

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 13 AUGUST 1878

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 13 August, 1878.

Questions.—Chairman of Committees.—Message from the Governor.—Chairman of Committees.—Petition.—Message from the Legislative Council.—Return.—Extension of the Northern Railway.—Supply.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Attorney-General—

When Civil servants refuse to pay their debts or submit to decisions of debts courts—having no goods to seize—is the head of the department warranted in protecting the debtor against the creditor, by declining to interfere in the usual payment of salary?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Griffith) replied—

It is not considered expedient for Government departments to undertake the duty of paying or seeing to the payment of debts due by persons employed in the public service.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Minister for Works—

1. When is the ironwork for the bridges on the first section of the Gympie railway expected to arrive?

2. Will the delay in furnishing such material entitle the contractors to compensation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Miles) replied—

1. The first shipment is expected in October.
2. No.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The PREMIER (Mr. Douglas) moved, without previous notice, that leave of absence be granted to James Morgan, Esquire, Chairman of Committees, for the remainder of the session.

Question put and passed.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER informed the House that he had received messages from His Excellency the Governor, giving his assent to an Appropriation Bill, the Toowoomba Gas and Coke Company's Bill, and the Inclosed Lands Bill.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The PREMIER moved, without previous notice, that Simon Fraser, Esquire, act as Chairman of Committees during the absence, on leave, of James Morgan, Esquire.

Question put and passed.

PETITION.

Mr. MOREHEAD presented a petition from certain residents and householders praying that the Northern Railway might be extended from Emerald Downs in the direction of Barcaldine Downs, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, returning the Lands Resumption Bill, without amendment.

RETURN.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL laid on the table of the House a part return to an order, made on the motion of the honourable member for Toowoomba, relative to the costs incurred by the colony in the Privy Council appeal cases of the Queen *v.* Davenport and others. In doing so, he said that the return contained part of the costs in the case of Queen *v.* Davenport and the whole of the costs in the case of Fisher *v.* Tully. The costs in the case of Queen *v.* Smith were not yet known; and he would therefore wait till the return was completed before moving that it be printed.

EXTENSION OF THE NORTHERN
RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving the motion standing in his name, said it was unnecessary for him to give any explanation. He was not aware that there would be any exception taken to the motion; but if there were, he would reserve to himself the right of replying to any remarks that might be made. He moved—

1. That this House approves the plans, sections, and book of reference of the extension of the railway from Emerald Downs to Retreat Creek, as laid upon the table of this House.

2. That the said plans, sections, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council for their approval, by message in the usual form.

Mr. WALSH said it was a most extraordinary thing for a member of the Government to get up and propose the approval of plans about which he himself was not able to say anything, and to reserve to himself the right of replying to any remarks that might be made in reference to them. The approval of those plans would lead to enormous expenditure, yet the Minister for Works was utterly unable to offer any justification of the expenditure, route, or anything else in connection with them; he simply reserved to himself the right to answer any objections that might be made. He (Mr. Walsh) had never before known a case in which such meagre, scanty information had been afforded to the Legislative Assembly. It was a wild proposition, made probably by the Engineer-in-Chief, and favoured by the Minister for Works; and he did not believe that two members of the House had seen the plans, sections, and books of reference which had been laid on the table. Yet the Minister for Works got up and asked the House to assent to the plans,

telling them, at the same time, that he had nothing whatever to say in recommendation of them. If the whole of the Government were to be judged by one member of it, the country must be in a deplorable state, as it was governed by a Ministry the chief expenditure of which was carried on by the Minister for Works, who had nothing whatever to say in justification of this proposed enormous outlay. The railway was being made to nowhere, no one knew where it was to end, what it was to penetrate, or what business was to be transacted by it; and yet the honourable member said nothing about it, but reserved the prudential right of answering any remarks that might be made, presumed by honourable members on the Opposition side of the House. It was time this way of carrying on expenditure was stopped, if the country was to be saved from utter bankruptcy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What about your three million loan?

Mr. WALSH said he would tell the honourable member. They had a Government that had betrayed so much fear that when an honourable member on the Opposition side of the House proposed an expenditure, they came, *ad misericordiam*, and said "You have stolen our proposition from us, robbed us of our programme." The loan for three millions proposed by a member of the Opposition side of the House had covered honourable members on the other side with eternal shame; because no sooner was it proposed, to the astonishment of the country, and, perhaps, to the astonishment of some honourable members, than the occupants of the Treasury benches said, "That is exactly what we were going to do; you have forestalled our intention, and stolen our very policy." The honourable the Minister for Works, who, when he sat on the Opposition side, was always talking about the lamentable extravagance of the Government, should be the last to twit him (Mr. Walsh) or any other honourable member about the £3,000,000 loan. The very mention of that subject would cover the Government with an inglorious shame, which he (Mr. Walsh) would be very sorry to share. It was bad enough for honourable members, who did not believe in it, to propose it; but it was ten thousand times worse when a Government, for the purpose of holding their places, said that the policy had been stolen from them. After all, honourable members of the Opposition side would have been perfectly justified, if their proposal had been the means of ridding the country of such an incubus, the chief of which was the Minister for Works. A pause should be made before going on with this kind of legislation. The House was asked to sanction a very large expenditure, to justify which nothing was put before

honourable members but plans, sections, and books of reference, which he did not believe more than two or three members had had opportunities of seeing. He was perfectly sure the Minister for Works had not seen them, or that, if he had seen them, he did not understand them. They were not told what the expenditure was to be, nor was any justification for the work given, and he protested against the revenue of the country being so recklessly expended.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the Railway Act of 1872 clearly provided that the plans, sections, and books of reference of every railway should be laid upon the table of the House, and there was no provision made for any deviation from the plans approved by the House. He found, however, that one of the sections which he held in his hand was described as a trial section, which assumed that a permanent one was to be made afterwards. He had no doubt it should have been described as a section only, and he would therefore suggest that the honourable the Speaker strike out the word "trial" and that the plans be then approved as sections of the railway. The difficulty had arisen from the clumsy way in which the plans had been put on the table. He had no complaint to make about the plans, but the House should approve those according to which the railway was to be made.

Mr. BAILEY hoped this would be the last occasion on which the Government would be under the painful necessity of borrowing a policy from the other side of the House. Honourable members were constantly hearing about the extension of two or three main trunk lines, but they heard nothing about the extension of the coast railways. He was not going to object to the motion, but he frankly confessed that he looked upon it as a robbery of the other side, and he hoped the country would look upon it as such, and as carrying out main trunk railways at the cost of the coast districts. It was time the coast districts came to a proper sense of what was going on. They had paid for the construction of 400 or 500 miles of trunk railways, and they should now take the matter into their own hands, look at home, and realise the maxim that charity began there. It was quite time that the party on the Government side of the House, if there was one, began to consult not only the interest of the far west, but also the interests of those nearer home. On the coast were numbers of mines and all sorts of industries calculated to increase the revenue and the prosperity of the colony; yet any railway proposed there was called a swindle, and, if sanctioned, was dribbled along at such a rate that before it was constructed the people were almost starved out. A definite policy should be adopted,

and he hoped it was the last time that one would be borrowed from the other side of the House. He was inclined to think that even the honourable member for the Warrego agreed with him and other honourable members in thinking that the two systems of railways should be carried on together. Very little progress was being made with the branch lines which had been sanctioned, whilst every few months they heard that some twenty, thirty, or forty miles of main trunk lines had been opened up.

The PREMIER said he was surprised at the remarks of the honourable member for Wide Bay. The honourable member for Warrego got up and denounced the extension of the railway as a further example of the extravagance of the Government; and then the honourable member for Wide Bay accused the Government of having stolen the policy of the Opposition. He wished, however, particularly to object to the remarks of the honourable member for Wide Bay that this railway was being made at the cost of the coast districts. He simply submitted that the statement was not correct. The railway was made at the cost of the country through which it ran, and that country was amply sufficient to meet all demands for any possible extension in that direction. The Central district of Queensland contained land admirably suited to be sold for the purpose of making this railway, as provided by the Act under which the line was commenced. The railway was not to be constructed at the cost of the people living in the coast districts, and he only called attention to the statement in order to contradict it.

Mr. THOMPSON said the honourable member for Wide Bay had done good service in calling attention to the system under which railways were constructed. He (Mr. Thompson) saw that branch railways were to be constructed and paid for by the districts through which they passed. If such were not the case, the Premier could give the statement a denial. The scheme was enunciated in an organ of the Government, and it stated that municipalities were to be forced on the districts, and through their means the people would have to pay for the railways themselves.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honourable member for Bremer did not give the name of the Government organ. He (the Attorney-General) had never heard of such a scheme before, and it appeared to him that the means suggested would be impracticable to do anything of the kind, and entirely inappropriate. He could assure the honourable member that the scheme did not emanate from the Government. Possibly it was the honourable member's own.

