

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 10 JUNE 1869

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 10 June, 1869.

Adjournment.—Civil Service Appointments.—“Hansard.”
—Carriage of Goods by Railway.—Supreme Court.—
Private Telegraphic Communication.—Supply of
Parliamentary Papers to Schools of Art.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. WALSH said he desired to call the attention of the Government to a notice which had appeared, of the position in which an Englishman could be placed in this country. A man was reported in the newspaper to have been apprehended at Cooper's Creek, he believed a distance of nearly one thousand miles from Gympie; was brought down there under circumstances of severity, and, after all, this arose from a misapprehension, for it proved that the man, Andrew Harmer by name, was taken and dragged off for another person, and, when he reached Gympie, it appears that he was told, in police parlance, that “he was not wanted,” and then let loose, a thousand miles or so from his home, to find his way back, and no redress made. Now, he thought that, if such things must be in the management of the police, and such things occur, as do occur, it was the duty of the Government to make such regulations as would effectually prevent hardship from being inflicted upon the undeserving, or, at least, give them some reparation. He trusted the honorable member for the Northern Downs was not laughing at the circumstances.

Mr. BELL: Mr. Speaker, I object to the observation of the honorable member. What has the honorable member to do with my laughter?

Mr. WALSH said he naturally thought that, as usual, the subject was exciting the ridicule of the honorable member, when he was laughing.

Mr. BELL said it was quite clear that the honorable member generally did, by his speeches, bring about a feeling of ridicule. But he would say that he was not alluding to him at the present time, and what he had been laughing at was something very different.

Mr. WALSH, resuming, said he was satisfied, although the matter was much too serious for laughter, and, when serious subjects were discussed in the House, he very much disliked to hear laughter, or to see levity displayed, at all, on the occasion. However, he would ask the honorable the Attorney-General if the case had been brought under his notice, or had it been ascertained whether there was any truth in the report; and, if so, whether the Government would be prepared to make any reparation to the person aggrieved. He thought he was justified in making this demand; and, to put himself in order, he moved the adjournment of the House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that this was, apparently, one of the cases which do occasionally happen, and which it was very difficult to prevent. Still the Government

had no official knowledge of the affair in any way, and it was only by the statement of the honorable member for Maryborough, on the subject, which had brought it under his attention. It was, however, a very difficult case to deal with. It was supposed that the man was Palmer, the murderer, and he was taken. He did not know that there was any unnecessary hardship inflicted if the man would not submit to the police, and any undue severity could be remedied in a court of law. It was what all of us were liable to where there was any reasonable ground of suspicion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said these mistakes would occur in the best regulated colonies. He could himself recollect an instance where a judge—Sir Francis Forbes—had been apprehended and lodged in confinement at Musselbrook, as a felon, although his own residence was only five miles off from the place. It was, of course, a mistake.

Mr. BELL said it was not known, as a fact, that the thing referred to had happened. He objected to the time of the House being wasted over a mere newspaper report, and trusted that honorable members would lend themselves to nothing of the sort. The honorable member for Maryborough would do better if he were to bring some fact of direct interest before the House for discussion. What he now occupied their time with was, perhaps, one of those most outrageous reports, such as he had seen in newspapers. It might be agreeable to the honorable member for Maryborough to bring himself forward into notice by this kind of discussion, but he would have preferred something of a more original character.

Mr. THORN said that he had seen a person who was doing admirably on the diggings wrongly arrested on mere suspicion. He thought that some circumspection should be used before a man was arrested. In the case to which he alluded, and for which he could vouch, although there was nothing against the man at all, the arrest had lost him all chance of doing well.

Mr. MILES said that though they could not vouch for the correctness of the report, he must object to the statement of the honorable member for the Northern Downs, that his time should be taken up with these questions—

Mr. BELL said that the honorable member was prone to two things—imputing motives and misquoting language of honorable members. He denied that he had made use of the words put into his mouth.

Mr. MILES, resuming, said he did not see much difference in the words used, when the honorable member objected to the time of the House being wasted over matters of this kind. However, if the honorable member had been in the same position, he would not at all object to a little time of the House being taken up by it. He had himself been an eye-witness of a very gross act committed in the public streets of Brisbane, where a constable apprehended a man without any just cause what-

ever. He had himself prepared a charge against that constable, but the constable was sent—to be out of the way—to Goondiwindi. He was told to excuse the constable, that he was a zealous officer, anxious to get promotion. It was possible that the individual who apprehended this man, in the present case, had the same object in view. It was hard for a man to be apprehended and took a thousand miles away, and then to be set at liberty, when he had not been guilty of any wrong. It would be but a simple act of justice to compensate him.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE said there was another phase of this matter with respect to the police;—this man might have been apprehended, charged with some imaginary crime. How was it possible that this could have been the man who had murdered Halligan, when he was too far off at the time? Certainly, it might have been one of the individuals concerned in the Gympie mail robbery. It appeared, from a previous report, that this man was imbecile, or, what is commonly called silly, so that it was easy to take him up. He knew that such unjustifiable arrests had frequently occurred before, and these long journeys and apprehensions at a great distance required great caution on the part of the Government and all parties concerned, to secure the right person.

Mr. WALSH said, in reference to what had fallen from the honorable member for the Northern Downs, that he had done nothing this afternoon to make that honorable member go out of his way to impute motives. That honorable member stated that he was possibly desirous of making himself notorious in the eyes of the country, by taking up the time of the House. He would ask, how that was done when he had been engaged in asserting the cause of others, and not himself. The honorable Colonial Secretary had told the House a most unnecessary anecdote, with that flippancy which he could always impart to any debate which ought to be serious. He was simply asking the Government concerning the harsh dealing with a fellow colonist, when he was met by a story which was not true. It was the duty of the Government and that chamber to prevent such unpleasant occurrences as that of which he spoke. The honorable Colonial Secretary, instead of joking, might remember a Moreton Bay squatter, who, when he was wanted by a constable, pointed out another person for himself to the minion of the law, and saw him arrested. Ever since, the honorable gentleman appeared to have sympathy with this kind of thing. He begged leave to withdraw the motion.

The motion, by leave, withdrawn.

CIVIL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. PALMER having obtained permission to amend his motion by the insertion of the words, "with the exception of those officers who have been discharged on the score of

economy, from no fault of their own," so as to read thus—

1. That, in the opinion of this House, no fresh appointment—with the exception of those officers who have been discharged on the score of economy, from no fault of their own—to any situation in the Civil Service should be made, until, by death, resignation, or other reason, the present number in the Civil Service be reduced twenty per cent.

2. That an address, embodying this resolution, be presented to His Excellency the Governor.

said that the difficulty of decreasing public expenditure, year after year, appeared to him to increase, and he thought that all attempts of cutting down votes and salaries, and of making one man do the work of two, or three, or even four, had been unavailing hitherto. The only way he saw to reduce the Civil Service list was by some such plan as that contained in the present proposition. The number of civil servants engaged in the colony, in proportion to the population, is something enormous. This was largely made up of a number with small salaries in the different offices at the seat of Government. He believed that if a resolution of the sort were carried into effect, it would not only not embarrass the Government, but tend greatly to reduce their labors. He knew that the torments arising from parties seeking patronage was one of the great miseries of office; and if the House were to pass the resolution, it would strengthen the hands of the Ministry very much, and save their labor, by enabling them to say to applicants for appointments that their hands were tied by a resolution of the House, and that no fresh appointments could be made till the staff of the departments had been brought down to something like a proper size. There could be no difficulty in working the Civil Service if the resolution were passed. As it was, every week, officers in the Civil Service were dismissed on the score of retrenchment merely, and several officers were about to be dismissed on this ground, their salaries being voted only up to the end of June, when, they are told, their services would be required no longer. It would be quite possible to dispense with many of the Government clerks, and have the work done. He had found the hours of work and the pay in the Government offices, compared with the time during which bankers' and merchants' clerks were engaged, out of all proportion. Again, whenever there was the slightest press of work in the Government offices, he observed that the clerks did not exert themselves any more to meet it; but supernumeraries were taken on, while the other clerks left their offices at the same time as usual. When such pressure came, the clerks ought to be expected to work longer, and stay up later, as bankers' clerks did. He had been struck by seeing, as he passed through the town—especially on Monday nights,—that there was hardly a bank

without clerks at work in them up to ten or eleven o'clock. There would be no hardship in the Government clerks having to pursue the same course. There had been cases of fresh appointments made to the Civil Service, although there were gentlemen, dismissed for no fault of their own, remaining without employment—and that was unfair. He need hardly allude to some recent appointments, and especially to one which was very unsatisfactory indeed. If the principle of this resolution were to be carried out, it would prevent a great deal of harm arising to the public service. The motion was so self-evident, and he was so hoarse, that he should not take up the time of the House any further, but would leave the motion, which he begged to move, in the hands of the House.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that although the intention of the honorable member who made the motion was very good, he feared he could not agree with it, as it would scarcely be practicable. It was hardly worth while putting resolutions which would have to be dispensed with in some circumstances. Thus, assuming there would be this tremendous rush anticipated to the Gilbert, there would be numerous appointments necessary, and other gold fields might spring up, and the Government be necessarily called upon to make a very large addition to the Civil Service in consequence. In such circumstances it would be exceedingly inconvenient to determine "that no fresh appointment should be made until the present number in the Civil Service had been reduced twenty per cent." It would have been much more practical on the part of the honorable member to have shown that it was possible to reduce the officers by this percentage. The Government were endeavoring to bring the Civil Service within a reasonable limit. In this colony, it is true that the proportion of the service to the population is very large, but so also is the territory to be governed. Thus they were encumbered with a large staff of civil officers out of all proportion to the people. It was one of the chief difficulties in every department, and the honorable member must be well aware of the great difficulties of governing so widely scattered a population over so large an area. To reduce the staff by twenty per cent. would be exceedingly difficult; and, however determined, they would be unable to do so. Again, when this reduction had been effected by death and so on, there was no limit provided to any subsequent decrease. It would scarcely be advisable to put this resolution on the records of the House, when no Government could possibly be tied by it; they must, even if it passed, have servants if wanted. A similar motion was passed by the House last session by the honorable member for Maranoa. Did the last Government regard it? No: it was practically disregarded; and he could not conceive that any Government ought to have their hands tied in this way. It would be

fairer to say that the Government should not have the control of the appointments. On the Estimates there is a sum granted for the service, and if there were great excess in the amount, the Government were open to censure; but the resolution would be a very inconvenient one to place upon the records of the House. It was of no use attempting to put an impediment in the way of individuals by it, and why put resolutions upon the records of the House which the Government must necessarily disregard, in the necessities of Government. To set an example of disregard to the will of the House would be a great pity. The honorable member seemed to think that more work ought to be given to the clerks to do, and their numbers thus decreased. He agreed with this, and thought it advisable to have an investigation into the various departments, to see what number of hands were required for the work, and that the clerks did a fair day's work. The Civil Service had been pampered, and the officials called Government officers instead of ordinary clerks. Thus they had come to regard themselves as far above gentlemen doing similar work in banking or merchants' establishments, where the work done by a clerk was equivalent to three times the work of a Government clerk. As clerks, they were the most useless creatures that could be found anywhere, and it was really tedious to see the way they go about business in the Government offices. He did not blame the men themselves for this, but their training. Thus, instead of having a copying press for government letters in a colony where letter-press is evidence in a court of law, the copying is done by hand. The heads of departments object to the copying-press that it is not practicable, though he could not tell why it cannot be done. So, too, there were many books kept which ought not to be kept at all. The matter should, however, be left in the hands of the Government, who could say, as business men, to the inefficient: "Here you are not earning your salt; we will dispense with your services." He must resist the motion, as it would lead to no useful result.

