

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 1870

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 29 November, 1870.

Supply.—Civil List Amendment Bill.—Additional Judge Bill.—Elections Bill.—Speaker's Pension Bill.

SUPPLY.

On the Orders of the Day being called,

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was very important that the Loan Bill should be gone on with as soon as possible, and, with the view of expediting its progress, his honorable friend the Colonial Treasurer would, if it met with the wishes of the House, take the votes in Committee of Supply on the items as set down in the Loan Estimate; and, then, there would be no necessity for discussion on the Loan Bill. The Treasurer felt that it was of very great importance that he should be prepared to make certain payments on the 31st December, this year; and therefore the Bill should be proceeded with, without any delay whatever.

All Orders of the Day preceding that for the resumption of the Committee of Supply, having been postponed,

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the chair.

Mr. STEPHENS said he was very much astonished at the extraordinary nature of the proposition, and must certainly oppose it. The question was looked upon as one of great importance. The Treasurer, in his financial statement, on Tuesday last, stated definitely that he would leave the discussion of the Loan Estimate for the second reading of the Loan Bill, as better than to discuss the items of the schedule in committee. What was now proposed? That they should first consider the items of the schedule to the Bill and then discuss the general principles of the Bill. It was not the first time the Treasurer desired to take that course, of discussing his figures before his principles, but objection was taken to it before and would be now. This seemed to be an attempt to rush through the House the financial policy of the Government without giving honorable members the slightest opportunity of discussing it as a whole, but only its details, or affording them any time to determine what was their policy generally. The House had their policy about the current expenditure in the financial statement; and what was it?

Taxation, without retrenchment. The course proposed was without any precedent—to pass details without first discussing general principles of the Loan Bill. He was afraid it would be somewhat a waste of time, if the Government pressed it on the House. There were various items in the Estimate of which the House were fairly entitled to have all the particulars, ere they could debate either the Bill or the Estimate. For instance, before they were asked to discuss the items for roads, they should have the schedule before them, which, according to the Estimate, was to be furnished. He had been in hopes that both sides of the House would be able to co-operate cordially, and pass all the necessary measures of the Government; but as the Government sought to rush the Loan Bill through the House in such a way, he feared they could not, and he must oppose them as strongly as he could. They had made one mistake by haste, in rushing through the new tariff, which they would have to re-consider; do not let them make another.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: He thought the honorable member who had just sat down entirely misunderstood the question. The only object of the Government was to facilitate business. It appeared to them that they should get on more rapidly by the course proposed than otherwise, and that the House would thus avoid going over the same ground twice. Taking the Estimate at once, they could settle what items they would agree to, upon consideration; and, those agreed to, when the Loan Bill should come on, there would be no discussion of irrelevant matters. It was of the utmost importance that time should be saved. The Government had, as the honorable member for South Brisbane knew, large payments to make at the end of the year. They must be met, or the credit of the colony would suffer. The Government had calculated, as closely as they possibly could, that it would take a fortnight after the Loan Bill had passed before they could get things in order; and, therefore, they did not think that they had any time to spare. They did not wish to rush anything through the House; but they wished to have, if possible, all matters brought before honorable members for consideration without delay. The whole scheme of the loan proposed by the Government had been before the House since the second day of their assembling for business; except in respect to what was contained in the schedule of roads. That was now prepared, and he believed would be in print in an hour or so. It was only in respect of the last item in the Loan Estimate that there was any reason why it should not be considered at once. For the first five items, the money had been spent—on the railway. There were nine or ten items of the Estimate in much the same position.

Mr. STEPHENS was understood to say the money had been voted by the House.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: A portion had not come out of any Loan Act. What was the use of voting any money unless it was provided? The vote was granted merely to authorise the Auditor-General to pass his accounts. All the Government wanted, now, was the proper authority to put the expenditure in their Loan Bill. There were matters that could be discussed at once. There was £17,500 for the steamer, and others. He should like to hear reasons from other honorable members why they should not go on, better than those given by the honorable member for South Brisbane.

Mr. BELL remarked that the Treasurer should see that it would facilitate the object he desired if he would take the suggestion of the honorable member for South Brisbane. The course he proposed to take was an irregular one, and not according to precedent—to begin at the tail-end of a Bill by considering the schedule first, and the Bill itself afterwards. No doubt the honorable gentleman succeeded well in carrying his tariff through the House in that way;—there may have been some precedent and some reason for that. But there was no strong reason for the course now proposed. There was time enough before the end of the year to carry out the details of the work to be done in connection with the Loan Bill; and the adoption of the suggestion of the honorable member for South Brisbane would only make the difference of a day to the Treasurer—and tomorrow was a Government business day. The Loan Bill should be proceeded with in the usual course; take the preamble first, and finish with the schedule.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no wish whatever, on the part of the Government, to rush the Loan Bill through the House. As had been very well stated by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, the items in the Loan Estimate had been on the table since the second day the House met, and the greater portion of them had been already spent by previous Governments. If it would meet with the wishes of even one side of the House to let the Estimate stand over till tomorrow, and then take the vote on the items, he should not object. One of the Treasurer's great objects in taking the present course was to get the Bill, of which he had to give notice this evening, first on the paper for tomorrow. There was the Registration of Debentures Bill, which he was anxious to get through the House before the Loan Bill, because, before the debentures were issued—and the late Treasurer would see there was an advantage in it—it was desired to have them registered. His honorable colleague, thinking to expedite business, proposed to get on to-day with the loan as set forth in the Estimate. Surely, there were items the House could go into.

Mr. STEPHENS: Sums already voted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: They need not be voted again; but if the House finished

the Loan Estimate, they could go into the Bill to-morrow. He hoped, at any rate, that the Loan Bill would be allowed to pass through most of its stages at the next sitting, the first and second readings; and that the House would go into committee on it. If the House would accede to that he thought his honorable friend would be content? The Government had no wish to press forward the matter in a hurry.

Mr. BELL said he did not see why there should be any stipulation with regard to the Bill—

The SPEAKER: The honorable member had already spoken.

Mr. ATKIN said he fancied the objections raised by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House were not for the purpose of preventing the honorable the Colonial Treasurer getting on with despatch of business. There were, no doubt, very many items in the Estimate which could be passed; but the House understood, when the Treasurer made his statement, that a general discussion was to come on, as far as loans were concerned, when the second reading of the Loan Bill was moved. The Opposition objected to pass the items and to affirm the principles of the Government, on details, until they had a discussion on the general policy of the loan;—they might shadow forth some large system of loans. They had not the slightest intimation that the Estimate was to be brought forward to-day. No doubt that certain items could be voted at once; but no time would be lost if the Government put the subject off till next day, when the House would be able to see the schedule of roads which was to be laid on the table within an hour. That course would satisfy honorable members on both sides of the House.

The question was put and affirmed, on a division, by 15 to 11 votes.

The House went into committee, but immediately resumed; and the Chairman reported no progress. Leave was given to the committee to sit to-morrow.

CIVIL LIST AMENDMENT BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, in moving the second reading of the Civil List Amendment Bill, observed that the measure was, as he had before explained to the House, "a Bill to amend the Civil List annexed to the Constitution Act of 1867," as far as respected Ministers of the Crown. In fact, it was a Bill to equalise and reduce the salaries of Ministers of the Crown. It was a very short measure. One of much the same sort had been carried through the Assembly by a former Ministry with which he had been connected, but was rejected by the Council. He felt that in connection with the proposed system of taxation and retrenchment in the public service, it was only right to begin with themselves. In fact, the Ministry proposed to begin before themselves; they proposed to reduce the salaries of all future Governors.

Although the present Bill was first on the list, it really followed that, and stood between the proposal to reduce the salaries of future Governors and that to reduce the salaries of all persons drawing salaries from the Crown by five per cent. In this instance, they proposed to make a large reduction in all cases but one—a reduction of twenty per cent. on all Ministers' salaries except the Postmaster-General's, which was to be increased £200, to make it equal to those of the other Ministers. He (the Colonial Secretary) had always felt, and he now felt, the inconsistency of having one Minister drawing less salary than the others; and the proposal in the Bill was, that all Ministers should "row in the same boat." As the saving to the public would be something considerable, the Government thought it desirable that the Bill should pass. He had said, often, that he did not look upon the pay attaching to the office of a Minister of the Crown in this country as adequate; and he did not believe that £1,000 a year was too much for a gentleman who gave up his time and devoted himself earnestly to the service of the public, in presiding over a Government department. Yet, he did feel that when the Ministry proposed to reduce the salaries of all persons in the public service they ought to begin with their own, and they had done so.

Mr. STEPHENS: As the honorable the Colonial Secretary had stated, a Government with which he had been connected, had introduced a somewhat similar Bill before; and he (Mr. Stephens) recollected that in the discussion upon it he stated that he looked upon the Bill as "a precious piece of clap-trap." He had no hesitation whatever in speaking in the same terms of this Bill, that it was a mere piece of clap-trap, which, in all probability, the Government did not expect to carry, and were not very anxious to carry. However that might be, he was not particularly anxious to oppose the reduction of salaries, which was here proposed; but he would state one or two reasons why he should object to the reasons advanced in favor of the Bill. The Bill was put forward on the plea of economy. There was before the House an Additional Judge Bill, providing for a third judge, and £500 a year to be added to the salary of another: that was something to come out of the Treasury. Then there was the Speaker's Pension Bill—to introduce the system of pensions in this colony—of paying people for work that they did not perform. He did not see any economy in this case at all; nor did he see that the gentlemen who proposed it were actuated by economical motives. The absurdity of beginning with the Government was this:—He believed that gentlemen who accepted Ministerial office lost more than they gained by it, through their having to neglect their private business—it was a serious loss, in nine cases out of ten—yet it was proposed that they should be treated worse than those

who had a kind of vested interest in their salaries and could depend upon their position. He did not suppose that any Government were foolish enough to expect that heads of departments would afford them any assistance in retrenchment, unless they were absolutely forced to do so; but, if they were made aware that the responsible Ministers insisted upon it, their assistance might be obtained. However, one of the most unpleasant duties of the service—that of retrenchment—was here placed on the shoulders of persons whose salaries were to be reduced. Still, he was not inclined to oppose the principle of the measure; in that respect he would let the Government have their own way;—but when he looked at the Bill, he saw that instead of a decrease, there was to be an increase, and an increase he had heard no reason for, in the salary of the Postmaster-General. This item was an increase, and he should treat it as he intended to treat every item of increase he found in the Estimates; namely, with as firm and strong an opposition as the forms of the House would allow. He thought it was extraordinary, after the severe taxation just passed, to talk of increasing salaries. The only excuse for doing so, in the present case, was to equalise the salaries of Ministers; but he did not know where they were equal. In New South Wales the Colonial Secretary got £2,000 a year; and the Attorney-General, the Colonial Treasurer, the Minister for Lands, and the Minister for Works, £1,500 a year each, and the Postmaster-General £950. In South Australia, the Chief Secretary got £1,300; the Attorney-General £1,000; the Colonial Treasurer, £900; the Commissioner of Lands, £800; the Commissioner of Works, £800; and the Postmaster-General, who was not a member of the Government, £600. In that colony, Ministers were paid from £800 to £1,300 per annum. In Victoria, they were paid in much the same proportion as in the other colonies named; but he had not obtained the exact figures. The sum there voted was £14,000 for six Ministers; and it was divided according to their relative duties. The Chief Secretary got £2,000; and other Ministers £1,500; and the Postmaster-General and others, again, getting a very much less sum. So that, there was no cause for the proposed increase in any way. It appeared to him that the House would not do their duty, if they did not resist every increase of salaries. The present was only another instance of the care which was necessary in order to keep the House from going in for additional expenditure. The Postmaster-General, for many years, received £600 a year; his office was then made a political appointment, and he was still left to the performance of his duties at the same salary; and so it was carried out for some time. Now it was proposed to increase the salary, when, positively, there was another increase, in the salary of the Under-Secretary, at £600 a year. Perhaps it was on that account, and to make

things look more decent, that the Postmaster-General's salary was to be increased by £200, to raise him above the Under-Secretary of the Post Office. He (Mr. Stephens) intended to object to both of them, and very strongly, when in committee on the Estimates. There were four salaries in the Bill which were reduced £200 each; that was a reduction of £800. Then there was £200 placed on the Postmaster-General's salary, and the additional increase to meet the change in the Post office; so that the actual decrease by the measure before the House was very small. An amount was taken off in one way, and put under two very unnecessary heads. If one Postmaster-General, at £600, had hitherto done the duty, why did it now require two men to do it? He could not see the necessity of it, and he should give that portion of the arrangement his opposition.