Mr. GRIMES said there must be a point at which it would be necessary that they

should stop carrying out trunk lines of railway at such a large expenditure, and from that point adopt a line such as had been described by the honourable member for Maranoa, equal to a speed of four or five miles an hour, which would be quite sufficient for the requirements of the country. It was desirable that a stand should be made somewhere, and a description of line adopted which would be sufficient for the traffic of the country, and which could be constructed at such a cost that the returns would be calculated to pay something towards the cost of construction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had made inquiry and found that the plans &c., had been laid on the table in the usual form. They were Parliamentary plans, not working plans, and were sufficient to enable the House to decide whether to adopt them or not. If the honourable member for Maranoa objected to the form in which they were presented, he had no objection to withdraw them, and bring them down in an amended form. The question of the Northern Railway had been debated over and over again, and they were told the other night that unless action was at once taken, the engineer would be compelled to disband his staff of workmen. The Government was endeavouring to meet the wishes of the House, and yet the honourable member for Maranoa objected to the plans because they spoke of a trial survey.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he did not disapprove of the plans, but he disapproved of the plans being called trial plans.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was informed that this was the usual form in which plans were presented for the approval of Parliament; but if it was objected to, he was, as he had said before, quite willing to withdraw them and introduce them in another form. The documents had been laid on the table for the last ten days, and if honourable members had not chosen to look at them, it was not his fault. He believed it was the desire of the House that this extension should be proceeded with, and the Government were anxious that nothing should occur to cause the staff to be broken up and disbanded.

Mr. PALMER said the only objection he had to the plans was, that the section was too short. From the names of the engineers attached, he was perfectly certain that the plans were correct.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. Dickson), the House went into Committee of Supply.

On the question that £2,056 be granted for the Museum—

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Garrick) said that when this motion was made on

last Thursday night it was determined to postpone the further consideration of it until the report of the Trustees of the Museum could be circulated among honourable members. That report was now in the hands of honourable members, and he need do no more than read a very few paragraphs from it. The second paragraph stated:—

“The means at the disposal of the Board have also been of too limited a character to permit of very extensive additions being made to the collections, nor could very much more have been done with advantage, had it been otherwise, for want of room to display further objects; the Board have, however, to the best of their ability and judgment, expended the vote made to the institution (£600) in the maintenance of the collections in hand in the best possible state of preservation, and the mounting and displaying of such additional specimens as could be found room for, and in the purchase of collections and objects calculated to increase the attractiveness and usefulness of the Museum, especially having regard to their suitability for the new premises when completed.”

The sixth paragraph referred to the time at which the building would be ready for occupation; and this had been confirmed by the Colonial Architect, who informed him that the trustees might be in occupation by February next. With regard to the items mentioned in the estimate, the trustees addressed him a letter dated the 9th March last. As to the Curator's salary, they said:—

“With regard to the first item, ‘Curator's salary, £300,’ the Board are strongly of opinion that the services of a first-class man should be secured from the old country, and they think that £600 per annum is the least that could be offered (particularly as there are no quarters provided for residence) likely to attract the attention of a man of such attainments as would raise the institution to the position it is hoped it will command. Should the selection of this officer be left in the hands of the Board, which they assume, as a matter of course, will be the case, it is proposed to open negotiations through the highest scientific institutions in the United Kingdom, with the view of obtaining the very best assistance in this all-important step.

With reference to the second item—“Messenger, £104”—the trustees said:—

“The present messenger's salary is only £88 per annum; this the Board consider inadequate, particularly as the occupant has held the post for several years, has performed his duties in a satisfactory manner, and in fact has responsibilities of a rather more onerous character than those of an ordinary messenger.”

Then came the item of £52 for clerical assistance, regarding which they said:—

“Hitherto the custodian (Mr. Staiger) has performed the duties of secretary to the Board, but his time is fully occupied in his position of analytical chemist, and there being a good deal of clerical work to be performed in connection

with the institution, the Board propose to secure the services of a paid officer temporarily to the 31st December."

The next item was "bonus to custodian, £100," and on this matter the trustees said:—

"Bearing in mind the energy and attention devoted in the past to the interests of the Museum by the present custodian (Mr. Staiger) and the probable increase of work towards the period of removal to the new building, and also the fact that no special remuneration has been made for the performance of these duties (the office of custodian being attached to that of analytical chemist), the Board feel bound to in some way recognise these services, and they now propose that a sum of £100 shall be awarded him."

The sum originally named by the trustees for contingencies and purchase of specimens was £2,000, but the amount put down on the Estimates was only £1,500. On this item the trustees said:—

"Regarding the sum of £2,000 proposed for contingencies and purchase of specimens, &c., this is, of course, only an approximate estimate of what may be required. That extensive purchases of collections and specimens of interest must be made is certain, and the sooner the Board are in a position to open negotiations with this object the better, as considerable time must elapse in communicating with Europe and other parts of the world with this view.

"Again, the services of skilled taxidermists will have to be employed to a considerable extent, in the preparing and mounting of specimens, especially during the coming financial year. The Board have not recommended the appointment of a permanent officer to this post for this year; but it will, no doubt, be found highly advisable and most conducive to the interests of the institution to have one in the future. The whole expenses of the botanical department, including salary of the keeper of Herbarium, have also to be defrayed from this amount. This has been hitherto provided by grant in the estimates of the Land Department; but it seems hardly worth while to have separate grants to the same institution. The Board have contracted a liability of £160, being the balance of purchase money for a zoological collection now in the Museum, but which the present year's vote was insufficient to meet. This will be a further charge upon the coming year's contingencies, and when the expenses of removal, purchase of material, &c., are also considered, and provision made for moderate additions to the scientific literature of the Museum library, a feature the importance of which cannot be ignored, the Board do not think that the sum asked for will be at all too large."

He had been informed by a gentleman who had taken an active part in the management of the Museum that the curator's salary of £600 had been decided upon after reference to Professor McCoy, of Melbourne. The trustees were convinced that the present system of management could not be continued, and that it was impos-

sible for the analytical chemist to fulfil his own duties and those of curator as well—in other words, that Mr. Staiger was not the man to have the administrative charge of the new Museum.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that while there was a good deal of information in the report of the trustees, it was evident that a good deal of information had been suppressed with regard to the capacity of the analytical chemist. He did not think the colony was in a position to go to such an expense as was here indicated. The committee had already voted £350 for an analytical chemist, and £88 for an assistant, and now they were asked to provide the Museum with a new staff of officers. They were actually asked to go to more expense in this direction than the Government of Victoria, which paid to the manager and superintendent of its Technological and Scientific Museum £350, with an additional sum of £200 as analytical chemist. Here they were asked to pay £350 to an analytical chemist, £150 for an assistant, and £600 for a curator of the Museum into the bargain. This was a most extravagant proposal, especially after the admission of the Minister for Lands that the present curator was unfit for the position. It was only on the understanding that Mr. Staiger could perform both duties that the vote for his salary was allowed to pass on the last occasion. His own opinion was that the Museum building would not be ready for occupation before the next Estimates came on, and he would suggest that the Government withdraw the item, and endeavour to come to a more economical arrangement.

Mr. McLEAN said that curator might be a more high-sounding title than director; but the director of the Victorian Museum was only paid £350 a-year, while in this young colony it was proposed to change the name to curator, and give the holder of the office £600 a-year. For a colony like Queensland, he preferred a director with £350 a-year to a curator with £600, the duty of both being merely to look after a few specimens of natural history in the museum. Government would do well, he thought, to withdraw the vote, and make some less expensive arrangement. If the present analytical chemist could not undertake the two duties, the sooner they got a man who could, the better for the colony. Last session they were told that the building would be finished this year, and now they were told that it would be opened in February; but, to judge from appearance, it would not be finished before the House met again. There was plenty of time, therefore, to consider how some more economical arrangement could be arrived at.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that, with regard to the completion of the building, he had been under the same impression as the honourable member for Logan; but

the Colonial Architect had assured him that it would be in the occupation of the trustees by February next. He had never intimated, as seemed to be imagined by the honourable member for Maranoa, that the duties of analytical chemist and curator could be performed by one person. On the contrary, his opinion was that the two offices should be kept apart. With reference to Victoria, it should be remembered that there were two museums in Melbourne—the National Museum at the University, and the Technological Museum in Swanston street; and that Professor McCoy was not only director of both, but held the chair of natural history in the University, his total emoluments being at least £1,500 a-year. There was also a far larger staff of clerks and assistants than would be required here for many years to come, and there was also a secretary to the trustees at £350 a-year. Comparing Brisbane with Melbourne, therefore, the proposed salary for the curator was by no means too large. The curator of the Sydney Museum, besides his salary, had quarters, fuel, and attendance.

Mr. McILWRAITH contended that he was right in making this comparison between the curator of the Brisbane Museum and the director of the Technological and Industrial Museum in Melbourne. There were one or two names on the list of trustees who were well able to fill temporarily the office of curator until the Government were able to find a gentleman whose abilities would enable him to fill the two offices of curator and analytical chemist. It had yet to be shown that an analytical chemist was needed here, and it was certain that the colony was not yet in a position to pay for such a luxury. He would repeat that the salary of Mr. Staiger would not have been passed the other night, had it not been considered that he was to take charge of the combined offices.