MR. ARCHER said he was not surprised that the Government intended to resist the motion. As it stood, he himself could not support it, because it did not provide for cases of necessity, such as constantly occur in this colony. He thought an amendment would provide for that. As it stood, he did not think it would enable the Government to carry on the business of the country properly; besides, it would exclude good men from appointments, and force them to select inferior men for great trusts. He did not see that the power of making good appointments should be taken away from the Government. He would not blame the Government on account of the appointments recently made, for he remembered that he had blamed the previous Government for making unsuitable appointments, but that was simply

because he knew personally the men appointed. The honorable the Colonial Secretary had, doubtless, allowed his good feelings to carry him away in some of the recent appointments. Men who were not fitted for the position should not be put there simply because they were friends. There were men expecting to be dismissed for economy's sake who were quite as fitted for police magistrates as—and indeed better than—some who had been lately appointed. Still he did not think that any resolution would have any effect in restraining the Government. What the House had to do was to keep a very sharp look-out after the appointments made by the Ministers, to keep them in check. He really could not support the motion as it stood, for there were in the service very inefficient men, whom it would be an immense advantage to have dismissed for more efficient men. This the motion would prevent, by precluding the Government from appointing men not at present in the Civil Service. He had no doubt that the number on the list might very well be reduced, but the Government should not lose all choice of men for the service. He would move the following as an amendment:—

That all the words after “until” be omitted, with the view of inserting in their place the words “those who have been discharged on the score of economy, and from no fault of their own, be re-appointed.”

That amendment would simply bind the Government not to re-appoint friends of their own at the expense of those servants discharged through no fault of their own. Now, he regarded inefficiency as a fault such as would not compel re-appointment. But, otherwise, it was only just that those discharged on the score of economy should have appointments before any strangers. They had evidence that the Government had not followed the strongly expressed opinion of the House, that this course should be adopted; it was as well, therefore, that the House should express their opinion on the subject. They knew that strangers had been appointed when there were others competent to fill the posts. He trusted that his honorable friend, the member for Port Curtis, would accept his amendment. With respect to the hours of work, he was quite certain that for two nights of the week the clerks in the banks work from nine o'clock in the morning to ten or eleven o'clock at night. If they compared their salaries, it would be found that the bankers' clerks were not so large as the clerks of the same standing in the public service. At the same time, he had seen nothing by which anyone could mark out the superiority of clerks in the Civil Service. He felt, then, that the Government would be justified in demanding the same amount of work from them as bankers demanded of their clerks. If the clerks under Government were looked upon by themselves as superior, they should have

more work to show their superiority; and if they did so on account of the money paid them, that should be another reason for greater work. He was not at all aware that there was anything in the clerks that should make the Government pay them higher than any private employer for their labor, who thinks of a clerk as a person earning his work by his daily labor. He begged to move—

That the question be amended by the omission of all the words following the word “until” in line two, with a view to the insertion, in their place, of the words, “those who have been discharged on the score of economy, and from no fault of their own, be re-appointed.”

Mr. MILES said he could not see the object to be gained by the proposed amendment. At the same time, he thought that ten per cent. would be about the right proportion. A reduction of twenty per cent was very large; whereas he should have supported the former. The honorable member made a reference to bank clerks, and compared them with those of the Civil Service, as if they should have the same pay. He forgot that a clerk in a bank is always sure of promotion, whereas one in the Civil Service was not so sure, because outsiders are put over their heads. It was then utterly impossible to expect the Civil Service clerks to be so good as the others under such circumstances. In banks, no one was taken from the wilds to be manager over the heads of the clerks in the house. Those clerks, therefore, had an object in working long hours; it was with a view to promotion, but there was no such thing as promotion in the Civil Service. He thought some check should be put upon the Government in their appointments, for they had shown themselves most reckless—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. MILES: It was, nevertheless, the fact, although the Attorney-General said “No.” He objected to laughter on the matter, and the time would come when they would have cause to feel shame. He wished the honorable member for Rockhampton would further amend the motion, by saying ten instead of twenty per cent. He felt that the Government would then accept the motion, and be very glad to say, that by a resolution of this House, they could not make these appointments. If the amendment be carried as it was, it might as well be waste paper, for it would be of no use at all, and he did not see the object of it.

Mr. BELL said there was no more difficult duty which devolved upon a Government than the appointment of its officers to carry out the work of the Civil Service. These appointments were sometimes unsatisfactory; and every person who had to make appointments in his own private affairs, sometimes makes them such as to prove unsatisfactory beyond anticipation. Therefore, the absence of perfection in Government appointments might well be looked upon with some leniency. It

was, indeed, the duty of the House to scrutinize the appointments made, but he had never yet heard of the Government here whose appointments approved themselves to him or the majority of the House. In addressing himself to the amendment and original motion, he thought that neither one nor the other should be accepted. The original motion was too stringent, though very direct and very proper; but the amendment was not so; there was nothing in it. He said this with no spirit but that of perfect courtesy to the honorable member who proposed that amendment. All he desired to say was, that the amendment might be carried, and yet leave the Government to do all they required to do in the Civil Service, for it was a mere matter of opinion whether an officer be efficient or not. If clerks were discharged on the score of economy, the least efficient were dispensed with. On the grounds of efficiency, therefore, as well as of economy, the amendment would not turn out quite as the honorable member for Rockhampton desired, and it might well be withdrawn. No doubt that honorable member took the same view of the original motion as himself, namely—that it embraces too much, and would embarrass the Government too much. He never hoped to see any Government make all their appointments satisfactorily. This was a penalty they had to pay for responsible Government, and one that must be put up with. He trusted the honorable mover would see that it was desirable for him to withdraw his motion. For himself, he must say he could support neither the original motion nor the amendment.

Mr. WALSH said he had a very useful suggestion to offer to the Government, though he made it without the slightest hopes that they would carry it out. He did not see any great good likely to result from this or any similar motion that the House might carry, for no Government ever pays any attention to its resolutions. He was very much inclined to think that, in a very short time, owing to their laxity, the House would be absolutely surprised when they found that the Government obey even Acts of Parliament. Session after session resolutions were passed enjoining a certain course upon the Government, and no attention whatever was paid to them, to see that the Government carry them out. The honorable member for the Maranoa carried a motion of the same kind as this, last session, yet it was utterly disregarded by this Government, and the Government of which the honorable member for Port Curtis formed a portion. He was perfectly sure that the present Government had set these resolutions aside, and would question whether the resolution of the past session bound the Government in this. All that honorable members could do for the future, would be to inquire into such appointments as that recently made at Taroom, and make the Government accountable then and

there. They would be able to punish them some time or other, for no Government should be allowed to exist for one hour, who made these bad appointments in violation of resolutions of the House. He felt, however, that there was no moving the present Government, and it was no matter what they did while they had such support. The suggestion he had to make was, that no person should be taken into the Government service, whose name, as an applicant, had not been published in the *Government Gazette*, at least one month before his appointment. Within the last fortnight a very bad appointment had been made, and, if this plan had been in use, and the gentleman's name been gazetted a month before it, a warrant from some other colony would have been put in force against him a month ago. The Government, too, would be relieved from too much political pressure. He would impress this suggestion upon the Premier, although he did not suppose the suggestion would be taken. He had nothing further to say upon the subject, except that he should vote for original motion or amendment also, if necessary. In fact, he would vote for anything which would control the Government in making appointments to the Civil Service. There were gentlemen now who might have been in the service, and who had been discharged, who had a far greater claim for re-appointment than those utter strangers who had been appointed. It was in violation of justice, and in violation of the resolutions of this House, that such appointments were made. The Government deserved to be brought to book, and to have their actions put under some such control as this resolution proposed.

Mr. FRANCIS said he did not think this debate was to be regretted, although he could not vote for the original motion or even for the amendment. He should not regret if the Civil Service of the colony were to form the subject of discussion one day during every week of the session, so that the crying abuses which were known to exist might be so impressed upon the minds of honorable members, that some steps would be taken to remove them. He was glad to see an opinion gaining ground, that some opportunities and advantages ought to be held out in the Civil Service, which were offered outside the service—that merit should be prized and rewarded, and that a fair thing should be expected, both as to work and payment; and that altogether the employment in the Civil Service and that obtained outside, should be more assimilated than they had been hitherto. It could not be too often reiterated, that the condition of the service was altogether bad; he could scarcely mention a department which did not afford proof of it. The Post Office had been frequently referred to, and the Department of Lands might also be named, while the arrangements in the Supreme Court were so notoriously bad, that it was scarcely worth while to allude to them. With regard to the

Customs Department, he had been informed upon the very best authority, that although £400,000 were passing through it every year, there had never been any audit of the accounts, by the Government. In fact it was pretty generally known, that a very unsatisfactory state of things existed in reference to the different departments in the public service, and it was not at all creditable that it should remain so long unchecked. That something must be done was beginning to be felt by all. That was admitted by the Premier, but when it was suggested that a commission should be appointed to investigate the matter, that honorable gentleman had claimed that the Government of the day were the proper commission to undertake that duty. But he wished to know how long the country was to wait before same action was taken, and what reason there was to expect any remedy would proceed from that quarter. For his part, he thought there was very little reason to expect it. He did not wish to anticipate any of the remarks which he should have to make on the resolution he had tabled, which he hoped to bring forward some day; he only wished to say he was glad the discussion had arisen; and he hoped honorable members would address themselves seriously to the question, as it was a very important one. With regard to the waste of public money, caused by the pampered condition of the civil servants, that was a small matter. If the Government nursed their civil servants into habits of negligence, and then occasionally came down upon them with barbarous cruelty, they simply punished the victims of their own neglect. The condition of the Civil Service, he repeated, was disgraceful to the people of the colony. The civil servants looked upon themselves as ill-used persons if they could not get a share of the public plunder, and that was a state of things which should not be permitted to continue. He did not think the motion before the House could be insisted upon, or that any arbitrary rule could be laid down as to what reductions should be made. His own opinion was that twenty per cent. would not be too much, if, indeed, it would be a sufficient reduction. But although no fixed rule could be laid down, if the principle were established, he felt quite sure a great improvement might be expected in the Civil Service. Then, he would admit, that no fresh appointments ought to be made from outside the service. A rule should be laid down, such as obtained in every merchant's or banker's office, conducted on rational principles, that reward should be connected with merit, and that a man should be engaged because he was fit for the work he was asked to do. Of course, if he were not fit, his place must be filled by the appointment of some person outside; but it should be a rule that, when vacancies occurred, they should be filled up by competent subordinates. That was a principle which any man could understand; and he thought that the civil servants had

just cause for complaint that no stimulus was given to them in the shape of regular promotion; for, at present, unless they held particular political opinions, their merits, whatever they might be, were likely to lie under a bushel to the end of the chapter. He would not take up the time of the House any longer, but would go more fully into the matter when his resolutions came before the House. He was glad to see that an inquiry was being instituted into the state of the Supreme Court Department; and he should be glad if the House could be divided into a number of standing committees, to investigate the whole subject; for surely, when they had evidence that there were rogues and murderers in the commission of the peace, it was necessary, in the interests of the community at large, that some radical change should be made in the public service of the colony.

