

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 25 JULY 1877

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 25 July, 1877.

Questions.—Petition.—Diseases in Sheep Act Amendment Bill.—Road at Goodna.—Adjournment.—Formal Business.—Fortitude Valley Parsonage Land Sale Bill—third reading.—New Bill.—Railway Reserves Bill—third reading.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Supreme Court Bill.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Premier—

Is it the intention of the Government to appoint an Inspector of Machinery in use on the gold fields, and in the sugar-growing districts of the colony?

The PREMIER (Mr. Douglas) replied—

The matter is under consideration. The necessity for an Inspector is recognised, but there is no law in force securing power of inspection.

Mr. WALSH asked the Secretary for Public Works—

Is it a fact that a member of Parliament was refused a passage in the down express train, stopping at Western Creek, on Monday last?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Thorn) replied—

The Traffic Manager reports that the train was improperly signalled, slackened speed, but did not actually stop. The guard having ascertained the line clear, the train proceeded without taking the intending passenger.

Mr. IVORY asked the Premier—

Is it the intention of the Government during the present session to ask the sanction of Parliament for the construction of the following railway line, viz., from Ipswich to Harrisville?

The PREMIER said—

It is the intention of the Government to ask for authority to borrow £220,000 for the construction of branch lines. The line from Ipswich to Harrisville is now being surveyed; and, when the plans are ready, the approval of Parliament will be asked for a low-cost line, as above; but the Government cannot undertake to say that they will ask for the approval of these plans during the present session.

PETITION.

Mr. KINGSFORD presented a petition from the inhabitants of the city of Brisbane and district, in favour of an extension of the Southern and Western Railway from Oxley to South Brisbane.

Petition read and received.

DISEASES IN SHEEP ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Miles) presented a Bill to further amend the Diseases in Sheep Act of 1867, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed, and the second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for the following Tuesday.

ROAD AT GOODNA.

Mr. J. SCOTT brought up a progress report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into all matters connected with the proposed opening of the road through portion 174, parish of Goodna, and moved that it be read.

Question put and passed.

Mr. J. SCOTT wished, without notice, to ask the Minister for Works, whether, in accordance with the recommendation made by the committee, he would cause all further proceedings to be stayed until the committee brought up their final report?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that he had been informed that the road had already been opened, final notice having appeared in the *Government Gazette* some time ago.

Mr. McLLWRAITH said that he did not think that was exactly the sort of answer the House might expect from the honourable member. That House, some time ago, remitted to a committee the duty of considering whether the road in question should be opened or not, to consider whether it was either equitable or desirable that such a course should be taken. But it now appeared that the Government were superseding the action of the committee; and, if that was the case, it was insulting the members of that House by allowing committees to be appointed. The

committee had been informed that the Government had actually put fencers on the ground to take possession of it, whilst the question as to whether a road could be made through the land had been referred to a committee for their investigation; in fact, it was making a fool of the committee. If he was not speaking to any motion, he begged to move the adjournment of the House, in order to give the Ministers an opportunity of making some explanation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not think that any explanation was necessary. He might inform the honourable member for Springsure that the road was proclaimed to be open some time before the committee was asked for; it was opened strictly in accordance with the Act, and the Government had full power under the deed of reservation to open it. The Government had taken no action whatever since the committee was appointed.

Mr. IVORY said that he should have thought that a committee having been appointed to inquire into the matter, it would have been more decent for the Government to have withheld any further action; but, so far as he understood, that had not been the case, and they had thus offered a direct insult to that House. It was quite true that the road might have been proclaimed, but it was the very fact of there being notice of such proclamation that caused the committee to be moved for. A committee having been appointed, he thought it was highly improper that the Government should proceed further in the matter until a final report was brought up.

Mr. McLEAN said that, as a member of the committee appointed to investigate the matter, he might mention that the committee had been very much surprised that day to find that the Government had instructed one of their local officers to proceed to fence in the road at once. The committee had also been led to understand that, in accordance with the 85th clause of the Roads Act, the Government could not open a road until it was fenced in. After the Government were well aware of the duty of investigating the case being remitted to a committee, the committee learnt, with considerable chagrin, that the Government were taking further action. The object of appointing a committee had been to enable the Government and the parties concerned to come to some amicable settlement; but, instead of that, the Government were proceeding further in the matter. He thought it was the duty of the Government to stay all further proceedings until the committee had brought up their final report.

The PREMIER said that he was not acquainted with the details of the case; but he might state, that after the report of the committee, which had been read by the

Clerk, the Government would feel themselves bound to stay all further proceedings. He took it, that the course adopted by the committee was the only one they had of communicating with the Government on the subject.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Griffith) said he thought there was some misunderstanding in the matter, inasmuch as the road was proclaimed open before the commencement of the present session; and any stranger could go and walk through it if he chose. The section in the Roads Act which had been referred to had nothing whatever to do with the present case, as the road was opened under a reservation in the deed of grant, and not under the Roads Act, which, in fact, had no application.

Mr. WALSH thought it was very strange that the Attorney-General should lay down that any person could take the law into his own hands; and he would tell the honourable gentleman that if he was possessed of a piece of land which the Government wished to reserve in the same way, he would show him that the law he quoted was very bad; and he was perfectly certain that, if investigated, the Act under which the Attorney-General proceeded would be found unworkable.

Mr. PALMER said he thought that after the assurance of the Premier that the Government would stay further proceedings, the present was not the time to debate the question.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he was quite prepared to accept the assurance of the Premier that the proceedings would be stayed; but after that the Attorney-General stood up and stated what was not true, and, therefore, he (Mr. Buzacott) felt bound to state the facts of the case, which were, that he took steps for the appointment of a committee before the date of proclaiming the road open; but having to go home, he had been compelled to ask the honourable member for Springsure to act for him, and move for the committee.

Mr. McILWRAITH would mention, in reply to the remarks of the Attorney-General, that the committee had it in evidence that one of the interested parties in the case was quite prepared to commit an assault on any Government officer who might attempt to enter upon the land in question.

Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. J. SCOTT moved, without notice—

That the progress report of the committee be printed.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he wished to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of making a few remarks in regard to

a matter which had come before the House that evening. He was at Western Creek on Monday last, and was coming down by the night train, and asked the gate-keeper when the next train would pass, and whether it was a special or mixed train. The man said it was a mixed train, but that he had no instructions to stop it. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) told him that if he did not stop it, he would report him; and the man did stop it. He was on the platform at the time, and could have stepped into the train easily; but when the guard found the train was stopping merely to take him to Ipswich, he got into a bit of a rage, and told the driver to move on; and the consequence was that he had to walk for a mile and a-half to his own house, and stop at Grandchester for the night; had it not been for the recent change in the time-table, he could not have got down to the House in time to assist in forming a quorum. So far as he himself was concerned, he did not much care, but the same thing might happen to any member, and he thought that anything which was disrespectful to a member, was an insult to the dignity of the whole House.

The PREMIER said he hardly thought the honourable gentleman was correct when he said an insult had been offered to the whole House in his person. The officers and servants in charge of a train ought to have no more knowledge of a member of Parliament than of any other person, and they were expected to do their duty irrespective of the quality or position of their passengers or anyone else. They were bound to obey orders, and carry their instructions into effect. Indeed, he was afraid the honourable member had set a bad example to the station-master in inducing him to go beyond his instructions, as the honourable gentleman would himself see that the strictest obedience was necessary if the operations of the railway were to be carried out successfully. The train would not ordinarily have stopped at that station, and the officer who signalled the train to stop was, he thought, greatly in fault.

Mr. THOMPSON said he did not think any blame was attributable to the station-master, as it was the first time of the running of the fast trains, and, having received no instructions otherwise, he presumed that it was his duty, as on other occasions, to require the train to stop for passengers. As the train did stop, it might very well have taken the honourable gentleman to his destination.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the guard of the train knew who he was, for the station-master told him that a member of Parliament wanted to get into the train.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he would take this opportunity of rebutting the extraordinary charge made against him a few

moments ago by the honourable member for Rockhampton, who said that he (the Attorney-General) had made a statement that was absolutely untrue. A charge like that should not be lightly made. What he (the Attorney-General) said was, that the last proclamation was made, he thought, before the opening of Parliament, but, at all events, before the honourable member had taken any steps towards obtaining a select committee. The fact was, that the first proclamation, which was authorised on the 16th May, was dated on the 29th May, and published in the *Gazette* of the 2nd June, while the honourable member did not give notice of his motion till the 13th June. The honourable member should be a little more cautious before making such an unfounded assertion.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the Attorney-General himself ought to be a little more cautious in his statements. He had said the proclamation was issued three months ago, whereas not two months had elapsed since the 29th May. What the Attorney-General said was, therefore, really untrue.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he still held that the statement was really untrue. The Attorney-General said the proclamation was issued before the session commenced, while he proved that it was not issued until after that period. By untruth, he did not mean falsehood.

Motion, by consent, withdrawn.

FORMAL BUSINESS.

The following resolutions were passed:—

By Mr. MACROSSAN—

That there be laid upon the Table of this House, a return showing,—

1. The total number of men and officers of the Police stationed in the Northern Financial District.

2. The number of men and officers at each Police Station in the same district, with the rank of the officers and the number of Native Police in each place.

By Mr. IVORY—

That there be laid upon the Table of this House, a return of all free passes granted on the Southern and Western Railway since 1st July, 1876, to 1st July, 1877; to whom, by whom, and on whose authority, and for how long granted; also of those current on the 1st June of this year.

By Mr. PALMER—

That there be laid on the table of this House copies of all tenders for the conveyance of mails from Mackay to Walkerston, showing which tender has been accepted and on what grounds.

FORTITUDE VALLEY PARSONAGE LAND SALE BILL.—THIRD READING.

On the motion of Mr. GARRICK, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

NEW BILL.

The House, in committee, affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Jury Act of 1867, so far as relates to the qualification of, and compensation payable to, jurors, as recommended by the Message No. 8 of His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, of 18th July.

The Bill was introduced and read a first time, the second reading being fixed to stand an Order of the Day for this day week.

RAILWAY RESERVES BILL.—THIRD READING.

The PREMIER moved that this Bill be read a third time.

Mr. WALSH said he hoped there would be a division on the motion, in order that the country might have full information as to who were its friends and who its enemies.

Question—that the Bill be read a third time—put and passed.

Bill passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COM- MITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the House went into Committee of Supply.

The PREMIER moved a grant of £1,640, on account of His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he regretted to see that so large a reduction had been made in the sum set down for His Excellency's travelling expenses while on tours of inspection. The inhabitants of Rockhampton were very anxious to see the Governor after the close of the session. He hoped the reduction had not been made with the idea that the Governor should remain in Brisbane all the year.

The PREMIER said that, if it was found convenient, and His Excellency desired to see the colony, a vote for the required amount would be asked for.

Mr. PALMER said His Excellency had publicly declared that it was his intention to go into different parts of the colony. Why was the item so largely reduced? Did the Ministry wish to clip his wings and keep him in Brisbane? They seemed to wish him to be kept entirely for Queen street, with an occasional visit to Toowoomba. Honourable members knew from the present Governor's declaration that it was his intention to visit the whole colony as far as he could.

The PREMIER said the amount was put on specially last year, and not acted upon. He had no hesitation in saying that, whenever any further sum was required,

the Government would not hesitate to expend it, with the full knowledge that when they came to the House it would be granted.

Mr. PALMER said the real fact was, that the amount had been struck off to make the Treasurer's Statement look £1,000 the better.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER proposed a grant of £689 on account of the Executive Council. He pointed out that there was an addition of £100 for the salary of the Clerk of the Council; he was a very efficient and trustworthy servant, and the last Governor had recommended that an increase of salary should be given him, and his services had been of such a character that the Government felt themselves justified in recommending an increase.

Mr. PALMER said that when this vote was going through the House last year, it was only allowed to pass on the positive assurance that Mr. Drury would not act any longer as Private Secretary to the Governor. But what had been the result? Shortly afterwards a gentleman had been nominally appointed as Private Secretary, and pretended to act for a few weeks; but, notwithstanding the positive declaration that he would not be allowed to occupy the two positions for the future, the Clerk of the Council resumed his former position, and continued to act as Private Secretary. He considered it a most extraordinary thing to put to the committee of this House, as a reason that the salary of the Clerk of the Council should be increased, that it had been strongly recommended by a late Governor. Was that a sufficient reason for increasing an officer's salary? Was it likely that the committee would vote the increase on the *ipse dixit* of a Governor who had been very subservient in allowing a change of Ministry three times during his term of office, but who had no right to dictate to the committee? He should vote against the increase, and sit a long time before allowing it to pass.