MR. ATKIN said he merely wished to observe that the Government deserved great credit for reducing their own salaries when they proposed to reduce the salaries of all public servants. It was only fair. At the same time that he supported them in carrying this measure, he should join the honorable member for South Brisbane in opposing any increase whatever. It took away from the effect of the Bill, that £200 a year additional should be given to the Postmaster-General. Whether it was done because an Under-Secretary had been appointed at a larger salary than any officer before who performed his duties, he did not know. He did not believe there was a colony in the Australian group where all the Ministers received the same salaries, nor did he think it necessary in this colony. If for a number of years the Postmaster-General had performed the duties of his department, at £600 a year, the salary was sufficient now; when it was proposed that the unfortunate civil servants—even the lowest, receiving a miserable pittance—should have five per cent. deducted from their salaries. The increase of the Postmaster-General's salary was only for some symmetrical arrangement, through the appointment of an Under-Secretary. Although there was a suspicion entertained that the Government did not want honorable members to do so, he should support the Bill.

MR. THORN said he felt that if one member of the Government should be paid more than another, it ought to be the Colonial Treasurer. The duties appertaining to his office obliged that gentleman to work hardest, and they were far more laborious than those of any other Minister. His salary ought to be doubled. All the other offices of the Government were sinecures. As to the Post Office, he (Mr. Thorn) had been told that the honorable member for South Brisbane first proposed and appointed an Under-Secretary, Mr. Gulland: and he was not aware that the present occupant of that office received a higher salary than the appointee of the honorable member. He could not understand

why the honorable member should take exception to the appointment now, seeing that the gentleman he had appointed did not fulfil the duties of the office as they ought to be done.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said he was very happy to be able to add his voice to those of the honorable members who had spoken and given due credit to the Government for this effort in the way of economy, and, further, for the desire they had shewn to strike off a couple of hundreds a year from their own salaries, which, he hoped, they did mean to have carried. He hoped that Ministers would insist upon the Upper House passing the Bill. If what he had heard rumored was true, the Council meant to do, again, what they had done before—reject the Bill. He trusted that the Ministry would insist that the privileges of the Assembly should be upheld in the matter, and that the Bill should be passed. As for the opinions that had been expressed, that the increase of the salary of the Postmaster-General was not in keeping with the reduction of the salaries of other Ministers, there could be no doubt that the work of the Postmaster-General at present was very much less onerous and less responsible than that of any of his colleagues. He could understand that it was desirable to put on an additional £200, if a re-arrangement of duties was made, and the superintendence of the Telegraph Department added to the Post Office.

HONORABLE MEMBERS ON THE TREASURY BENCHES: It is so, now.

Dr. O'DOHERTY: If that was so, he durst say it added considerably to the work of the Postmaster-General's Department; but he was not aware that it was always the case. However, with that added on, it struck him that the responsibility attached to the department was as nothing compared to the responsibility of other departments. He should be willing to aid the movement on the part of Ministers, in the way of economy, which was only intended as a temporary measure, to last so long as the country was in a state of depression. He did not think £800 a-year paid Ministers.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am sure it does not.

Dr. O'DOHERTY: £1,000 a year was very small for the work that Ministers had to perform in a colony like this. He should vote very heartily for the Bill, so far as the decrease of Ministers' salaries was concerned.

Mr. MILES said he could cordially support the Government on the Bill, but he could hardly agree with the honorable member for South Brisbane, that it was clap-trap. He believed the Government were sincere, and that it was their intention to carry the Bill through the House. However, they would have to make some exertion, and to watch it very carefully in another place. Honorable members would remember that when a similar Bill passed the Assembly before, that, as on this occasion, ex-Ministers took objec-

tion to it: they hoped, at some future time, to get back into office, and they did not like the salaries to be reduced. His opinion was that £1,000 a-year was inadequate for the services of Ministers; but, seeing that the taxation of the people was, year after year, increased, it was high time that exertion should be made by the House in another direction, and the public expenditure decreased. He trusted that the Government would use all the influence they possibly could, to ensure the acceptance of the Bill in another place in order that it should become law. They knew exactly what would follow if they did not; their salaries would be untouched. With regard to the salary of the Postmaster-General and the proposed increase of £200, he made a suggestion—that, as the Government could not get a seat for their Attorney-General, and they had tried several times, they should place that gentleman in the Upper House to represent them, and abolish the Postmaster-General as a Ministerial office. If they would act on that suggestion, it would get them out of their difficulties, and it would give him pleasure to support the Bill.

Mr. DE SARGE: Whether it was right or not that all Ministers should have the same salary, it was right to give the Postmaster-General £800 a year, when his Under-Secretary received £600. The provision was not for this time only, but for years hence.

Mr. HANDY said that, although he would support the Government in carrying out the Bill, he must express himself as not believing in their sincerity to make it law. In the Upper House, before, such a Bill was rejected; and, he believed that, now, it was anticipated that the Bill would be again thrown out. He found on the Estimates for 1870, that the Ministers who were not provided for in the schedule to the Constitution Act were carefully looked after; the Minister for Public Works was put down for £1,000, and the Postmaster-General for £1,000, also, instead of £600. If the Government intended to carry their Estimates, they did not intend to carry their Bill, to reduce them to £800 a year. Consequently, he could not believe in their sincerity; for that seemed to indicate that they did not expect their Bill would be carried in the Upper House. Supposing that it was not carried, they had made sufficient provision on the Estimates. With regard to the Postmaster-General's remuneration, his was not an office that very much bothered him sitting up in the night. Possibly, once or twice a-week, he had to attend the Council for an hour or two; and that was all his legislative duty. The duties of the Post Office were not so very onerous, and not like those of any other Ministerial department, especially since he had got an Under-Secretary to discharge them at a salary equal to his own, at present. He (Mr. Handy) could not, for the life of him, see why the salary of the Postmaster-General should

be increased; or that both he and his first officer were wanted in the department. He had frequently had to make inquiries at the General Post Office, and had desired to see the Postmaster-General, but he had seldom found the honorable gentleman there. Unlike every other member of the Government, who, when he called, he could always find in their departments, the Postmaster-General could be seldom found in his office. The Under Secretary attended to the departmental duties of the Post Office; and that was all that was required. He (Mr. Handy) could not see any reason for a separate Minister over that department. If there was really a wish for retrenchment, he thought there ought to be a change at once, by which one of the officers named should do the work of both in the Post Office. He would support the Government in reducing their salaries to £800 a year, with only one of those officers in the Post Office; but he would not support the increase to the Postmaster-General. He supported the general character of the Bill, and was happy that it was really intended by the Government to retrench.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said it was not a question whether the Postmaster-General attended to the duties of his office and deserved £800 a year, but the question was one of fairness to the Ministers, that they should be on the same footing with each other. One Minister had the work of the country to do the same as another, and the Ministry had come to the conclusion that their pay should be the same. He confessed to a very unpleasant feeling, that a Minister who did work equally important to the colony with his own, was receiving for it less from the State than he. As far as the question of the sincerity of the Government was concerned, he did not think that the honorable member who last spoke had sufficient experience to enable him to come to a conclusion upon it;—he had not been amongst honorable members sufficiently long, and he ought to wait a little longer before he questioned the sincerity of the Government in carrying out what they had promised, or put them down as wishing to imitate their predecessors in office. Again, he thought it would be better for the honorable member to wait till he could judge for himself; and that it would be well for the honorable member for South Brisbane to leave a young member to take his own course, and not to prompt him to make assertions, which time would make him sorry for, by shewing him how groundless they were.

Mr. HANDY begged to say that the honorable member for South Brisbane had simply suggested to him that the salary of the Under-Secretary for the Post Office was only asked for at £600, for the first time, in the Estimates now before the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He warned honorable members against the honorable member for South Brisbane. He had had experience of that honorable member, and

of how he took in young members, when he sat on the opposite side of the House. If the honorable member for Mitchell wished to chalk out a useful course for himself in the House, he would sit as far as possible from the honorable member for South Brisbane. There was no worse friend, in the hour of need, that he could possibly have than the honorable member for South Brisbane. There was nothing, except the Electoral Bill, which gave him (the Secretary for Works) so much pleasure as the Bill to equalise the salaries of Ministers.

Mr. BELL said he was rather surprised at the remarks of the honorable the Secretary for Public Works, because, if he recollected rightly, on a former occasion, that honorable gentleman was not so clear upon the equalisation of salaries.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I voted for reduction.

Mr. BELL: On a former occasion, the honorable gentleman thought it was very unfair to equalise the salaries of Ministers; and he said that the head of every Government ought to have higher pay than the other Ministers, and that the salary, here, ought to be £1,200 a year, as against £1,000 for other Ministers. He so far agreed with the honorable gentleman, that for a man to take the position of Premier, if salary was any inducement, it ought to be double the amount, for the whole responsibility of the work of the Government was, as they all knew, upon the Premier. Why the Minister for Works now saw reason for the equalisation of salaries, he (Mr. Bell) should like to know. He could well imagine the anxiety of the Government in passing this Bill. He was quite sure no Bill possessed the same interest in the minds of the Government, because there was in it that great principle of justice which, as they thought, they were meting out to the people of the colony in reducing salaries. They should consider, however, whether the withdrawal of the Bill would not be better than to risk its loss in another place. If the Bill were sent back from the Upper House, he thought it was hardly likely the Government, after having their full salaries thrust upon them, would refuse to draw those salaries. The glory, however, was now open to them of leaving in the Treasury the balance of their salaries, say, £800 or £1,000. It would be a safe course, and would have the advantage of not interfering with future Ministers. For the sake of certainty in giving effect to their wishes, the Government would be in a better position if the Bill was not before the House and they refused to take their salaries.