The Hon. R. PRING said he had understood it had been intimated by the Premier that the Civil Service Act was to be repealed, and if that were so, he thought it would be better to deal with that Act before passing any resolutions with regard to the departments in the service; because although resolutions of this sort might be instructive to the Government, the whole question could then be much better discussed. Further than that, he was of opinion that the House could not deal by resolution with any rights which the civil servants possessed under the Act in force in the colony. Leaving that part of the question, however, he would address himself to the position of the House with reference to the Government. He was not of opinion that the House should trammel the Government with regard to their appointments, although, when those appointments were made, they had a perfect right to question them. If the Government were trusted with the administration of the affairs of the country, he thought it would be undignified on the part of the House to attempt to act upon a resolution of this kind. If the House were content to trust the Government with the expenditure of the revenue of the country, and took no trouble to see how that revenue was expended, it seemed a very paltry matter to squabble about an appointment here or there. It did not seem to him a proper time to do so, because certain civil servants, not appointed by the present Government, who had held office for a number of years, had only recently been found out. If the House were allowed to proceed with their business, it was very probable that the evils complained of might be found to be connected with the bad appointments hitherto made; but he could not conceive that the resolution before the House, by putting a limit on the appointments to be made henceforth, would remedy those evils. If the resolution, or even the amendment, were passed, and considered binding on the Government, it would have the effect of compelling the Government to take into their service men in whom they had

no confidence whatever, because they possessed a certain prescriptive right, from having been previously employed. If the Government found an officer who was unfit for the duty for which he was appointed, either from incapacity, or any other cause, the Minister in whose department he was should be able to put a good man in his place—whether that man had held office under Government or not. He maintained it was a perfect farce to keep a man who was possessed of greater abilities, and was fit for promotion, at the bottom of the class, because some nincompoop happened to be above him, and that the Government should be powerless to do anything in the matter, because some Act prevented them. He thought the House should wait until they saw whether there was to be a repeal of the Civil Service Act, and, in the meantime, the Government would see that the rights of no officer who was protected by that Act would be interfered with. He hoped the Government would not be trammelled in any way so as to prevent them from putting the right men in the right place. For these reasons alone, however much he might think that the resolution and amendment had been put forward with the best motives, he could only offer his opinion that the matter should be allowed to stand over until it was seen whether the Government were going to do away with the Civil Service Act. He believed that any Government, if they were left entirely unfettered, would, for their own benefit, appoint the best men. Supposing, for example, that the honorable member at the head of the Government gave an appointment to a friend, he would of course expect the person he appointed to do his duty, and the same thing would be done by any Government. What was the meaning of the word patronage? Was it not patronage so long as the Government held office? He maintained that the House had no right to trammel the Government with regard to these appointments.

Mr. PALMER, in reply, said he did not think the resolution before the House would bear the interpretation given to them by previous speakers. So far from trammelling the action of the Government, it would, if carried, assist the Government in weeding the various offices of inefficient men, and appointing good men in their places. There was nothing to prevent the Government from discharging inefficient men. The resolution stated "death, resignation, or other reason," and no better reason than inefficient conduct could be given. He had not introduced the resolution with any idea of trammelling the Government, but rather to advance their interests, and in the belief that no piecemeal action, such as cutting down a clerk here, and a clerk there, would meet the case. There must be a reduction somewhere; things could not go on as they were. They were living on the capital of the country, and there must be a change, and he had brought

forward this resolution with the object of giving the Government a broad plan of action. He could not see what the argument of the honorable member had to do with the question. There was nothing to prevent the Government from appointing proper officers; the object of the resolution was simply to reduce the present Civil Service Establishment, which every honorable member admitted was much too large for the purpose for which it was required. He did not know whether the resolution would be carried, but he should certainly not agree to the amendment, for he could see no result likely to follow from it. A resolution much to the same effect, introduced by the honorable member for Maranoa, had already been passed—that officers who had lost their situations through no fault of their own should be provided for before others were appointed; and he could only say that the records in the Colonial Secretary's office would show that during the time that he held office he had carried out that principle, as far as he was concerned. He had not expected any opposition to this motion from the Government; he had rather thought they would have been pleased to have been assisted by a resolution of the House to carry out an economical system of expenditure. But, it appeared, that was not the case; the Government would not accept the remedy, and would only consider the question of reduction when the Estimates came before the House. With regard to those Estimates, honorable members had been given to understand that they would be on the table of the House before this time. The Premier had stated that they would be brought in early in the session, and that they would show the proposed economy of the Government. But no symptom of that economy had yet appeared. He knew of no instance—though, of course, there must be some—where appointments had fallen in, and fresh officers had not been put into them; and he thought that after the Government had made so many professions of economy, the House should know their intentions with regard to the Estimates of 1870, in which there was to be such a great reduction. He should divide the House upon the resolution, for, although he had very little hope of carrying it, he wished to show who was for economy, and who was not.

The amendment was negatived, and the original question being put, the House divided:—

Ayes, 8.
Mr. Ramsay
" Lamb
" De Satge
" Royds
" Haly
" Miles
" Palmer
" Walsh.

Noes, 15.
Mr. Macalister
" A. Hodgson
" S. Hodgson
" Jordan
" Taylor
" Thompson
Dr. O'Doherty
Mr. Murphy
" Lilley
" Stephens
" Archer
" Francis
" Edmondstone
" Pring
" Bell.

"HANSARD."

Mr. WALSH moved—

1. That in the opinion of this House, the Government should at once make due provision for continuing the publication of "Hansard," either in its present, or some more economical form.

2. That the foregoing resolution be transmitted, by address, to His Excellency the Governor in the usual way.

He said he had felt it necessary to bring this motion forward, in consequence of the Government having made no money provision for continuing "Hansard" after the end of the present month; and he certainly felt his task considerably lightened from the expressions which had fallen from honorable members in connection with the subject. He believed that the Government, if they were not of that opinion when they determined to omit the sum from the Estimates, now believed that they would best meet the wishes of the House, by continuing to record the Parliamentary debates. After all that had been said in reference to the value of "Hansard," it would not be necessary for him to make a long speech on the subject, or to recapitulate the reasons which had been drawn from those honorable members who had addressed the House lately on this question. He wished to show that his main object was to preserve for the use of the country, if possible, in a readable form, the proceedings of that chamber, or rather of the colony; for it must not be forgotten that although the proceedings took place in that chamber, they were carried out by the representatives of every part of the colony, and were therefore of interest to the whole community. It was his desire that the people of this country should have an opportunity of knowing what their representatives in Parliament were doing. At this moment, he maintained they had no such opportunity, and they were therefore deprived of one of the great advantages which representative Government should confer upon them. They should, although they might be ever so distant from the House, have a certain knowledge of what their representatives were doing, and how far their actions in Parliament conformed with the promises they had made on the hustings and elsewhere in their respective districts. It could not be gainsaid they did not enjoy this privilege from the publication of "Hansard," as it was now carried out; because, however valuable it might be to members, or to the future historians of Queensland, it was of no value to the people of this colony. He should be very glad if it could be made, as he believed it could, of service to the whole colony. If the people of Queensland were to judge of the proceedings of the Legislature from what they read in the newspapers, they would be obliged to come to the conclusion that their representatives, whether ministers or members of the House, said one thing to them, and another—

and a totally different thing—in Parliament: in fact, they would be forced to the conclusion that the representatives of the people were about the most hollow, deceitful class of men in the colony. He unhesitatingly asserted that, if his conduct and motives were judged from what appeared in the public prints, he should appear as one of the most frivolous, and certainly the most inconsistent, persons it was possible to deal with. That was neither fair to members, nor to the people of the country; and it was not the way to make their debates or their labors valuable; for he maintained that in proportion to the correct representation of the proceedings and debates in that chamber, would be the desire on the part of members to attain that degree of excellence which they had not hitherto reached, for want of a correct report of their sayings and doings. At present, they were not judged by what they said, for too frequently words were put into their mouths which they never used or dreamt of using. That was injurious to the press, and deceitful to the country; and the result would be a carelessness and indifference on the part of members in the performance of their duties. The manner in which the debates in that assembly were reported was unjust in every way, because members were not condemned out of their mouths, but out of the mouths of libellers—persons who seemed to be actually employed to misreport them, to make them say what they never said, and then to write lying articles upon those misrepresentations. He would mention an instance to show how this system seemed to have crept in, in connection with the journals of this colony, or rather, some of them. The reporters for the press were actually leaving the colony as fast as they could, and the reason given was, that they were not allowed to report properly—that their reports were so mutilated that they were leaving the colony because they were too independent to put up with it, and because they could not retain their position as reporters, if they permitted the license which was taken with their work to continue. He had it on very good authority, that within the last week or fortnight one of the most valuable reporters in this colony had left it simply because he had not got fair play, and he was afraid of losing his character if he submitted to the corrections made in his reports of the debates in that House. He need not refer to other reasons to show the necessity which existed for some reform in this matter, because it had been admitted, over and over again, by honorable members, during the last fortnight. It was only last night, that the honorable member for Mitchell had got up and made some suggestion, which he (Mr. Walsh) did not remember; but he would have remembered it if the honorable member had made such an atrocious suggestion as was given in the *Courier*. That honorable member was reported to have suggested that penal clauses should be introduced into the Immigration

Bill. Now, he was quite sure it was not in the nature of the honorable member for Mitchell to make such a suggestion. It had never proceeded from his side of the House; but it appeared that that was only a portion of the general policy, on the part of the press, to misreport everything said by the opponents of the present Government. He thought he had sufficiently shewn the necessity for supplying the people of the colony with more faithful reports of what their representatives said and did in that chamber. Various suggestions had been made in reference to the continuance of "Hansard," and he believed very few for doing away with it. He should be glad to listen to any of those suggestions, and he hoped they would be able to devise some scheme to make it much more perfect, much cheaper, and of more general benefit for public purposes. He asked for nothing more; he wished to improve its value, and make it a work which could be placed within the reach of all those who had any interest in the Government of the colony and the proceedings of their representatives. He believed one of the suggestions which had been made was to appoint a select committee to take evidence on the subject: he approved of that suggestion. Another was, that there should be a Reporting Committee of both Chambers appointed every session, who should have full power to make arrangements for all reporting, and would relieve the Speaker and the President of the Legislative Council from some of the invidious duties which they were called upon to perform in connection with this subject. He believed the honorable Colonial Secretary had another scheme—unless he had abandoned it—which would be well worth the consideration of the House. He would now give the House a few extracts, taken from the New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, where the Legislature seemed to have been in many respects in the same position as the Legislature of this colony, with regard to the question of reporting. They had had abundant reasons for finding fault with the way in which their debates were given to the public; they had had the same difficulty in finding money to carry on a "Hansard"; the same objections had been urged against it, and they had taken the matter into serious consideration, and had treated it with the ability they seemed to apply to every question. They seemed to have come to a determination that it was necessary to the welfare of the people, and for the improvement of members themselves, to continue it, whatever the publication of "Hansard" might cost. He found in one of the numbers of the New Zealand "Hansard" a motion brought forward by Major Heaphy, to this effect—

"That, having in view the burdensome taxation of the country, the probable deficiency of revenue, and the cost of defence, this House is of opinion that the present system of reporting the debates, and the expense thereof, should cease with the termination of existing contracts."