The PREMIER observed that there had been no attempt at dictation; it was merely mentioned as a fact that the late Governor, with whom Mr. Drury had been brought into close and confidential communication, had strongly recommended that an increase of salary should be voted him. The responsibility, however, of recommending that increase attached to the Government. He did not think that £600 a-year was an unduly large amount for the office. In reference to what had been said about Mr. Drury continuing to discharge the two duties of Private Secretary and Clerk of the Council, after the assurance had been given that he would not be allowed to do so, he could state positively that Mr. Drury was in no way recognised afterwards as Private Secretary, and did not perform the duties to his (the Premier's) knowledge.

Mr. PALMER asked whether the Premier would say positively that he did not do the work, because the committee knew that he was in constant attendance on the Governor? There was no good reason why Mr. Drury's salary should be increased; it had been raised within the last three years. He repeated, it was an insult to the House to say that the late Governor had recommended an increase to a certain officer merely because the gentleman had made himself useful to him.

The PREMIER remarked that he did not give the recommendation as a reason; he merely stated that Mr. Drury had been recommended by the late Governor, and he did not see why the fact should not be received for what it was worth.

Mr. McILWRAITH asked for what object the Governor's recommendation had been given, if not as a reason for the increase. There was not the slightest doubt that Mr. Drury performed the duties of Private Secretary after the pledge given last year that he was not to continue to do so; he did exactly the same work as before.

Mr. PALMER moved, as an amendment, that the amount of the vote be reduced by £100.

Mr. THOMPSON said he thought it was a pity that the committee should be losing sight of this officer's merits by considering the question whether he had performed other duties at a certain time. Every Government gave Mr. Drury the greatest praise as being a thoroughly efficient officer. It must be remembered that his work had greatly increased during the last few years, two new departments having been created. He should be very glad to see the increase granted, and hoped honourable members would not press their justifiable irritation at Governor Cairns' recommendation.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that the pledge given last year by the late Premier was perfectly well known to Mr. Drury; yet, they broke it, and Mr. Drury again performed the duties of Private Secretary. He thought that the committee should mark their sense of the conduct of an officer who went against the wishes of the House in this way. He considered that the late Premier had to answer for deceit.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the pledge given by him last session was observed. Mr. Drury did not continue to occupy the dual positions. He only filled the position of Clerk of the Council.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the pledge given last year was carried out, for he had himself represented to Governor Cairns that Mr. Drury could not continue to fill the two positions. At a later period of the year, His Excellency wished Mr. Drury to again act, until his Private Secretary arrived; but he (the Colonial Treasurer) protested, and the records of his department would show that he objected to

pass the payment of a salary to the Private Secretary, under the circumstances. He could not say whether Mr. Drury afterwards performed the duties voluntarily; he might have done so, as a matter of courtesy.

MR. PALMER: Who drew the salary?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It was not drawn.

MR. PALMER maintained that the Clerk of the Council had no business to act in the dual capacity of Clerk of the Council and Private Secretary—that he had no business to be also the eyes and ears of the Governor. In his opinion, the committee ought to mark their sense of Mr. Drury's conduct. The committee knew that he did again perform the duties of Private Secretary after the assurance was given; that the Private Secretary came, but only remained for a short time in the colony.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL agreed with the honourable member for Port Curtis that it was extremely undesirable that the Clerk of the Council should have anything to do with the Governor, except in his capacity as Clerk. But he thought the committee would do well to remember that for many years Mr. Drury had assisted in discharging the duties of Private Secretary, and he believed had got some remuneration for his services. The Clerk now understood that he was not to do so for the future. No doubt, if that rule were carried out, the result would be a reduction in Mr. Drury's income, because he believed it was an undoubted fact that he received remuneration for his services from Lord Normanby and Mr. Cairns.

MR. PALMER said that, if that were so, the Attorney-General knew more than he did. He believed, however, that if Mr. Drury was paid at all, it was by arrangement with the Private Secretary.

MR. STEWART said that he thought the increase was asked because of the additional work that had been created. It required a man of considerable discretion to fill Mr. Drury's position; and he thought the amount of his salary not sufficient. He could say, from his own knowledge, that Mr. Drury had had a great deal of additional work on account of the quarantine arrangements. He knew that for weeks together, instead of there being but one Executive meeting, there were four or five in each week, causing much additional work. He thought that Mr. Drury should be classed as one of the heads of departments, and that the proposed salary of £600 a-year was little enough.

MR. McILWRAITH remarked that the claim for an increase was now being put forward on quite different grounds. It was remarkable that the work had increased so much. It was not long since the last speaker was Colonial Secretary, when he defended

the Government for giving the Clerk to the Council the additional office of "Private Secretary," on the grounds that he was quite able to perform the duties of both.

MR. FRASER said he had yet to learn that £500 a-year was not a very handsome salary for Mr. Drury's position. When it was contrasted with the long hours and heavier work that men of equal capacity had to fill for a smaller salary, he had yet to learn that £500 was not sufficient. He maintained that the times were too critical to vote increases of salary. He supported Mr. Palmer's amendment purely on the merits of the question. He did not wish to express an opinion that Mr. Drury was not in every respect what he had been represented to be.

MR. GRAHAM said it was very evident that the work to which this gentleman was in future to be confined was not so very heavy, because at one time he was able to take double work, and, he believed, perform it efficiently.

MR. J. SCOTT said that no doubt Mr. Drury was a very efficient officer; but he objected to any further increase in his salary, while other officers equally deserving, and who had been promised increases for years, were left out in the cold.

MR. KING said that it must be recollected that there were a great many more increases behind this one, and that the manner in which the committee dealt with this one might influence their votes with regard to the others. He thought the country was scarcely in a position to vote large increases; and, unless special circumstances could be shown, he should vote against any being granted this session.

MR. WALSH said that the Premier should withdraw the item at once. This was the most extravagant Government he had ever seen in this colony. He was really astonished that a Government of which the Colonial Secretary was a member should have submitted such Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the proposed increase was a very small one, and he was somewhat astonished to hear it said that it should be taken as a guide. He was astonished at the opposition which came from some members on the other side of the House, for last year they brought under his notice the subject of increases for several Northern officers; one honourable member, in fact, advocated increases to every officer. Mr. Drury was a very deserving officer, and he thought it was hard that he should have to suffer because he had acted for a few days as Private Secretary to the late Governor.

MR. J. SCOTT acknowledged advocating increases to deserving officers last year; but these officers were left exactly as they were before, and that was the reason why he objected to this increase. It was not fair to make fish of one and flesh of another.

Mr. GROOM said the Minister for Works had remarked that the proposed increases were comparatively light, but this was a mistake. He knew of one case where it amounted to £500. He agreed with what had fallen from the honourable member for Bandanba, and he also thought that, if any officer deserved an increase, it was the Clerk-Assistant of the Assembly.

The PREMIER said he did not wish to institute comparisons, but merely desired to observe that he did not think, from his own observation, that there could be a more confidential and efficient servant than Mr. Drury. His duties were of a particularly responsible character, for the whole business of the country came under his knowledge. There had been a very large increase in his work, particularly in the mechanical work of the Council. In addition to this, Mr. Drury had been in the service of the Government for a number of years. He thought his work was quite equal to that of any of the Under-Secretaries.

Mr. PALMER said there had been a great deal of talk about the responsibilities of Mr. Drury's office. His responsibilities were simply to hold his tongue; and he believed Mr. Drury had done that, for he had never heard of any official secrets being known through him.

Mr. MURPHY hoped that the committee would not agree with the suggestion thrown out by the honourable member for Spring-sure, that because some officers had not increases put down to them, others should be deprived of that consideration. He himself considered that Mr. Drury was a careful and painstaking officer, and deserved the increase. There was no doubt that the vote of the committee on this item would be taken as a guide in other cases, and he knew that some deserved increases in the salaries of officers living at a distance from Brisbane were down on the Estimates; and, if this vote was reduced, the others might be treated in the same manner. Fault had been found with the increase on the ground that Mr. Drury's duties were not of a very onerous nature; but he would remind honourable members that they might require peculiar characteristics not to be found in all persons.

Mr. PALMER did not know why, because this vote was reduced, others should be reduced also. He intended to vote on each item according to its merit.

The COLONIAL TREASURER quite agreed with the honourable member for Port Curtis that each item should be considered on its own merits. Although he considered Mr. Drury a deserving officer, and quite worthy of the proposed increase in salary, the Government had not only put this increase down to him on account of his being a very meritorious officer, but also on the recommendation of the late Governor. He men-

tioned this fact in order that the manner in which this increase might be dealt with should not be held to affect any further increases that might be found on the Estimates. For his own part, he considered that the recommendation of the Governor should be treated with respect.

Mr. HALY said that, before the explanation made by the Colonial Treasurer, he would have voted for the increase; but now he would vote dead against it.

Mr. PALMER asked for some explanation of the different statements made by the Premier and Colonial Secretary.

The PREMIER said there was a slight difference of opinion between himself and his colleague. The Governor had certainly requested the increase; but a Governor might go on requesting for ever, without relieving the Ministry from its responsibility. It was a mere coincidence that the Governor requested the increase. He hoped that Mr. Drury would not suffer because of the fact that the late Governor had asked for an increase to his salary. He had felt himself bound to render assistance to the late Governor when he asked for it; and he (Mr. Douglas) did not think that Mr. Drury should be made to suffer for so doing.

Mr. WALSH was very sorry, for Mr. Drury's sake, that the discussion had arisen; but it was a question whether he was not well enough paid for his work at £5 0; and, in his opinion, it was the duty of honourable members to protect the public interests in the first place. He did think that Mr. Drury was a good officer; but he had disregarded the almost positive instructions of the House. The late Governor had incited him to do this; yet, at the valedictory request of that Governor, they were asked to increase his salary.

Question—That the vote be reduced by £100—put.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 21.

Messrs. Palmer, Walsh, McIlwraith, Graham, O'Sullivan, Haly, Hockings, Fraser, Buzacott, McLean, Fox, King, Groom, Haly, Macrossan, J. Scott, Ivory, Foote, Beattie, Grimes, and MacDonald.

NOES 12.

Messrs. G. Thorn, Thompson, Dickson, Griffith, Douglas, Miles, Stevenson, Tyrel, Murphy, Low, J. Thorn, and Kingsford.

Vote, as reduced, put and passed.

The PREMIER proposed a grant of £3,500 on account of the Legislative Council. He pointed out that the sum asked for was somewhat less than last year. There was an increase of £50 in the salary of the Clerk-Assistant, which had been placed on the Estimates at the request of the President of the Council; and which had the effect of placing him on the same footing as the Clerk-Assistant of the Assembly.

Mr. MACDONALD disagreed altogether with placing the Clerk-Assistant of the Council on the same footing, as far as salary was concerned, with the Clerk-Assistant of the Assembly, who, he considered, did a vast deal more work. He understood, also, that this was a new appointment and a new officer. He moved, therefore, the reduction of the amount asked for by £50.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that it might be considered a practical rule that the salaries of officers of both Houses should be put on the same footing; at least, a sort of rule to that effect had been observed, although, of course, that House voted the salaries for both. He thought the rule had been found to work well, and he deprecated any collision between the two Houses on such unimportant points.

Mr. GRAHAM thought the proposed increase was decidedly uncalled for, as the officer who held the position had been very recently appointed. In fact that very day, when he appeared before a select committee, and was asked to give evidence on the method of procedure in the Council, he was not able to do so; and when the chairman of that committee had suggested to him that he was probably imperfectly acquainted with the rules, he (the Clerk-Assistant) acknowledged that such was the case.

Mr. WALSH rose to a point of order. He thought the honourable member was out of order in alluding to what had transpired in a select committee.

Mr. GRAHAM said he was a believer in giving increases to old servants, and not to new ones. The officer in question was confessedly not up to his work, for which he had the very good excuse of being newly appointed; but he (Mr. Graham) knew of fifty other officers more deserving of an increase.

Mr. PALMER did not know of any Standing Order to forbid honourable members from stating what the honourable member for Darling Downs had stated; they forbade the repetition of evidence given, but the honourable member had stated that the Clerk-Assistant gave no evidence. He agreed with the Attorney-General, that it had been the practice to allow the Estimates of the Legislative Council to pass without alteration, unless the salaries exceeded those of the Assembly; and the last time they had disputed an item they had been compelled to eat humble pie. He was of the same opinion as the honourable member for Blackall, that there could be no comparison between the work done by the Clerk-Assistant in the Council and the same officer in the Assembly, nor between the work done by any officer of either House. But that had nothing to do with the matter in hand. The salaries were fixed by Act of Parliament; the Upper House claimed

that their servants should be placed on the same footing as those of the Assembly, and it was not worth while disputing the point.