Mr. McLEAN said it did not augur well for the new institution that clerical assistance was already required. The probabilities were, that next year a secretary would be asked for at a salary of £300 or £400.

Mr. MOREHEAD wished to know in what part of last year's Estimates he would be able to find the items of the £700 granted to the analytical chemist?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the vote for last year appeared in the Estimates in the honourable member's hand.

Mr. GRAHAM said the amount for last year appeared in the estimates of the Works department. He was astonished that the Minister for Lands was not aware of that.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was aware of the fact, and he wished to know if the Minister for Lands, who ought to know it, was aware of it. That honourable gentle-

man had told them that the Museum would probably be ready in February; but he (Mr. Morehead) ventured to express a hope that it would never be finished. It was a hideous building, placed in the most unsuitable site that could be found; and he thought it would much better to strike out the whole of this proposed vote until the Museum was completed.

Mr. WALSH did not hesitate to say that the Government in all their dealings, except as far as their administration of the Crown lands of the colony were concerned, were perpetually bungling. The very fact that the Museum had been placed where it was, was a most egregious blunder, and he could not understand how the citizens of Brisbane submitted so complacently to such an innovation, by which the beauty of the city was so materially injured. Then, if this was to be a museum for the whole colony, was the building at all adequate, or could it be made adequate for the purpose? It was as small in its character as the Government were in theirs. It exactly represented the Government. They did not look at all to the future—it would last during their tenure of office, and that was long enough. There was not the slightest chance of the building being completed during the next twelve months, and yet the committee were called upon to vote the salary of a curator. Was ever such nonsense propounded before? It would be fully a year before the building was finished, and yet so anxious were the Government for patronage as well as pay that they came down and asked the House to vote a salary for some imaginary gentleman to fill an imaginary office. He maintained that if the colony was to rise to its proper position in the scale of colonies, that they should have in charge of such an institution as a museum, where technological education was imparted, a man of the very highest talent, no matter what they had to pay for his services. He should be a man able to educate the rising generation in all such matters, to transact all necessary business, and to conduct the correspondence of the institution in such a manner as to command the respect of other countries. But there was no provision for such a position as that. Was it possible, that for the paltry sum of £300 they could get a man possessing such attainments? He should be not only a scientific man, but a philosopher, a scholar, and a man well read in every respect, and it was proposed to vote £300 for the services of such a man! He (Mr. Walsh) was sorry he was not present when the salary of the analytical chemist was voted, for he should have demanded from the Government some proof of the efficiency of that gentleman—some report showing the value of his services during the past year, which would justify them in voting his salary for the next year. The

Government had shown no justification for it, but simply relied upon the concurrence and obedience of honourable members who supported them. What proof had they of the competency of the analytical chemist? What had he done to justify his salary being voted again? He (Mr. Walsh) did not mean to say that this officer was not qualified to occupy the position, but they had no proof of it; there was nothing whatever to lead the country to believe that they had at that moment a trustworthy analytical chemist. The responsibility was cast upon the Government of showing that they had confidence in this gentleman, and that they were justified in inviting people to consult him as an analytical chemist.

Mr. BEOR would like to know what the trustees meant by wanting "the services of a first-class man." By "first-class" did they mean a man who had taken first-class honours at a university, or was it a person who always travelled first-class on a railway, or what did it mean? If they meant a man first-class in all the particular qualities which would be necessary to enable him to superintend every department of a museum, they would not get him for £600 a-year. Such a man would have to be a Fellow of the Royal Society, of the Geological Society, of the Botanical Society, a chemist, and a great many other things. It was ridiculous to expect to get such a man for £600. And if the Museum was going to cost such large sums as it now appeared it would, it was a luxury that ought never to have been entered upon. In his opinion, the proper course to pursue was to see if there were gentlemen in the colony who would devote themselves to particular branches, as they did in the old country, and who would be far better able to do the work than any curator, who had to superintend them all. If that were done, it would be quite sufficient to pay—as in the country museums in the old country—a custodian £100 or £150 a-year, which would be ample for the purpose for which such an officer was required.

The PREMIER said the honourable member for Bowen was rather hypercritical as to the expression "first-class man." What was meant was no doubt a gentleman of sufficient scientific attainments, who would throw his whole heart and soul into the work, and who would be competent to represent the colony, in foreign countries, as correspondent on all scientific matters. Of course a really first-class man would mean a man with nothing short of world-wide fame; but what they wanted was a thoroughly well-educated scientific man, capable of holding his own with other scientific men in Europe and elsewhere; and unless they had such a man they would not have an efficient museum. He thought the Museum was a thoroughly popular institution. It was resorted to by

a large number of people—to a greater extent probably than similar institutions in the other colonies, and with even the insufficient appliances at hand, it was doing good educational work. One of the objects of the trustees in selecting the present site in preference to others offered was that it would be easily accessible to the public, being in one of the public streets. Another advantage in the site was that it was remarkably free from dust, which was a very important consideration. Whether the committee voted this money now or not was perhaps immaterial. But when they did vote a sum for the purpose, he hoped it would be sufficient to secure a really good man to take charge of the Museum. No doubt there were competent men in the colony, such as Mr. Gregory, Mr. Miskin, and Mr. Bernays, and Dr. O'Doherty, who were really scientific men; but they were not prepared to devote time, except occasionally, to the working of the institution, which must be carried on by a competent man, possessing high scientific attainments. He submitted that of the amount asked for, the salary of the curator was the most necessary, because without it the institution could not be properly conducted or progress. It would take probably six months before a competent man could be appointed, and that was a reason why the money should be voted at once, in order that proper care might be taken in selecting a person who would be ready when the building was completed to take charge of everything connected with the institution.

Mr. KIDGELL said he saw by the report of the trustees that the system of exchanges had not been lost sight of, but he could not altogether agree with that, because upwards of twelve months since he applied for an exchange for the Gympie Museum in connection with the School of Mines there, and he experienced the greatest difficulty in getting it attended to. This year he again repeated the request in connection with some specimens represented as having been donated by the Italian Government. These specimens, he had been given to understand, were from a formation very similar to the west of Gympie, and a duplicate of them would be an immense advantage in the Mining Museum at Gympie, but he had not been able to effect an exchange. One of the first objects of the trustees should be to disseminate as much information as they could, and also to distribute specimens when duplicates could be given without detriment to the original collection, which he understood could have been done in the case he referred to. He knew there was some difficulty in getting at the specimens in consequence of the way in which they were packed away, but still he thought something more might have been done in the matter than had been. In fact, it was much easier to get speci-

mens from Sydney and Melbourne and Ballarat than from the Brisbane Museum, and he hoped that some good reason would be given why month after month and year after year had passed without being able to get a few exchanges made which would be of great use to the inhabitants of Gympie, and especially those engaged in mining.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was informed by the trustees that, having no room to exhibit many specimens, they were stored away, and could not be got at for the purpose of making the exchanges the honourable member referred to.

Mr. GRIMES thought the amount asked for for this purpose was far larger than the committee should vote in the present condition of the colony, and that the course pursued in the past would do very well for the future. With regard to the remarks made respecting the competency of Mr. Staiger as custodian of the Museum, it appeared that he was limited to space in the exhibition of specimens, so that the blame did not rest with him, because no one could possibly exhibit specimens properly without sufficient accommodation. He believed if they voted the £600 a-year they would not get such a man as some honourable members appeared to expect. Why, they would want a regular Admirable Crichton to have all the qualifications they required; and they were not likely to get that, because different men made different lines their specialities. He thought the suggestion of the honourable member for Maranoa was a very good one; that certain gentlemen whom he named and who were competent to take charge of different departments, should be desired to do so. One of them, the Geological Surveyor of the Southern district, must have a good deal of time at his disposal, and it would not be too much to ask him to give the community the benefit of his services in this respect. He hoped the item of £300 would be withdrawn, for he did not feel justified in supporting it.

Mr. PALMER said, before the question was put, he should say a few words in defence of the present curator of the Museum. He did not know how he became analytical chemist, or anything about him in connection with that office; but he felt bound to say, having visited the Museum frequently, that the curator did as much work as it was possible for any man to do with the means at his command, even if they paid him £1,700 a-year. A man with plenty of money could do a great deal, but he liked to see fair play for every man, and he felt called upon to say, that with the means at his command, Mr. Staiger had done as much as any man could. A great deal had been said about the sort of man they were going to get, but the question was, whether they wanted such a man at all at present? In his opinion they did not. From his

experience of public buildings in Brisbane, the trustees would not get the Museum next February, and if they got it the February following, they would be very fortunate. It would, therefore, never do to vote the money, because the Government would only hand it over to the trustees, and they would spend it somehow. He believed Mr. Staiger was quite competent to remove the museum from one building to the other, and to get it in order for whoever was to take charge of it afterwards.

Mr. McILWRAITH said if the whole amount of the vote was negatived, it would not express the opinion of the committee, because some honourable members were in favour of keeping things as they were. He therefore moved that the following items be struck out:—Curator, £300; bonus to custodian £100; and £900 off contingencies, making £1,300, and leaving the vote about the same as last year.

Mr. GRIMES asked if some person had been appointed clerical assistant, or was the work distributed over several persons?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Nobody has been appointed.