Mr. HALY said he could plainly see the drift of the Opposition. They did not wish to see the Bill pass; they wished to see it refused by the Upper House. They did not intend to have the Bill, because they would not increase the salary of the Postmaster-General, and, the salaries of Ministers not being equalised, the Council would not

pass it; and the responsibility of throwing it out would be on the Upper House. That was what the Opposition wanted; and, then they wanted to come back to office on full salary. He was only sorry that the salaries of Ministers were not still further reduced; then there would not be seen so much shuffling of the cards for office, and perhaps he would really see the business of the country carried on satisfactorily. He thought that the higher the salary, the greater the business of shuffling the cards. It would be good, and he should be glad to see it, if all members were paid; and, as soon as they took office, that they should get nothing. That would be the best plan, as far as the business of the country was concerned.

Mr. MORGAN said he was glad that Ministers had given such a proof of their desire for retrenchment as reducing their own salaries. They should have his assistance. He hoped they would carry out their principle of retrenchment on the Estimates. He would support the Bill, except as it related to the increase to the Postmaster-General. He believed that that officer, notwithstanding the opinion of the Honorable the Secretary for Public Works, was not so hard worked as the other Ministers—not so hard-worked as that honorable gentleman himself.

Mr. FERRETT said that when he last addressed the House he stated that, if no other person brought forward a Bill for the reduction of Ministers' salaries, he would do so himself. His reason was, the prevention of party strife, which was carried on for nothing but the pay attaching to the office of Ministers. Some few years ago, the salaries of Ministers were £700 a year; and, as far as he could recollect, more business was done—and it was better done—than since the salaries had been increased. Those were his reasons for supporting the Bill now before the House. He could not see why one Minister was not as much entitled to an equal salary as another; so long as he had to give his time and attention to the public service, and did give them faithfully. Exception had been taken to the Postmaster-General being put on the same footing as the other Ministers. He believed the Postmaster-General was an energetic officer, and that he had had no increase though he had to carry out the supervision of the Telegraph Office as well as the Post Office. It was well known that the late Colonial Treasurer had appointed the Under-Secretary to the Post Office. It was doubtful, if the honorable gentleman was in office now, whether he would object to the salary proposed for the Under-Secretary. He believed that the Ministry were sincere in their desire for economy; whether the Opposition were sincere, was altogether another question. If they wished the Bill to be defeated in another place, the course the Opposition were taking would ensure it.

Mr. FYFE said it was his intention to vote with the Ministry on this question, and to

give a higher salary to the Postmaster-General than he now enjoyed, notwithstanding that this might not be the practice of the other colonies. The Government ought to be supported in sacrificing their own salaries; and, in compliance with their wish, the salaries of all Ministers ought to be equalised. With regard to the question of further reductions, he said that there were many salaries on the Estimates that should not be reduced; and he should never consent to reduce many of the salaries of the public servants, most of them being sufficiently low already.

The question was put and passed.

ADDITIONAL JUDGE BILL.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved the second reading of a Bill to provide for the appointment of a second puisne judge of the Supreme Court. He said, the subject which the Bill referred to, viz., the appointment of a third judge, was a question which had engaged the attention of the legal profession and the public for some time past. It had been considered—in fact, it stood to reason—that the appeal from one judge to another, especially when one of them (the Chief Justice) had a casting vote, was virtually no appeal at all. The fact that the judges, under existing circumstances, had never got into hot water was very creditable to them; but there existed, nevertheless, a slumbering feeling of dissatisfaction among suitors which this Bill would remove. The appointment of a second puisne judge of the Supreme Court was the principal feature of the Bill, and he thought it hardly required any further explanation. It must be patent to every one that the present state of things was extremely undesirable; and if it could be remedied at a small cost, it would be well that the matter should be considered. No one, he thought, would question the necessity of the proposed change: it only remained to be seen how it could be effected without great expense. The way it was proposed to do it in the Bill before the House was this—that the third judge should be the Judge of the Metropolitan District Court. That was a scheme which would work very well, and the present salary of the Judge of that District Court would only have to be increased by some £500 a year. With regard to the Judge's Associate, whose salary would have to be voted, the Registrar of the District Court would take the place of the Judge's Associate in the same way that the messenger of that court would take the place of judge's tipstaff. Very little additional expense would therefore be incurred, more especially as the cost of witnesses and so forth would be considerably lessened; because an arrangement could be made by which the Supreme Court and the District Court, at Ipswich for instance, would sit at different times. The principle embodied in the Bill—that there should be a proper court of appeal—was so important, that although

the Government, on the score of economy, were reducing their own salaries, they considered it necessary to bring this measure forward, although it would entail some additional expense. With regard to the additional salary to the Chief Justice, it was almost inevitable, because, at present, he was in the anomalous position of head of his department, and in receipt of a smaller salary than the puisne judge under him. That salary the House could not reduce; the gentleman who held it was perfectly ready to defend his right, and he had done so before successfully. It was proposed that all puisne judges should receive £1,500. Further comment was, he thought, unnecessary. The principle of the Bill was so patent that a long speech from him would be unseemly and uncalled for. There were one or two amendments which might, perhaps, be made in committee. The sittings of the Court at Rockhampton were too few, and with an additional judge they might be increased. The sixth paragraph, he thought, might be omitted altogether; at any rate, it would require some alteration.

Mr. THORN said he should consider it his duty to vote against the increase of £500 to the salary of the Chief Justice; especially at a time when it was proposed to reduce the Governor's salary. In comparison with the salaries of the Ministers, he considered £1,500 very handsome pay. He objected to the latter portion of the 4th clause, as it would place too much power in the hands of the Government.

Mr. STEPHENS said that under the Supreme Court Act, which the first clause of this Bill proposed to repeal, the salary of the Chief Justice was fixed at £1,500, and the salaries of the other Judges at £1,200. There had been an anomaly in the fact, that the Chief Justice received £1,500 only, while the Puisne Judge, who did not come under that Act, received £2,000; but on three separate occasions this question had been brought before the House. He remembered that on one occasion the Attorney-General proposed an increase to the Chief Justice's salary, and—perhaps, because it was considered unseemly to raise a discussion on the point—no debate took place, and when the Attorney-General sat down and the question was put, the noes were so distinctly uttered that there was an end of it. The Government now proposed to make an addition to the salary of the Chief Justice, because it was smaller than that of the present Puisne Judge. But that gentleman might, before long, be receiving his superannuation allowance, and, therefore, to give the additional salary for, perhaps, twenty years, would be a gross extravagance. If the additional salary were limited to the period during which the Puisne Judge received £2,000, there would be some show of reason in it.

Mr. MILLS said he would recommend the Government to withdraw the Bill for the present. He felt hardly competent to discuss the legal bearings of the question, but he

should oppose the increase. The salary of the Chief Justice had been before the House on several occasions, and he thought honorable members had sufficiently shewn that this proposal was distasteful to the country. The Chief Justice came out to the colony under a special arrangement to receive £1,500 a year; and it did seem singular, when Ministers found it necessary to reduce their own salaries, to propose an increase of £500 upon this item. He hoped the Government would withdraw the Bill for the present, and give honorable members a little more time to consider it.

Mr. ATKIN said it was a great pity that so much reticence had been shewn by the Government on this question. Possibly they were afraid to express opinions which might not run parallel with some other arrangements. The proposed arrangement appeared to him a most extraordinary one. Immediately after a heavy additional burden of taxation had been imposed upon the people, the Government came forward with a Bill, for which there was no necessity whatever—to increase the expenses. As the honorable member for Maranoa had observed, the Chief Justice had no claim whatever for an increase of salary. Admitting the learned gentleman's great ability and fitness for his position, he must point out that he had accepted the position on the clear understanding that £1,500 a-year would recompense him, and he (Mr. Atkin) must say that, while the country was in such a state, and its liabilities so heavy, it was not a time to bring forward a proposition of this kind. This Bill was, no doubt, introduced to carry out a recommendation made in the second session of 1869, to appoint a third judge, an appointment which he thought should be made. But what was really wanted was a mining judge, to hold circuit courts in the northern districts and the different gold fields. With regard to the court of appeal, some arrangement might be made, when the judges were sitting in Banco, to meet that difficulty. He thought that, if the Government were sincere in their desire to meet the requirements of the country, they might accede to the proposal of the honorable member for Maranoa, and withdraw this Bill, which, he repeated, in the present state of the country, was a piece of great extravagance. He was surprised that honorable members who represented northern constituencies, and who were continually complaining of the expenditure in the South, should advocate such an addition to the burden on the people. In order to bring the matter to a crisis, and to evoke, if possible, an expression of opinion from some eminent members on the other side, he would move, by way of amendment—

That the Bill before the House be read a second time this day six months.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said he should consider it his duty to support that portion of the Bill which provided for the appointment of a third

judge, for he believed such an appointment had become necessary. But he concurred with the honorable member for East Moreton, that it was rather inconsistent on the part of the Government, to come forward with a proposition to tax the unfortunate civil servants at the rate of 5 per cent. upon their small salaries, and, at the same time, to propose an additional expenditure, which, according to his calculation, would add £1,600 a year to the liabilities of the country. He thought there should be a scale to regulate the salaries of judges appointed by colonial Acts of Parliament, and that the salary of the Chief Justice should be £1,500, and that of the puisne judges £1,200. But, under the Bill now before the House, the Chief Justice would have £2,000 a year; one of the puisne judges, £2,000 (from the Imperial Government); and the puisne judge—

The House here adjourned for refreshment.

The Hon. R. PRING said he did not consider it necessary on his part to go fully into the Bill, because he believed the Bill was one which he had drafted himself. There had, however, been a few alterations made upon it. When the Bill was proposed by the Mackenzie Government, in 1868, it was not supposed that it would be advisable to do away with the District Courts. But the circumstances of the colony were now quite different from what they were then. Still, he doubted if at present it would be advisable to do away with the Metropolitan District Court Judge. At the same time, he thought the Warwick and Toowoomba District Courts might be amalgamated; or he should rather say be united with the Western District Courts; especially as there was now so much convenience for attending the court, because of the facilities provided by means of railway communication. As to the Northern districts, however, he thought the Government would in all probability find it necessary to increase the number of District Courts. When the Metropolitan District Court was first established, it was not thought that the work would be so heavy as it had been. But generally the District Courts had not worked well. Now, he did not know but that it would be advisable to postpone this measure till the Gold Fields Act was disposed of. As to salaries, he had good reasons for believing that the Chief Justice was induced to come to the colony on the ground that the salary at first offered to him would be increased; but such increase had not been extended to him. Now, though he considered that the Chief Justice was entitled to an increase of salary, he considered that the present was a most inopportune time to propose such an increase, inasmuch as the Ministry proposed a decrease of their own salaries, and the salaries of others.