That appeared to be exactly the position which the Government took up. The honorable member who moved that resolution made the following remarks:—

"He was unable to say whether the sum of £2,000 expended last year covered the whole expenses of reporting and printing, or whether the sum of £10,000, for stationery, or £6,000 for printing, had not been somewhat trencched upon. The whole sum for reporting, printing, and stationery, that had been voted, had fallen a little short of £19,000. In addition, there was the expense of provincial stationery, so that an enormous sum was annually paid by the colony for that purpose."

That was his opinion of the actual cost of "Hansard." In speaking about it, he said, in alluding to some member who had referred to him—

"The honorable member mistook him, when he interpreted him as having said that he considered the 'Hansard' reports as merely a private luxury. He had said, on the contrary, that he believed them to be essential to the carrying out of the principle of representative government; but it was a luxury which the colony could not afford. His object in bringing the matter forward was simply to point out that the colony in its present state of monetary depression could not afford to maintain the 'Hansard.'"

Several members addressed the House, who seemed to be fully aware of the financial state of the colony. One honorable member, Mr. Carleton, said—

"The honorable member who introduced it, had treated the publishing of the debates as a luxury. That showed how completely he misunderstood the objects of reporting the debates. The honorable member supposed that it concerned the members of that House alone, whereas they were the very last persons to be considered in the matter. That honorable member had entirely forgotten that the system had not been introduced by way of a luxury to themselves, but for the sake of informing the public correctly as to what were the proceedings of that House. He considered no sum of money too great for the purpose of giving correct information to the country of their proceedings. They all knew what a great change had been produced in the general feeling of the country between the present and the last session—a change exactly in the opposite direction from that which the honorable member who now opposed the publication of the 'Hansard' would wish—a direction most painful to that honorable member himself. They all knew what a change had come over the opinion of the country, and he attributed it more than anything else to the publication of those debates. True it was that a few political pedlars, as they were called, had gone about to inform the country a little more of what had taken place last session, but their labor had been as nothing in effect compared to the information which had been supplied by that publication. Was the sum three or four times as great, he would not grudge it, the House would not grudge it, and, what was more, he believed that now, as the public knew its value, they would not grudge it. With regard to the

great change which had come over the public mind in reference to what was called centralism and provincialism, he attributed that mainly to the correct publication of their debates."

Now he (Mr. Walsh) believed that if "Hansard" could be issued in a cheap form and circulated throughout the country, it would have an excellent effect, the public would understand their representatives better, and would not be continually misled by the utterance of libels and slanders respecting the members of that House, and he felt sure it would bring about a better feeling between them, and conduce to the general advantage of the community. A great part of the time of honorable members was taken up in reviewing the accusations which, he was sorry to say, were made against them for political purposes. The same member went on to say—

"It must also be recollected that there was, in former times, a system prevailing among a certain class of newspapers in this colony, a system never heard of in the home country, that of deliberately misreporting debates for the purpose of deceiving the country. The fact was notorious, and could not be denied. That system was never put an end to until the publication of 'Hansard.'"

Well, he was sorry to say that the publication of "Hansard" in this colony had not had that effect, because it had been retained for the use of members only, in apparent forgetfulness of what was due to the country as well. The next speaker in the course of his remarks observed—

"He believed the 'Hansard' to be a valuable publication, and that it would lighten the labors of the future historians of New Zealand."

Another honorable member, Mr. Vogel, said—

"The cost, he thought, was fully compensated for by the result—that of inviting honorable members to state their opinions in the assurance that such would be properly reported and known; and, further, in withdrawing from honorable members the facility of forgetting remarks previously made—not the least desirable use of such a work; and, besides, he believed that the tone of the debates would be raised by the knowledge that the opinions so expressed would be recorded in the annals of the colony. He was not going to say where retrenchment should commence; but he thought it would be a mistake to commence in that direction, as, if the country could afford to have an Assembly, they should do the utmost they could to elevate the character of the debates."

The next speaker said—

"If not for the 'Hansard,' he maintained, the public, at all events in Auckland and Otago, would be kept in the dark, as only the opinions of members agreeing with the views of the editors of the papers would be presented to the public. He hoped that now the 'Hansard' was commenced, it might be conducted more economically year after year, and that members calling for economy would take the hint of condensing their remarks, thus

not merely conferring a great benefit on the members who had to listen, but also saving the resources of the country."

The next member said—

"He could not agree to the motion to discontinue reporting the debates, for, without them, the colony would be excluded from knowing what had taken place in the House."

Another honorable member stated—

"If they did away with 'Hansard' it might be at once said that they were afraid of their views and proceedings being made public, for it was very certain that without it they would not go beyond the House, as the reports in the newspapers could not give much idea of the discussions, and the limited accommodation for the public prevented them from coming to hear them."

Another member, Mr. Hall, said—

"One of the principal newspapers in Wellington had recently reported one of his speeches at a length of more than four columns; while the Hon. the Commissioner of Customs, who spoke longer, was only allowed one column, and the Hon. the Colonial Secretary was reported with even greater brevity. He believed that throughout the length and breadth of the land there was hardly any part of the expenditure of the Government which was looked upon with greater satisfaction, and was considered to furnish a more useful result, than the money expended on the 'Hansard.'"

He could quote many other remarks made in the same spirit.

The result of the debate was, that in a House of fifty-six members, there was a majority of thirty-four in favor of carrying on "Hansard." He would quote from another number of the same publication, just to show the way in which "Hansard" was commenced in New Zealand, as it might be a guide to the House. In the second number of that "Hansard," he found there had been a Reporting Committee, of which Mr. A. S. Atkinson brought up the report. He would read it—

"Your committee have the honor to report, *ad interim*, that they have adopted the following rules for regulating the reporting and printing of the debates, and for distributing the pamphlets when printed.

"That members be allowed the opportunity of revising reports, on the strict understanding that the alterations are to be confined to making the reports more in accordance with the remarks actually uttered in the House. The head reporter to be judge of the alterations made, and to refuse to pass those which he considers are departures from a correct report of what the speaker said. Differences of opinion between the member revising and the head reporter to be referred to the committee.

"For the purpose of carrying out the above, slips of reports shall be sent to members concerned, each day, by ten o'clock, and the corrected slips be deposited in the head reporter's box in the lobby. The box to be cleared daily, at one o'clock, and the understanding to be that members who have not deposited the corrected slips by that hour desire to make no alterations.

"That contributions to the expenses of reporting ought not to be asked from the colonial newspapers, unless the means could be devised (which your committee find themselves unable to do) of exacting contributions alike from all newspapers availing themselves of the House reports. That the House reports should be given free to the newspapers, as other parliamentary papers are.

"That each member of the Assembly receive two copies, besides one bound copy at the end of the session.

"That it is desirable that the pamphlets should go post free.

"That the price per copy should be 1s., and the trade price 8d. each.

"That the Government Printing Office should sell only to the trade.

"That, in regard to the distribution of the pamphlets, when the time before the despatch of a mail is limited, the newspapers ought to be the first supplied, then the members of the Assembly, and then the trade.

"That no opportunity ought to be lost of forwarding, by mail, the pamphlet parcels to the trade.

"That the chairman be authorized, in matters of detail not provided for by these resolutions, to give orders, and also, in cases of urgent necessity, to relax the resolutions, reporting the same to the committee at an early opportunity.

"A. S. ATKINSON,
Chairman.

"House of Representatives,
"July 16th, 1867."

He did see why that plan or any other should especially be adopted in this colony, but he thought it was well worth the consideration of the House, because it appeared to work satisfactorily in New Zealand. He could, if necessary, refer to other debates which had taken place in the other chamber, in that colony, but they were all to the same end, and the reasons advanced were the same which must animate honorable members in this colony, for it was absolutely necessary for the credit of the Parliament, and, to do justice to the public, to disseminate a full and fair knowledge of the proceedings of the representatives of the people. He had not gone so far into the matter as he had intended, but he hoped other honorable members would take it up more warmly, and more ably, and would, at any rate, coincide with him in the opinion he had expressed as to the object which should chiefly be kept in view in the publication of their debates, in order that some practical good might result, and the Government might take steps to see how the "Hansard" could best be carried on, with advantage to the public as well as to the Parliament, and at the lowest cost to the country.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said there was no intention on the part of the Government to offer any opposition to the motion. The vote for "Hansard" was left out of the Estimates from motives of economy—as a bare matter of saving expenditure. Whether "Hansard"

was dispensed with or not, he believed the work was a luxury. If the House could afford it, it was one that could be rendered useful by some modification of the present mode of publication. At present, it answered no extensively useful purpose; its circulation was confined almost entirely to members of Parliament. If it could, by any means, be cheaply and correctly brought out for the information of the public, as well, he thought it would be very desirable indeed. The House would recognise that sound principle laid down by the honorable member for Maryborough, that honorable members did not sit in that chamber to suit themselves; that a "Hansard" was not for themselves; but that their conduct—their speeches and their votes—should be sent forth to the colony at large. Nothing could be more dangerous to the liberties of the people, nothing more injurious to the principles of representative institutions than to have the deliberations of the Parliament altogether secret. If he had any objection to the motion, it was rather to the form than to the substance: he objected to the matter being thrown upon the Government. He had a very decided opinion that, in respect to their own proceedings, the House should keep entire control of them in their own hands. He thought the Government should have nothing to do with them, except to make the necessary payments. If the House should think fit to pay money for "Hansard," the Government ought to have no control over the voice of the Assembly—it ought to go before the world in such a form as the House chose to send it. It would be very dangerous if the Government should have, in any way, strong control over the publication of the debates. If it was the feeling of the House that the publication of "Hansard" should be continued, he would suggest that it would be wise to refer the whole subject to a committee, and the committee should bring up some plan for the approval of the House. If the honorable mover struck out the word "Government," it would be better; and there ought to be some amendment of the motion, so as to leave it to a committee to consider the subject. The committee might bring up two or three schemes, any one of which might be adopted by the House. He might say, at once, that unless a scheme was presented that would enable the House to get the "Hansard" circulated throughout the colony, he would not support it. He hoped the committee, if appointed, would direct their attention to the best and cheapest mode of getting the debates, as well as the decisions of the House, circulated as fully as possible outside the walls of the Parliament. As to the newspapers, the reports were not, in some of the journals—not in all—satisfactory; some reported fairly enough. No doubt, the *Courier* had been somewhat unfortunate in its reports; but he could hardly think that the strictures of the honorable member for Maryborough