Mr. McLEAN asked if the messenger was to be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He was not. Honourable members would see that when the trustees moved into the new building they would want more for contingencies than was voted last year; and he therefore submitted to the honourable member for Maranoa that a larger sum should be allowed.

Question—That £756 only be granted for the service—put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS in moving that a sum of £2,830 should be granted for Secretary for Public Works, said the item included four increases—three of £20 each, and one of £25. They were put on the Estimates last year, but withdrawn before being submitted. They were again brought forward this year, so that the committee might have the opportunity of saying whether they should be granted or not. There was an additional clerk at £155 who was previously paid from contingencies.

Mr. McILWRAITH thought this was the proper time to refer to the position in which the Government were placed with regard to public works votes, or rather to the financial position so far as votes for public works were concerned. The Colonial Treasurer estimated that there would be a surplus of £24,000 at the end of the ensuing financial year. It was very questionable whether there would be such a surplus; assuming it, however, as likely to occur, the House had already passed special votes for £24,000 for public works in different parts of the colony, and there would consequently be no surplus at all left to the Colonial Treasurer. At the same time, as the honourable gentleman himself had

pointed out, it was very desirable that they should be able to show a surplus, especially at the present time. It was plainly the duty of the Government to defend the Treasury, and now was their time to state how they proposed to save sufficient to make provision for the £24,000 already specially voted. If the Government went on with their public works estimates, and they were granted, the responsibility would lie with the Government of having voted a large sum of money which they knew could not be provided by the Treasury. The Colonial Treasurer ought to tell the committee in what respect and on what items he proposed to make alterations, and if no alterations were contemplated, in what way he proposed to find the money.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was not prepared to recede from the Estimates which he had submitted. The committee, in proceeding through the Estimates, would doubtless give them every consideration. Although the Government believed that the various items were required, the committee would no doubt exercise a prudent consideration, as had been done with other parts of the Estimates. It was very undesirable, however, that he should be called on to say which items he was prepared to dispense with to make room for the services specially voted. These votes had been carried under circumstances which led to strong expostulations being made by him. He pointed out that the Government had framed the Estimates according to the estimated ways and means, and, in view of the small margin which was anticipated, that he could not see his way to giving the additional applications favourable consideration. That was the position he still took up. The committee could not fairly expect him, because a certain amount had been voted for other purposes, to disclose now a fresh financial policy, either by the excision of certain items, or by proposing fresh taxation, or some other fiscal policy of providing ways and means. He had no doubt these disclosures would come in due time, but, at present, he objected to being placed in the position of making a financial statement as to providing ways and means for votes other than those under consideration.

Mr. BAILEY thought it would be as well before taking the Minister for Works' estimate, if the committee understood the principle that was intended to be adopted by them. Taking the first five groups, he found that West Moreton received £3 9s. 7d. per adult male for road votes; East Moreton, £4 16s.; Darling Downs, £2 5s.; Maranoa and Western Districts, £1 10s. 2d.; and Wide Bay and Burnett, £2 10s. 7d. If the West Moreton group was taken as the standard—£3 9s. 7d. per adult male

—the amount for East Moreton would be not £35,240, but only £24,809. Darling Downs would be entitled to £20,307, instead of £13,150; Maranoa and Western Districts would not stand at £5,300, but at £12,229; and the Wide Bay and Burnett would be entitled to £18,603, instead of £13,535. He had taken a very fair standard—that of the West Moreton District, not the Government pet district of East Moreton—and he found that the sum total of these five groups would very nearly approach the amount proposed to be spent in them by the Government, but it would be differently divided. He was sure it would be better to have an understanding on this point—whether they were to have any standard; whether because a particular district was a favoured one it was to receive 30, 40, or 50 per cent. more for its roads; or whether all districts were to be dealt with on an equal footing. A division on the adult population basis was a fair one, and he suggested that the sums he had mentioned would make a much fairer estimate than the one the Minister for Works would propose.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the honourable member for Wide Bay had put the matter very clearly. If the Colonial Treasurer went on with the Estimates as prepared, he would occupy a wrong position, for he would be deliberately asking the House to vote money which the Government had not to spend. The step he (Mr. McIlwraith) was taking was quite fair, and it was his duty to point out that circumstances had changed since the Financial Statement had been made. At that time no money had been voted. At the present time £25,000 had been voted, thereby wiping out the prospects of a surplus. It consequently became the duty of the Government to provide additional funds or to curtail their estimates. No doubt the Colonial Treasurer had expostulated repeatedly about voting these sums of money; but, in spite of his expostulations, a majority of the House had over and over again affirmed that money should be granted. As Colonial Treasurer, he was bound to follow the dictates of the House, and either find the money, or give place to a Colonial Treasurer who could, either by imposing additional taxation, or by reducing the Estimates. If the Colonial Treasurer could renounce all responsibility by saying he was not able to provide for the votes, where was the responsibility of Government? When money was voted which the Government could not find, it was the plain duty of the Government to tell the House so, and if the House would not relax in their determination it was their plain duty to resign. For a Ministry to say that the responsibility lay on the House was absurd. A Government which deliberately submitted to the House voting

more money than the finances of the colony would allow, accepted a position which no previous Government ever accepted. When the Government themselves were not able to protect the Treasury, it was time that they gave place to other persons. The Colonial Treasurer was wrong if he thought his way out of the difficulty was to allow the House to vote as much money as they liked and left the Government to spend as much as they liked. They accepted with complacency these special votes without using the proper protest that if honourable members were not satisfied with their Estimates they should get other men to fill their places. So long as they accepted defeat after defeat, as they had repeatedly done during the present session, he could not see how it was possible to defend the Treasury. Every such vote against the Government, when the Government were not in a position to find the money, was virtually a vote of want of confidence, and the Government had submitted to that repeatedly rather than accept the proper position of letting the management of the finances go into the hands of men who could find the resources. He had been forced to refer to this matter on account of the charges often made against the Opposition, that they had connived at these special votes of money to embarrass and complicate the position of the Government. He had not done so. He had only voted money which he considered should be granted, and for every one of his votes could give a great deal better reason than could be given for nine-tenths of the Estimates before the committee.

The PREMIER (Mr. Douglas) said he could not acquit the honourable member for Maranoa of the blame which he deserved for not co-operating to some extent with the Government upon matters affecting the Treasury. The honourable member himself admitted at the outset of the session that he would assist the Government in protecting the Treasury.

Mr. McILWRAITH: I have.

The PREMIER said the honourable member had not done so. In consequence of a combination between a very compact Opposition, voting not upon the merits of the case, but against the Government *en masse*, and certain gentlemen on the Government side of the House who desired to obtain votes of money for their districts, the position had been brought about. The honourable member had no right to submit the ultimatum which he had—that the Government should alter their Estimates to suit the additional amounts that had been passed. The position was anomalous. They were at the close of a Parliament which had nearly lived its constitutional term—an unprecedented event in the history of the colony. They had only recently

closed a want of confidence debate, the result of which had been admittedly a small majority in favour of the Government.

Mr. PALMER: Very small.

The PREMIER said that parties in the House were very nearly divided, for whatever reasons he should not now attempt to explain. But, at any rate, so far as the information had been sought and indicated, the Government possessed the confidence of the House. He might go further, and say that, though it was desirable to possess a larger majority, there was no party in the House who could presume to claim a majority equal to that of the Government. If they were called upon to resign, to whom were they to resign their trust? Certainly not to the party who were the other day in a minority, and especially were the Government bound not to do so when provision had been made for an appeal to the constituent body. On a motion which was avowedly brought forward to take the government out of their hands the honourable member for Maranoa failed, and thereby practically secured to the Government a vote of confidence. He should retain his position so long as the House indicated to him that he still possessed its confidence, and no longer; but he submitted that under no circumstances should he be justified in surrendering the power which rightly belonged to the Government until the appeal to the constituent body, for which provision had been made. Honourable members opposite had no right to assume that they had the confidence of the House and the country under the present circumstances. In the discussion of the Estimates, a certain latitude was allowed; the fact was, they were discussed in detail, and he presumed that members of the House exercised their individual opinion on these matters of detail. It was true that in the present disorganised state of parties many of the special votes had been passed in a way which he deplored, and that the result had been to place additional burden upon the Treasury. The Government had submitted what they considered sufficient for the year; and the vote which they asked considerably exceeded the amount voted last year. The honourable member for Wide Bay had said the amounts were unfairly divided to a certain extent. He was quite ready to argue that point out. Last year £140,150, was voted, and this year they asked for £175,010, which was a considerable increase, not unjustified they believed by the wants of the country. It was possible, however, that the House might take a view which might lead it to modify the votes which Government proposed. It was certainly not a question of Ministerial responsibility if the House reduced them by £10,000, £15,000, or even £20,000. The Government were

bound to submit their Estimates, and hoped they would receive fair consideration. The Government believed that in the old districts where the people were more thickly settled than in the outside districts, roads were more required. The very fact of settlement involved the formation of roads. In the bush where the population was scattered the ordinary bush tracks were generally sufficient for all purposes of traffic. It was necessary, no doubt, to construct bridges and adapt the bush roads to the purposes of traffic, but admittedly roads were not required so much as in the more settled districts; there permanent roads were necessary. He hoped, therefore, that the Estimates would be considered on their merits, and that the House would exercise its discretion where necessary; but on no ground were the Government justified in accepting the position entailed by the argument of the honourable member opposite.