Mr. KING said he concurred with the honorable and learned member who last addressed the House, in believing that to pass the Bill at present would be inadvisable; and he, therefore, thought that the Government

should withdraw it. The third clause of the Bill proposed that the salary of the Chief Justice should be increased from £1,500 to £2,000, and the reason advanced in support of it was, that Mr. Justice Lutwyche received £2,000. Now, seeing that living was so much cheaper than it was when the Chief Justice accepted the appointment, and as economy and reduction seemed to be the order of the day, he did not see that the proposed increase should be made. Still, he did not believe that it would be possible to secure the services of a gentleman qualified to discharge the duties of a puisne judge for less than £1,500 a year; and, therefore, he would support the Bill to that extent. He thought that a Bill for improving the administration of justice on the gold fields should be passed before this measure; and for that reason he hoped the Bill now before the House would be withdrawn, and again introduced after the passing of a Gold Fields Act Amendment Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the object the Government had in view in introducing the Bill now before the House, was to obtain the opinion of honorable members on the subject. Now, the Government had succeeded in extracting the opinion of the honorable and learned member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pring, but they had not obtained the opinion of the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley. He had no doubt that in committee many alterations would be made upon the provisions of the Bill, and to some extent the Government would be prepared to accept the amendments that might be proposed. Several honorable members who had addressed the House had objected to the Bill, on the ground that, while the Government proposed reducing their own salaries, and the salaries of others, they proposed, by the measure now before the House, to increase the salary of the Chief Justice. Now, he had always understood that it was from the first intended that the salary of the Chief Justice should be increased. He must say that he had always thought it a very anomalous condition of things that the Chief Justice should receive a lower salary than the Puisne Judge. He did not think that £2,000 a-year was too high a salary for those who were competent to perform the important and onerous duties of judges of the Supreme Court. He believed it would, in the end, be found to be the wisest economy that could be adopted to pay the judges well; so that they might obtain, either in the colonies or from home, the ablest men that could be found, who would accept the office. In any country the judges of the Supreme Court should be highly paid, both on account of their requisite qualifications, and in order that they might be placed in an independent position. Now, it could not be expected that gentlemen of experience and ability would accept the position of judge unless they were assured that they would

receive a salary at least equal to their income from private practice. He believed that the appointment of a third judge of the Supreme Court would result in a saving to the country. Taking into consideration the cost of travelling, he did not think that the position of the judges was one that was at all advantageous to themselves. The Government did not ask more than that the Bill should now be read a second time, and they would then consent to its being put as far back as possible, so as not to interfere with the passing of the Insolvency and Gold Fields Bills.

Mr. LILLY said he did not think the judges were at all over-paid. He thought, apart from all professional feeling in the matter, that £2,000 a year was not too high a salary for the services of a gentleman qualified to occupy the position of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the colony. No doubt the passing of the Bill would remove the anomaly which at present existed in the circumstance of the second judge of the Supreme Court having a higher salary than the Chief Justice. While he said so he must further state that he could not vote for the second reading of the Bill, because he did not see that there was any pressing necessity for the appointment of a third judge—whether the gentleman should be sent home for or selected from the members of the legal profession in the colonies. Now, he did not hesitate to say that, in his opinion, there was not a judge of any of the inferior courts of the colony capable of occupying the office of a judge of the Supreme Court. He did not think the effective strength of the Supreme Court would be increased by the promotion of any of the District Court Judges to the position of a judge of the Supreme Court. When he occupied the office of Colonial Secretary, it was his intention to bring in a Bill for the purpose of increasing the number of judges for mining courts, and providing that in some of the northern and interior districts they should have an insolvency jurisdiction. Great inconvenience had been experienced in the North from the want of such a measure as he referred to. By the Government withdrawing the Bill there would be no difficulty placed in the way of increasing the salary of the Chief Justice,—inasmuch as the proposed increase could be effected by another Bill, or by increasing the amount that might be set down in the Estimates.

Mr. FYFE said it was his intention to vote against the Bill now before the House, for the reasons that had been advanced against it, and especially because the honorable the Colonial Secretary promised that there should be a resident judge appointed for Rockhampton. Now, until such an appointment was made he would oppose the appointment of a third judge for the Supreme Court in Brisbane.

Mr. De SARGE said he thought that the appointment of a third judge of the Supreme Court could be very easily effected by the

doing away with the Metropolitan District Court. He did not see that there was any barrister of such eminence as to justify his appointment to the office, and, therefore, he thought it would be necessary to get some gentleman from England to fill the situation; and he was the more especially impressed with that opinion because a gentleman from England, qualified to occupy the office of judge, would not be actuated by any local prejudices. He would support the second reading of the Bill, on the distinct understanding that there should be one judge permanently located at Rockhampton.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he hoped the House would consent to the motion for the second reading of the Bill. After this and other measures had been read a second time, it would, as honorable members were aware, be in the power of the House to amend them in committee.

The question was then put and carried on division—ayes, 15; noes, 12.

ELECTIONS BILL.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS, in moving the second reading of the Elections Bill, said that the object of the proposed measure was to extend the franchise to lodgers as well as householders. Householders would, of course, have a vote in the district where their family resided, whether they themselves resided in the district or not. Persons who were not able to read or write were not, he thought, entitled to the franchise; and in the Bill proposed to be introduced there was a clause excluding such persons from the right of voting. There was, however, a proviso as against such exclusion, in favor of persons who, because of blindness or any other physical debility, might be unable to sign their names. At present a considerable amount of *finesse* was required for a respectable man to get his name placed on the roll, whereas any unscrupulous rogue could get his name placed on the roll without the slightest difficulty. He left the provision for giving a member to a university. It could do no possible harm. If a university should be established here, or if any of the grammar schools should be turned into a university, it would be necessary for the Legislature then to see that it had the status laid down in the clause as to the qualifications for votes, and the number of graduates who had taken degrees in the university to entitle it to return a member to the Legislative Assembly. In regard to making claims to be placed on the roll, the Bill was pretty nearly the same as the old Act, with this exception: that when a man should now claim to vote it was required that his claim should be accompanied by a solemn declaration, stating that his qualification was as set out in the claim. The claim could be sent by post, so that a man need not attend personally at the revision court to establish his claim to be placed on the roll, his solemn

declaration made in proper form being deemed sufficient. This provision was introduced because he thought that in a colony like this it was required, where some districts were hundreds of miles in extent, and a man might have to ride a hundred miles to register his vote. Without such a provision numbers of men would be deprived of their rights as electors. No doubt there were many instances in the colony of men being prevented getting on the roll, because they could not afford the time and incur the trouble of attending personally to substantiate their claims to be put on the roll. He (the Secretary for Lands) believed that the provision was a very good one to be introduced in the Bill, and that it would meet with the universal assent of honorable members. While dealing with this part of the Bill, he might state that it was proposed to abolish what, under the old Act, were courts of examination. The reason why he had done this was not to throw it upon the justices of the district to revise the roll and make objections. Here, there, and everywhere, in the country districts, it was impossible to find local magistrates who had not local prejudices; it was said that individual magistrates were corrupt; they were open to the charge of favoring their political friends and giving effect to their own peculiar wishes and views. He gave powers to the courts under the Bill for the revision of the rolls, but the facilities thrown in the way of those who desired to exercise the franchise rendered the exercise of those powers less necessary than before. With the knowledge they were gaining, the people were beginning to see how to work political matters now; and, if only individuals would have an interest in the revision of the electoral rolls, he hoped that the provisions of the Bill would enable a healthy state of affairs to be brought about with efficiency. The powers of the revision courts were to be found set out in the fifteenth clause. They were all susceptible of alteration in committee; there were some irrelevancies in the wording, which, if they had attracted his attention earlier, he should have altered before submitting the Bill to honorable members. He might observe that one difficulty that struck him was that of having a proper chairman at revision courts. He had, therefore, attempted to introduce the principle that the district court judges should be at the command of the Government to take the chair at those courts, when they could be there; or, the crown prosecutors; so that, as in England, where revising barristers performed the duties, there should be a barrister to preside. Not, but that to judge of the qualification was not simple enough; but, he made that provision so that there should be a sharp man of business to deal with the many questions that would arise, and to obviate irregularities. Objections had been made to police magistrates taking the chair, and their decisions had given extreme dissatisfaction. Not that he conceived them important;—the

same dissatisfaction occurred in England, where first-class trained men discharged the duties of revising the rolls. There, the same thing was going on. The revising barrister at Bristol, say, gave a different interpretation from another, somewhere else. It always would be so, wherever there were Acts of Parliament; and it was not likely that they would be perfection here. There would always be differences of opinion, and variance of interpretation of law, and difficulties arising therefrom; therefore he did not lay so much stress upon those matters as other honorable members did. The principle he had introduced from the Victorian system was that of the "voter's right," which would strike a blow at one of the greatest abuses of our system—personation and misrepresentation. The roll was prepared, and, after that, certificates were issued, numbered, by the clerk of petty sessions, on certain proof that any man claiming such a certificate was identical with the one named on the roll. That was the voter's right, which the voter got on answering the questions put to him on making his application. The voter signed his name on the voter's right, and also on the butt or counterfoil; the consequence was that, when he went to vote, his signature was competent to shew that he was the same man who had signed the butt and the voter's right when the latter was issued. There were penalties, of course, for forgery, or the improper use of a voter's right, or of the rights of dead men; there were provisions protecting the voters' rights from alienation; there was provision that no man should detain any voter's right, and that it should be valid only for the person to whom it was issued, and that that person could recover it before a magistrate. Every satisfactory provision was thrown by the Victorian Act around the voter's right. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) thought it a very good system, and almost perfect. He had heard of no complaints against it. The twenty-ninth clause was drawn to enable a man who should have lost his voter's right, which was a very likely thing to occur, to get another. Substituted rights might be issued on proof. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) thought sufficient protection was thrown around the voter's right to prevent any man getting a second right for improper purposes; to prevent fraud; and, indeed, to make it almost impossible for any man to run the risk of personation. He had introduced another new feature in the Bill, which was this:—Honorable members were all aware that nominations, as conducted at present, were generally very disorderly affairs;—an open-air meeting; and there was generally great disorder over what should be a serious business. He proposed to abolish the open-air nomination, and that the nomination should be a written nomination, signed by a certain number of electors. Honorable members were aware of an instance in which a person