were justified—that they were sent out for the purpose of libelling the House. He had not seen anything to lead to that conclusion. He thought that consideration, and great allowance, ought to be made for the reporters under the circumstances of their position: the distance they were from honorable members in the House, and the difficulty they had in hearing in the gallery, and, consequently, of giving accurate reports of what was said. He hardly thought any of the gentlemen of the press—any whom he knew—would remain an hour on a newspaper if their reports were hashed in the way the honorable member had stated. And, he thought he was right in assuring him, that the gentlemen whom he had made allusion to were leaving for the very material and substantial reason that they would get better pay and would have better prospects of advancement where they were going, than could be secured in Brisbane. The two young gentlemen were excellent reporters, both; and, with respect to the law reports, he could speak positively—they were capital. They were going to fulfil engagements on the leading journal in Melbourne, and would receive increased remuneration.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Fifty per cent.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They would receive fifty per cent. more than they got in this colony. He had a particular reason for knowing this, because one of the young gentlemen, who was gone already, had, himself, told it to him; and that he thought he would have greater facilities for entering his (the Attorney-General's) own profession, in Victoria, than were afforded to law students in this colony. The other young gentleman who was going, had better prospects before him, and more substantial reward for his services than he could command here. It was not, therefore, on account of the corrupt motives attributed by the honorable member for Maryborough to the conductors of the press that those gentlemen were leaving. He (the Attorney-General) was sorry they were going, because they were both admirable reporters; and it would be a loss to honorable members that their services would be no longer given to the local press. The incorrect reports of the newspaper press were, he thought, due more to the difficulties the reporters were under in their present situation in the gallery than to any other cause; and it would be well for the committee to consider the best place for the reporters in the House. The gallery must be altered considerably, or the reporters must be placed in the lower part of the chamber, or some other means must be found to enable them to perform their duties with comfort and satisfaction to themselves and the House. If Parliament were to have "Hansard," the reporters must have full facilities for reporting. It was very hard to leave the reporters to labor under the existing disadvantages—when the reporter had to sit craning over his desk, one hand to his ear and the other holding his pencil, straining to

catch the voice of the member speaking—for it was impossible to report with certainty as they were placed. In the main, "Hansard" was a very fair report, but the reporters labored under great difficulties; and it was very doubtful, if they had not the assistance of honorable members—to whom they could refer when necessary—whether the Parliament's own reporters, skillful as they were, could do as well as they did. Honorable members must remember that the gentlemen on the daily press had not the time that the "Hansard" reporters had to bring out their reports. They were obliged to condense—being limited as to space, to suit the exigencies of a daily issue—and to write out their reports within a limited time. They had not the advantages which the reporters for "Hansard" had, who were not thus bound; and they had many difficulties to contend against which were unknown to the reporters for "Hansard." The gentlemen of the press endeavored to discharge their duties faithfully to the House; and he hoped that the honorable member for Maryborough would see that he was mistaken, and that in dealing out such hard judgment, he was unjust. They could have no such motive for supporting his (the Attorney-General's) side of the House as they had for supporting that on which the honorable member sat; and it seemed a very strange thing that they should abuse their own masters. He should be inclined to view it as evidence of the independence and magnanimity of the proprietors, that they allowed, in their own journal, the publication of strictures upon themselves. It was very hard to accuse the reporters and writers for the press of being libellers. The same thing might be said of "Hansard," and against the House; for, in the opinion of some, there were libellers in the House as well as out of doors.

MR. WALSH, in explanation, said the libel he referred to was, the putting into honorable members' mouths words they never used. What he wished to state was, that reporters hostile to honorable members made them say what they never said, and then wrote leading articles founded upon their false reports.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He said libelling was not confined solely to gentlemen outside the House; because, sometimes, under cover of their privileges, honorable members made statements that might be regarded as libels. If they were to have "Hansard," they must see that it was placed on a sound foundation. The honorable member for Maryborough had made some researches in connection with the subject, and had offered some suggestions for adoption. He (the Attorney-General) thought that the rules laid down for the New Zealand "Hansard" might, with some exceptions, be applied to their own. It was very curious that, in New Zealand, it had been found necessary to guard against members exercising too large a supervision of the reports of their speeches. That, to his mind, was one of the strongest objections to "Hansard,"

which, sometimes contained not merely the report of a member's speech, but an essay which had been subsequently written by him. Unless "Hansard" contained the speeches that honorable members delivered in the House, the work could be of no value. It was preposterous that a man, after having delivered his speech, and seen his arguments demolished, should amend the report in "Hansard," and answer objections that he never contemplated when speaking. No doubt when "Hansard" was reported very fully, honorable members would not only be induced to take pains with their speeches—to make them good ones—but they might be led into another temptation; that was, to make them very long. Better than full reports of long speeches, were good condensed reports; and nothing helped a reporter, in condensing a speech, so much as the speaker's devoting his attention to certain points, so as to make his speech direct and concise. A long speech was very difficult to condense; but where a speaker set out with certain points, and made a speech to them, the task of the reporter was wonderfully lightened. He knew that from experience. If honorable members wished to have a fair view of their speeches placed before the public, they should make them brief and pointed. He had no objection to the appointment of a committee, if the honorable member for Maryborough would alter his motion to that effect. If the Printing Committee were nominated for the purpose, they might bring up such a report as would enable the House to come to a decision on the subject. The committee need not confine themselves to one form of publishing "Hansard," but suggest several, to which their inquiries might be directed.

Mr. SANDEMAN said he was exceedingly glad to hear the Premier take a favorable view of this question. It was not, he thought, one that hitherto was considered of sufficient importance by the House. If they would have "Hansard," it should be as a faithful record of the proceedings of the Parliament, and as a transcript of the political history of the country—which it really ought to be, and, no doubt, would be, if properly conducted. It was unnecessary, after what had been said, to descant upon the great value and importance of the subject; but there was one part of it that the House had not sufficiently considered the importance of. They knew well that the duties of the reporter were onerous; that, for those duties, men not only of considerable talent, but of high attainments were employed. It was justly said, that the duties of the reporter were not sufficiently understood. If the House would permit him, he would read an extract from an article, in which there were some remarks that, he believed, would be considered to the point—

"The uninitiated have no idea of how much time short-hand notes require to write out. One

hour of taking down makes about six hours' work in copying. Well, in the gallery of the House of Commons, where each man only takes a twenty minutes' turn, he writes out his own notes; but if a short-hand writer has taken three hours, or more (as, for instance, at a committee), and the transcript must be produced next morning, it is physically impossible for him to make his own translation; so that the copy, by whatever means made, has to be read over against the original short-hand."

There was a great deal more upon the subject, of very great interest; but he would not detain the House by going over more than a few points. Again—

"On the whole, the work of the short-hand writer is much more laborious and much more responsible than is commonly supposed. To say that it is merely mechanical, is absurd; for (to go no further) ninety speakers out of every hundred would be almost unintelligible if their exact words were reproduced, unedited; and fifty out of a hundred make positively glaring blunders, which the short-hand writer corrects for them. Again, the mere hearing of what is said is often a most arduous task. How the mumbling of the judges in law courts is made sense of, I have not much notion. I am sure, as a matter of fact, that it cannot be heard, and is not heard, and that the reporter has frequently to rely upon his own ingenuity for filling up gaps."

He (Mr. Sandeman) had no doubt that was the case generally. In speaking of the character of reporters, another statement from a paper that appeared in the *Illustrated London News*, some time back, was as follows:—

"The reporter has no right to mark his own estimation of the speech by the insertion of any descriptive epithet, whether disparaging or commendatory, applied either to the speaker or to any of the remarks and opinions he may have uttered. Not the slightest insinuation of this kind, favorable or unfavorable, is found in an honest report, nor the least expression of the reporter's partiality for one view or the other of the question discussed. This is a point of honor with the laborious, intelligent, and trustworthy class of literary men who are engaged by the London daily papers to report the proceedings in both Houses of Parliament, and occasionally at various public meetings. Individually, they may be eager political partisans, and may admire and sympathise with one speaker, or dislike and disagree with another, as freely and ardently as any of the multitude of newspaper readers; but they hold it their duty, not enjoined by the orders of an employer, but tacitly prescribed by the principles of good faith and by the usages of their profession, to refrain most strictly from any indication of these feelings in their reports. The faithful observance of this law is one of the main causes of the high character of the English newspaper press, as compared with that of America, where the reports of debates in Congress frequently teem with unfair and offensive comments on the style or arguments of the speakers who are obnoxious to the party of the journal so reporting them."

He wished the House to look at the subject fairly, to understand the duties of the reporters, and the high character of the class of persons who held the office. To come to the question, which had often been discussed by the House, that of expense; he maintained that they could not expect to get the services of educated men without remunerating them amply: and, he did not think they had ever been properly considered by the House. Looking at the importance of "Hansard," he thought they should not regard it in a parsimonious spirit; they ought to be liberal in their allowance for "Hansard;" and, in re-considering the subject, now, the House should be prepared to do it well and properly. He thought that the suggestions of the Premier, as to the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the whole subject, was a very proper one; and, if the honorable gentleman would allow him, he (Mr. Sandeman) would suggest that, as the motion related to a work in which both Houses of Parliament were interested, it was proper that a joint committee should be appointed, representing the Council as well as the Assembly. With the leave of the House, he would propose an amendment on the motion of the honorable member for Maryborough, to the following effect:—

That all the words after the word "that," in the first line be omitted, with the view of inserting in their place the following words, viz.:—"The Legislative Council be invited to join this House in the constitution of a select committee to inquire into, and report upon, the advisableness of making due provision for continuing the publication of 'Hansard,' either in its present or some more economical form; and, further, to consider the advisableness of including the full proceedings of the Parliament, and of issuing the reports daily to the public, with power to send for persons and papers, and with leave to sit during any adjournment."

"2. That the members to serve in said joint committee be eight, four to be a quorum."

"3. That the following members of this House be appointed to serve in said committee, viz.:—Mr. Stephens, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Francis, and Mr. Royds."

"4. That these resolutions be communicated to the Legislative Council, by message, in the usual way."

Question—"That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question"—put.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he should like to say a word or two before the motion was passed, and he would confine himself as nearly as he could to it. The House would probably bear with him, if he made some reference to what had been said by the honorable member for Maryborough—that the newspaper reporters of Brisbane had been in the habit of receiving instructions from the proprietors to report unfaithfully. As he had, for eight or nine years, up to a recent date, the management of one of the newspapers, he felt bound to defend the character of the gentlemen who had been in his service,

and who had performed their duties faithfully, by assuring honorable members that the statement which had been made to the honorable member for Maryborough, and which the honorable member had repeated in the House, was entirely untrue. He never yet knew any reporters in this city who would receive such instructions; and, on their behalf, he emphatically denied the statement which had been made by the honorable member. In regard to the particular instance to which the honorable member had referred, the reason why the young man left Brisbane was clear enough—he wished to improve his position, and he left to take an appointment on the Melbourne *Argus*—the largest newspaper in the colonies—at a salary of fifty per cent. more than he was paid in this place. And he was justified in going. The only instructions he ever gave to reporters, or that he ever knew given—and if there had been others, he should have known of them—were very proper, and were usual on all papers; they were with regard to the space at the disposal of a reporter for any particular meeting or thing he might have to report. He approved of the appointment of a joint committee, but he thought that such committee should have further instructions with regard to "Hansard." There were two or three points of very considerable importance to be considered in connection with the subject. It had been stated that one great object in continuing the publication of "Hansard" was, that honorable members' constituents might know what they were doing in Parliament. As it was perfectly understood that the publication, in a weekly form, was no use for that purpose, and that, at present, it was not availed of except so far as members were concerned, a weekly "Hansard" was not sufficient, if it was to be made available to the public. The suggestion thrown out by honorable members, that the publication should be daily, and saleable, was the only one to make it of public benefit, and of use to their constituents. Another remark he had to make was, that although the reports in "Hansard" were very full—of some speeches, on particular questions—the debates in Committee of the Whole, which, very frequently, were as important as any debates in the House, were not reported. Another thing: "Hansard," as now published—following the example of the English "Hansard"—did not give the proceedings of the House, as distinct from debates on certain questions; so that, even if the public got it in its present form, it would not inform readers of the decisions of the House on certain questions of interest, because they were not noticed in "Hansard." The necessary additions would add very little to its bulk or the length of the reports, and that might very easily be compensated for by a slight condensation of the speeches now so fully reported;—and this could be done without any great loss. He thought the attention of the committee should

be directed to those points, and it might be an instruction to the committee to give consideration to them. Another instruction should be, that whatever report the committee might bring up, they should, if possible, give an estimate of the probable expense of any or every plan they might recommend for the continuance of "Hansard." The question of expense was one that could not be overlooked; and it should be fully brought before the committee that a scheme ought to be devised which would be as economical as possible—that they should not only direct their inquiry to several plans, but also to their cost.