Mr. BUZACOTT objected to the House relaxing in any degree their control over the Estimates. In the matter referred to by the honourable member for Port Curtis he had himself agreed to give in rather than enter on a serious dispute; still, he would not admit that they were under any obligation to accept the Estimates as sent down by the Council. He believed that this officer would become a very efficient one; but, in consequence of his inexperience, he considered the increase an unfair one.

Mr. MCLEAN would support the amendment, for the reasons given by the honourable member for Darling Downs.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL did not see much force in the reasons given by the honourable member for Darling Downs; the officer had not been long in office, and could not be expected to be proficient in the routine.

Mr. GRAHAM said that was exactly what he had argued—because the officer was new in office, therefore the salary should not be increased. The Attorney-General had brought forward no argument for an increase in the officer's salary, but a very good reason why he should not be removed on account of present deficiencies, as he had no doubt the will and ability to make himself more perfect in his duties.

Mr. McILWRAITH thought there might be something in the argument that the officers of both Houses should be paid alike, if it did not appear that the Clerk-Assistant in the Council had previously been paid less than in the Assembly; and this was a very bad time to bring forward an increase of salary for the former. Going no further back than 1874, he found the Assembly Clerk-Assistant put down at £350, while that of the Council was down for £300; the former had been, and should be, paid more.

Mr. J. SCOTT said that it was a question rather of the office than of the officer; and he did not think it desirable to incur a conflict between the Houses on this point.

Mr. BAILEY said that the question was, by whom was the officer appointed, at what salary was he appointed, and what reason was given for the proposed increase?

Mr. GRAHAM would like to hear the Colonial Secretary give his reason for this increase; he could fancy how he would have denounced these increases had he been sitting as formerly on the Opposition side of the House. He did not believe in the reasons given for not interfering with the recommendation of the Council, because their Clerk-Assistant had always had, and ought to have, £50 less. Both officers had received an increase of £50, and now it was

proposed to give another advance of £50 to the Clerk-Assistant of the other House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had much pleasure in responding to the appeal of the honourable member for Darling Downs, and would remind that honourable member that, when he had had as long experience in the House as himself, he would not be willing to propose any reductions in the estimates of the Council; for it had always been a rule laid down, that whatever increases were proposed by the President should be agreed to, and if they were struck off in the first instance, they were always subsequently voted.

Mr. WALSH said, in confirmation of the remarks of the Colonial Secretary, that it was not long ago since the Assembly got into collision with the Legislative Council through refusing to vote an increase; and they had had to eat humble pie afterwards, and put the very sum they refused on to the Supplementary Estimates. Further than that, the President had always been accorded the right of framing his own estimates, and if he thought that one of his officers should be placed on an equality with an officer in the Assembly, he was only doing his duty in proposing it. With regard to the objection he had taken to the honourable member for Darling Downs referring to what had taken place in a select committee, he had since referred to "May," and found that it was laid down by that authority that it was a breach of privilege for any member to publish information of what had taken place in committee.

Mr. GROOM said that what the Colonial Secretary and the honourable member for Port Curtis had pointed out was perfectly true, as there were two occasions on which the House had interfered with the estimates of the Legislative Council, and afterwards had to succumb; they were, however, different to the present case. When the House met in Queen street, the Assembly thought fit to take away the salary of a porter; and, on a more recent occasion, when the House thought fit to refuse an increase of £50 to the Shorthand-writer of the Council, the matter was especially brought forward by the President, and it was finally arranged by the amount being placed on a supplementary estimate. He considered, however, that, if the Assembly had no right to control the estimates of the Upper House, their power as custodians of the revenue was gone. The estimates of the Council were framed by one gentleman only, and, therefore, he considered that the Assembly had a perfect right to exercise a discretionary power in regard to them. He thought that there should be a difference between the salaries of the Clerk-Assistant in the Assembly, who had such arduous duties to perform, and the gentleman holding a similar position in the other chamber. Whatever might be said by the

Colonial Secretary about not interfering with the votes of the Upper House, he was perfectly certain that, if that honourable gentleman were sitting on the Opposition benches, he would oppose the increase now under discussion. There was another thing to be remembered—namely, that the late Clerk-Assistant of the Upper House, who was a very old officer indeed, had never made any complaint of his salary being too low.

Mr. HALY thought that the Council would have too much good sense to interfere with the decision of the committee; particularly as the officer whose salary was under discussion had been so recently appointed.

Mr. PALMER said that, whilst he agreed with all that had been said about the rights of the House to make reductions, the question remained, whether it was worth while to bring the two Houses into collision by interfering with the estimates of the Council on the present occasion; especially as there was a question of far more importance further on, which was this: when were they to hear the last of the expenses consequent upon the illness and death of the late Clerk of Parliaments? There was no doubt that the officers of the other House did not work so hard as those of the Assembly, and that the present Clerk-Assistant of the Upper House was a new officer; at the same time, he must do that gentleman the justice to say that he appeared to be able to carry on the business of the House in the absence of the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Mr. McILWRAITH wanted to know on what principle the Upper House was acting, in proposing the addition now under discussion, because, for the last four years there had always been a difference of £50 between the Clerk-Assistant of the Assembly and the same officer of the Legislative Council. He thought the President had no right to insist on such an increase on his estimates.

The PREMIER said that probably he had not; but it had been the custom to submit the estimates to the President. He would not say that was right, but it had been the custom; at the same time, this should not prevent the committee from expressing an opinion on any estimate.

Mr. PALMER said that it had not been the invariable custom to accept the estimates of the President. As had been already remarked, when reductions had been made in the salaries of the officers of the Legislative Council, the Assembly had always afterwards had to vote them in a supplementary estimate.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that he looked upon the recommendation of the President in the same light as a recommendation of the Government to increase any salary; and that whilst all respect should be paid

to such recommendations, the Assembly should deny them as a right. He differed from the honourable member for Port Curtis, as he considered it was worth while to refuse the proposed increase, not for the amount of money, but on principle; and he should never be one in that House to give up its right to control the public purse. A comparison had been drawn between the work performed by the Clerk-Assistant of the Assembly and the same officer in the Upper House; and, if they went on the principle that a man should be paid for his labour, then their own Clerk was worth ten times as much as the officer in the other chamber. He might mention, as a proof of the amount of work done by their own officer, that after he had finished compiling the Votes and Proceedings for last session, he had only fourteen days for his own recreation.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY explained that whenever they had reduced an estimate of the Council, it had always been replaced on a Supplementary Estimate. He recollected that during the crisis of 1866, they were going to make sweeping reductions in salaries, and commenced with the President and Chairman of Committees of the Legislative Council; the salaries of both of those gentlemen were reduced; but when they came to the salaries of the Speaker and Chairman of Committees of that House, the honourable member for Port Curtis refused to agree to any reduction, and the consequence was that they afterwards had to place on the Supplementary Estimates the amounts they had deducted from the officers of the other Chamber. If the present vote was reduced, he trusted honourable members would take care that it should not be reinstated.

Mr. FOX would point out that in the present Estimates it was proposed to add to an officer's salary, and not to reduce it, so that there was no parallel between the case quoted by the Colonial Secretary and the present one. He should support the amendment.

Mr. GROOM said that he found, on reference to the New South Wales Estimates for 1875, that whilst the Clerk-Assistant of the Legislative Council there received £500 a-year, the Clerk-Assistant of the Assembly received £600. Thus, it was evident that in New South Wales they thought the Clerk-Assistant of the Assembly, having greater duties to perform, was entitled to a larger salary.

Mr. HALY said that the Clerk-Assistant of the Assembly had always received more than the same officer in the Legislative Council; and he did not see why any departure should be made from that rule.

The COLONIAL TREASURER wished to point out that there was a distinct recommendation in the present instance from the

President, stating that it was desirable that the salaries of the officers in both Houses should be the same.

Mr. MACROSSAN trusted that the country would not overlook the remark of the honourable member for Leichhardt, that the Council had too much good common-sense to oppose the resolution, seeing that the officer in question had been appointed so short a time. He thought that if the House voted the increase to that gentleman, they must of necessity increase the salary of the Clerk-Assistant of the Assembly, seeing how very much more work he had to do.

Question—That the item be reduced by £50—put. The committee divided.

AYES, 23.

Messrs. King, Graham, McIlwraith, Low, Thompson, Haly, Hockings, Fraser, Palmer, Stevenson, Fox, Buzacott, Groom, Ivory, MacDonald, Grimes, McLean, Beattie, Perkins, O'Sullivan, Foote, Tyrel, and Macrossan.

NOES, 9.

Messrs. Griffith, Walsh, Dickson, Douglas, Miles, G. Thorn, Kingsford, Stewart, and J. Scott.

Question—that the sum, as reduced, be voted—put and passed.

The PREMIER proposed a grant of £5,466 on account of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. IVORY said he had no objection to offer to the vote being passed, but he noticed an increase in one of the items which he should be glad if the Premier would explain.

The PREMIER said he believed the honourable gentleman referred to the increase of £20 to one of the messengers, who had been eight years in the service, and it was considered that he deserved the increase asked for.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER proposed that the sum of £2,792 be granted on account of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly. He explained that the amount set down in the Estimates was £3,192; but an item of £400 for books, periodicals, and contingencies for the Library had, by mistake, been inserted twice over.

Mr. McILWRAITH thought the amount of £400 was too small for that purpose, and that it would be a mistake to reduce it to that figure. He was inclined to think that the whole amount of £800 would not be too much, and he suggested that the vote be allowed to remain in its original form, as the Library Committee would take care not to spend more than was actually necessary.

Mr. STEWART thought the amount might be left as it stood on the Estimates, on the understanding that the committee would not spend more than was actually required.

The PREMIER said he would amend his motion, by moving that the sum of £3,192

be granted on account of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly.

The COLONIAL TREASURER pointed out to the committee that in the Estimates there was an unintentional omission. A recommendation had been made that the Librarian's salary should be increased from £400 to £450; but that increase had not been put down. He deemed it his duty to bring this fact before the committee, and he would ask for an expression of opinion on the subject. If no adverse expression of opinion was given upon it, he should think it his duty to insert it on the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. PALMER said the recommendation of the Joint Parliamentary Buildings Committee had not been attended to. That committee recently recommended an extra groom, but he had not been provided for. He thought it would be better to let the vote stand as it appeared on the Estimates. He differed from the honourable member for Brisbane, and hoped that the Library Committee would spend the whole of the £800 in good books and maps.

The PREMIER reminded the honourable member for Port Curtis that the recommendation of the Joint Parliamentary Buildings Committee was made subsequent to the framing of the Estimates.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY proposed that the sum of £2,875 be granted on account of the Colonial Secretary's office. He stated that this amount showed an increase of £95 over that voted last year. This increase included £50 to the chief clerk, £25 to the accountant, and £20 to another clerk, whose length of service entitled them to these small increases of salary. He pointed out that the chief clerks in the other departments were paid considerably higher salaries, and he thought that the sum of £400 was not too large an amount to give to the chief clerk of the Colonial Secretary's office. When the present holder of that office was appointed, he was promised that he would have an increase of salary from £350 to £400.

Mr. GRAHAM asked on whose authority that promise was made? He did not see that anyone had a right to make any such promise, as the power of increasing salaries rested with the House.

Mr. KING said, if the increase were voted, it would show that the late chief clerk had been very badly used. He had served for many years in that office at a salary of £350; and yet, as soon as a new man was appointed, the committee was asked to increase his salary by £50 a-year. If that were carried, something ought to be put on the Supplementary Estimates for the late chief clerk.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY explained, in reply to the honourable member for Darling Downs, that what he meant by a

promise being given was simply that the amount would be put down on the Estimates, and the sanction of the committee asked to it.

Mr. J. SCOTT said it seemed strange that the late chief clerk should have held office for five years at £350 a-year, and the moment he left, and a new man was appointed, the salary should be increased to £400. Most of the increases proposed, so far, were to new hands, and the old servants were left as before. That was not a just and equitable way of dealing with the public money.

Mr. STEWART said the present Government were not responsible for the late chief clerk not getting the increase; and that gentleman had got promotion by being sent to Maryborough as Clerk of Petty Sessions. The clerk next in seniority to him would have been appointed his successor but for a physical infirmity which somewhat disqualified him, and on that account it was proposed to add £25 to his salary. The salary of the chief clerk, even with the proposed increase, would still be small for the holder of that very important office.

Mr. PALMER said that, if the Colonial Secretary had been where he ought to be, on the Opposition side of the House, he would have raised his voice strenuously against this proposed increase. He hoped the committee would go on as they had begun, and cut down all the increases, especially to the new men. There were plenty of men in the Civil Service fit for the office; but, instead of appointing one of them, they had gone outside the service and taken a Parliamentary officer. He moved that the vote be reduced by the sum of £95 to the figure at which it stood last year, namely, £2,780.