had been brought forward for election, who, if such a provision had been in force, could not have stood as a candidate. He also provided for a small sum to be paid with the nomination, in order to prevent a person coming forward simply for frivolous purposes, or for the purpose of gain—for instance, a candidate being started in order to keep a public house open, which honorable members knew had been the case in more than one election. If an unsuccessful candidate should get over a certain number of votes, his money would be returned to him after the election; but if it appeared that he had had no chance at all—that he had not secured that proportion of votes specified in the Bill—or that he had simply come forward for his own purposes, he ought to suffer in pocket, a little, at any rate. There was another provision for the retirement of a candidate. It was something like that for nomination; a notification in writing to the returning officer, signed by a less number of persons than were required to nominate a candidate. That was a matter of detail. Upon receiving such a notification, the returning officer had power to countermand the poll in respect to the candidate withdrawn. If one member was to be elected, and two persons were nominated, and one retired, the returning officer had power to declare the remaining candidate elected without a poll. If there were three candidates, and one retired, only two names would appear on the ballot papers. That, he (the Secretary for Lands) considered a very good provision, which he had taken, with the system of voters' rights, from the Victorian Act. With regard to that Act, he might say that the election system of Victoria was very elaborate and expensive. He was, therefore, unable to adopt it as a whole. He was obliged to adapt it to the circumstances of this colony. In Victoria, there were returning officers and recording officers, having nothing else to do, who were paid salaries, and other expenses which were not requisite here. The duty of compiling the roll was under the Bill, as at present, on the magistrates; and the duty of issuing voters' rights was on the clerks of Petty Sessions. It appeared to him that those modifications of the Victorian system would work no more expensively than the existing system, except in the little matter of printing. He hoped that, if the Bill passed, it would work satisfactorily. Honorable members would see, in clause fifty-six, the mode of proceeding in case a second vote was tendered; that provision, with the other provisions which honorable members could see, would be a great safeguard. It had been suggested to him, since the Bill was drawn up, by one of the returning officers, that provision should be made—that where a person from blindness was unable to sign his name, it should be specified in the Bill whether he was secretly to tell the returning officer what he wished to do, or whether he was to be allowed openly before

everybody to declare for whom he would vote; because, hitherto it had been a moot question as to whether such a person had a right to come forward and say, "I will vote for So-and-so." Some had held that it was necessary that the party should retire with the returning officer and secretly tell him what he wished. The Act was capable of two interpretations, so that, whichever way the returning officer acted, he gave dissatisfaction. If he took the vote openly, it was a violation of the ballot; if he took it secretly, some said it must be openly stated, as he had too much power in his hands. The returning officer must take the vote of a blind man or of an illiterate man. No doubt power was thus placed in the hands of the returning officer. He (the Secretary for Lands) believed that the returning officers had hitherto discharged their duties fairly and not improperly; but he had to deal with the system, not with individuals. If the good faith of individuals was trusted to, failure was sure, some day; whereas, if the system was perfect, there was a better chance of getting things done in a proper manner. As to the rest of the Bill, with the exception of some few penal clauses, he had adopted the old Act as much as possible. It was unnecessary where the Act worked well that any modification should be introduced. He had annexed to the Bill a number of schedules which would a good deal explain the working of the measure. Schedule number six was the form of electors' rights. Honorable members would there see that one side was the counterfoil, on the other the right to vote. It was the same as a cheque book, except that the receipt was taken on the butt, and there was ample opportunity to compare the signature when a man came to vote. There were also the form of nomination and the form of withdrawal, and the forms of the old Act; but the declaration of qualification was very different; and he had improved on the old declaration. The declaration of qualification was accompanied by a certificate of a magistrate, and it must be taken as evidence in the court of revision:—

" SCHEDULE 2.

" Declaration of qualification to accompany claim.

" I of [residence and description] do solemnly and sincerely declare that I am possessed of the qualification mentioned in my notice of claim hereto attached [or above-written] and that the particulars of such qualification as contained in the said notice of claim are correct in every particular and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true.

" (Signature of Declarant.)

" I certify that the above declaration was made and subscribed before me at this day of one thousand eight hundred and and that to the best of my knowledge and belief the same is correct.

" J.P."

In all other respects, he thought the Bill was pretty nearly the same as in the old Act. Having been called upon somewhat hurriedly to introduce it to the House, inasmuch as he had not thought he should have been obliged to move the second reading this day, and he was not so well prepared as he should otherwise have been; it was possible that in going through the Bill he had omitted to give prominence to some points of it that required explanation. He might say that he had no vanity at all on the subject; he did not take any great credit to himself for the Bill. His only object would be to see it made, in committee, as perfect as possible. He should be happy to recognise any good amendments honorable members might choose to propose. He should, also, if possible, add his own amendments to the Bill as it stood. He believed such a measure should have every and ample consideration; and he should be flattered that honorable members should give as much attention to it as would necessitate considerable alterations. He moved formally—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. BELL said it was with much pleasure he heard the explanation of the Minister for Lands of the Bill; and it would give him great pleasure to assist the honorable gentleman in considering its details and carrying the Bill through the House. He regretted to find any interruption to its course at the present stage. He was aware that there were certain honorable members who were not satisfied with the principles of the Bill, and many were dissatisfied with its details. He thought there were very few measures of its character which would not meet with some objection at the hands of some honorable members. He was very glad to find that if the Bill became law, its operation would have the effect of doing away in a great measure with the interference of the local courts with the qualifications of electors. Nothing was calculated to interfere so much with the franchise of the people as the wrong readings and extremely peculiar decisions of the revision courts of the colony. The honorable member who introduced the Bill had told the House that the best means of improving the revision courts was to fly to the judges of the District Courts; but from his (Mr. Bell's) experience, and that of most honorable members, he believed, instead of those judges assisting in the working of the electoral law, they had mystified and confounded it, and worked it most unjustly throughout the colony. Taking the majority of unpaid magistrates, he believed they would have given equally satisfactory decisions to those of the judges, and he thought the paid magistrates would have given very much better. The Bill would be much handled in committee. There were, as he had said, clauses in the Bill which were objectionable to some honorable members, such as the education qualification—that

a man should write his name before getting a vote; and that candidates for legislative honors should pay a certain sum before being nominated. For himself, however, he highly approved of the principle of the Bill, and he would give it his hearty support.

Mr. FORBES said he was happy to see that there was some progress to be made in regard to the manner of carrying out elections. He thought he was bound to agree with the principles of the Bill; and he should be glad to see it go further than he understood it went, from the explanation of the honorable mover, for he believed there could be no complete representation without the personal representation of minorities. He might be thought theoretical if he brought that principle before the House; so he should accept the Bill as he found it, believing it to be a truly practical measure, and one more worthy of the attentive consideration of the House than anything of the kind which had been presented since he had the honor of a seat. In the early days of the colony a measure similar in character, perhaps, was presented to the House; similar, for instance, in the education test, which was one of the grounds upon which the strongest opposition to it had been based. He was glad to see that a new state of things had come about, and that the present Bill would not be attacked because of the education test. This colony stood the highest, considering its youth, in the possession of educational establishments. From the trouble and interest that had been taken by the legislature, from time to time, to educate the people, there ought certainly to be a measure of this kind. He might say that, generally speaking, he agreed with the principle, because it was an improvement on our present system of election. He thought there had been nothing more demoralising to the community than the existing Electoral Acts, which it was impossible to administer: they had not one good point. The House should try to make the Bill a perfect measure. He looked upon it as asserting a good principle; but, still, as only the skeleton of the measure that the House should pass into law. As it was presented for second reading, it promised to have one good effect—the occupation of electioneering agents would be gone. And he approved of it on another ground—candidates would not have to spend so much money as it heretofore cost to obtain a seat in Parliament. Why should it cost the immense sum of money that had to be spent to obtain a seat in the House?—where the thanks were so little, however earnest the desire of members to act well towards their constituents. He certainly thought there should be a proposition to go into that matter, and he hoped it would be provided for by the honorable gentleman who had introduced the Bill. As to the ballot, he thought that secrecy should be adhered to as much as possible. The deputy returning officers or the poll clerks should not know what was

going on. With regard to the qualification, he perfectly agreed with the residential qualification. It might be argued that, in addition, there should be a property qualification. In a young colony like this, a man should have a vote for property he possessed in a constituency where he might not happen to reside. In regard to the university, he thought the principle should be left, to be adopted at the proper time, as in the mother country. The provisions of the Bill had been so well described by the honorable mover, that it would not be well he should follow him at length. It was admittedly not so perfect in its provisions as it could, and he hoped would, be made. The provision that the application to have a name placed on the electoral roll must be accompanied by a solemn declaration, was almost perfect. Then came the clause about the revision courts, which required some modification. The more simple the business of getting on the roll was made, the more beneficial it would be for all. As there must be revision courts, he asked the honorable mover to accept a suggestion from him for the amendment of the ninth clause, by extending the time for making new claims from the first January to March, thereby leaving two clear months to enable electors to apply for their rights. That would cause slight alterations in subsequent clauses. But he thought the honorable gentleman would find the desirability of giving as much time as possible, especially in the sparsely populated districts of the interior, for electors to put their names on the roll. With regard to the deposit of one pound by a person objecting to a name or claim, he thought there was no necessity for that. It would be found objectionable and would work badly. The declaration accompanying the application would be sufficient to shew the good faith of the applicant; and the punishment under the old Act would be sufficient. Those were sufficient guarantees of a claim being *bonâ fide*. He certainly felt that, as a matter of course, there should be no cost to a man claiming to vote under a residential qualification; but that the declaration should be sufficient. And, instead of an objector having to lodge a pound when making an objection, the revision court might have power to make an order that the person objected to, if the objection was not sustained, was entitled to such costs, for vexatious opposition to his claim, as were just; or he might have a remedy at the Small Debts Court. A party at a distance might give authority to an agent to get his name placed on the roll; and the authority should be a record with the clerk of Petty Sessions for the issue of the voter's right to the agent for the party claiming. He was glad to see, in some clauses, that justice was to be done in the matter of bribery and personation; for it was well known that some persons did not think it a crime to buy votes. In fact, under the existing law, he did not think one jury in ten could be got

who would do other than acquit a person so charged. The declaration would, however, save a great deal of trouble and annoyance in all matters connected with elections. He congratulated the honorable gentleman who had introduced the Bill on being the first to bring forward a measure of electoral reform that would be conducive to the best interests of the country, and a great acquisition; and it would be effectual in doing away with many of those heartburnings that now so often arose. He would, in conclusion, suggest the introduction of a clause or two for referring election petitions to the judges of the Supreme Court. A similar course was found to work admirably in England; and its adoption would do more to stop bribery and corruption than the most stringent measures the House could enact. He thought that returning officers were entitled to some small remuneration for the performance of their duties. If anything was expected to be done well, it must be paid for. There was another matter to be referred to. If possible, there should be some one to prosecute in the case of offences under the Bill. The police should be compelled or bound to prosecute for all offences under it, in courts of Petty Sessions. He cordially supported the Bill, feeling that the House would make it a perfect measure.