Mr. FRANCIS: There were two reasons, to his mind, why "Hansard" should not be discontinued. The first was, that it was desirable the House should preserve a record of the speeches made by honorable members, especially by Ministers, past and present, in order that they might be reminded of their occasional changes of opinion: it might be of beneficial effect, that the House and the country should see what views had been taken in days gone by. He found it exceedingly interesting to read the opinions of gentlemen in days gone by—of those whom he respected, whose voices he never heard, now. Furthermore, and more than all else, it was important that the utmost publicity should be given to the proceedings of the House. It was not that honorable members wanted to stand out in high relief, or to be painted in fine colors;—he took it that every member would like it to be shown to the country that the House were not quite the asses that certain newspapers made them out to be—that they really did apply themselves to the business of the colony, and endeavored to combat the great difficulties which all legislation presented. It was not only for their own self-defence, however, that they wanted "Hansard;" it was, also, with a view to the political education of the people—a most important matter! It was in the hope to get suggestions in their work of legislation, that what they did in the House should go to their constituents—be fairly brought under the attention of the people. It was all-important, and, therefore, the value of "Hansard" could not be over-estimated. The very strength of their life consisted in the blaze of daylight being brought to bear upon all their proceedings. All the political mischief that had been done in this and other places resulted from cliques, log-rolling, dark conspiracies, that would not bear the light of day. He hoped that, if there were any members of the House whose deeds would not bear the light, they were a small minority. For the purpose he had stated, as well as for others, he thought that "Hansard" should be continued. He was extremely unwilling to make any motion in the direction of expending the public money; but he did say that the cost of "Hansard" was a most economical expenditure, whatever it might

be. As it now existed, "Hansard" did not answer the second purpose desiderated, inasmuch as it was not within the reach of the people. As a fair and faithful report of what it professed to give, he thought it was certainly admirable. He did not know whether the gentlemen who reported for "Hansard" had longer or shorter ears than other reporters; but it seemed to him very plain that their reports were faithful. As to the ingenious defence by the Premier, of the *Courier*, he did not think it carried conviction with it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He did not defend the *Courier* newspaper; he defended the gentlemen of the press from the charge of wilfully libelling the House. As to defending the *Courier* newspaper, as a whole, he declined to do it.

Mr. FRANCIS: He perfectly understood the honorable gentleman; but, as far as he knew, nobody attacked the Brisbane press, or the reporters of the Brisbane press. He never heard that the reporters of the *Express* had been attacked. All the accusations that had been made in the House had been in regard to the *Courier* newspaper. As regarded that newspaper, he thought it incapable of being defended. He spoke of it as it was at present. It was only during the last six months or so that the complaints against that paper were heard. So far as the House could get at its secret workings, it seemed to be carried on by a joint-stock company, banded together for the iniquitous purpose of misleading the public as to what went on in the House; and a baser object he could not conceive. Talk of prostitution! There was no prostitution so vile as that. However, he did not wish to take up the time of the House by performing such a work of supererogation as condemning the *Courier*. He certainly thought that the complaining voice was of little avail in this world unless there was a mending hand. He thought that "Hansard" might answer all purposes by being published as a broad-sheet, every morning. He did not care what it cost. He did not think it need cost a shilling more than at present. He suggested that authorised reports, such as were now given in "Hansard," should be prepared, and furnished by the officers of the House to the newspapers of opposite politics—if they could be found—to be published day by day. That was his idea; and he thought, that if the committee addressed themselves to the subject earnestly, the House would secure a fair and full publication of their proceedings.

Mr. JORDAN: He should avail himself of this opportunity to say what he would not otherwise say, in reply to some remarks that had been made by honorable members in reference to himself, some months ago. It had been stated, he thought by the honorable member for Maranoa, that he (Mr. Jordan) was in the habit of re-writing his speeches. He did correct a speech which he delivered in the House—the first speech which he made

after his return for East Moreton—but he made only such corrections as were necessary to convey to persons who read the report something like an idea of what he really had said. He did not re-write his speech. The honorable member for Maranoa was mistaken. He (Mr. Jordan) believed the parliamentary reporters, during the pressure of business of the session, were very much overworked. In reference to that speech, he believed it might have been impossible for the reporters to have given anything like a correct report; but he believed, from its corresponding almost exactly with the report in the *Courier*, that the reporter was possibly under the necessity, on that occasion, of adopting the newspaper report. He and other honorable members had had to complain—at least, he had not complained formally—of the reports given in the daily papers. Some of them had reason for so doing. The speeches of some honorable members were given at length, others were given fairly, and others were given, he thought, unfairly. He knew that there were many excuses to be made for the reporters: the difficulty of hearing what was said, or, at least, all that speakers said. Some honorable members were not blessed with such clear voices as others, which was a disadvantage. Then, the daily papers were circumscribed as to space, the reporters had to condense their reports, and they had to do their work within a limited time. Honorable members must make all those allowances for them. Still, there was great room for improvement in the very imperfect reports which were presented by the newspapers to the constituents of honorable members, and which exhibited them in a very ridiculous point of view. On very important questions, he had seen very few remarks reported of honorable members who had spoken at length and to the purpose, and those few unfortunately conveyed a very wrong impression. He had heard it said of an honorable member that the general impression of his constituents was, that he had had very little to say on certain questions; whereas, the fact was, that the same gentleman had spoken at length and several times, and had advanced unanswerable arguments in support of his views. In reference to "Hansard," he (Mr. Jordan) believed the continuation of that publication was very important. It should be improved, if possible, by an increase of the staff. He believed an increase very necessary. The gentlemen who were employed as parliamentary reporters were men of very considerable ability, and they were not overpaid. The staff was insufficient. He had heard an admirable suggestion on this subject—it was not his own: that there should be articulated clerks brought up under the present parliamentary reporters; and that those young gentlemen should learn, not only short-hand, but to set up type from short-hand reports. The House had been told that what it took

an hour to report took six hours to write out, so that the writing out would be saved if those young men were taught as suggested. If that suggestion had been carried out seven years ago, the Parliament would, by this time, have realised the possession of a strong staff of trained clerks. The House was indebted very much to the honorable member for Maryborough for having brought the question forward so ably; yet he thought he might find fault with the remarks made by him, as to the reporters going away from the colony because they were obliged to act according to instructions as to what was put in the papers, and could not get permission to report faithfully.

MR. WALSH: He said he had been so informed.

MR. JORDAN: He thought the ideas he gave taking the practice from New Zealand were admirable, and might be very usefully carried out here. He considered it as possibly necessary, and very desirable, that honorable members should have the power of revising their speeches, but still that there should be a check upon them by the reporter, and that points in dispute should be referred to the Chairman of Committees. Further, he thought that honorable members should be supplied with a slip, in the morning, for correction of the reports. He thought that the idea suggested by his colleague, the honorable member for East Moreton, namely, that a broad sheet of the debates should appear the next morning, and be put in general circulation, was a very good one, and, if carried out, would be one means of meeting the necessary expense. He thought that it would have a very considerable sale, and be an admirable check upon the daily papers. For these could hardly continue to put in the wretched reports they did in the face of a broad sheet of this kind.

MR. LAMB said he had just sent for a copy of the amendment he had moved the other evening, to show how it had been misreported. That amendment had been read out four times in the House: twice by the Chairman of Committees, once by the honorable member for Maryborough, and once by himself. He had sent for a copy of that amendment, and would read how it appeared in the newspaper, and honorable members would be able to determine whether the misreporting was not done for a purpose or not. Anybody could see the reason why. But as the amendment was not forthcoming he could not discuss it. However, he had drawn the attention of two or three honorable gentlemen to the fact, and honorable members might now determine for themselves.

MR. MILES said he would say a word or two as on a former occasion when "Hansard" was discussed in the House; he had indeed said that several honorable members had made corrections in their speeches, and he wished to say that when he said this it was not to censure those honorable members at

the time, but because it was a great increase of the expense of printing "Hansard." He was sorry to have given any offence to honorable members. He had not made any extensive alteration in any of his speeches, and the difficulties the reporters had to contend with were so great they would hardly be able to report correctly without some corrections. His own corrections were merely on the Pastoral Leases Bill, where he had been made to say that the rent of runs was "thirty shillings" instead of "pounds," and "seven" instead of "seventy." However, his object had not been to censure honorable members by the course he took, but simply to show that by extensive corrections the expense of "Hansard" was greatly increased.

Mr. WALSH said he proposed to speak to the amendment, and would remark that he was especially glad to find the Ministry had given their adhesion to the motion. With much said by the Premier he cordially concurred. If they were to continue "Hansard," it was absolutely necessary that the reporters should be placed within hearing. It was absurd to place them where they will not—or rather cannot—hear, or have that excuse. It was folly for them to be where they must render imperfect accounts of what is said. He had recently met with an instance of this in respect to the initial and final words of a quotation to be supplied in "Hansard," and he had great difficulty in verifying the extract. If an error occurred where one's reading was not heard, how much more would it be the case in rapid speaking, which was not so clear? It would be mere folly to increase the expense of "Hansard," if the reporters were to be kept where they were out of hearing, for the sake of ornamentation only. The complaints made of the public press were wholly on the part of one section of the House; but if he could see that the supporters of the Government were as truly misreported as he himself and the members of the Opposition, he would admit that it was done unintentionally, and not from a political motive, in every instance. This was done by gross misreporting, and not merely from cutting down a speech. In every instance where an utterance had been damaging to the speaker, it had been in connection with two or three members of the House on his side, who were thus held up to ridicule. He here referred to the honorable member for the Mitchell, and one or two others, who were systematically misunderstood; whereas honorable members on the other side did not appear subject to the same misinterpretation. Even when misstatements were made they were not corrected, or the correction made was no improvement. With respect to himself, he might adduce an instance. When the Minister for Lands was moving the second reading of the Pastoral Bill, the member for Maranoa interrupted that honorable gentleman on the score, that the Minister was wandering away from the subject matter,

and notwithstanding that he (Mr. Walsh) begged that the Minister might be allowed some latitude—seeing that it was the honorable gentleman's first effort of the sort—the *Courier*, next morning, made him (Mr. Walsh) say that he also objected to the wandering away, from the subject, of the Minister! He would point to another matter to show that there was an unfair way of reporting adopted. The *Courier* of this morning gave a very imperfect report in reference to the debate in committee the previous evening, but he need not dwell at length on the subject. There were objections taken to the honorable Treasurer's arguments last night which were excellent and evidently wanted at the time. It would be seen that there must have been some strong arguments advanced against some propositions made by the honorable Treasurer, to refute which, he, according to the newspaper, gets up a second time, where there is nothing put in to cause him to rise again, and without any person intervening. The honorable Treasurer argued that the clause had better be allowed to stand as it was; then ensued half-an-hour's debate to show that it should not be allowed to stand as it stood (and, no doubt, this was taken down by the reporter), and here he gets up again, without anybody intervening, as though he were another person, and enters into a most full discussion to show why he stood by the clause. It was but too obvious that two speakers had been blotted out, and, therefore, the report was unfair. The honorable Colonial Treasurer proved that to be the case by stating that all the newspaper proprietors had to do was to tell the reporters to leave so much space for one person and so much for another.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Oh, no! Oh, no!