Mr. GRAHAM said that, so far as the Estimates had gone, the reasons given for the proposed increases had been exceedingly weak. They had been for officers lately appointed, and no good reason had been brought forward why there should be increases voted. He was quite certain that there were in the Civil Service men who had been longer in the service, who probably had large families to support, and who were more deserving of increases; but, to judge by the feeling of the committee, there would be difficulty in getting increases for these old, tried, servants. An increase to the salary of the Librarian had been foreshadowed, on what ground he did not know; he believed that officer had his salary raised last year.

Mr. HALY said that if Mr. Gore was the chief clerk, he could assure the last speaker that he was not a new officer; he was, years ago, Clerk of Petty Sessions at Nanango, and was a very efficient clerk.

Mr. STEWART said great difficulty had been experienced in getting a suitable man for the office, and Mr. Gore had been fixed

upon by himself as the most suitable on the list; he thought the salary far too small for the office, and that, if it were larger, they might have had a larger number to choose from. The salary was not sufficient for a really first-class man. He thought Mr. Gore was capable of carrying out the duties of the office, and was entitled to the proposed increase; he was an old officer, and did good service as deposition clerk in Brisbane. The accountant in the office was also an efficient officer; he believed there was no better accountant in the service, except, perhaps, in the Treasury and Audit departments.

Mr. KING said that the remarks that had been made showed how very desirable it was that the Estimates should first be revised by a committee. Honourable members had to deal with a number of proposed increases to gentlemen with whose duties and circumstances they were not acquainted, and might be involuntarily doing them an injustice. He believed it was the intention of the House to give fair pay for the work that was done, but at the same time to be as economical as possible. If a financial committee of the House, composed of different members from each side, were appointed to examine into the details of each item, and have the Under Secretaries before them, the House would be in a better position to decide upon each increase that was recommended.

Mr. HALY would ask the Colonial Secretary if Mr. Gore had been constantly in the service since he first joined as Clerk of Petty Sessions at Nanango? The answer would decide his vote.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied that Mr. Gore had not been continually in the service; he believed that he had been out of it for some short time. He would not bring forward these increases to his officers if he did not think they were fairly and justly entitled to them. He was not going to haggle about them; but left the responsibility of doing an injustice to the committee.

Mr. PALMER denied entirely that it would be an act of injustice to refuse the increase. He looked upon it simply as a new appointment to the office; and it certainly was a bad compliment to the gentleman who held it previously for years that an increase should be granted immediately that he left it. It was also unfair.

Mr. GRAHAM said that he would ask the Colonial Secretary if he was really satisfied as to the efficiency of his officers, for he (Mr. Graham) was not; he would like to know whether the money which was promised to the Warwick Hospital, and which was said to have been forwarded, had now been sent? Who was responsible in that matter?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY explained that it had taken some little time to bring the

matter before the Executive, and get authority for monetary assistance for the Warwick Hospital; in his opinion, if the committee of the Warwick Hospital were a little more economical, and endeavoured a little more to raise subscriptions, it would be much better. He believed and trusted that the money had now been forwarded.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that a better and more efficient officer than Mr. Gore could not be found in the colony, and it was a mistake altogether on the part of the member for Port Curtis to suppose that this was a new appointment. That honourable member, when he sat on the Treasury benches, had made such new appointments far more frequently than the Ministry of which he (the Minister for Works) was a member.

Mr. PALMER said that the Minister for Works never opened his mouth without putting his foot into it. He (Mr. Palmer) had never said that Mr. Gore was not an efficient officer; that was not the question. What he had said was, that this increase was with regard to a recent appointment to a new office. He contended that Mr. Gore ought to take the office at the original salary, and wait for an increase until he had earned promotion.

Mr. J. SCOTT said he did not say that Mr. Gore was not efficient; but he objected to his being picked out for an increase whilst older and more deserving officers were overlooked.

Mr. STEWART said that Mr. Gore was promised that an increase should be placed on the Estimates.

Mr. PALMER: The Colonial Secretary had no right to promise that.

Mr. STEWART maintained that a Minister had a right to make such a promise in order to get a suitable man. He was in office at the time, and it was only fair that he should explain why the appointment and promise were made. It was a matter of opinion, but he could say that the appointment was only made after mature consideration, and that there was no one whom he thought so fit for the office as Mr. Gore. That gentleman was accordingly asked to accept the appointment, and the promise referred to was made to him. He thought that the committee should weigh, to a certain extent, the fact that the appointing Minister thought Mr. Gore fit for the position, and promised that an addition to his salary should be placed on the Estimates.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that the office of chief clerk was almost as responsible as that of the Under Secretary, and he ought to be capable of doing the Under Secretary's work when that officer was away. In other departments the chief clerk got £500; whereas, in the Colonial Secretary's office, where the chief clerk

actually had more to do, the salary was only £350. He thought that the office had been miserably underpaid. The quality of the work was well worth £400.

Mr. McILWRAITH: Why did you not propose the increase last year?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he had always thought that the salary for the office should be increased, and he believed that the subject had often been spoken about.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he could see much difference between the proposed increase and those which the House had refused to sanction. He quite concurred with what had been said as to the responsibilities of the office of chief clerk; and thought that it ought to be an experienced and very efficient officer who should hold it. He had known Mr. Gore for a long time, and knew that he was an experienced and able officer. If the increase of salary was promised to him on condition that he accepted office, that promise ought to be respected by the committee. Considering this, and that the committee appeared to be agreed that it was a responsible office, he thought that they could not do harm in sanctioning the proposed addition to Mr. Gore's salary.

Question—That £2,780 only be granted to this service—put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 15.

Messrs. Palmer, Thompson, King, Graham, McLlwraith, J. Scott, J. Th. rn, Bailey, Foote, MacDonald, Ivory, Groom, Macrossan, Fraser, and Fox.

NOES, 17.

Messrs. Dickson, Douglas, Miles, Stevenson, McLean, Buzacott, Griffith, Perkins, Murphy, Haly, Grimes, Tyrel, Low, Stewart, Hockings, Kingsford, and G. Thorn.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

The original vote was next put.

Mr. PALMER said that he must confess he failed to understand the grounds on which honourable members had voted against the amendment, and if they went on in that manner, they might as well vote the Estimates *in globo*. Here was an officer newly appointed to his office; it was not as if they had been trying to reduce his salary, for he had the same as he had in the Council. If Mr. Gore was underpaid, then every other officer in the Civil Service was underpaid. He wanted to know if the same system was to be pursued throughout. He might let that vote go; but he was afraid that the committee were going to sacrifice themselves to the Government, and to allow them to pass their Estimates unchallenged.

The PREMIER said that the House had adopted the very suggestion of the honourable member for Port Curtis, and had decided the question on its own merits. In this case they had divided on the question whether the chief clerk performed his

duties satisfactorily and deserved an increase of his salary; and in his (Mr. Douglas's) opinion they had decided properly.

Mr. PALMER wanted to know why the old clerk had not been paid an increased salary? It seemed a strange thing that the increase should be asked when a new appointment had just been made. The fact was, and he was sorry to say it, it looked very much as if family influence had been at work in this case as well as the last. The vote of the committee should be given on the principle involved, not on the man.

Mr. PERKINS thought that the officer was not undeserving of the proposed increase of salary; that these appointments should be given to the most deserving officers in the service. He would like to know why the previous officer had not received an increase of salary. There seemed to be no prospect of old hard-working Civil servants getting the promotion they deserved, for they found outsiders put over their heads. He had understood that a distinct bargain had been made with the gentleman who now filled the office; and, as he filled it efficiently, he should vote for the increase.

Mr. GROOM said that the House had nothing whatever to do with bargains made between Ministers and private individuals, and it was because it was said that this was a bargain that he voted against the increase. If these bargains were to be made, members had indeed better stop at home and let the Estimates be voted *in globo*. It was currently reported out of doors, and it was no secret, that this appointment, from first to last, had been a family arrangement, while other Civil servants had been entirely neglected. The late Colonial Secretary said he had looked around Brisbane before he could find a man suitable for the appointment, and then could only find a gentleman in the Legislative Council. There were Civil servants who had passed through as high an education quite fit for the appointment, and who possessed abilities equal, if not superior, to the gentleman now chief clerk in the Colonial Secretary's office. He had no personal interest in the matter, but he did say it was high time the House made a stand against the favouritism that was going on, and it was high time that those men working hard in the Civil Service, year after year expecting promotion, should get it; and that no new hands should be pitchforked over the heads of those who had given their services to the country for years. It was time honourable members should be disposed to look at these things on broad and general grounds. If Mr. Terry were a deserving officer, it was evident he was an underpaid servant; yet, last session, they never heard a word about him, and it was never hinted that the chief

clerk in the Colonial Secretary's office was underpaid. Yet, because this gentleman had certain family connections who could bring pressure to bear upon the Government in more ways than one, a bargain had been made. He repudiated such bargains, and if ever they were mentioned again he should take every means in his power of opposing them.

The PREMIER was quite sure that no bargain of the kind described had been made, and it was unfair to say so. The present holder of the office had left the place he had previously held, when the work was not half so hard, believing, no doubt, that he would receive a higher salary in his present one; but he (Mr. Douglas) denied that any such expectation had been founded on a distinct bargain. With reference to his predecessor, he might say that he left, at his own request, to accept what appeared to him to be a most desirable promotion. He considered that no complaint of favouritism would lie against the present Government in respect to their Civil Service appointments; for there had been more promotion by seniority under the present Ministry than under any other previous Government. At the same time, he maintained that it would not be good for the public service to tie down a Government to promotion by seniority. They must be allowed to select fit men wherever they could get them. If Mr. Terry had retained the office, the same application for increase would have been made; it was for the office and not for the man; although Mr. Gore had no doubt accepted it in the expectation that the Legislature would do justice to the position.

Mr. STEWART said that the honourable member for Toowoomba had referred to favouritism and family influence as having brought about this appointment. He could assure honourable members that such was not the case, and that there never was any pressure from anyone connected with Mr. Gore. So far from Mr. Gore having asked for the appointment, he (Mr. Stewart) had himself looked round for a good man, and fixed on that gentleman as the best available. The remarks made by the honourable member for Toowoomba were, therefore, utterly at variance with the actual facts of the case. He knew that Mr. Gore's qualifications were such as to specially fit him for this office before he appointed him, and special qualities were required for the proper fulfilment of its duties. The officer who lately held the appointment had been promoted to a post at Maryborough. He (Mr. Stewart) might say that he had been so short a time in office when the last Estimates were framed, that he had had no time to look out deficiencies in officers' salaries.

Mr. GRIMES thought that the remarks of the honourable member for Port Curtis

called for some explanation from him. He had voted against the previous increases because the work of the office was small; but this case was quite a different one. When there was much work to be done it was desirable to get an efficient man to do it, and he believed that the honourable member for North Brisbane chose Mr. Gore because he was specially qualified for the work. He himself had heard the bench of magistrates in the police office of Brisbane speak of the effective manner in which he did his work there, and complain that it had not been done equally well either before or since his occupancy of the position. Such a testimonial from that bench was sufficient to justify his vote, and he had no doubt that the late Colonial Secretary had made a proper choice.

Mr. IVORY was glad to hear the Premier deny that a bargain had been made, although he gathered from the remarks of the honourable member for North Brisbane a contrary impression. Mr. Gore must have known that the House would not be influenced by anything that that honourable member had said to him. The objection was, that the increase was asked on behalf of a new-comer to the office, not that he was inefficient—and it looked strange that this should happen while so many old Civil servants were left without increase. It looked as if some influence had been at work, and he put the previously proposed increase to an officer of the Council in the same category. He thought that many honourable members had held themselves bound by the promise of the late Colonial Secretary. He had no objection to the increases given to the other clerks; but to test this question fairly, he should move that the proposed increase of salary to the chief clerk be deducted from the vote, and that the total be reduced to £2,825 only.

Mr. BAILEY thought that the object of honourable members should be not to increase salaries more than was absolutely necessary. They should advocate economy. Old servants really deserving increases in their salaries should have them, but only when very good grounds were shown for the increase. If the vote were brought under consideration next year, he would have no objection to supporting it; but he did not like to vote an increase to an officer who had only held his position for six months. He placed no importance on the salary received by Mr. Gore in another place, as that was probably something in the nature of a sinecure. As to the Brisbane police court, there was very good cause for the remarks that the deposition clerks had not been up to their work, as the place had lately been filled with new chums; but now there was a good man in the position, who gave every satisfaction.

Mr. BUZACOTT said that the remarks of the honourable member for Port Curtis

seemed to reflect on those who had voted for the increase. He voted for it because he thought the office worthy of higher remuneration, and he considered that this was proved by the fact that the previous occupant of this most important position had looked upon a transfer to a really inferior post at Maryborough as promotion. It was, in his opinion, wrong for Ministers to make absolute promises to officers; but it was not wrong for them to say that they would put an increase on the Estimates, and, if this was done, and it was shown that the officer was deserving, the increase should be voted. He was not in favour of striking off all increases indiscriminately.