Mr. FYFE said he intended to vote for the second reading of the Bill, although he felt it would be necessary to alter it considerably in committee. One of the provisions he objected to was the disqualification of persons who could not read or write. It could not be doubted that there were numbers of men possessed of property, and intelligence too, who could not stand the education test; and he thought that time should be allowed such persons to qualify themselves. He should oppose the doing away with open-air nominations, as he thought it most advisable, in a colony like this, to adhere to the established custom. Had it not been for the open-air meetings, he might not be in the honorable position that he occupied as a member of the House. He objected to a deposit of fifty pounds being paid to the returning officer as security for the *bona fides* of a candidate in an election. He knew, that in Victoria, at one time, it was found desirable. Any elector—he might be a madman, so long as his name appeared on the roll—might run the country to the expense of a contested election; and it was found necessary to put a stop to the too frequent candidature of mere “stump orators” who thronged the constituencies. In the same way, he would object to the number of ten electors, instead of six, to demand a poll. He wondered how the provision would have applied to the Mitchell District, some time ago. Take any district, where the population was scattered, and it would be found very difficult to carry out that provision. Returning officers in Victoria had no salary, and he did not think

they should have any here. The appointment of returning officer was looked upon as one of the most honorable that could be held. Although he had had some experience in that capacity himself, he did not know what powers a returning officer held or exercised here; yet he was sworn to perform his duties faithfully and honorably; and he believed that, if the right sort of men, honorable men—and they could be found—were appointed to the position, there would be nothing like partizanship, or anything wrong, in their discharge of their duties. He (Mr. Fyfe) objected also to the tickets to voters. He could imagine how difficult it would be for such men as shepherds, say, who were on a station, to go fifty or a hundred miles for their voters' rights, and to keep them when they had got them. They had all heard of the sixteen "faithful and true" men on a certain station of the Premier's—how easily they might get their rights, and, no doubt they would vote for him; but it might not be as easy for the men in the employ of other squatters. He felt that disputes would arise under such a provision. He looked upon the Bill as much more suitable for a country with a large population, than for a sparsely settled colony like this. Doubtless, when the Victorian Act was framed, it was required; but, now, he thought it was far too stringent for that colony. Here it was not applicable; therefore, he would try to get some modifications made in the Bill in committee.

Mr. MORGAN said it was not his intention to oppose the second reading of the Bill. A hasty glance shewed him that it was a very desirable measure. With reference to those parts which might be objectionable to his views, when the House went into committee would be the right time to discuss details. Certainly, he thought a very good enactment could be made of the Bill.

Mr. ATKIN said: This was one of their Bills on which the Government might be very fairly congratulated for introducing this session. Until he heard the speech of the honorable gentleman who had introduced it, he had not anticipated that it was so good a measure. But it was in honorable members' hands so short a time, that it was not desirable to criticise it. Honorable members would have an opportunity of making it a good measure. In the main, he agreed with it; but with a few minor amendments it would be greatly improved. He thought the Minister for Lands had made a great mistake in introducing the education qualification. It might be entirely left out, or left till by-and-bye. In this part of the world there was a great number of worthy colonists who, unfortunately for themselves, were unable to write. Honorable members all knew that until late years educational advantages were not generally diffused amongst the people; and it would be monstrous to attach to a residential qualification an educa-

tional test such as was proposed. In a few years more, when the generation that was growing up under our liberal education system would enjoy the franchise, such a qualification might be admitted. He (Mr. Atkin) thought the honorable mover would accede to amendments in the Bill; and he hoped that the educational qualification would not be insisted upon. He had been glad to hear the remarks of the honorable member for Northern Downs about the illiberality of the judges of the District Courts in dealing with the Electoral Acts. Some provision ought to be made for collecting the votes, it being rather hard that a man should be expected to come in several miles to register himself. If a place was considered proper for taking a poll, it would be equally well adapted for the collection of voters to be placed on the rolls. It might be well for deputy officers to be empowered to collect voters' names. Once a year was not often enough to give electors an opportunity to be placed on the roll; they might be enabled to do so every six months. He hoped to see the amendment suggested by the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba the other day, introduced into the Bill; and if that gentleman should not be in the House when the Bill was in committee, he would feel it his duty to propose it. It was to the effect that the deputy returning officers at the country polling places should not declare the votes polled, but, at the close of the poll, seal the ballot box and send it to the returning officer at the principal polling place for the district; and only the total number of the votes polled in the district should be made public. That would preserve to a great extent the secrecy of the ballot at polling places where there were only a few voters. But those were matters of detail on which he would not detain the House. He congratulated the Government on the main features of the Bill. It was a grand thing to get manhood suffrage. He hoped that when the Bill became law, it would be such a measure as would prevent the disgraceful scenes of personation which had taken place at certain elections, where the evasion of the existing law was carried out to an extent that ought not to be permitted.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he must deny that he had ever exercised any influence over the votes of his employes; and no one who knew him would charge him with having done so. With regard to the Bill before the House, it had been drafted with a great deal of care; but the Government had never expected it would be a perfect Bill, and his honorable colleague had said so in introducing it. They would be glad to receive in committee any amendments which might be likely to improve it; but they believed the Bill on the whole was a good one, and he was more than ever convinced that the principle of manhood suffrage was the correct one. The provision which required that every voter should sign his own name was, in his

opinion, very desirable: it was, in fact, the first step towards compulsory education, which he yet hoped to see the law of the land; and there could be no difficulty for a man to learn to write his own name. He believed the Bill would go to a second reading without opposition; and he hoped that when the House went into committee upon it, honorable members would assist the Government in making it as good a measure as possible. The groundwork was a good one, and the Government would be glad to accept any suggestions for its improvement in detail.

Mr. DE SARGE said he believed his constituents, who were a mining population, would be satisfied with this Bill; and that, when it was passed, the colony would have received as great a boon as had been conferred upon it since the establishment of responsible government. The Government deserved great credit for having tackled the question, and brought it before the House on such an early date. Some material alterations would have to be made in it, however. Among others, he would suggest that greater facilities be offered for the registration of voters in the outside districts. There was great difficulty in getting men to go fifty or sixty, or perhaps one hundred miles to obtain their electoral right or voting ticket; and he thought if it were within the scope of the revenue to defray the cost, some one should be sent round the district to give these tickets to those who were qualified to receive them. The registration of voters in the outside districts was the heart and soul of electoral reform. It was absurd to suppose that the Mitchell District, for instance, comprised only twenty or thirty voters; there were a large number of adult males in it who never availed themselves of their electoral rights. If, therefore, even at the expense of three, four, or five thousand pounds, some further facilities for registration could be afforded, it would only be right to afford them, considering the vast extent of territory which this colony embraced; and he should be inclined to try the feeling of the House by proposing some amendment to that effect. With regard to the revision of the lists it would perhaps be as well to have it done at the usual revision courts. He was convinced that in the populated districts at least one-third of the names which appeared on the rolls did not represent persons who were qualified to vote. He thought the simplicity of manhood suffrage, with six months' residence, would be the greatest safeguard possible, but he was rather afraid the reading and writing qualification would give rise to some difficulty. He thought the suggestion of the honorable member for Rockhampton, to give all persons unable to sign their names sufficient time to be able to acquire that qualification, was worth consideration. There could be no doubt, however—and that seemed to be the general impression on the minds of honorable members—that the Bill was a very good and liberal measure. He considered it

the greatest measure of reform which had yet been brought forward, and he congratulated the Government upon having introduced it.

Mr. JORDAN said he looked upon the introduction of this measure as highly creditable to the Government, and he believed it would give satisfaction to the country. A measure of this sort was much needed, and he thought its provisions were of a very liberal character. He had always been of opinion that the suffrage should be light, and had never believed in property qualification—not that every man in this colony might not soon qualify himself—but interpretations had been put upon the Act contrary to its spirit. For instance, it had been held that a salary qualification did not apply in the case of a man who received payment for wages weekly or monthly, although he might be getting as much as £100 a year. This Bill would do away with all such vexatious restrictions; it would, in fact, nearly amount to manhood suffrage. He believed it would be safe to introduce manhood suffrage even in England, where a large proportion of the population were steeped in poverty and ignorance, and where a good deal of crime existed, because the majority would always be found voting in the right direction. Here, however, the greater proportion of the population were educated to a certain extent. During their voyage out they had all picked up a good many new ideas, and from their associations in the colony they had learned habits of self-reliance and energy; besides which, they were not, as at home, depressed by poverty and other vexatious circumstances. He believed the Bill would be a great boon to the colony. He was not quite sure whether the educational test was desirable, and he believed the Government would find some difficulty in carrying it out. There were a number of persons in the colony who were not educated, but who, by the exercise of intelligence and habits of industry, had become possessed of property, and it would be hard to disfranchise them. Of course, this provision would have some advantage in preventing personation, the use of dead men's names, and other abuses of that kind; but he thought the disadvantages attending it would more than counterbalance its advantages. It had been proposed to give persons who were thus disqualified twelve months' notice, to enable them to learn to sign their names, and certainly it would be no great difficulty for a man to learn to scrawl his name in that time. But a little learning was a dangerous thing; and if it did not extend to reading, or even following the letters of the alphabet, he did not think much advantage would be gained by giving this notice. If that was the extent of the suggestion, he thought it would be better to leave the Bill as it stood. He believed that, on the whole, it was a very good measure, and it was very creditable to the Government that they had had the courage to bring it forward. He did not think it was

desirable to limit the period for registering votes to once in the year; the first day of every quarter would, in his opinion, be better. The greater the facilities offered for registration, and the greater the simplicity in the system, the better it would be for all parties. With a few alterations in committee, he believed the Bill might be made an excellent measure, and he cordially supported the motion for its second reading.

Mr. THORN agreed with the honorable member who had spoken, that the Bill before the House, when some few alterations had been made in committee, would be a very good measure of reform. He was glad to see that the Government had taken the matter in hand, and abolished the examination courts under the old Act. He believed there should be only one court of revision, but he thought it should sit two or three times in the year. He thought that where declarations could not be obtained, some means should be devised of putting the names of all qualified persons on the roll. It was proposed to do away with open-air nominations: that he thought was a mistake. Every candidate should have an opportunity of stating his views to the electors, who had not perhaps another chance of eliciting his opinions. He should vote against that provision in committee. Another clause provided that each candidate must be nominated by at least ten qualified voters. He heartily agreed with that provision, and should vote for it. With regard to the educational test, he should support the clause intact, as he was utterly opposed to giving the franchise to persons who could neither read nor write. That provision was necessary to preserve the secrecy of the ballot. In reference to the suggestion of the honorable member for East Moreton, that all the papers should be sent to the chief returning officers and the total number made public, he thought it would be very difficult to carry it out, and it would be much better to leave the clause as it stood. He should cordially assist the Government in perfecting this Bill, as he believed that, with a few modifications in committee, it could be made a very good measure, and would be the means of preventing a great deal of the personation and abuse of the system which had hitherto obtained.

The question was put and passed, and the Bill was read a second time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS, in moving the committal of the Bill for that day week, pointed out that a great saving of time would be effected if honorable members who proposed to move amendments upon it would submit those amendments to the Clerk of the House before the Bill was again considered, in order that they might be circulated among honorable members. He quite admitted the right of every honorable member to propose, at a moment's notice, any amendment he chose. But there would probably be a great many amendments brought forward upon this

measure, and the course he suggested would prevent a great deal of inconvenience. He then moved—

That the consideration of this Bill in Committee stand an Order of the Day for this day week.

Agreed to.