Mr. WALSH, resuming, said he had a note taken of what was said, and it was taken by the fairest member in the House, and by that note the honorable the Colonial Treasurer admitted the case. According to that, the honorable member had said of his direction to the reporter, that "he might give a friend six inches space and an enemy one." If he did not say these words, that is what had struck an honorable gentleman this afternoon that all the interference the Colonial Treasurer made with the reporter was, that he should give friends six inches and enemies one. Last night the honorable gentleman had it all to himself, and his views were carried out only too correctly. The Premier had said there was need to defend members against the libel of the reporters.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I did not say the reporters had libelled them, but that "Hansard" was made a vehicle for libel.

Mr. WALSH, resuming, said, all he could say was that it was derogatory to the reporters to remain here having to obey political orders. One of the reporters of the honorable Colonial Treasurer had left the colony, and not without some such grounds for get-

ting employment elsewhere, which he had made it his business to do, as soon as he could escape from political interferences.

The COLONIAL TREASURER explained that the reporter referred to had no grounds for leaving, further than that he benefited himself, by getting fifty per cent. increase of salary. With regard to the question of space, alluded to by the honorable member, he might say that the only instructions given to the professional reporter would be that he leave space available for the meeting, or other thing which he would have to report, and, with regard to parliamentary reporting, the rule was so many columns for the sitting.

Mr. WALSH, resuming, said the honorable gentleman had a great advantage over him in this question, and he would not discuss it. At any rate, the services of a very valuable young man, in that profession, had been lost, when the colony could not afford to lose any clever person's talent, especially in the reporting line. He cordially agreed with the suggestion thrown out for making "Hansard" a daily publication. He had suggested the plan himself years ago, so as to do justice to the country. He had always thought that could be done in a way to repay the country the expense of it. But he was told that it could only be carried out at a certain expense to the country; yet, whatever might be the expense, it would be money very well spent, indeed; and, although they could not see all the good results of it at present, the time would come when they would be more apparent. He did not need to say anything more, but he trusted that means would be taken to put an end to those acrimonious debates occurring in the House, arising from the way in which, from some cause or other, the addresses of honorable members had been reported in the local press.

Mr. FRASER said he did not attach so much importance to his own speeches as to have observed whether they were misreported in the papers or not. Whatever cause the honorable member for Maryborough had to complain, it was certain that he occupied a larger space daily in the papers than any other honorable member, though, perhaps, not more than he was entitled to. With respect to short-hand writers, they were certainly short-handed. He was sitting upon one committee now, and had had to apply to Mr. Speaker for additional assistance, for reporting on it. The evidence taken for the last sitting could not be reduced in time to a form available for the committee. It was a matter of very great importance, as any honorable member on a committee must be aware, that the evidence of the previous day should be forthcoming on the following sitting, but the hands of the reporter were so full that, at the third sitting, no evidence was available to the members of the committee. In this case, it devolved upon the Speaker to find the committee assistance, and the House should support their Speaker in doing so. They had

recently lost two of the ablest reporters on the press, and that was said without disparagement to others. If the "Hansard" were to be of any service, the reporters should have every aid, so as to be able to hear and report. Any honorable member had only to sit in the gallery to see how impossible it was, up there, to hear what some honorable members said. That misreporting should occur in such circumstances was no matter of surprise at all. With respect to the opposition shown by himself to any increase in, and to the large sum paid to reporters, on the Estimates, he must admit that neither he himself nor the House generally were in a position to know what was required of them in detail. Honorable members knew now that these matters must be done efficiently, and that the means to do so must be had, and pay for it.

The SPEAKER said he must state to the House, in reference to this question, that he had had application from the honorable member for additional assistance, needed for reporting, and the honorable member applied to him, as Speaker, to provide it. He believed that the Speaker, under parliamentary government, is bound to see that there are proper officers in the House to carry on the business of the House. Such being the case, he considered it his duty to endeavor to procure an additional short-hand writer's assistance, as a temporary measure.

The motion, as amended, was then put and carried.

CARRIAGE OF GOODS BY RAILWAY.

Mr. FRANCIS said he begged to move, That a return be laid upon the Table of this House, showing—

1. The amounts paid respectively by all persons in business in Toowoomba, Dalby, and Allora, for the carriage of goods by railway, during the last twelve months.

2. The names of all persons to whom "merchants' tickets" for travelling by railway have been issued during the same period.

In support of that motion, he had only to remark that it had been represented to him that something like favoritism had been shown in the issuing of these merchants' tickets, and that persons sending large quantities of goods by the railway, to entitle them to these merchants' tickets, from some cause or other, had not received the same privileges as others. On the representations thus made to him, he brought forward this motion; but, if there were any well-grounded objection on the part of the Minister for Works, to be taken, he would not press the motion.

The SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS said that he would, for his part, be very happy to do all in his power to comply with the request of the honorable member, and to satisfy his mind on the question. There appeared, however, to be objections against giving these returns, at all. The Government, in this respect, were in the position of a large mercantile firm, and they could not give up

the names of individuals who had been in the practice of transacting business with them. It would be wrong to give these names, and if the honorable member were only to ask the Australasian Steam Navigation Company for such information, he would at once get a denial. The honorable member asked for an account for all persons in business in Toowoomba, Dalby, and Allora. Why was the inquiry confined to these places and store-keepers? But with regard to the real object of these returns, and the grounds of the wish for them,—he believed he knew the case in question. He believed there were only two applications that had been refused; the first one made by a person in Brisbane in the position of a forwarding agent, and it was usual to refuse tickets to persons in that position as not entitled to them. The other was one who insisted that he sent the quantity of goods per annum entitling to these tickets, but was refused it, because, when called upon to show that he did so, he declined. He, himself, had taken the trouble to call upon the Traffic Manager, and found that the man in question fell far behind the amount required for a ticket, and, therefore, he was refused. There were no others. He thought it would be very injurious to the public interest to furnish the return or to divide the House upon the question. He trusted the honorable member would withdraw his motion.

Mr. MILES said he was not altogether satisfied with the explanation by the honorable the Secretary for Works; and what he had said showed that the whole system of free passages was rotten. It would be a very judicious proceeding on the part of the Government to discontinue the system. He did not see why a forwarding agent should have been refused a ticket; and, he would ask, where was there a single merchant that conveyed by rail so much as 300 tons per annum on his own account? If the returns were furnished, he was sure there would not be found one single merchant that would be duly allowed these tickets; or they might as well allow them to every shopkeeper, for he could not see where any distinction existed, if the system were to be continued. However, he did not wish the returns to be pressed for injuriously to the interests of the Government; and the honorable member for East Moreton should withdraw his motion.

Mr. PALMER said the motion was highly injudicious. He thought the Secretary for Works would refuse to give the returns. He had no right to do so; and it would answer no practical purpose whatever, but only gratify private spleen. He would always recommend the refusal of returns, which are not worth the paper they are printed on. Indeed, he thought that when returns were moved for by honorable members, it should be shown that some use was to be made of them. He strongly objected to the motion.

Mr. FRANCIS said he would willingly withdraw his motion, if the answer given by the

Secretary for Works had satisfied him; but it had not. Neither could he get satisfaction to his mind that any rational or fair principle was proceeded upon in the issue of these merchants' tickets. Three hundred tons of goods per annum must be carried to obtain the tickets; but it did not matter whether it were hay at £5 per ton, or spirits at £20 or higher. It was not in one case only, but in more than one case, that complaints were made of unfairness shown towards persons making use of the railway. He was not at all clear in his own mind that the system was a good one. He should decline to withdraw the motion.

The motion was put and negatived on a division—Ayes, 7; noes, 12.

SUPREME COURT.

Mr. WALSH, in moving—

1. That a select committee be appointed for the purpose of inquiring into, and reporting upon, the organization, constitution, and cost of the Supreme Court and other offices connected with the administration of justice in the superior courts.

2. Also, to take evidence and report upon the duties, powers, privileges, and emoluments of each officer, with a view to showing whether improvements can be effected in the way appointments are made, and in the management and general efficiency of the departments.

3. That such committee have power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of this House.

4. That such committee consist of seven members, viz.:—Mr. De Satge, Mr. Francis, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Lamb, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Samuel Hodgson, and the mover,

said he would not detain the House with respect to the motion. He was quite sure there was no occasion to do so. He had been assisted by a friend in drawing up the resolutions, which were comprehensive enough, and sufficiently told their own tale. This was the first time, in the history of the colony—and, unfortunately, for the interest of the public, far too late—that such an investigation as this had been asked for. The public, respecting these offices in the Supreme Court, is absolutely in a state of utter ignorance. The very heathen were not more destitute of a knowledge of Christianity, than all were here of the order of the working of these offices. It appeared to him wonderful that some honorable member had not, long ago, applied himself to see whether anything needed mending, or whether there was not something detrimental to the public in the conduct of these offices, which required to be remedied. There was nothing to be ascertained respecting them, or that anybody in them had power over anybody—whether the judges over their subordinates, or the Premier over those in the court, who were paid at the expense of the colony. All that he could find out was, that a certain amount of work was done there in a suspicious manner, and in a way always creating suspicions in the public mind, which may be all mere imagina-

tion, but which entirely arose from the utter ignorance of the public respecting the mode in which the work was conducted. Not even the Premier knew anything really about the departmental work of this office. That honorable gentleman would not be able to tell them of any control, and was not aware of any powers he might have over it. This was an anomalous position of affairs, and ought to be cured. They had witnessed, as a result of this indifference, the most lamentable occurrences which had recently taken place. It would have been better if the public had known more respecting the power, privileges, and emoluments of these offices, and that they had been better defined. Some of them—not yet sufficiently understood or developed—would have to be investigated. He took blame to himself for having slumbered over this question so long, for he had been much impressed with the opinion that there ought to have been something done to make it better understood some three years ago. For reasons of which he need not now speak, he had allowed his better judgment to be overcome. He had nothing whatever to say against the Government concerning the way in which recent investigations had been made by them. But the public was not sufficiently satisfied; they did not know enough to satisfy them. Such ignorance always engendered suspicion; and, one of the best results of the inquiry would be, that, the more the working of these offices were understood, the less cause of suspicion there would be. He did not think that he need say more. It would be seen that this committee would be empowered to take cognizance of every office and every officer in the Supreme Court, from the judge to the door-keeper; to ascertain if the duties of each are properly defined, and if each officer has such control over him as is sufficient and necessary for the proper ordering of his duties. As one of the members on this committee, he might say that its task would be a very unpleasant one indeed, and would bring them into contact with customs that it would be their duty to set their faces against—an undertaking which was neither nice nor pleasant to perform. But he trusted that the result would be, that the public would be better served in the future than they had been in times past, and that more confidence would be felt in the department, and, perhaps, that this chamber would rise in the estimation of the public. He had an alteration to suggest—that it was absolutely necessary that at least one gentleman connected with the law should sit on the committee. He would suggest the removal of the name of Mr. Samuel Hodgson, and that Mr. Thompson's name be added in its place. He was quite sure that, with that honorable gentleman's assistance, a more valuable result would ensue from the labors of the committee. He had determined to shirk the arduous duty of chairman, and that some

other honorable gentleman more qualified act instead. Indeed, it was almost accidental that he had himself moved for the committee. At the same time, he promised that he would enter upon his duties with all his powers, and that he would give all the time and labor that he possibly could; while he reminded the honorable members who would sit upon the committee that their work would be very arduous. He hoped that the Premier would accede, on behalf of the Government, to this motion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he had no objection to an investigation into all the offices connected with the administration of justice, and he thought it was a good thing that some notice should be taken of this subject by the House, especially since the unpleasant occurrences which had recently taken place in that department. He did not know whether to understand the first resolution as applying literally to the Supreme Court and its officers, or to all the courts of justice in the colony.