Mr. HALY assured the committee that, if his vote had been influenced by any improper motive, he would have voted against the increase, as he might be supposed to bear a slight grudge against Mr. Gore on account of some past transactions, but he was thankful to say that he was above such petty spite. He thought Mr. Gore a most efficient officer and deserving of the increase, more especially as the inferior clerks got £350 each.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it must not be forgotten that Mr. Terry had only been six or eight months in the Government service when the honourable leader of the Opposition appointed him chief clerk. He (Mr. Miles) had then found fault with the appointment, and the honourable gentleman had told him that he should make what appointments he thought proper. He himself had made many appointments, but always inside the department, with one exception only—that of an agent to a South Sea Island trader.

Mr. PALMER said that no objection had been made to Mr. Gore's appointment; but to the fact that his salary was to be raised as soon as the appointment was made. Could the Colonial Secretary say that Mr. Terry had been an inefficient officer? If not, then he had been greatly underpaid. The honourable gentleman was taking the question quite out of its bearing.

Mr. STEVENSON denied that honourable members had been influenced in their votes; they had decided on the merits of the case. All that had been stated in the House showed that Mr. Gore was an efficient officer; and, as the chief clerks in other departments got £500, he was underpaid at £350. He thought that it was inadvisable to ask for an increase just when a new appointment was made; but he thought that was not a sufficient reason for refusing this increase.

Mr. KING said that the point was that a total increase of probably £3,000 or £4,000 would be made in the whole Estimates by these various increases in items, and he did not think that the country could afford it, although he was prepared to make an exception in cases of great hardship. If this

increase was assented to, and other small increases to hard-working servants refused, these men would have good cause for complaint. He thought the Estimates should be kept as low as possible.

Mr. J. SCOTT said that, if honourable members would examine, they would find that the present holder of the office had had two promotions in six months.

Mr. FRASER thought that if this increase was granted, it would be unfair to leave older and more meritorious officers without a similar increase.

Question—that the item be reduced by £50—put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 16.

Messrs. Palmer, Thompson, J. Scott, Foote, McIlwraith, Bailey, Macrossan, MacDonald, J. Thorn, Groom, King, Graham, Ivory, Fraser, Fox, and Hockings.

NOES, 16.

Messrs. Douglas, G. Thorn, Dickson, McLean, Miles, Grimes, Buzacott, Griffith, Stevenson, Tyrel, Perkins, Haly, Murphy, Low, Stewart, and Kingsford.

The CHAIRMAN said, the numbers being equal, he should give his casting vote with the Noes.

Mr. PALMER said he took exception to the Chairman voting with the Noes, as his duty was not to give any vote which would impose increased burdens on the people. The present was the second occasion this session on which the Chairman's vote had been given against Parliamentary practice. He would now move that the Chairman leave the chair, and report the point to the Speaker.

Question put and passed.

The SPEAKER stated that the Chairman of Committees had informed him that a division having taken place on which the numbers were equal, he had given his vote with the Noes.

Mr. PALMER said that the Chairman had not informed the honourable the Speaker, at the same time, that the vote he gave imposed an additional burden on the people. He had been a good many years in Parliament, and had been present at a great many divisions, but he had never yet known a Chairman of Committees so desecrate his office as to vote for increasing the burdens on the people; it was contrary to all Parliamentary usage.

Mr. GROOM said that he could entirely bear out the remarks of the honourable member for Port Curtis, inasmuch as, during the fifteen years he had been in that House, he had never known a Chairman of Committees to vote for increasing the burdens on the people; but the contrary had always been the practice.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that no doubt it was the usual course for Chairmen of Committees, when the numbers were

equal, to vote on the side of economy; but it was also the custom for a Chairman to vote in such a way as to leave the question open. In the present case, the casting vote of the Chairman did not decide the matter one way or the other.

Mr. HALY said that so long as he had been in the House, it had been the invariable custom of the Chairman to give his vote so as to lessen the burdens on the people.

The SPEAKER said he might inform the House that there was no ruling laid down by which the casting vote, either of the Chairman of Committees or the Speaker, was regulated; but it was the custom, when in Committee of Supply, for the Chairman to vote for the smaller amount. There was, however, no distinct ruling on the subject.

The House again went into committee.

On the question that a sum of £2,875 be voted,

Mr. GROOM said that, in order to test the opinion of the committee by another division, he would move that the sum be reduced by £49 19s.

Question put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 17.

Messrs. Palmer, Hockings, Thompson, McIlwraith, Graham, Fraser, Buzacott, Ivory, Fox, King, Haly, Groom, Macrossan, Bailey, J. Scott, Foote, and J. Thorn.

NOES, 15.

Messrs. Thorn, Douglas, Dickson, Miles, McLean, Griffith, Tyrel, Perkins, Beattie, Murphy, Stevenson, Grimes, Low, Kingsford, and Stewart.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the sum of £7,379 be voted for the Registrar-General's Department. He might mention that there had been a few increases made; for instance, an increase of £25, which was recommended by the Registrar-General, was made to the salary of the chief draughtsman; also, £25 to the salary of Mr. Whitley, which was recommended by Mr. Scott some time ago; also, an increase to the chief clerk, and to two other clerks, of £25 a-year each. There were also two additional clerks at £125 each, who were formerly paid out of the contingencies, but were now placed on the Estimates.

Mr. KING said he noticed that the draughtsman was put down at £400 a-year, whilst the highest paid draughtsman on the Northern Railway received only £350 a-year. He did not see why the draughtsman in the Registrar-General's office should receive more than the officer he referred to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had no information as to how the draughtsmen in the Public Works Department were paid.

Mr. MURPHY would remind the honourable member for Ravenswood that the duties of a draughtsman in the Real Property office were very important indeed. That officer was liable, under an assurance fund, for any errors made; thus, the public were assured to a certain extent that the work was properly done; and, seeing that the country was responsible for the correctness of titles, it was necessary to have a thoroughly competent draughtsman in that office. No doubt the draughtsmen referred to by the honourable member, were responsible; but, if one of them made a mistake, it could be easily remedied. That was not the case, however, in the Registrar-General's Office, as in the event of any mistake being made there, the person interested could come down upon the Government, under the assurance fund.

Mr. KING said he was under the impression that the Real Property Office was supplied with all plans from the Survey Office; and, therefore, he had been struck with the discrepancy between the salaries of the officers to whom he had referred, especially as the chief draughtsman in the railway department held the highest position in a professional point of view.

Mr. FRASER thought that the duty of draughtsmen in the Registrar-General's office was more important than was supposed by the honourable member for Ravenswood. It was a fact, within his own knowledge, that the very officer in question had within the last twelve months detected errors in surveys made twelve or fifteen years ago, and he could state that that gentleman was most careful in the performance of his duties. It was another thing to say whether he was entitled to the increase proposed, but, if any officer in his position was entitled to it, he was pre-eminently so. Going from that point there was another matter in connection with the Registrar-General's office which had been often referred to, and to which he would again direct the attention of the Government. It was very well known that no office was of more importance to the public than that was, and no office in which the despatch of business was of more importance. He would, therefore, bring under the notice of the Government the absolute necessity of separating the office of Statistical Registrar from the office of Registrar of Titles. He was aware that there was a Bill before the House to amend the Real Property Act of 1861; but he took the opportunity of directing the attention of the Government to that matter, as it was a matter of universal comment that much delay took place in the issuing of titles from the Registrar-General's office. It ought not to occupy three or four weeks to get a simple title from that office; and he believed that, if the division he proposed was carried out, such delay would not take

place. He thought that the committee would not object to see placed on the Estimates a provision for a Registrar of Deeds separate from the Statistical Registrar.

Mr. THOMPSON said it would be unwise to be too rigidly economical in this department of the public service. On the other hand, it was quite possible that this draughtsman, who was put down at £400 a-year, might not be worth more than £200. If the man was worth £400, he should vote for his having that amount, for a good draughtsman was worth his pay. It only showed that there should be some system by which the committee could be informed of the qualifications of the various officers in the public service. In his opinion, the time had come when it was necessary to separate the Statistical Branch of the Registrar-General's department from the Real Property branch. It was well known that the Real Property branch paid for its working, and left a considerable surplus over, but the two branches were so mixed up that it was impossible to say how much each branch cost the country. It was generally believed that the Real Property branch paid several hundreds a-year towards keeping up the Statistical Branch. This combination of the two was inconvenient to the public, and did not tend to economy of working. Under the existing system, the Registrar-General was the head of the department, and there were no less than four deputy heads under him, namely, the Master of Titles, the Acting Master of Titles, and two Deputy Registrars-General. What he contended for was, that there should be a complete separation of the two branches, and if that was done, it would be seen that the Deeds Branch would bear an extra cost of £400 or £500 a-year and still be self-supporting. There would then be one head who would have sole control of the department, whereas, now, the responsibility was frittered away. The Master of Titles was in receipt of a salary of £700 a-year, and the Deputy Registrar-General of the branch £500 a-year. With a little addition—not more than £400 a-year in all—a separate department could be formed for real property work, including the registration of deeds under the old common-law system, and still be self-supporting. He hoped the Government would see their way to assenting to this principle in the Bill which had been introduced into the House. The business of the Real Property Office, which formerly used to support an army of lawyers, was now done by the country at the expense of the tax-payers. That business was increasing year by year. In two years it had increased by one-fourth, and it must go on increasing at that ratio. The business of the department could not be confined within its present limits. As population increased, and subdivision of

land extended, so the work of the office would increase. It must also be borne in mind that in this office all the real property work of the colony was done, from the Gulf of Carpentaria to its southernmost boundary, so that really it was becoming a gigantic affair. The time would come shortly when it would be absolutely necessary to have the department divided in such a way that people in the Gulf district, say, could register their deeds much nearer home than Brisbane. In fact, there should be a Real Property Office for the Northern and another for the Southern district. He hoped the Government would express an opinion favourable to the establishment of a separate department under the Real Property Act. If they did so, the work under that Act would be done in a much more satisfactory manner than at present. The delays in the office were enormous. According to his own experience, the simplest matter could not be done in less than three weeks, though, as all were well aware, it might be done in as many hours.

Mr. MURPHY cordially agreed with the remarks of the two honourable members who last spoke. The measure affecting real property which had been introduced into the House, more intimately concerned the community as a whole than any measure which had been brought before the House this session. Nearly every person in the colony was to some extent mixed up with the working of the Real Property Act, and any system which would facilitate the transaction of business, and enable titles to issue quickly and without that degree of uncertainty which at present existed, would be hailed by the public with great pleasure. The first step in that direction was the one which had been suggested this evening. As to delays in the office, he could go even further than the honourable member for Bremer, for he found, from his experience, that six weeks was the average time before which titles could issue. The principle of the Act was the same as that in the Merchant Shipping Act, whereby a ship could be transferred to a new owner in a quarter-of-an-hour. The law as introduced by Mr. Torrens, in South Australia, and as since adopted throughout the colonies, was founded on expedition and certainty; but unless these two principles could be brought more fully into play, the Act itself was somewhat delusive. He was pleased to think that amendments in the Real Property Bill now before the House would operate very largely towards a proper working of the Act. After reading an extract from the evidence given by Mr. Peterson, the Deputy Registrar-General, when examined before a select committee of the Upper House as to the cause of the delay in the office, the honourable member said that, if such delays occurred to people residing in Brisbane, what must be

the case of those who resided in distant parts of the colony? From these parts it took three weeks or a month for the document to reach Brisbane; and, allowing a month for it to remain in the office, and two or three weeks more before it could reach its destination, some months would elapse, during which the owner of the property in question had really no title to it. He trusted that the suggestions of the honourable members for Bandanba and Bremer would receive the attention of the Government. If the separation of the department cost £300 or £400 more, it mattered little, so long as it was able to perform its work more speedily and effectually.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said it was scarcely worth while to discuss the matter at length now, because no change could be made in the system of administration in the Real Property Office until the law was altered. A Bill was before the House now, in which the necessary alteration might be inserted, but until the House agreed to place the administration under another officer than the Registrar-General, there was no use in discussing it. He could not hold out any strong hopes that the Government would accept the proposal made by the honourable member for Bremer, for an officer could just do his work as well whether he was called Deputy Registrar-General or some other title. At present, the Deputy Registrar-General was undoubtedly the head of the department; and the Registrar-General, who was the nominal head, had no more to do with it than the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. THOMPSON said that what he argued was, not the calling the Deputy Registrar-General by another title, but the establishment of a separate department. Where there was one head like the Registrar-General, and several deputy heads, there must be a divided responsibility. The head of that branch had not that freedom of action which he would have if he were responsible solely through the Colonial Secretary to this House.