Mr. PALMER said a lamer defence had never been made on behalf of a Ministry than the reply just given by the Premier to the speech of the honourable member for Maranoa. He had begged the question altogether, and gone away from the argument used by the honourable member. The honourable member had stated very fairly that a Ministry who could not defend the Treasury or protect themselves from their own followers, and dared not resign, were not fit to hold office, and he agreed with him and said the argument was unanswerable. They had a Ministry who were so lost to a sense of their position that they dared not put their foot down and say to their followers, "You will take the consequences if you don't support us." Was there ever a Ministry which allowed Estimates to be carried against them night after night as this one had done? The leader of the Opposition had promised to help the Government in protecting the Treasury. Had he not saved the Treasury from the £19,000 asked for by the honourable member for Cook; but where the Opposition saw gross favouritism shown to some districts, and saw districts left out which should not have been, they were perfectly right in carrying votes for such districts. He noticed that the honourable member for Cook was down on the paper for £20,000 again, and if reports that he had read in the papers were true, he had been aided and abetted in putting the notice on the paper by the Minister for Works. If any Ministry was so one-sided and partial as to leave out districts which had been shown by statistics and figures over and over again to be entitled to roads and bridges, the Opposition had but one course to adopt. The only argument that had been used against them was, that in thickly-populated districts the Govern-

ment were bound to spend more money. Would that argument hold good regarding the Darling Downs or East and West Moreton? It would not. East Moreton however, got the largest amount of money, for what purpose might easily be guessed. The Colonial Treasurer talked of defending the Treasury. The honourable gentleman himself had attended a public meeting of his constituents which had been called to urge upon the Government to put a sum of money on the Estimates for a road which was refused last year as utterly worthless. He did not know what it was called, but it no doubt re-appeared on the Estimates this year in some shape. There was a sum down for a bridge from Caxton street to Fernberg road. It was not wanted, for they had a really good bridge, only a little way out of the road. Then there was a culvert for the old Cemetery road. Why, it was almost within the municipality, and the Colonial Treasurer talked of defending the Treasury! He went to a public meeting, and promised to get an amount put upon the Estimates which was refused last year, and had done it. He did not believe that if the whole Ministry were examined on their oath or honour, they could tell where the half of these votes were to be spent. They were like the useless Ithaca Creek Bridge, stuck on because the foreman of Works or some of their constituents said they were wanted. The speech of the leader of the Opposition remained unanswered. If the Government could not defend their Treasury, they were not fit to hold their position, and the majority for which the Premier took such credit was a majority of which he should be ashamed to boast, for it was one which was gained merely by the vote of a poor old man who was suffering from the effects of a very bad accident. Besides that, it was a majority that would not bear examination in other ways. Was it not a well-known fact that an honourable gentleman sitting behind the Treasury bench said that he had sailed so long in the ship that he would not assist to scuttle it; but it was only for that reason he forbore? Were there not many honourable members who had confessed that they did not believe in the Premier's policy, but did not like to see a Ministry they had supported so long go out? Had not the House heard the honourable member for Wide Bay say that, although he was a follower, he was not a supporter of the Ministry? Was that the kind of support the Premier was proud of? Was that the sort of vote upon which the Premier plumed himself? He (Mr. Palmer) should be ashamed to remain in office upon such terms as that; for it was well known both inside of the House and out of it, that there were many members who were, like the honourable member for Wide Bay, followers without being supporters. The

Ministry, too, must have been well aware that the majority of which they boasted was only gained through the absence of the honourable member for Leichhardt, who it was well known would have voted against them; and if he had been present, instead of having a majority, they would have been beaten. Surely that was a thing not to boast about;—it would have been no majority at all but for the accident of one member, a staunch supporter of the Opposition, being absent. If the Estimates went on, he (Mr. Palmer) would have a good deal more to say about these roads and bridges; he now merely called the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to the fact that he, who should have defended the Treasury, as soon as the last session was over, went to a public meeting and promised to support a work which the House disapproved of, which was unnecessary, and which was partly within the boundaries of the municipality.

Mr. BAILEY said the proposal he made was a very simple one; and it was, that the committee might have some sort of understanding as to whether the Ministry would accede to these votes being equalised. He had pointed out to the Ministry one way in which this could be done; and if that were accepted, a satisfactory result might be arrived at; but his constituents for one would never agree that so much money should be spent upon East Moreton, and so little upon themselves. They would think, and would be justified in thinking, it was a metropolitan constituency petted in the usual way by a metropolitan Government. The Premier had said that outlying districts like the Maranoa and the Western districts were not so desirous of having a great number of roads as the more settled districts, and no doubt that was so; but his argument was, that the estimated sum required for the whole colony would, if his proposal were carried out, be very nearly similar to that at present proposed by the Estimates; all he wanted was, that the districts should be treated fairly, especially those where there was a large population settled. He was in hopes the Minister for Works would have said he would accede to some proposition of this kind. If he did not, the Government would suffer the disgrace of being defeated upon one vote after another, and the time of the committee would be uselessly wasted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the member for Wide Bay had quoted certain figures to the committee, but it was not at all clear how he had arrived at them. He (the Minister for Works) had a table before him giving an average of the expenditure per head upon the total population, as found in the returns of the Registrar-General. According to this table, the amount of expenditure per head of the population of East Moreton would be

12s. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.; West Moreton, 15s. 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.; Darling Downs, 7s. 10d. This, he might point out, was the lowest of the whole; but it would easily be accounted for, if it was remembered that there were two lines of railway running through the centre of the Darling Downs. He freely confessed that 7s. 10d. per head for the Darling Downs was a very small amount, but then the people in that district had no main road. Previous to the railways being constructed, there was always a large sum on the Estimates for communication between Toowoomba and Warwick and Toowoomba and Dalby. It was not necessary to make provision for these roads now, because the towns were connected by railways. Continuing the table, he next found that the amount per head of population in the Maranoa and Warrego districts was 14s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and Wide Bay and Burnett district 10s. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., so that after all the honourable member for Wide Bay had very little to complain of. He (Mr. Miles) had long been of opinion that figures could be manufactured to suit any and every purpose. As far as he was concerned, and as far as he was aware, the districts generally had been fairly provided for. It must be pretty well known to honourable members that the district of East Moreton was very densely populated, and that the traffic was necessarily excessive; but taking all these things into consideration, he must repeat his assertion that the wants of the colony had been very fairly provided for on the Estimates.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that the Minister for Works had stated his belief that figures could be manufactured to suit anything, and probably some persons would be inclined to apply that remark to the returns compiled in the office of the Registrar-General. If the honourable gentleman meant to say that the returns of the electoral districts fairly divided gave the sum which he read, he had made a most incorrect statement. He (Mr. McIlwraith) had during the present session taken the population in every electorate from the tables of the Premier himself, and laid the returns upon the table of the House, and they had remained there three months unchallenged. In these tables he showed the amount spent per head of population in every one of the electorates. The Attorney-General one night mumbled out a criticism on, or answer to, this table. It was impossible to gather what he said, but it appeared from the report in *Hansard* that what he did say was that in order to find out how they ought to vote for the roads of East Moreton they should take in the population of Brisbane, because it was at the end of several of the roads; and that in order to find out the same result for West Moreton, Ipswich must be taken in. But the honourable gentleman

quite forgot one thing. He (Mr. McIlwraith) had taken into consideration the grants to municipalities, and if the Attorney-General had done the same, he would have found that it would, after all, tell very much against East Moreton. The figures quoted just now by the honourable member for Wide Bay were quite correct, and, as he said, they had been lying upon the table for three months, and had never been challenged, because they could not be. The figures read by the Minister for Works were no doubt those concocted by the Attorney-General, and were perfectly wrong.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: He never saw them.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honourable member for Maranoa on a previous occasion produced the table of figures which he said correctly represented the distribution of money granted for road purposes, and it appeared that the honourable member for Wide Bay was now quoting from that table, unless the honourable member for Maranoa had supplied him with a new one. But, wherever the figures came from, they were quite inaccurate. It was not correct to say that the honourable member for Maranoa's figures had never been challenged. It was a fashion of the honourable member, when his statements were proved to be incorrect, to repeat them at some future time as if they had never been denied. This table of figures which he said had remained unchallenged, he himself (the Attorney-General) proved at considerable length on a previous occasion to be incorrect. The honourable member for Maranoa had said that his speech on that occasion was mumbled out, but the fact was, the honourable member favoured him with a running criticism as he went along, and tried all he could to put him out. The honourable gentleman, in his calculations, excluded the populations of the municipalities of Brisbane and Ipswich, but included that of the municipalities of Rockhampton and Townsville and Cooktown and Roma and Mackay, and this also had been pointed out on a previous occasion when the incorrectness of the honourable gentleman was conclusively shown. Any honourable member who had taken the trouble to go into these old calculations of the honourable gentleman, would know they were not to be relied upon in any degree. He believed the committee would not gain much by criticising these figures at the present time, but he was quite certain anybody who had taken the trouble to enter into the matter, would see that they could not be relied upon. The authentic calculations were no doubt correct, but the data upon which they were founded were the reverse. Notwithstanding this, the honourable gentleman came back to his old

statement, and his old errors. What they were talking about now amounted to this—that the honourable gentleman estimated the expenditure upon roads by the number of adult males. Was ever such a thing heard of before? If the honourable gentleman intended to come forward as champion of that view, and others of a similar kind, he should do so openly; and just before a general election was, perhaps, as good a time as any other. It would be only proper for the honourable gentleman to tell the House and the country whether he thought that the populous parts of the colony were not only to pay for trunk railways into the uninhabited districts, but were, in addition, to pay for making roads in those districts. If that was his policy, let him at once declare it, and he might rely upon it that his policy would have to be declared, before he came to that (the Government) side of the House.