SPEAKER'S PENSION BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved the second reading of a Bill to grant an annuity or pension to Gilbert Elliott, Esquire, in consideration of his services as Speaker. The honorable member said the purport of the Bill was known to every member of the House; it was to grant a retiring pension to the gentleman who had so long and so worthily presided over their deliberations. It was not intended in any way to make this a precedent for future pensions. It was not at all probable that any other member would hold the office for so long a period as the late Speaker, and certainly no one else could be the first Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly. There had, he believed, been a very general feeling among honorable members that a retiring allowance of some sort should be granted to Mr. Elliott. He had been Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for sixteen sessions; and during the whole of that time his conduct had been such as to gain him the esteem, as it had certainly gained him the support, of every member of that House. The honorable gentleman was now an old man, full of years; and feeling, as he had expressed himself in his retiring address, that it was time for him to resign and to make way for a younger man, he had not, at the late general election, canvassed any constituency. The Government, not only as members of a Government, but as members of that House, had participated in the feeling, which at the close of last session was almost universal, and introduced this Bill, which he sincerely hoped the House would pass as it stood. £600 a-year might seem a large sum for a retiring pension; and he had no doubt that would be said by honorable members who would speak after him. They would probably say that £600 pension for a salary of £800 was too much. But there was no rule without an exception, and this, he thought, was an exceptional case. The honorable gentleman in whose favor this Bill was introduced, was seventy-five years of age, and, in the ordinary course of nature, the annuity would not be paid for any length of time. This might not be a very delicate way of putting it, but it was just as well to look things in the face; and, therefore, considering the amount of retiring pension they were about to allow, they might calculate the number of years he was likely to enjoy it. He might inform the House, and he did so with the full consent of the honorable gentleman himself, that he was almost entirely—he believed entirely—dependent upon the allowance voted for him by the House. He had introduced a very large capital into the

colony, and, from no fault of his own, had lost nearly the whole of it in pastoral pursuits. He (the Colonial Secretary) did not advance that as a claim upon the House, but to shew that it was not the fault of the honorable gentleman in question that he was obliged to accept an annuity, if the House chose to grant it. He thought it was enough for him to refer to the services the honorable gentleman had rendered, and that it was sufficient for him to state the purport of the Bill. He had heard that the amount of the retiring allowance would be opposed, but he had not heard that it was proposed to throw the Bill out altogether. He believed the majority of honorable members, even if they did not approve of the larger amount, would allow the Bill to be read a second time, and when it was committed, if they insisted upon it, the Government would have to submit to a reduction. It was entirely a question for the consideration of the House, and could in no way be called a Government measure. Some one had to introduce it, and the Government had willingly and cheerfully undertaken the task, and of course they would support it.

MR. STEPHENS said it was not very pleasant to address the House on this question, but he felt it his duty to express his opinion upon it. As the honorable Premier had remarked, it was better to look the matter in the face and to give a fair opinion on its merits. The honorable Colonial Secretary had stated that this would not form a precedent; but it was very clear that the passing of this Bill would be the initiation of a system of pensions. He, therefore, felt it his duty to oppose its introduction, and he should oppose it at every stage. It appeared to him that, in the present condition of the colony, it was a very unfavorable time to bring forward such a proposal. What were pensions? They were simply payment for services for a period in which no services were rendered. The other reason which the honorable member had advanced—though not brought forward as an argument on behalf of the late Speaker for a retiring allowance—might with equal justice apply to other persons in the country. The loss of money in this colony was no argument whatever. Considering this would be the first step towards the initiation of a system of pensions, he thought some better reasons should be brought forward to support it. The honorable Colonial Secretary said this was an exceptional case—the gentleman in question had been the first Speaker of the House. Well, the first holder of any other office might be in a similar position, and this Bill would be considered a precedent, and would afford a strong argument for voting a similar amount. The honorable member should have given stronger proofs that this was an exceptional case. He had given none, in fact, and he (Mr. Stephens) was glad of it, because it obviated the necessity of importing any personal questions into the discussion; it would

be much better to deal with the subject on its merits. There was one point, however, to which he must draw the attention of the House, because it referred to what he considered a most reprehensible practice. During the last four months, from the last dissolution until the day the House met again, a period during which the gentleman for whom a pension was now asked was not only not Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, but not even a member of Parliament, there being no Parliament in existence, he had been drawing his full salary. Now, he believed a precedent could be found for that, but it would be a precedent established by the very same person, and he could not see what principle or honesty was shewn in receiving the salary attached to an office which he did not hold at all. There was only one argument he had heard in support of such a course, and that was that it was the practice in England; but, there, it was specially provided that the salary should be paid until the appointment of the next Speaker, which was not the case here. It was clear to him that the Colonial Treasurer had no right to give him the money. The salary in question could only properly be paid upon a certificate that certain services had been performed: upon whose certificate was it paid? He was aware that, on a previous occasion, Mr. Elliott had himself signed the certificate, not being then a member of the Assembly. He would rather not have mentioned this in connection with the Pension Bill, because he thought it would have been better dealt with on some other occasion, when it would be desirable to bring forward a distinct motion that no salaries should be paid, under such circumstances, when there were no duties to perform, and when, if there were, the persons were not in a position to perform them. He opposed the Bill, however, simply on the ground that it would be unwise to establish the system of pensions; for, if the Bill were passed, nothing that was said or done in connection with it would prevent it from becoming a precedent. He protested, in the name of his constituents, against putting on a tax upon every article they consumed for the purpose of increasing the revenue, and at the very same time paying away the public money in granting pensions which the country could not afford. He should consider it his duty to divide the House upon the Bill at every stage, and, should it be carried, he hoped the House would consider the propriety of reducing the amount; for, as they all knew, six hundred pounds was the actual salary which Mr. Elliott had received for some time. It was reduced to that sum, and it was only by dint of great pressure that honorable members were induced to vote the full amount. It appeared to him monstrous to vote this sum, and, when they were forced to put on additional taxation, to establish a precedent upon which any number of applications for pensions would be founded.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said he regretted that on this occasion he should feel it his duty to take a course in opposition to that of such a distinguished member on his side of the House as the honorable member for South Brisbane. He confessed he was not afraid of the Bill being carried in its present form, but he did not think the questions which had been raised should have been imported into the discussion. The question to be considered was, whether it was the wish of the House to cast the gentleman, who had been their Speaker for so long, adrift, without the means of subsistence; for the honorable the Colonial Secretary had told them that he had nothing else to rely upon, and they were bound to accept that statement as correct. To do so, he thought would be an act of the grossest injustice on the part of the House; and he would simply compare such an act with what had always been the acknowledged action of the House and the Government in the case of any unfortunate man who came before them and proved that he was incapable, from age or infirmity, of earning a livelihood for himself. A Benevolent Asylum had been established, in which a number of old men were supported by the State at a cost of forty pounds a year each: why?—simply because, without having rendered any service whatever to the State, they came forward and shewed that they were unable to earn the means of subsistence. He agreed with the honorable the Colonial Secretary, that this was perhaps basing the argument upon a low ground; but it seemed to him that the late Speaker had a very fair claim upon the country, when the Government and the Legislature were always ready to take care of those who were unable to provide their own living. He thought it was a fair argument on the general question. But, apart from that altogether, he thought the honorable gentleman had very direct claims upon the consideration of the House. He did not think it was fair to put forward as a reason why this claim should be disallowed, the receipt of the salary by the late Speaker for the four months during which the Parliament was dissolved. If any one had acted wrongly in this matter he held that the Minister who gave the money was the more deserving of blame; but he thought it unfair to import such a question into a discussion as to the justice or injustice of granting a pension to a gentleman who had rendered the House such good service. What were the facts of the case? Mr. Elliott had been for ten years Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. He was the first Speaker—a fact which, in itself, he thought, should be sufficient to justify the action taken by the Government in bringing forward the Bill before the House. As the Colonial Secretary had stated, it was not likely that any future Speaker would hold office so long, and, therefore, a precedent would not be established. There was one point which he did not think had been referred to by the Premier. He

had heard it stated, on more than one occasion, that Mr. Elliott had a stronger claim upon the consideration of the Legislature. He believed that it was well known that for a number of years that gentleman had occupied a very high position in the military service; and when he accepted the position of Speaker of that Assembly he had been obliged to forego all the claims which that position entitled him to from the Imperial Government. That fact should, he thought, strengthen the claim which this gentleman had upon the House and the colony for a retiring pension. He must confess he felt that to turn this old gentleman adrift, without any acknowledgment on their part of the services he had rendered to the country, would be a false economy. He did think that a refusal on the part of the House to recognise his claims would be a severe blow to the public service of the colony; and that it would be found extremely difficult to obtain gentlemen of character and standing to perform the duties required of them. He should vote for the pension; but, he must say, he thought the sum was more than was called for. He hoped an amendment would be moved in committee to reduce the amount, and he should consider it his duty to support the reduction.

Mr. DE SATGE said he thought, considering the high position which the honorable gentleman had held, it was only right that the House should support the Government in recognising his claim for a retiring allowance, especially when the Ministers had that evening taken off the sum of £660 from their own salaries. He thought it was derogatory to the late Speaker to bring him before the House *in formâ pauperis*, and that several questions which had been imported into the discussion would have been much better left out. He quite agreed with the honorable member at the head of the Government when he said he had undertaken a very disagreeable task.

Mr. FYFE said he should vote for the second reading of the Bill, but he thought the amount of the pension might be reconsidered. With regard to precedents, he thought this was one which ought to be established. Judges received pensions, and in the other colonies provision was made to pension Ministers, and for what purpose?—to keep up the dignity which attached to the position of a Minister of the Crown. He thought they could not shew greater respect for the practice of the Imperial Parliament, than to vote a retiring allowance to the late Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. At home, the practice was to give a pension to a Speaker who had been five years in that position. With regard to the amount of the pension now proposed, he would leave that question to be decided by honorable members who had a more lengthened experience of this colony than he had.