The PREMIER said he felt justified in stating that he thought it was most desirable to give the utmost possible efficiency to this department, as it was one in which the public interests were very much concerned. The department more than paid for itself now, and as the whole of the conveyancing of the colony was now conducted through it, it was important that it should be made as efficient as it could possibly be. He was aware that complaints were made of delays in the office, and he did not see why that evil could not be remedied. He understood that the honourable member for Bremer intended to propose that transfers should be made upon the parchment itself. The work would be done then and there, and it seemed to him that it would facilitate matters to a great extent.

He, as well as his honourable friend the Attorney-General, was most anxious to make the office as efficient as possible. He did not think that the discussion which had taken place was a waste of time, and he was quite prepared to go on with the Real Property Bill after disposing of the vote at present before the House, if such a course met the views of honourable members.

Mr. GROOM said he hoped the statistical branch of the department would not be lost sight of. Complaints of delay were just as frequent in that branch as in the other. Although it was now the latter end of July, they had not yet been able to obtain the Statistical Register. Previous to the last two or three years the Colonial Secretary had been able to lay the Register on the table almost at the commencement of the session. He would say, however, that he did not attach much importance to the statistics which were now being compiled. There were scores of papers left by the police in his district which had never been called for. Generally speaking, the police considered the collection of statistics by them as an unnecessary piece of work thrown upon them, and they performed it very perfunctorily. In New South Wales there was a division of labour in the Registrar-General's department. He hoped the Colonial Secretary would induce some extra activity into the statistical branch, and that he would take some more reliable means of collecting his statistics.

Mr. PERKINS said it was desirable to know what were the duties of the Registrar-General and the Deputy Registrar-General. He believed that it was the duty of the Registrar-General to sign the papers. In that case, what had the Deputy-Registrar-General to do?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the business of the Real Property Office was increasing to such an extent that the staff were not able to get through the work. His own opinion was that the staff wanted increasing altogether—that more clerks were required. There was no doubt Mr. Peterson had as much power under his present title as he would have were he head of the department. There was no doubt that this was an important office, one in which every facility should be given to the public to conduct business with the greatest possible speed. He could assure honourable members that he would inquire into the subject of their complaint.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY proposed a grant of £10,630 on account of the Immigration Department. There was, he said, a large item of increase on this vote, and honourable members would, perhaps, think it rather singular that he should vote an increase of £500 a-year to the Agent-General's salary. He believed that last ses-

sion he had expressed himself strongly that Mr. Macalister would not be the right man in the right place. He was always open to conviction, however, and since accepting office he had endeavoured to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the business transacted at the Immigration Office in London; and he was satisfied that the duties were being well and thoroughly performed. This proposed increase was not a salary to Mr. Macalister; it was a salary to the Agent-General, for it was not likely that Mr. Macalister was always going to retain the position. He did not think there was a single honourable member who would not admit that the present salary was not adequate to the position. He trusted honourable members would give the proposed increase their best consideration, and be prepared to do justice to future Agents-General as well as the present. He thought that anything under £1,500 a-year was an absurd salary for the position.

Mr. IVORY would like the Colonial Secretary to explain to whom the amount of £300, set down for travelling and other expenses, was paid?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied that these were the travelling expenses of the despatching officer, who had sometimes to go to Liverpool, Queenstown, and Glasgow.

Mr. GROOM said he did not think that the colony could afford the nice salary it was proposed to give the Agent-General, and he had yet to learn that the duties of the London office had increased so much—had risen to such magnitude—that this proposed addition was justified. It had often and often been dinned into the ears of members of this House that Queensland was burdened with a heavy debt, and that its taxation was larger than any other Australian colony. When they knew that this was the case, he would ask whether it was right to propose such a large increase? The Colonial Secretary had told the committee that the gentleman who was now Agent-General could not keep up the dignity of the position unless he received £1,500 a-year; if he could not, then the best thing he (Mr. Groom) could recommend him to do was to relinquish it. The Agent-General of New South Wales received a salary of £1,500 a-year; but what was the position of that colony compared with Queensland? It had an annual revenue of £3,500,000, its population was 650,000, and at the present time it had a surplus revenue of something like £1,500,000, which was placed at bank interest; but, as regards Queensland, the estimated revenue for the year ending 1877-78, was £1,557,000, or only £57,000 over the estimated surplus of New South Wales. The population of Queensland, including even the 16,000 or 17,000 Chinese, and the 5,000 or 6,000 Polynesians

supposed to be in the colony, amounted to 180,000, and we gave our Agent-General £1,000 a-year. Now, looking at the relative positions of the two colonies, he considered that this colony was giving as much as it could afford; and, under these circumstances, he must consider it his duty to move that the sum be reduced by £500. Last session the question was asked as to whether the present Agent-General had left with the understanding that he was to get £1,500 a-year, and we had the assurance of the then Government—the question was well canvassed—that Mr. Macalister accepted office with the distinct understanding that the salary was to be £1,000, and that he was not to get more.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. GROOM said he distinctly understood from the then head of the Government that this was to be so. Looking at the small revenue of the colony, and the heavy taxation with which it was burdened, and remembering that it was about to engage in a large scheme of public works, which must involve the colony in additional taxation, it would not be a wisest thing to assent to such a large increase in the salary of the Agent-General. When the revenue and the population increased sufficiently to justify such an addition to the salary of the Agent-General as was now proposed, he presumed there would be no objection to granting it. Looking, however, at the present population and revenue, and the smallness of the interests that the Agent-General had to represent, he thought that £1,000 was quite sufficient, and he would move that the amount set down for him be reduced by £500.

The PREMIER said he felt bound to correct the misapprehension of the honourable member for Toowoomba on the subject of Mr. Macalister's salary. He had stated that Mr. Macalister left the colony with the distinct understanding that he was not to get more than £1,000 a-year. He (the Premier) was intimately connected with the transactions, and he could assure the honourable member most emphatically that the honour of the Government was pledged to secure for Mr. Macalister, under Act of Parliament, a defined position and a salary of £1,500 a-year. Mr. Macalister knew, of course, that the amount that was being voted was £1,000 a-year, and that he could not expect more than it was the pleasure of Parliament to vote; but it was most unmistakably understood between Mr. Macalister and himself and the Minister for Works that this increase should be proposed, so as to place him in a better position. He hoped that the honourable gentleman would not go away with the belief that Mr. Macalister understood that his salary was only to be £1,000 a-year.

Mr. GROOM: This is the first time I have heard of it.

The PREMIER said that, if it was the first time, he would now correct that misapprehension.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is no misapprehension.

The PREMIER said that he himself was directly concerned in the transaction, and he knew that the facts were as he had stated. Last year a Bill respecting the Agent-General was introduced, and it was intended to again invite the attention of honourable members to the matter in the form of an Act of Parliament, after the more important business had been got through this session. Apart altogether, however, from that, there were some reasons why this vote should not be refused. He would say, at the outset, that he almost regretted that the amount set down for the salary of the secretary to the Agent-General had not been increased, because he thought that it was probably desirable that it should be. For the position of Agent-General, he thought the colony was bound to get an efficient man, and that it was desirable to get one who had served a political apprenticeship in the colony—a man of high trust. The office was one of importance, and its importance increased every day. The orders sent from the colony were very considerable, and the responsibilities were very great, and they were bound to get a man who would administer these responsibilities honestly and intelligently; and he believed that in the present Agent-General this object would be secured. He ranked the responsibilities of the Agent-General as above those of the judges of the Supreme Court.

Mr. PERKINS: It is a much better appointment.

The PREMIER said that he did not know that it was better, but he was sure that the responsibilities were quite as high; and if our judges were paid £2,000 a-year, he did not see why the Agent-General should not be paid quite as much. However, that was not the question.

Mr. GROOM: Our judges should be above suspicion.

The PREMIER said that the Agent-General should also be so, and that to make him so his salary should be increased. The temptations to which he was liable were direct and unmistakable, and for that reason he thought that officer ought to be placed in a position in which he could be entirely independent. Of course his position also demanded some little expenditure on his part; he must live up to a certain standard, and hold his own with those in a similar position. The honourable member for Toowoomba had instanced the Agent-General for New South Wales. He might also have instanced those of Victoria

and New Zealand. He did not think the Agent-General for Queensland would willingly place himself in a lower position than these, if he had the honour of the colony at heart, and he ought to be placed in an equivalent position to the best of them. He did not mean to say that it was not possible to get a man who would honestly discharge the duties of the office for the salary of £1,000 a-year, because an honest man would always do his duty, no matter what his remuneration might be. But, at the same time, that was no reason why the colony should not pay well for the discharge of the responsible duties which attached to the Agent-General. He would point out to honourable members that the colony was now paying commissions exceeding £2,000 a-year to an inspecting engineer, who merely did part of the work of the colony, and not as much as the Agent-General. If services of this kind were to be properly performed, the Agent-General ought to be well paid. He believed that it would be wise to pay the Agent-General £1,500 a-year, and that the committee would be consulting the interests of the colony and the dignity of the Agent-General by voting that measure.

Mr. PALMER thought the position of Agent-General should be held as much for the honour which attaches to it as for the pay. He did not think it should be entirely a question of pay; and he had no doubt that men in quite as good a position as Mr. Macalister—and better, perhaps—could be found to take it for £1,000 a-year. The statement made by the Premier that evening, and the statement made by him last year, were as different as light and darkness. Last year the House was told distinctly that Mr. Macalister went home on the clear understanding that his salary was to be £1,000 a-year. He was sure honourable members would bear him out in this statement. They were certainly afterwards favoured with a Bill increasing the salary to £1,500; but, if ever a man was ill-treated by his late colleagues, the Agent-General was that man, for the Bill was introduced with the distinct intention of being shelved. The then Premier told the House, in answer to a question, that he did not intend to proceed with the Bill further than the second reading; and, if that was not shelving it, he (Mr. Palmer) did not know what was. He did not think that the Government were in earnest now about that Bill. The colony could not pay the increase. Putting aside altogether the question as to who the Agent-General was, the temptations to which he was subject, and the style in which he had to live to perform his duties, the question was, could the colony afford the increase? He maintained that it could not. He should also like to ask a question about another matter. Last session they were told most distinctly

by the present Premier, that in his opinion Mr. Macalister and Mr. Hamilton should not be allowed to remain in the same office. The honourable gentleman then was Secretary for Lands—an inferior position; but he was now, and had been for some time, Premier. Might he ask him if he had taken any means to separate these two gentlemen? The committee had heard a great deal about the great responsibilities of the office, and how desirable it was that the Agent-General should be above suspicion. Did the speech of the Premier last year show that the Agent-General was above suspicion in his mind? He must have then thought that one of the two was not above suspicion; but no change had taken place that the House was aware of. He (Mr. Palmer) wanted to know from the Premier whether he had made any arrangements for carrying out his ideas of last year—of separating these two gentlemen; he quite agreed that they should not be in the office together, but he had not the authority to separate them. It must be patent to everyone who had watched the proceedings, that the Agent-General and the secretary were playing into the hands of the firm of Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts. Immigrant vessels laid on by other firms did not get the Government cargo; a great proportion was sent out by ships belonging to a firm whose ring the Agent-General had declared, when he returned, he had broken up. This was an unmistakable charge to make. Let the Government contradict it. It was notorious in London that Mr. Taylor was Mr. Macalister's henchman; that gentleman could not do anything without Mr. Taylor, who followed him about like a poodle-dog. The House was told last year that the ring was broken up; but it was not broken up. The only thing that had been broken up, or broken down, was the health of the unfortunate gentleman which had been impaired by their machinations. This estimate was doubtless put purposely on the paper to deceive the House. He considered that not one-tenth of the expenses of the immigration department were put down in it. He would ask, was there anything like the number of clerks that were actually employed put down? He was told that the Agent-General's office in London was an enormous establishment; that people from Queensland were struck with amazement at its size, and could not imagine why there should be so many clerks. One of the largest businesses in London could be managed with the staff. Were the whole of the clerks, or even one-fourth of them, put down in the Estimates? If not, then the Estimates had been prepared for the purpose of deceiving the committee. To come back, however, to the question before the committee, he repeated that the colony was not in a position to pay £1,500 a-year.

He believed, but he did not state it as a positive fact, that the late Agent-General for South Australia only got £1,000 a-year until within a short time of his death, when his salary was increased by £250; he would therefore ask why the committee should increase the salary of our Agent-General by £500? He maintained that the increase was not called for, and he hoped that the committee would not sanction it.