MR. McILWRAITH said the honourable gentleman's policy was, to use an expression of the Premier, an unpatriotic one when he pitted the settled districts against the unsettled. In doing that he made a great mistake, and would not succeed. With regard to the accuracy of the tables that were now challenged, the Attorney-General knew perfectly well that the alleged interruptions he complained of during a speech delivered on a previous occasion were directly invited, and, as it was the habit of the honourable gentleman to do this, it was very ungrateful in him, seeing that the Opposition did sometimes oblige him in what he sought, to upbraid them with it afterwards. He (Mr. McIlwraith) was quite prepared to stand by the table he prepared three months ago. There were some trifling inaccuracies, but they did not influence the general results, and he had explained them to the House and to the Attorney-General. For instance, with regard to the Roma municipality, he (Mr. McIlwraith) admitted that the figures included that municipality, but did not include the municipality of Brisbane. But he did not exclude the Roma municipality from the Maranoa electorate simply because there was a piece added to it; instead of going to the Registrar-General for information, he himself calculated that the amount left out was equal to that which was put in, and he had no reason to think that this was not a perfectly fair estimate. At any rate it did not interfere with the general accuracy of the figures. The Minister for Works said his figures were not the figures of the Attorney-General. If so, he should like to know whose they were? At any rate, let them be laid upon the table of the House as his (Mr. McIlwraith's) were.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL said it was quite true the honourable member had explained what he had described about the

Roma municipality, but it was equally true, that he (the Attorney-General) had also explained that the explanation was a mistake.

Mr. GRIMES said they had heard a great deal about the House having voted this sum for roads, &c., but that was not the case. They had simply passed an address to His Excellency praying that the sum might be put upon the Supplementary Estimates, and when that was done, and the amount was put there, it would stand in exactly the same position as any of the votes in the Estimates now before them, and be subjected to the same scrutiny when those Estimates came before the House. To assume that the vote would pass was about the same as to assume that every other vote on the present Estimates would pass. As to the equal distribution of the public revenue in the different districts of the colony, no doubt honourable members would feel aggrieved by the amount put down for some of them; from the character of the population, the avocations they pursued, and the industries in which they were engaged, they might require the expenditure of public votes in a different direction from other districts. For instance, they did not all use the postal service to the same extent. They did not use railways to the same extent; nor the telegraph works. These were portions of the public expenditure which the State had undertaken to take charge of, because they were for the general good of the whole community. All the debate that had arisen seemed to have been based on the paltry sum of £137,000, for, when distributed over the whole of the colony, £137,000 expended in the maintenance of the main roads, was but a paltry sum compared with the amount of the interest on loans. And where did that come from, except from taxation—from the pockets of the people; or the sale of lands, which, properly speaking, were the property of the people? If they were to go in for a fair distribution of the public expenditure of the colony, they must regard all its industries, and must take into consideration all the expenditure of the Government in the different interests which he had referred to. Without this, their data would be utterly unreliable. The honourable member for Wide Bay had complained of the amount put down for his district, on the ground of unequal apportionment. He did not know the extent of settlement in the district, but perhaps it was proportionately as thickly settled as other parts of the colony; and if an undue share of the expenditure was devoted to Maryborough and the Burnett, the outside districts did not participate to the same extent, it must follow that the injustice adverted to as being perpetrated in the metropolis was perpetrated on a similar scale in other parts of the

colony. He believed that instead of the attempt to raise jealousy between districts on the part of the opposition in reference to the distribution of this paltry £137,000 being a stroke of good policy, it would be found that the honourable gentleman, the leader of the Opposition, had made a mistake, and that rather than approve of spending time in squabbling over these items, the thinking people of the community would say that large amounts had been properly apportioned to the various districts of the colony, and met with the approval of those who were eventually to pay them. He believed that the assertion that people living near the metropolis were getting more than their fair share was not in accordance with the truth of the case. In East Moreton and Bulimba there had been no expenditure for telegraph or postal services, and as to the expenditure on harbour improvements, it had not benefited in any degree the inhabitants of those districts. If they took, for example, the railways, it would be seen that the inhabitants of East Moreton and Logan generally received no benefit, except the privilege of paying for its construction. He challenged the honourable member for Maranoa to disprove what he had said. He believed that the result of the general election would be against the honourable gentleman.

Mr. IVORY said the honourable member imagined he had thrown a vast deal of light on the subject, and had taken it on himself to state that these addresses which were passed to the Governor for the appropriation of certain moneys on the Supplementary or Loan Estimates were to appear before the House in the same form again. He assumed that they would not be passed; but he would remind the honourable member that when these votes appeared on the Supplementary Estimates, it would be the duty of the Government to support them. So that, after once passing the address to the Governor, they might assume that the votes were passed altogether, with the exception of the form of passing them through the House. With regard to the remarks of the honourable member for Wide Bay as to the disproportion in the expenditure proposed for the various districts, he regretted that in a debate on a motion for a reasonable amount for the Burnett district, the honourable member took upon himself to oppose it. However, he (Mr. Ivory) did not feel disposed to treat him in the same way, but would give him his support in his endeavour to see that these road votes were fairly apportioned to the various districts of the colony. As to the speech of the honourable member for Maranoa, he agreed with the honourable member for Port Curtis, that the Premier had entirely failed to meet the arguments of the honour-

able gentleman, and that they were unanswerable. The answer was an absurdity, and was rendered all the more absurd by the remark the Attorney-General made from his seat, that the honourable member for Cook was a Government supporter. The argument of the honourable member for Maranoa was all the more forcible when it was clear that every vote that the Opposition proposed was carried, and that others were carried by the support given by members of the Opposition. Were not all those votes votes of want of confidence? Not only were the Opposition able to beat the Government on motions in which they received the support of the gentlemen sitting on the Government side, but on motions having the support solely of members of the Opposition. But putting it in the light that the votes were carried on the motion of a member on the other side and supported by the Opposition, it was tantamount to an expression of want of confidence; for it showed that Government could not command support even on a vote coming from their own side of the House. If they possessed the confidence of the House they should be able to bring up their strength, and say "If you pass that vote we shall resign." But they would not do that, and the Attorney-General never forgot the Treasury except upon a vote proposed by a Government supporter.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had looked forward with great interest to seeing the Estimates of the Minister for Works, because the honourable gentleman had taken the opportunity, during one of his speeches made during the recess, to state that in his department there were one-third more officers than he wanted. It might have been expected, therefore, that a great reduction would have appeared; but instead of that, he found that there was a greater increase in that department than in any other, the Estimates for which had as yet been submitted to the committee. If the honourable the Minister for Works wanted to deserve the character for economy, which he had, without proof, assumed, why did he not dismiss the one-third of the clerks that were not needed? They found, however, that vacancies which had occurred, instead of being left unoccupied or filled from the ranks of the department itself, had been, in more than one instance filled by foreigners, some from outside the service and some from other departments. The main point to which he wished to allude, however, was the fact that the Minister for Works, who affected stern economy, had increased his estimates more than any other Minister whose estimates had been before the committee. If the Department was already over-officered, why was there not a decrease instead of an increase?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said this estimate was not in reality increased.

It might appear so, because several officers who before were paid from contingencies now appeared on the Estimates. He did not consider it necessary to issue a *Government Gazette* whenever it was necessary to make a change, but he could inform the honourable member that several reductions had been made. He could assure the honourable member that now every officer in the department appeared on the Estimates, and the committee would therefore know exactly what each amount was for. If necessary, he could enumerate a good many officers whose services had been dispensed with.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he noticed that there appeared in the item one additional clerk at £150 and one at £130, and if the £280 were deducted, the estimate would be much as before. But he wanted to know why the one-third of the clerks who were useless were not got rid of? The honourable member had told them something about names not ordinarily upon the Estimates being put down; but he had not shown why he did not get rid of the clerks who were not required.