Mr. LILLEY said it was not his intention to vote for the second reading of this Bill, and

he expressed that determination with considerable regret, because some time ago, in consideration of the honorable gentleman whose claim was now being discussed having been the first Speaker of that House, in consideration of his advanced age, and the belief that he would be dependent upon the liberality of the House, he (Mr. Lilley) had expressed himself in favor of giving him a retiring pension. But he must say the statements made by the honorable member for South Brisbane that evening, had caused him to change his opinions. He did not think the late Speaker was justified in receiving money from the public Treasury, when he had no right to it—when not only had he no possible claim as Speaker of the House, but when he had announced his intention not again to seek the suffrages of any constituency. Under such circumstances, to draw from the public Treasury a salary as Speaker was a wrong action, of which he must have been conscious when he received the money. The only thing which would induce him to support the motion before the House would be a promise, on the part of the Government, to make Mr. Elliott refund out of this allowance the full amount of salary he had wrongly received. Nothing less than that would induce him to alter his determination. He had always been opposed to pensions, though he believed he had been justified in departing from that principle in the case of Mr. Manning, and he certainly should not vote for a pension to any future Speaker. The prize was, in his opinion, sufficiently tempting without it—it was, in fact, too tempting. By increasing its value, the political honor and consistency of the Legislature might be endangered. He would not be one to place in the way of members of that House too great a temptation; he would not be a party to anything which might lead a man to close a long life of political treachery by deserting his party for the sake of a permanent office. That consideration alone would influence him in opposing a Bill of this kind. He hoped the Colonial Secretary would be able to place this question before the House in such a form that he might feel himself justified in assenting to a gratuity, or some kind of support to Mr. Elliott. He should, however, object to the granting of a pension; he should object to a gratuity, or anything of the kind, unless he were assured that the public Treasury would be recouped to the extent of the salary which had been unconstitutionally drawn from it. If that were done, he might modify his objection to the Bill; but until that was done he should oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. JORDAN said he did not like to oppose the motion to give a retiring allowance to the honorable gentleman who had so long occupied the chair of the House as Speaker, though he was loth to establish a precedent of this kind, especially at a time when it became necessary to levy increased taxation upon the

people, in order to defray the expenses of government. At the same time, he had heard with regret the severe expressions of opinion which had been uttered by a leading member of the Opposition, in reference to the late Speaker. Admitting that that honorable gentleman had made a mistake in drawing his salary during the late dissolution, it had hitherto been the practice of the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees to do so, and it was the established custom in the Imperial Parliament. The action of Mr. Elliott, therefore, could not be regarded as such a very grave offence as to require so much censure. He thought the House ought not to object to the payment of salary to the late Speaker during the period of prorogation. The honorable gentleman had been in his place every day for sixteen sessions. Now, he understood that it was the practice in England, that the services of the Speaker should be recognised in the way proposed in this instance; and the practice was followed, he believed, in some of the other Australian colonies, as well as in other British dependencies. He thought that on account of the long period of service of the late Speaker, and also on account of the large amount of money he had expended with the view of promoting, as far as it was in his power, the progress of the colony, Mr. Elliott deserved the pension proposed in the motion now before the House. For those reasons he would, therefore, support the motion.

Mr. THORN observed that it was the practice in the other colonies to pay the Speaker, and the Chairman of Committees, during a recess or prorogation, and he, therefore, considered that the speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane had no weight whatever. Seeing that this was the first case of the kind in the colony of Queensland, and taking into consideration the fact that Mr. Elliott had held the office of Speaker so long, he thought that some recognition of his services should be made. He, however, believed that half the amount proposed would be an adequate compensation.

Mr. ATKIN said that he objected to pensions of any kind. The preamble of the Bill now before the House, spoke of the eminent services which had been rendered by the late Speaker; but he must say he was at a loss to understand what had been the eminence of the services of the late Speaker. The honorable the Minister for Works had just stated, that it was owing to the casting vote of the late Speaker, that the colony had been burdened with the large railway expenditure that now pressed upon it. The vote which the late Speaker gave on that occasion, was against all parliamentary precedent. Now, the usual rule was that the question should be so decided by the vote of the Speaker, that it should be left open for the further consideration of the House. But in the instance he referred to such had not been the case. He had no objection to a small gratuity

being granted to the late Speaker, but he considered the proposed sum was excessive. The civil servants had to be many years in office before they obtained any retiring allowance; and that retiring allowance was payable out of the fund to which they were contributors, under the provisions of the Civil Service Act. It had been argued in favor of the motion before the House, that the late Speaker had, in consequence of his acceptance of the office of Speaker, forfeited his claims on the Imperial Government, for a retiring allowance or pension. Now, that was not correct, for the honorable gentleman resigned his position in the Imperial Service long before he became Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland; and in the interim he had long been in the service of the Government of the neighboring colony of New South Wales.

The Hon. R. PRING said he thought it would be inadvisable to support the Bill to its full extent; yet he could not altogether oppose it. He was not disposed to support the Bill because of the alleged eminent services which had been rendered by the late Speaker; and he was further induced to oppose it, on the ground that such a measure, if carried into law, might constitute an objectionable precedent. He would, however, support the Bill on the ground that Mr. Elliott had been the first to hold the office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in this colony, and because he considered that he had filled the office of Speaker with all due dignity to the House and with the fullest credit to himself. As to the question of the Speaker drawing his salary during a dissolution, he had his doubts about the legality of it. There was a difference between a prorogation and a dissolution; and it must be borne in mind that during the late dissolution the Speaker had not submitted himself as a candidate for election for any constituency. Besides, seeing there was no House, how could there be a Speaker? He, however, wished it to be understood, that while he said so, he believed that the late Speaker would not have drawn his salary except under some mistake; because, in point of fact, the office of Speaker was rendered vacant by the proclamation of dissolution. He would support the second reading of the Bill, because Mr. Elliott had been the first Speaker of the Assembly, and because he had retired from the office on account of age: but he could not support it on the ground of private circumstances; because if the Bill were passed on that consideration, it would form a precedent for dealing in a similar way in the case of any other honorable member who, having held the office of Speaker for some time, might be placed in circumstances of difficulty. Further than that, he must add that he did not believe the late Speaker would accept of the pension if it were granted on the latter ground; for he was too highly spirited a gentleman to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS contended that, according to previous decisions of the House, it had been affirmed that the Speaker should receive his salary during the recess—and that according to the practice of the Imperial Parliament. In fact, the question came to this—that the gentleman holding the office continued to be Speaker till a successor was appointed. That was, as he had said, the practice of the Imperial Parliament; and, according to the Standing Orders, such practice was to be followed where there was no special provision. There was no blame attachable to the late Speaker for drawing his salary during the prorogation; for even the honorable member who held the office of Chairman of Committees, before he had the honor of occupying that office, drew his salary during the recess—even up to the day before he (Mr. Thompson) was appointed. Though he did not, as a general rule, agree with the granting of pensions; he thought it would be a blot on the dignity and character of the colony if, in the case of a gentleman who had rendered such eminent services to the colony in the capacity of Speaker as Mr. Elliott had done, the House did not agree to the proposed pension.

Mr. KING said that, when he came to the House, he was quite undecided on the question of granting a pension to the late Speaker. He had, however, since ascertained that it was the practice of the Imperial Parliament to do so, and he thought the House could not have a better example to follow. He must say, however, that he could not support the Bill on the ground of consideration as to private circumstances. Moreover, he did not think that the honorable gentleman who formerly occupied the high office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, would wish that a pension should be granted to him upon that ground. However, he would support the Bill upon public grounds, though, when it was under consideration in committee, he would advocate a reduction of the amount proposed; because he could not vote one day for such a pension being granted, and the next day vote for a reduction of the salaries of the civil servants.

Mr. BELL said he very much regretted to have heard some of the expressions that had been used by some honorable members in the course of the discussion that had taken place upon the Bill now before the House. He regretted that honorable members had not felt it to be consistent with their public duty to pass the measure in a more gracious spirit. He further regretted that the measure, as relating to the former Speaker, should be dealt with as one that was brought before the House *in forma pauperis*. One honorable member had objected to the Bill because the late Speaker had been for several years in the receipt of a good salary. Now, no doubt, in voting away public money, the House ought to be extremely cautious; but when, as in this instance, they were only following the

example of older colonies, and the example of the Imperial Parliament, he did not see that this should be regarded as an objectionable measure. Though he disagreed with the principle of granting pensions, he maintained that, in certain cases, it was not only due to the individual, as he maintained it was in this case, but also due to the credit of the colony, that long and faithful services should be recognized in this manner. It had been stated that the honorable the late Speaker had not given satisfaction to the House on all occasions. But, he would ask, if it could be expected of any gentleman holding the high and important office of Speaker, to give satisfaction to every honorable member on all occasions? Now, he thought there was no honorable member who could say that the late Speaker did not act in a dignified manner as regarded himself, and in a way that was generally satisfactory to the House and to the country.

Mr. HALY said, that being an old member of the House, he did not think it would be becoming of him to give a silent vote on the Bill now before the House. Now, he believed the late Speaker deserved a more handsome recognition from the House for the services he had rendered than some honorable members seemed to think he was entitled to. He must say he was astonished at the arguments advanced against the Bill by some honorable members — especially by those honorable members who had, on previous occasions, maintained that the Speaker should receive a handsome retiring allowance, because of the dignified and impartial manner in which he had discharged the duties of his office. He was the more disposed to assent to the second reading of the Bill because the course it proposed was one that was in accordance with the practice of the House of Commons. Still he did not think the amount should be so high as that stated in the Bill, because he did not think the circumstances of the colony were such as to enable them to afford so much.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS stated that on one occasion, he believed it was during the recess of 1867, the Speaker did not receive his salary, though the Chairman of Committees received his salary. Now, it was a recognized principle that the Speaker of the Assembly was never defunct; and that he continued to hold office till a successor was appointed. The honorable member for South Brisbane opposed the Bill because of the heavy taxation it would inflict upon his constituents; but the other night the honorable member seemed to revel in taxing the people, especially in the matter of the absolute necessities of life. But on the present occasion he advocated the strictest economy. Now, he could tell the constituents of the honorable member for South Brisbane, should his words reach them, that there was no one more to be blamed for the grievous taxation they had to bear than the honorable member himself.

Mr. MORGAN said that though he was opposed to the granting of pensions because they would increase the burdens of the country, he would support the second reading of the Bill now before the House. He considered that the present was an exceptional case. He would, however, reserve to himself the right of voting for a reduction of the proposed amount when the Bill was under consideration in committee.

Mr. MILES said he regretted exceedingly having to take the course in this matter which he considered it to be his duty to take, because there was no honorable member who had a higher respect for the late Speaker than he had. Now, he did not think he would be justified in voting to that honorable gentleman a pension of £600 a year. He believed that the House had made ample provision for the late Speaker by the salary granted him while he was in office; and he believed that if the honorable gentleman had economised, there would have been no necessity for the Bill now before the House. During the ten years the honorable gentleman had held the office of Speaker, he might have made good provision for himself in his old age. Now, he thought it was not a right thing to encourage anyone in the public service to expect that after a certain period they would be provided with pensions. He concurred in the opinion that the late Speaker should not have drawn his salary during the recent prorogation, and upon this ground, if there were no other, that he did not offer himself as a candidate for the representation of any constituency, and so place himself, if elected, in the position of being eligible for election to the office of Speaker. In fact, by not standing for a constituency, he voluntarily resigned the office of Speaker. He believed the salary given to the Speaker was too high, and he would vote against the amount hitherto paid being paid to any future Speaker. As he had always been opposed to the granting of pensions, he would, on the present occasion, vote against the second reading of the Bill now before the House.

The motion was then put and carried, on a division, as follows:—

Ayes, 21.

Mr. Palmer
" Ramsay
" Thompson
" Royds
" Moreton
" Pring
" King
Dr. O'Doherty
Mr. Edmondstone
" Fyfe
" Haly
" De Satgé
" Wienholt
" Bell
" Scott
" Jordan
" Ferrett
" Forbes
" Thorn
" Walsh
" Morgan

Noes, 5.

Mr. Miles
" Lilley
" Handy
" Atkin
" Stephens