The PREMIER said that he believed he had said last year it would probably be better if Messrs. Macalister and Hamilton were not in the same office, but he would admit that he had been somewhat indiscreet in saying so. At any rate, he would admit that on receipt of better information—although he admitted that he had not all the information that might possibly be got—he was convinced, from the manner in which Mr. Hamilton had done his work, that he was a most excellent officer. The first statement he had made rather on current rumours than on definite information, and he still maintained that it was then justified by the universal currency of those rumours, but it was afterwards found that they had not sufficient substantial foundation to justify him in imputing blame to Mr. Hamilton. He now believed that Mr. Hamilton was a most excellent business man and efficient officer, and that his services were very inadequately remunerated by the salary of £500 a-year. It was true that when a man accepted the post of Agent-General, he did not look wholly to the pay attached to it, for the office was one of great honour and responsibility. It was nevertheless right to give the increase asked for, and that our Agent-General should be independent, whatever private means the holder of the office might possess—and it was well known what Mr. Macalister's position was in that respect—he should have an adequate salary. He (Mr. Douglas) still thought that £1,500 was not too large a sum to vote for his salary.

Mr. GROOM asked the committee to remember what were the expenses connected with the Agent-General of New South Wales' department, which honourable members could not deny had nearly ten times more business to transact than had to be done for Queensland. In spite of this fact, the total expense of that agency was only £2,650. What the honourable member for Port Curtis had referred to was quite correct; it had been over and over again remarked by visitors from Brisbane to England, that there were eight or nine clerks in the London office—one on the top of the other, as it were. If they had to pay £2,700 on the Estimates-in-Chief, what would it be when the Loan Estimates were considered? It would reach a total of nearly £5,000 for this office.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the detailed items on the Loan Estimates were simply for the

information of the House; the amounts were voted in lump sums.

Mr. MACROSSAN said they had had two confessions from the Premier that night. One related to a bargain between Mr. Macalister and himself, of which no one in that House had ever heard a word before; yet the late Premier had distinctly denied that Mr. Macalister went home under the impression that his salary would be more than £1,000. Which statement were they to believe? He preferred to believe that of the present Premier; but it was not creditable that such a confession had to be made. The assertion respecting Messrs. Hamilton and Macalister, made by the Premier last year, was a very bold one to make on mere rumour, and he doubted whether he (the Premier) was justified in retracting it in the manner he had done; he must still entertain a few doubts on the subject. As to the dignity of the office of Agent-General, he did not think it was any greater than when the present Premier or Mr. Daintree held it, and yet those gentlemen were willing to serve at £1,000. He was sure that Mr. Macalister would be equally willing, if he could not get £1,500, to accept £1,000. He did not think there could be any such very great increase in the work to be done, as, since Mr. Macalister went home, he had had the assistance of two lecturers. He noticed, further, that they were going to reduce the amount of work, as they proposed to do away with the lecturers, and thus reduce the amount of immigration. On referring to the Estimates, he found the salaries of those lecturers put down for only six months, showing that it was intended to do without them after the end of the present year. It was strange that they proposed to reduce the means of getting immigrants, and yet to increase the salary of the Agent-General; and the fact could only be accounted for by the bargain with the late Premier, which he could not look back upon with any satisfaction. He would support the amendment, as he was quite sure that, for the salary of £1,000 a-year, they could secure the services of a man equally capable and equally to be depended upon, who would do the work quite as efficiently, in fact, more efficiently, than it had been done. They would not, therefore, be justified in voting an increase of salary; they had not too much money to spare. If they compared the salary of the Agent-General of New South Wales, and took the revenue and population of that colony, it would be seen that our Agent-General was very highly paid, while the cost of the Queensland office was a great deal more than that of a colony far better able to bear it. He found that out of Loan Estimates eleven clerks were to be paid, and out of general revenue one clerk and a secretary. They had, therefore,

twelve clerks, a secretary, and an Agent-General—a far too large staff for the work to be done. If the Colonial Secretary held now the same position that he did last year, he would be the very man to oppose the increase of salary.

The PREMIER said that, if any sort of disgrace were attached by the honourable member who had just sat down to the word bargain, he must repudiate the imputation. That honourable member might have attached too much suspicion to the word; but there was a taint of unpleasantness hanging to it which was not properly attached to the understanding which had been arrived at between himself and Mr. Macalister. It was simply understood by Mr. Macalister that the Government would put the increase of salary on the Estimates, and do what they could to get it passed. This was all that was done, and it had been done openly and aboveboard. Until that was done, Mr. Macalister knew perfectly well that he could only get the £1,000 a-year which was secured to him; this was the understanding between them, and on this a misunderstanding appeared to have arisen in connection with the statement of the Minister for Works. In reference to the discontinuance of the lecturers, he must say that it did not, in his opinion, imply any diminution in the probable amount of immigration. It appeared from the last report of the Agent-General, that immigration was not much affected by these lectures, but that immigrants came from a number of local agencies, of which none of them sent many, but all a few persons. He did not at all contemplate a reduction in the immigration to this colony, and, if the item on the Loan Estimate passed, he hoped to secure a large number of Germans, who had proved themselves most valuable and industrious colonists, and who settled down here permanently. No doubt the lecturers had done their work, and done it honestly and effectually; but he thought now that their work might be considered as completed. Reference had been made to the number of clerks in the London office, but there was really a great deal of work to be done in it. He could not be sure of the exact number, but he believed that not less than an average of a dozen letters came about each emigrant, and this fact alone rendered a large staff necessary.

Mr. STEVENSON was surprised, after the statement just made by the Premier, that he had not got up last year and contradicted the statement made by the then Premier, who, he remembered, had stated that Mr. Macalister went home on the distinct understanding that he would only get £1,000 a-year, and that no other inducement whatever had been given him. The Premier told them now that when Mr. Macalister went home, the Gov-

ernment had pledged their honour to him that they would endeavour to get him £1,500.

Mr. PERKINS thought that the increase of salary was necessary to keep up the style and dignity that had been spoken about. He knew many people in a more humble sphere of life who would not do it for less. Still, the manner in which the work was done by the present holder of the office made him doubt whether he should vote for the increase asked for. He heard it stated that he must be kept above suspicion of corruption, and that he was being hunted about by contractors. He would like to know what proof there was of his capacity for the office he held. He would ask the present occupants of the Treasury benches whether they would entrust him with equally important private business of their own. He did not want to speak in an unkind manner of that gentleman; but he thought that, if the colony had important business to transact, they should send a business man to do it—a man above suspicion or temptation. He denied that Mr. Macalister's experience in this colony had been such as to qualify him to be director-general of those large and important transactions which the colony had in hand. He did not know much about Mr. Hamilton's business capacity, but he had heard opinions expressed on both sides of the House that he should not be in the same office with Mr. Macalister. He did not want anything more to be hushed up as the Wheeler business had been. He noticed now that almost every contract went up to Glasgow, not that he blamed the Agent-General for that—that official was not able to attend to such details; he was probably too busy airing himself at Paris or Vienna, or dining out with dukes. The manner in which the rails had been sent out by the "Zamora" was a proof of how the business of the colony was being transacted; and he would like the Government to stay their hands before affairs went any further. Why, he would rather hold the appointment of Agent-General than of Chief Justice; if he had it for three years he would be able to retire, and, if he chose, not come out to the colony again. He believed there was something very rotten in the Agent-General's office. It was a strange thing that Mr. Macalister should go home to investigate abuses in the Agent-General's office, and then transplant himself into it. Mr. Macalister might be ornamental in his office, but he did not understand anything of the business of it. How should he? How could he tell what that large staff of clerks were so busy about? Who paid them? He only saw a small item down on the Estimates. Even if the Agent-General had to keep up the grandeur and dignity of the colony, he would have to be a business man also.

Without imputing anything worse than carelessness, and considering Mr. Macalister's habits, he was afraid that the present manner in which the position was filled would lead to corruption and mischief.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that all he had promised to Mr. Macalister, last session, was £1,000 a-year and travelling expenses; but he also promised him to introduce the Agent-General's Bill, which had been introduced, and he could do no more. He was astonished that the honourable member for Toowoomba should have moved a reduction on this vote; and he did not think that honourable members who supported the reduction remembered the great part that Mr. Macalister had played in this colony; and that he had always met with the greatest respect from all sides,—more so than any other person who had been appointed Agent-General. The Agents-General of other colonies—men such as Messrs. Cowper, Forster, Michie—were all of them decidedly inferior in business capacity to Mr. Macalister. He denied *in toto* that Mr. Macalister was at all deficient in that respect; and he assured honourable members that the colony had never been represented by a more business-like man. It was only the other day that he (Mr. Thorn) had sent home an indent for water-pipes, and the pipes were put on board the ship within fourteen days of when it was sent from Brisbane. Why, the goods came so fast that they could not keep the wharves clear! With regard to the instance of carelessness mentioned in the case of the "Zamora," he would tell honourable members that the Agent-General was not supposed to attend to every single detail—to inspect every article put on board a ship. That was part of a subordinate's duty; and he believed that the subordinate in fault had been suspended, and an inquiry instituted. He maintained that the duties of the Queensland Agent-General were greater than those of the Agent for New South Wales. There were no immigrants going to that colony, and that alone made all the difference. That colony had followed a hum-drum policy respecting immigration, although they now seemed to be waking up. He maintained that Queensland had now the best Agent-General representing any colony at home. The office was generally looked upon as a reward for meritorious services performed. He considered that it came with a bad grace from honourable members opposite to oppose this small increase, as Mr. Macalister, in his official capacity, had never shown more favour to one side than to another. He would say again, that this refusal to grant the small increase asked for to the Agent-General's salary came with a very bad grace from honourable members; for the Agent-General of this colony ought to

occupy a very exalted position, not only in the eyes of England alone, but in the rest of Europe.

Mr. GROOM said it had for some time been a standing remark in New South Wales that Queensland was the best emigration agent that that colony could have. Although in New South Wales they had voted £100,000 for immigration purposes, yet no increase on that account was made to the salary of their Agent-General. The Minister for Works had compared the Agent-General of Queensland with those of the other colonies, and had said that none of them were practical business men, but merely men who had occupied a high political position in their respective colonies. With regard to Sir Charles Cowper, a better Agent-General could not possibly have been appointed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He appointed himself.

Mr. GROOM said that, although Mr. Macalister had not actually appointed himself, yet virtually he did so. If ever a Minister made arrangements to appoint himself to an office, that Minister was our present Agent-General. If Sir Charles Cowper did so, he certainly did it with much cleaner hands than Mr. Macalister. Sir Charles Cowper did not go on a visit to England at the expense of the colony, and make arrangements whilst there to oust the then occupier of the office, and then return here to complete those arrangements—which was more than can be said of Mr. Macalister. Mr. Forster's ability and intelligence were well known, and he was admittedly a good business man. The House had a perfect right to challenge the wisdom of this proposed increase. In his opinion, the present revenue of the colony would not bear the increase, and honourable members would find out shortly, when they began to ask for £500 here and £500 there for public works in their own districts, that they would be told that there was no money in the Treasury that could be spared for those purposes. He thought the number of clerks in the Agent-General's office was far too large. Not even the Minister for Works had twelve clerks under him in his own office. It was a peculiar fact that every immigrant ship which had arrived in this colony during the last three months was in as bad condition as any that was ever sent out by the late Agent-General. The case of the "Zamora" was a disgraceful instance of mismanagement in the Agent-General's office. It might be quite true that some commission agent had been suspended for having despatched the ship in such a condition, but the responsibility ought to rest with no one but the Agent-General. In the case of the "Southesk," which had only recently arrived from London, he believed that the doctor, before leaving, drew atten-

tion to the state of the vessel, and was told that it was no business of his. Questions were asked in this House last session as to whether the Agent-General left the colony with the understanding that he should receive an increase of his salary, and an assurance was given that he left with a distinct understanding that he was to get only £1,000 a-year. Something was certainly said about a Bill which was to counteract something that had been said by the honourable member for Port Curtis. The object of that Bill was to make Mr. Macalister the perpetual Agent-General. The Bill was introduced, but only on the understanding that it should not pass.

Mr. MURPHY regretted to find that the opposition was manifested towards the occupant of the office, instead of to the salary attaching to it. The only matter for consideration was whether the Agent-General's salary should be £1,500 or £1,000, irrespective of who might be at present occupying that position. Comparing Queensland with the other colonies, he thought the amount asked for a very fair one. No doubt in New South Wales the revenue was much larger, but the revenue of Queensland might be very largely increased if the same system of selling the public estate was introduced. The salary of the Agent-General of Victoria was £2,000; of New Zealand, £1,500; of New South Wales, £1,500; and of South Australia, £1,250. None of the Agents-General for other colonies were business men. No one had ever suggested that Mr. Forster was a business man, and yet no one would venture to say that he was not an able servant of the colony he represented. Mr. Michie was a barrister, and yet his conduct of the office had given great satisfaction to the people of Victoria.