Mr. McLEAN said the honourable member for the Burnett, when addressing the committee, had propounded a new doctrine as to why the Government should resign. One reason he gave was, that the Government had been repeatedly defeated upon their Estimates. He (Mr. McLean), however, had yet to learn that even Ministers themselves were bound to vote for every item on the Estimates. In such cases, he considered that honourable members were at perfect liberty to exercise their judgment, and vote as they pleased. If the honourable member for the Burnett thought that he (Mr. McLean) was a slave to the Government, and bound to vote for them, he was much mistaken. The honourable member seemed to wish the committee to understand that the Government expected their supporters to vote in that way, and that those honourable members were bound to obey. But he (Mr. McLean) was one of those who would not obey. He always had exercised, and always would exercise, his own judgment. Another reason given was, that several votes, in connection with notices of motion, had been carried against the Government; but the honourable member would remember that votes for a very large sum had been carried by the Opposition, with the support of members from the Government side. Those were questions upon which honourable members had a right to exercise their judgments, and vote just as they pleased, whatever the Government might ask them to do. He could not agree with the statement which had been made by the honourable member for Wide Bay, namely, that the amount of money on the Estimates for roads and bridges should be allocated ac-

ording to a population basis, because it was well known that in a case where five hundred vehicles went over a road, the wear and tear was much greater in proportion as compared with a road over which only half the number travelled. Where there was a large population and a great number of roads to be kept in repair, a much larger amount proportionally must be spent than in a district more sparsely peopled. He recollected, on one occasion, when a vote was before the House, it was stated that the amount should be allocated upon the population basis. The honourable member for Maranoa, at that time, was shown that he had made a slight error in certain calculations he had made. The figures were then revised by the honourable member, and if he (Mr. McLean) recollected rightly, West Moreton appeared highest in the list, and East Moreton was third. It should be remembered that in several of the thickly-populated districts, such as Logan, Bulimba, and East Moreton, there was no railway communication at all, and the settlers had to depend upon roads entirely. Taking that fact into consideration, it would be seen that to go upon the assumption that in spending money upon roads and bridges a population basis should be adopted, was not a sound principle to act upon at all. Where the population settled was greater, the roads would be more numerous, and they should, if possible, be kept in a better state of repair. Several of the road overseers had stated, in the course of conversation, that they did not know what to do with the money voted, as the amounts were so miserably small. The demand for good roads was daily increasing in the colonies, and where the largest number of people settled, a greater amount would have to be spent on roads. From his knowledge of the roads in East Moreton, Bulimba, and Logan, he could state that the amount on the Estimates was altogether inadequate to put them into even a passable state of repair. Comparing the road vote with the amount which had to be paid to keep up the present staff of Civil Servants, and considering how the service was being increased, as seen in the recent additions to the museum, it appeared as though they would soon reach that point when all the revenue would be wanted to pay the officers required for the management of the affairs of the country.

MR. GRAHAM would like to know whether they were discussing a particular item or the Estimates in general. If what had recently taken place was a sample of how the honourable the Minister for Works was going to get through his estimates, he might be inclined to say, "Save me from my friends!" The honourable member who had just sat down appeared to think that Ministers ought not to support their colleagues. He (Mr. Graham), however, held

a different opinion. The Estimates were framed with the consent of all, and though Ministers might differ over minor details, they should pull together over the Estimates. They would probably get through them much more quickly if such members as the honourable member for the Logan would reserve their electioneering speeches until they met their constituents face to face. Up to a certain point it was reasonable to allude, as the honourable member for the Mitchell had done, to the very large increase in the local amounts on these estimates. They had now a Minister for Works whom they were led to believe was one of the most economical Ministers that ever graced those benches, and yet they found an increase of £50,000 in his department. Last year the increase was something over £40,000, but it had been reserved for the Minister for Works, who was looked upon as the "Hume" of the House, to exceed the estimates of the honourable George Thorn, the late Minister. It would be better now to confine their attention to the item at present under discussion.

MR. WALSH said it might be their duty to get through the Estimates in a rapid way, but they had a higher duty to perform in analysing them, and also the conduct of the member of the Government in possession of them, and the conduct of Ministers towards their colleague. The honourable member who had last spoken suggested that Ministers should support their colleague; but he (Mr. Walsh) would ask, why should they support him, seeing that whenever he thought he could make a grand appeal to the popular sympathy, he invariably expressed himself as opposed to his colleagues—to the Premier, the Colonial Treasurer and, more especially, to the Attorney-General? Why, then, his colleagues should now be called upon to support him with the greatest fidelity and obedience, to pass his estimates, he (Mr. Walsh) could not understand at all. If the honourable member for the Logan, instead of being a servile supporter of the Government, had applied himself to the service of his constituents, he (Mr. Walsh) did not hesitate to say that before this time he (Mr. McLean) would have insisted upon the Government making a railroad for the benefit of his constituents. The Government knew they could play with the honourable member while they went on making those grand trunk lines to the westward and north-westward. The honourable member had been totally oblivious of the wants of his constituents while he had been tendering to the Government a most abject and ardent support. It was now too late in the session for the honourable member to get up and make electioneering remarks. Had he commenced the session as he seemed inclined to terminate it, he would have had a sum of money on the Estimates to make a line in East

Moreton towards Nerang Creek or somewhere in that direction. He (Mr. Walsh) did not hesitate to say that the Government had held their position through the session at the instance of the honourable member for Logan. He looked upon that honourable member as the Government of the colony during the session, though he had not done the justice to his constituents that he seemed inclined, at the eleventh hour, to do. He (Mr. Walsh) wished the Minister for Works to refer to those ridiculous figures which stated that the expenditure in the Warrego district was something like 14s. odd per head of the inhabitants, or the adult male inhabitants, he was not sure which. On turning to the Estimates, he found there was not a farthing put down for expenditure in the Warrego district. There were only one or two items of some £400 or £500 for roads towards the Warrego district—from Roma, that pet place of the Minister for Works. Yet the Minister for Works had the boldness to say that the estimated expenditure for the year 1878-9 in the Warrego district was at the rate of 14s. per head of the population. He would ask the honourable member to point out what expenditure was put down for the Warrego district with the exception of the sham, the old sham, of a road from Roma to Charleville.

Mr. PERKINS: What about the £5,000 vote last year?

Mr. WALSH said he believed the money had not been spent. The whole thing was a sham. As comparisons had been made, he would show the champions of East and West Moreton what was proposed to be spent on their roads, and what roads were proposed, whilst not a single road was put down for Warrego, except the road from Roma to Charleville, one-half, if not two-thirds, of which was not in the Warrego district at all. That district was, in fact, obliterated from the Estimates; while he found there were no less than ninety-one roads enumerated by name in East Moreton, thirty-two bridges in East and West Moreton, and forty-two roads in West Moreton, making in all 165 roads and bridges in East and West Moreton. In a dozen districts he could mention there was not a single road named; and as far as the Warrego district was concerned there was none, with the exception of that from Charleville to Roma. He would now ask honourable members to look at the amount of money proposed to be expended on those roads. On the ninety-one roads in East Moreton it was proposed to expend £20,100, and on the bridges £11,040, making about £32,000 on roads and bridges in that district alone. East Moreton did not contribute half as much to the revenue as Warrego, counting only the taxes collected from the people in the shape of rents and Customs duties. In West Moreton it was proposed to expend £10,520 on the forty-two roads enumerated.

No man was more desirous than himself to see roads made for the benefit of the agricultural population of the colony. He might indeed say that it was he who initiated the system. He was the first to recognise the right of the agricultural settlers to have roads made past their doors to enable them to take their produce to a market—thus relieving them from the neglect with which they had been visited by previous Governments. It might suit honourable members on the other side of the House, or it might suit a venal Press, to deny that claim to him. At any rate, he made the claim on behalf of the Government of which he was a member, that it was the first to recognise the right of the agricultural populations to have a fair share in the road expenditure of the colony. He had, therefore, a perfect right to analyse such an estimate as this. The present Ministry were certainly not pleasing the farmers by totally ignoring those other parts of the colony which were equally entitled to have justice done to them in this direction. He would call the attention of the committee to the fact that while there were ninety-one roads proposed in East and West Moreton, there was not one mentioned in the Estimates for that vast and important district of Warrego. Was this fair play? Was it justice? If it had been done by the Government of which he was a member, what an outcry there would have been against it! But this Government had only to pacify the honourable member for Logan and one or two other honourable members sitting behind them and voting for them so religiously, to ensure that they would meet with support. He did not object to those votes for East and West Moreton, but he objected to the Government studiously ignoring every other part of the colony, and he called upon the Government to explain their conduct in this matter. Were they to tolerate a Government that so pandered to the population about Brisbane, and dealt so unjustly with the outlying parts of the colony? He would warn the Government now, as he had warned them before, that the power they possessed now about Brisbane they would not possess for ever. The injustice they were meting out to other parts of the colony would be meted back again when those now neglected districts hereafter became paramount. Reprisals would assuredly be made for the injustice which was being voluntarily and unnecessarily done to the distant parts of the country. It was enough to make a man protest loudly against such Estimates, when the Government could pander in such a way to certain influential members of the House—for that really was the meaning of Estimates of this kind.