Mr. WALSH : The superior courts.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : Everything in connection with the Supreme Court was what he understood the proposed inquiry to refer to. If the honorable member intended it to extend to the District Courts, it would have to be continued beyond the present session. He had no objection to any action being taken by the House in accordance with the resolution, and he would suggest that the committee, when appointed, should visit the different offices, as they would get more information there than by taking evidence in the committee-rooms.

Mr. THOMPSON said, that with reference to the Supreme Court department, although he was a member of it he knew as little about it as the general public. All he knew was, that once he applied for certain papers, and was told he could not get them without an order from the Colonial Secretary, who was head of the department. Since that he had been told that the Attorney-General was head of the department, and afterwards that the Judges were at the head of it. So that the first question he should ask would be who was the head of the department? Another matter for inquiry would be the power which the House had to make laws to control the Supreme Court. The Acts of Parliament required certain things done on the 30th day of the month, and, on that very day, the public would find the doors closed. Then the Acts stated that there should only be three holidays in the year; and a person had to pay half-a-guinea to register a document which the Act of Parliament said should be registered for half-a-crown. Various little matters of that sort had come under his observation. One matter which he thought worthy of observation was this—the emoluments of the offices went to the officers of the Supreme Court, besides their salaries; and

he would throw out a suggestion that all public officers should be prevented from receiving fees in addition to their salaries. He believed that practice had been one source of the defalcations which had taken place: officers received fees and confused the public money with their own. No officer, he thought, whether in the Supreme Court or in a Petty Debts Court, should be allowed to receive any fees for his private use; it led to favoritism. In the Petty Debts Court the abuse was still more flagrant, because the clerk received the fees for his own use, and it was his interest to bring all cases into the Petty Debts Court, some of which might, for instance, come under the Masters and Servants Act. He knew this was considered a great evil, and the sooner the practice was abolished, the better. There were other matters to which he should give his attention in connection with this subject, though being a member of several other committees he was afraid he should not be able to devote much time to it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he might as well mention that in the new appointment he had made in this department, he had stopped all these fees, and he thought the committee would find when they commenced their inquiry that a considerable improvement was being made in the management of the Supreme Court. He had been in communication with the Judges, on whose recommendation the Registrar was appointed, and the management had been greatly improved.

The question was then put and passed: the committee to consist of the following members:—Messrs. Thompson, Francis, Archer, Lamb, Taylor, S. Hodgson, and the mover.

PRIVATE TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION.

Mr. BELL moved—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the Government should promote the greater use of the Telegraph lines of the colony by encouraging the erection of private wires at private expense, along the Government telegraph posts, conditionally upon the removal of such wires at the pleasure of the Government.

He said the object of the motion was very simple. He had brought it under the notice of the Government on two previous occasions, and the only hesitation he had in bringing it forward now was that it might be thought to have rather a personal tendency; but if that should have any weight at all with honorable members he would relieve them of any doubt in the matter by saying that rather than it should be thought he had introduced this resolution to benefit himself, he would pledge himself not to take advantage of it personally. He would tell the House how this subject had been brought before the Government on the two occasions to which he had alluded. In June, 1865, he addressed the Government on the subject of a line from Dalby to Jimbour. They promised to extend that line. He took no further action at the time, not having

heard anything more about it; but in April, 1868, he again addressed the Government—the Mackenzie Government—about it, and an objection was raised in the words of the Minister at the Telegraph Department, “That after fully considering the question, the Government consider it undesirable to connect Government wires with private wires.” Now, that seemed so utterly absurd that he determined to bring the matter before the House for its opinion. He must say, however, he felt that the decision then arrived at was owing to the Minister at the head of the Telegraph Department; he did not blame the Government generally, because his knowledge of the working of departmental Governments led him to believe that that Minister alone was responsible. Now, he thought it must be clear that the great object which a Government should have in view was to extend as far as possible the use of the telegraph wires of the colony. In the neighboring colony of New South Wales, for example, the Government encouraged the use of them to the fullest extent, and erected the wires at their own cost, the private individuals who used them only paying ten per cent. on the outlay. In the case of the line of telegraph he had referred to, he had proposed to take all the expense upon himself, and to pay the Government the usual charge for telegraphic messages, but he did not press the matter any further, and he heard nothing more about it. He entertained very strong opinions as to the advantage of telegraphic communication, and had for a long time been of opinion that the Government should adopt a less expensive scale of charges, in order to encourage the greater use of the wires. He was quite sure if it could be in some degree assimilated to the penny postage system, a similar result would follow, and the additional traffic would more than compensate for the reduction in the charges. He had no further object in bringing forward this resolution than to establish a principle which the Government of the day he believed saw the necessity and advantage of acceding to. He admitted that there was some difference between the plan he proposed, viz., to erect private wires on the Government posts, and the plan adopted in New South Wales. There they erected separate posts and separate wires; but in thinly populated districts the telegraph lines were so little used comparatively that it was desirable to take every advantage which offered. He would only, in conclusion, repeat that he had no personal interest in this motion, and he was quite prepared, if necessary, to pledge himself personally not to take advantage of it, if it were passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was unable to accede to the proposition of the honorable member in the form in which it then stood. There were considerable difficulties in the way; the second clause of the Act—the old New South Wales Act—required that the whole of the telegraph lines should be

erected, and maintained, and worked by the Government. That was the legal construction which had been put upon it, and in accordance with that Act the whole of the lines under the present system ought to be the property of the Government. It was manifest that it would not do for private individuals to erect other wires on the posts belonging to the Government, because unless they were kept in perfect order they might, and most certainly would, very seriously damage the working of the line. It was necessary that the whole of the wires should be under the control of the same department. But he thought it would be very advantageous to the Government to encourage, as much as possible, the use of the telegraph wires. There were many instances where there were long distances—as much as from 60 to 80 or 100 miles—from station to station, and between those places a wire might go directly past some head station where it might pick up a moderate amount of traffic, and be of great benefit to the proprietors. There were many instances where that might be done to the advantage of the public and the improvement of the revenue. There was a practice in New South Wales by which private individuals, applying to have telegraph lines made on their own property, might have them, on giving sufficient guarantee for the payment of ten per cent., but the owners of those properties had to pay the entire working expenses. Now, it appeared to him that it would be desirable for the Government to promote the use of the wires wherever they could, by constructing short branch stations, where necessary, at the cost of the applicants, so long as they did not involve any additional working expenses. He did not know whether the honorable member would be satisfied with obtaining an expression of opinion from the House, that it would be desirable to encourage the use of these branch lines under the control of the Government, so that the main lines would be protected. It might be sufficient for the honorable member to hear that the Government would be prepared to receive applications of that nature; and he would suggest that he should withdraw his motion, and be satisfied with the assurance that the Government would give every encouragement in their power to this mode of communication, wherever it could be done without interfering with their own lines.

Mr. MILES said he should be satisfied if the branch lines and stations were erected at the cost of the applicants.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

SUPPLY OF PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS TO SCHOOLS OF ART.

Mr. EDMONSTONE moved—

That it is the opinion of this House, that for the information of the public, and for a better dissemination of a knowledge of the affairs of Parliament amongst the community, and for the preservation of state documents for the use of the people, it is desirable,—

1. That all printed documents laid upon the tables of the Houses of Parliament be supplied to the North Brisbane School of Arts, free of charge, upon the condition that the trustees file and preserve the more important papers.

2. That the principal and more important printed state documents, laid upon the tables of the Houses of Parliament, be supplied to all the other Schools of Art in the colony, free of charge.

3. That the cost price of all printed papers laid upon the tables of either Houses of Parliament, or issued from the Government Printing Office, with the addition of ten per cent., be affixed to each document, and sold to the public at said prices affixed. And that agents be appointed in the principal towns of the colony for the sale of said documents to the public—the agents to be allowed a commission of ten per cent. on their sales.

The honorable member said, he hoped these resolutions would commend themselves to the favorable notice of honorable members, as they embraced no one-sided measure, but were intended to promote the general interests of the colony. A similar principle had been strongly advocated in reference to "Hansard," and he thought he need not use any fresh arguments to show that it was desirable to circulate these documents among the principal towns in the colony as much as possible, for the benefit of the general public. He hoped no opposition would be offered to the motion.

Mr. WALSH said he had one objection to the motion, and that was the distinction drawn between Brisbane and the other towns of the colony. He wished to know why the School of Arts, in Brisbane, should be furnished with documents, which were not supplied to the School of Arts, at Maryborough. All these institutions were founded with the same object, and what was good for the readers in the Brisbane School of Arts, was equally good for those in the School of Arts at Maryborough or Rockhampton; the distinction, he thought, was unjust. He did not object to the principle of the resolution, for he believed the information it referred to could not be disseminated too much. But, when it was proposed to send "the principal and more important" documents only to "the other Schools of Art," he must call attention to the invidious distinction. If it were necessary to file a state document in Brisbane, he could not see by what argument it could be shown that it was not equally proper to file it in the town of Burke, at the other end of the colony, and especially so at Rockhampton or Maryborough. He hoped the honorable member would see that the resolutions were unsatisfactory, and in that respect, unfair. If the honorable member would allow him to make a suggestion, he would recommend that the resolution be put in this way:—"That all printed documents laid on the table of the House, be supplied free of charge, to the various Schools of Art in the colony."

Mr. THOMPSON said he was under the impression that the most important state docu-

ments were already supplied to the Schools of Art; they received the "Votes and Proceedings," and they received "Hansard."

Mr. FRANCIS said that appeared to be the case at Ipswich, but it was not so with the other Schools of Art. He would suggest to the honorable mover of the resolutions that he should accept the amendment of the honorable member for Maryborough.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE said he was quite willing to make the alteration suggested, and would, therefore, amend the clause, as follows:—

That it is the opinion of this House, that for the information of the public, and for a better dissemination of a knowledge of the affairs of Parliament amongst the community, and for the preservation of state documents for the use of the people, it is desirable,—

1. That all printed documents laid upon the table of the Houses of Parliament be supplied to the various Schools of Arts, free of charge, except postage, upon the condition that the trustees file and preserve them.

2. That the cost price of all printed papers laid upon the tables of either House of Parliament, or issued from the Government Printing Office, with the addition of ten per cent., be affixed to each document, and sold to the public at said prices affixed. And that agents be appointed in the principal towns of the colony for the sale of said documents to the public—the agents to be allowed a commission of ten per cent. on their sales.

The resolutions, so amended, were then put and passed.