Mr. McILWRAITH: Mr. Michie was one of the best business men in the country.

Mr. MURPHY said he had known Mr. Michie for many years, and had only known him as an eloquent advocate at the bar. He was not aware that Sir Julius Vogel was a business man, yet he had ably represented New Zealand. Although Mr. Macalister was not brought up to business pursuits, he did not see why he should not succeed in satisfactorily transacting the home business of the colony. Nothing had been said that would induce him to believe that that gentleman would carry out his duties otherwise than conscientiously to himself and consistently with the best interests of the colony. Comparing Queensland with the other colonies, £1,500 was a fair and reasonable salary for the Agent-General in London.

Mr. PALMER said he wished to correct the honourable member for Cook in one or two of his statements. Sir Charles Cowper was a thorough business man. He worked his way step by step, and for some years

had the control of the extensive business of Robert Towns and Co. Mr. Forster was a squatter, and had been engaged in business transactions for the greater part of his life; and, as for Mr. Michie, he was represented to be one of the best business men in the colonies. He had known barristers who were as good business men as could be wished for.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the only argument brought forward by the honourable member for Cook why the salary of the Agent-General should be increased was because the Agents-General of the other colonies had higher salaries; but, if there were any force in that argument, they should begin by increasing the salaries of the Speaker and the Ministers, who in the other colonies were much more highly paid. If they compared Queensland with the other colonies fairly, they would find that the Agent-General was paid in proportion to its other chief officers. For his own part, he should never agree to the proposed increase, no matter who the occupant of the office might be. If defeated on the first division, he should try to reduce the amount pound by pound, and was prepared to fight the House all night upon it.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he could not congratulate Mr. Macalister on the kind of advocacy he was receiving, especially from the Minister for Works, whose only argument was, that since that gentleman had entered upon his duties as Agent-General he had swamped him with rails. He failed to see that that was a proof of business capacity. When the question was asked on more than one occasion last year, the Minister refused to inform the House that a promise had been given to Mr. Macalister that his salary should be increased. They studiously kept it in the background, and merely said he had gone home on the arrangement that he should be paid £1,000 a-year. How could this Assembly be possibly bound by any arrangement which the Government had made with Mr. Macalister, and which they had persistently refused to disclose? How could they say the House was bound to ratify an agreement about which they knew nothing? So far as immigration was concerned, he believed Mr. Macalister's administration was not much to be complained of, but in other respects it had been a failure. The question was not how much should the colony give as a reward for Mr. Macalister's past services, but what should be the salary of the Queensland Agent-General? Stress was laid by the Premier on the grave responsibility resting on the Agent-General, but the remedy was to be found, not in increasing his salary, but in reducing his responsibility. This might be done by providing that the contracts for immigration should be opened here by the Government, and the contractors selected here.

That was a practical matter, and it would provide security that the public welfare was being looked after. He could see no reason for granting the increase asked for; £1,000 a-year was quite sufficient for the duties performed. Taking into consideration the salaries given to other high officials in this colony, he thought that the present salary was quite high enough, and if anybody was entitled to an increase it was the Agent-General's secretary, who, in point of fact, did most of the work, and yet was put down at £500 a-year, although an increase in his case had been recommended.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that some remarks had been made as to the way in which Mr. Macalister had discharged the duties of his office, and with respect to the "Groper," which were likely to leave a wrong impression. The facts of the matter were, that the contract for the "Groper" was accepted on the 11th May, 1875, when Mr. Macalister was Premier; and that the dredge left on the 5th April, 1876, before Mr. Macalister had reached home to fill the office of Agent-General. His conduct could not, therefore, be called in question in connection with the building of this vessel. He also took this opportunity of expressing his own satisfaction at the correspondence which had frequently passed between the Agent-General and the Treasury on matters of public business; and the evidence afforded by this correspondence convinced him that Mr. Macalister, as Agent-General of the colony, transacted the public business, so far as it came under his (the Colonial Treasurer's) notice, in a highly satisfactory manner, creditable to himself, and with benefit to the colony. As regards the proposed increase of salary, he thought that, bearing in mind that the expense of living at home was very great, the Agent-General was not overpaid at a salary of £1,500 a-year, and that he should be placed in a position which would enable him to live there comfortably and discharge the duties of his office with dignity to himself and the colony. He did not mean to say that Mr. Macalister should air his dignity. With respect to the comparison instituted between this colony and New South Wales, he did not consider that it had much bearing upon this subject. This colony was particularly solicitous to attract desirable immigrants, and, he took it, that if the Agent-General effected this object and discharged his duties satisfactorily, it was only right that he should get a sufficient salary. He had risen more particularly, however, to give a distinct contradiction to the assertion that the duties of Mr. Macalister's office were in any way being neglected, so far as matters connected with the Treasury of the colony were concerned.

The PREMIER said he felt that some remarks made by the member for Port

Curtis should not be passed over. He referred to the statement that Mr. Macalister was connected in some way or other with the firm of Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts, and that he had given them undue preference in the matter of freight. He thought the honourable gentleman ought to support this very serious charge; and unless he could do so, he (the Premier) should disbelieve it. He thought that the real facts were something like this—that tenders for the conveyance of freight were called for, and that Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts, happening to be the lowest, were accepted by Mr. Macalister. He thought it unfair of the honourable member for Port Curtis to impute to an old antagonist what was nothing less than corruption; and he did not think such an imputation should be made unless the honourable member was prepared to substantiate it. He was quite sure that it could not be substantiated.

MR. PALMER: Don't be too sure of that.

The PREMIER said it had been inferred that Mr. Macalister had not been doing his duty with regard to the "Groper"; but nobody could read the correspondence that had passed with respect to that dredge without coming to the conclusion that Mr. Macalister had done his duty and looked after the interests of the colony. If a comparison were to be instituted between Mr. Macalister's conduct and Mr. Daintree's, Mr. Macalister would come out very much better, because he (the Premier) could not conceive that these evils could have happened if there had not been some laxity on the part of Mr. Daintree as to the appointment of the superintending engineer. Certainly the engineer had shown great carelessness in the discharge of his duties. He did not say that Mr. Daintree was responsible, in this respect, for the defects of the engineer; but there was no doubt that the colony had been shamefully victimised. He did not impute any direct blame to Mr. Daintree; but he said that he had the misfortune to employ an engineer who had let the colony in for thousands of pounds. He hoped that at some future time, at any rate, the honourable member for Port Curtis would substantiate the serious allegations that he had made.

MR. McILWRAITH said he did not think the honourable the Premier understood who Mr. Deas was, otherwise he would not have made the charges that he had. As regards the defective condition of the "Groper," he thought, from the correspondence which had passed, and from other evidence, that, probably, the incompetence of the people out here had something to do with the failure of the "Groper." The principal way in which Mr. Deas was injuriously affected by that correspondence was by the statement made by Mr. Macalister that he had received a commission of two and a-half

per cent. from the contractors. He (Mr. McIlwraith) did not believe that statement. No man held a higher position than Mr. Deas did. Professionally, he was considered the very highest authority; and he thought that his character should not be frittered away by the Premier without a great deal better authority than the statement of Mr. Macalister that he had accepted a bribe from the contractors. No proof had been given in support of that statement, and he maintained that if the Government had been doing their duty they would have asked Mr. Macalister to supply proofs.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We have asked him to do so.

MR. McILWRAITH said he was glad to hear it. The aspersions which had been cast upon Mr. Deas were perfectly unjustifiable. As regards the firm of Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts, he thought the statement of the Premier put the matter in a perfectly different light to what it was last year. There was then an expression of opinion—prominently from the Premier—that Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts were a business firm with whom this colony should have nothing to do. He maintained that the explanation given by the Premier as to the manner in which the connection with Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts had been revived, justified the late Agent-General, for he actually called for tenders, and Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts' being lowest, had the work given them. He (Mr. McIlwraith) did not think, however, that Mr. Macalister had called for tenders, and that on the premises of the Premier, Mr. Macalister was not justified.

The PREMIER said that his objection last year to the firm of Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts took this shape: that, in consequence of the shameful manner in which in one instance they had carried out their contract for the conveyance of immigrants, they should be disqualified from bringing out any more; it did not extend to freight, which he supposed was a simple business transaction, not involving the life or comfort of passengers. In reference to Mr. Deas, he believed that Mr. Macalister's statement would be substantiated. It was clear, at all events, that a defective machine had been sent out here; and it appeared that Mr. Deas had allowed the "Groper" to come here without first working her at home and trying her; that was where he had failed. He (the Premier) believed that the defective machine had arisen from defective inspection. Mr. Deas might be a man of high standing, but they knew that men of high standing sometimes failed in the discharge of their duties.

MR. McILWRAITH said that his observations with regard to Mr. Deas had been provoked by the argument used against the

late Agent-General, who was blamed for employing Mr. Deas. He could say from his own knowledge, and from what he had been able to gather from scientific journals, that Mr. Deas was at the head of his profession, and that there was no engineer to whom the late Agent-General would have been more justified to go. Mr. Deas had been selected by the Yarra Yarra River Commission to advise their works. He could not see how the late Agent-General could be blamed for employing him.

Mr. PALMER said he did not know Mr. Deas, but he believed from all that he had heard that that gentleman was an engineer of the highest standing. If Mr. Macalister's statement was a libel, Mr. Deas could and would no doubt take his remedy, the libel having been published. He could not understand why the Premier should attack Mr. Daintree, except on the supposition that he availed himself of every opportunity to attack that gentleman. He thought it most unkind of the Premier to make the charge he had against Mr. Daintree, knowing how ill he was, and that his illness was owing mainly to the persecution he had suffered at the hands of Mr. Macalister, who went home to hunt him out of his place and secure it for himself. That was a nice transaction indeed. He also thought that the Colonial Treasurer was to blame for sanctioning the payment of the sum of £1,500.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : That was to get possession of the dredge.

Mr. PALMER said it seemed that everything connected with the "Groper" had been greatly mismanaged out here. He had heard beforehand that the engineer who was sent out to put the machinery together, and who was discharged, declared that the machinery was being put together quite wrongly, and that a mess was being made of the job. With reference to his charge against Mr. Macalister, as regards the firm of Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts, he would remark that the Premier had the means of ascertaining whether it was true. It was not his (Mr. Palmer's) duty to supply the proof. He was not prosecutor; but the Premier was, and was paid for it. The Government would also find out, if they made inquiries, that ships belonging to Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts, were conveying immigrants. The "Indus," which had brought out immigrants, was one of their vessels. Everything was going back to them, and this state of things would continue so long as the present Agent-General remained in office.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the vessel referred to by the honourable member for Port Curtis was a chartered vessel. Surely that could not be brought as a charge against the Agent-General, who had nothing to do with the chartering of the vessel. It had been strongly urged that Mr. Mac-

alister and Mr. Hamilton should be separated. He did not believe there was a more efficient officer than Mr. Hamilton, and he believed that he was a great saving to the colony. He could assure the committee that when he accepted office, he expected that he should discover something that was to Mr. Macalister's disadvantage; but, so far as he could judge, the business of the country was being done by him with the greatest care and attention. He believed that Mr. Hamilton was a thorough business man; that he was the best man who had ever been in that office, and that he could conduct the business without the assistance of the Agent-General at all. Some reference had been made to immigration lecturers. He had always said that the country was paying too much for lecturers. He believed that they had done service in the past, but the time had now come when they could be dispensed with. He was of opinion that the class of immigrants the colony was now getting was not due to the lecturers but to the local agents. As regards the conveyance of freight by Messrs. Taylor, Bethell, and Roberts' ships, he might mention that, when he visited the Queensland office, he was informed that that firm had been precluded from tendering for the conveyance of immigrants, but that they had a perfect right to compete with other firms for the freight. Some remark had been made respecting Mr. Taylor and Mr. Macalister; and he (Mr. Miles) knew something of Mr. Taylor; he had hunted up successful tenderers to get a share of their work, and the Agent-General must be a very strong-minded man to get rid of him. He thought Mr. Taylor was a man of no principle, and the less that the Agent-General had to do with him the better.

Question—That the item objected to be reduced by £500—put.

The committee divided.

AYES, 13.

Messrs. Palmer, Thompson, McIlwraith, Hockings, Graham, Haly, Buzacott, Stevenson, Macrossan, McLean, Groom, Ivory, and Perkins.

NOES, 12.

Messrs. Douglas, Dickson, Griffith, Miles, G. Thorn, Fraser, J. Thorn, Tyrel, Beattie, Foote, Murphy, and Low.

Question, accordingly, resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed, and the committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

SUPREME COURT BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Legislative Council of a Bill to amend the Supreme Court Act of 1874, so far as it relates to the Northern Judge.

The Bill was read a first time.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to twelve o'clock.