majesty's representative in this colony. If the motion of the honorable member were agreed to, it would go forth to the world that the House had offered a gross indignity to His Excellency the Governor. There could be no difficulty whatever to the simplest mind in ascertaining the meaning conveyed by His Excellency in the despatch to which the honorable member had called the attention of the House. The paragraph to which the honorable member had referred merely drew a comparison between the large expenditure incurred for the defence of other colonies and the assistance required for Queensland; and if the honorable member had read it with the context, he must have been convinced that, so far from expressing any desire on the part of this colony to forego the protection of the Imperial Government, it strongly urged upon the Secretary of State the necessity of that protection. It was well known that His Excellency had since his arrival persistently and continuously advocated a military defence for this colony, and there had scarcely been a mail despatched from Queensland, during his residence in the country, from 4th May, 1860, to the 10th May, 1865, the date of the despatch before the House, in which that question had not been strongly urged. It was strongly urged in this despatch, and the statement in paragraph four, of which the honorable member complained, was simply a comparison between the costly sacrifice of blood and treasure which had been made by the home Government in defending New Zealand and the Cape of Good Hope, and the expenditure necessary for the defence of Queensland. [The honorable member read the despatch at length, and the Executive minute upon which it was founded.] He much regretted that His Excellency should have been made the subject of personal attack by any member of the House, and he trusted the honorable member would withdraw his motion, or that the House would not hesitate to reject it.

MR. HERBERT said that nothing could be more unanswerable than the reply of the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works to the paltry attack upon His Excellency the

Governor made in the motion before the House. He rose, as an independent member, to protest, as he had done as head of the Government last session, against such miserable, petty exhibitions of personal feeling. He hoped the House would set its face against them, for the honorable member knew very well, or if he did not, other honorable members did, that he had brought forward the motion from no desire whatever to further the interests of the country. He (Mr. Herbert) thought the Government ought not to be called upon to defend such an attack made in the absence of the person it concerned. The effect of such motions was to take up the time of the House unnecessarily. They were placed upon the paper by the honorable member for Maryborough probably for no other reason than because he found the business of the House too dull for him, and wished to introduce some debate of a more animated character. If the honorable member possessed the high talents for which the honorable the Premier had given him credit, and of which he hoped the honorable member would one day afford the House some evidence; he trusted he would devote them to questions of interest to the community, and not to those airy nothings upon which his mind seemed bent. He (Mr. Herbert) thought the House should support the Government, as it ought to have supported him last session, and protect them from such petty attacks. He asked the honorable member for Maryborough, simply as an act of kindness to other honorable members, who met as men of business to discuss matters of general interest, not to continue these frivolous interruptions, which would have the effect not only of driving members from the House, but of bringing the proceedings of the House into disrepute. The honorable Secretary for Lands and Works had shewn the House convincingly, and crushingly, that the honorable member had grappled with one passage of the despatch in a disingenuous way, and used it to make an attack upon His Excellency the Governor, who, it was well known throughout the colony, had been all along a strong advocate for Imperial protection. He (Mr. Herbert) must express his disapproval of the course pursued by the honorable member.

MR. BROOKES expressed his concurrence in the terms of the despatch, and the nature and amount of the assistance asked for. He could not, however, assent to the principle that the House had no right to criticise the despatches sent home by the Government on matters affecting the public interests. He hoped there would be no further debate on the motion before the House, but that the honorable member for Maryborough would withdraw it.

MR. WALSH, in reply, repudiated the charge of having been actuated by personal feeling in introducing the motion, or a desire to make a personal attack upon His Excel-

lency; and contended that the despatch, notwithstanding the arguments to the contrary, and the sophistry and special-pleading of the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works and the ex-premier, conveyed a distinct offer on the part of this colony to forego all claim to the protection of the mother country. It meant, in reality, that as long as certain things were granted—as long as a body of men were provided to protect Brisbane, the rest of the colony was willing to forego the advantage of Imperial protection. Such an admission might prove very inconvenient if, at some future time, should a hostile invasion take place, the home Government, on the strength of this despatch, should refuse to assist in the defence of the colony. He declined to withdraw the motion, and should press it to a division, although he might find himself in a very small minority.

The House divided, and the honorable member for Maryborough being alone on the side of the ayes, the Speaker declared the resolution to be negatived.