Mr. THOMPSON said there was one little matter which might be set at rest. The honourable member for Logan enunciated

the doctrine that Ministers were not bound to support one another in their Estimates, and it ought not to go forth that the servants of the Crown could bring down the recommendations of the Crown, and then use their own discretion whether they supported them or not. Ministers were equally bound to support the items which the Governor, at the request of a majority of the House, placed on the Supplementary Estimates. The position of the Government in such a case was certainly awkward, but their duty was plain.

Mr. BEOR said that one or two arguments had been used by members on the Ministerial side of such an extraordinary nature, that he did not wish the discussion to drop without expressing his dissent from them. One argument, employed by the Minister for Works, appeared to him a most marvellous one, namely, that thickly-settled districts were entitled to a larger proportionate amount of expenditure than districts which were not so thickly populated. He could not understand how anyone could come before the committee and contend that a district with a population of a thousand was entitled to ten times the expenditure of a district with a population of one hundred. Certainly, in East Moreton there was a much larger expenditure per individual than in any other district, and the Minister for Works justified the allocation on the ground that it was the most thickly settled. That seemed a most extraordinary doctrine, and he failed to see how it could be supported. Another argument from the Treasury benches was, that the constant defeats of the Government on votes for the Supplementary Estimates were brought about by the Opposition uniting with factious members of their own side of the House. But the fact was, that as many of these votes had been passed from that side as from this, and the support which they obtained from both sides conclusively showed that in their opinion the Estimates had been improperly drawn up by certain districts being unfairly treated in the matter of road expenditure. It was idle, therefore, to contend that those majorities had been obtained by the Opposition supporting motions from the other side of the House. With regard to the large question before the committee, it seemed an extraordinary thing to contend that Ministers should not be bound to their own Estimates. The compilation of the Estimates was the most important province of Government. The voting away of the public money was the most important prerogative which honourable members could exercise, and it was idle to contend that only the Minister bringing each particular vote forward was to be responsible for it. As to the way in which the public money had been dealt out to the different districts of the colony, he

meant to say very little, that question having been already sufficiently dealt with. It might seem a trifling matter to the honourable member for Bulimba to quarrel over £120,000 for roads, because that honourable member's roads were always kept in good order. But to those who knew the bitter experience of having for some months of the year roads perfectly impassable, it was by no means such a trifling matter as that honourable member seemed to suppose. With regard to the district which he represented, it would be a very long time indeed before they forgot the manner in which the Estimates for this year had been compiled by the Ministry now sitting on the Treasury benches.

Mr. BAILEY wished to correct the honourable member for Bowen on one point. It was hardly correct to say that both sides were equally to blame in forcing votes on to the Supplementary Estimates. Motions made from this side had been opposed both by the Government and the Opposition, while the same kind of motions from the other side had been invariably supported by the Opposition, and by members on this side who were peculiarly liberal in their views.

Mr. IVORY said the last speaker ought to have said that he did his best to place additional burdens on the Government, but failed.

Mr. GRIMES said the honourable member for Bowen evidently knew nothing about the roads in the Bulimba district, or he would not have spoken of them as he had done. Only a comparatively small portion of the money spent about Brisbane was expended on farmers' roads.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £3,265 be granted to the building branch. The increase over the estimate of last year was £340. There was an increase of £37 to the salary of the Colonial Architect, a clerk at £150, a draughtsman at £150, previously paid from the general votes, and one or two small increases to clerks.

Mr. MOREHEAD wished to call attention to the hideousness of the public buildings that were being erected in Brisbane, each succeeding one more hideous than its predecessor. He did not wish to cast any reflection on the Colonial Architect as a constructor, but as a designer he could not say so much. The Supreme Court was a medley of all sorts of styles, and must have been evolved by the Premier out of his inner consciousness, and handed over to the Colonial Architect to be worked out. He thought they might safely go beyond Brisbane for plans and designs for public buildings, allowing the Colonial Architect to superintend the erection of them, for which he was perfectly competent. He protested against these hideous buildings.

going up. They could get very much better designs for very much less money.

Mr. BAILEY asked if some improvement could not be effected in the building of country schools, which were at present, in too many cases, merely ovens to bake children in.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he knew of no school to which such a description could be applied. The greatest care was taken to build wide verandahs, and make the schools as comfortable as possible. Of course, one-fifth of the cost must be subscribed, and the amount expended on school buildings was limited by the amount of the local subscription.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he knew of one school which had not been constructed by the Colonial Architect, and which had not received a shilling in the shape of assistance from the Government. That was the school at Blackall. He had over and over again called the attention of the late Under Secretary for Education to the fact that a school was badly wanted there, and at last the people had put their hands into their pockets and built a school for themselves. No inspector had yet been near that school, simply because it was in an outside district. He rose more particularly to show that the inhabitants of that district he had the honour to represent could not fairly be called upon to contribute to the salary of the chief draughtsman in the public schools branch, since they derived no benefit from his services, and still less should they be called upon to contribute to the general taxation for the maintenance of schools, the use of which were not extended to them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honourable member's illustration was an unhappy one. There were not sufficient children at Blackall to warrant the establishment of a State school, and a provisional school was established, the aid to which fixed by the statute was simply a capita-tion allowance according to the rate at the nearest State school, which in this case was at Tambo. It was found, however, that the attendance was about six children, and the consequence was, the school had to be closed; in fact, the master left, not being able to get a living. Steps were then taken to get a better school, and so far from the Government acting illiberally, as stated by the honourable member, they actually went beyond the letter of the law for the purpose of assisting in the establishment of a school there. They knew that there would ultimately be a school required there, and on the land being conveyed to the Minister for Education, they went out of their way to assist in the erection of the school by advancing part of the State subsidy before the necessary subscriptions were raised.

Mr. GRAHAM said he thought the Attorney-General himself had given an unhappy illustration, unless the school at Blackall was very different from when he (Mr. Graham) saw it. There was really no school there, but a stable, and the reason the school was discontinued was because the building was required for the races.

Mr. WALSH said nothing could show more clearly the inherent weakness of the present school system than the remarks of the Minister for Education, who admitted that the Government had gone out of their way and broken the law to assist in establishing a school in the Blackall district. They went out of their way when it suited them to build schools; and he charged them with breaking the Education Act for political purposes. He had always complained of that, and the admission of the Minister in charge of the administration of that Act, that he broke it to please the people of Blackall, confirmed his opinion that it was broken every day to please the people about North and South Brisbane and East and West Moreton. He wanted to know why the education vote was supplemented by this sum in the department of the Minister for Works. Had not that Minister the courage or the official dignity to say this item did not belong to his department, and it should not be included in his estimates? No, he seemed to succumb to every influence brought to bear upon him. He (Mr. Walsh) objected to the education vote being supplemented in this way.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said, with reference to the remarks of the honourable member for Darling Downs, that the school at Blackall was closed because it was wanted for a stable, he could say that that was not the reason assigned by the school committee. With regard to the charge of the honourable member for Warrego, that the Education Act was worked for political purposes, as he had often said before, when that honourable member gave an instance, he would reply to it. The reason why these items were put in the Works department was, that it was found much more economical to do so than to establish a separate branch for the Education department.

Mr. STEVENSON said he visited the place where the school was held at Blackall about five months ago with the honourable member for Darling Downs, and it was simply a stall partitioned off from a publican's stable. They saw eight or ten children at least there at that time.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he found there were twenty-four children on the roll at Blackall.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Now.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the honourable member did not tell the committee the school was now open. £150 had been subscribed there, and all the assistance derived

from the State was £70 for the pay of a teacher. He also found that the Mitchell district alone contributed about £1,600 a-year towards the education of the children of the colony. About 12s. per head was the general taxation of the colony for educational purposes, but his unfortunate constituents had to pay for the education of children of the pampered people on the coast, who had too many opportunities for receiving education, while they derived no benefit from the system themselves. He contended that if there were only six children to teach in one of the outside districts, it was the duty of the State to teach them, because they had not the opportunities of those in the settled districts, although the district contributed to the general fund.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he stated that the school was closed because of the small attendance, but since then a school had been erected, and the Government contributed towards its erection.

Mr. PRING said he was at Blackall for a week before the honourable member for Darling Downs, and there were only six children there. He was also told by Mr. O'Byrne, the master, that although the people of Blackall promised to send their children, they abstained from doing so, and it was not on account of the stable. There was no grumbling about the accommodation, which, under the circumstances, was very fair.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was in a position to state that the Government had never spent one shilling of public money in the construction of the school at Blackall.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he could not say whether the money had been paid or not; but he knew he authorised the payment.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved the sum of £4,150 for salaries in connection with roads and bridges. He said the salary of a clerk, whose services had been dispensed with, was withdrawn, so that the sum asked for was what would be required. Last year several increases to district road surveyors were proposed under this head, but they were withdrawn without being submitted to the House, and were now again brought forward. In addition to that, there were several salaries put down that were previously paid out of contingencies.

Mr. STEVENSON asked if the services of the general inspector of roads had been dispensed with?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Inspector-General of Roads had been relieved of the duties in connection with the Northern and Central districts. It was found utterly impossible for that officer to visit those portions of the colony for the purpose of inspection, and he simply

stood in the position of an under secretary, his time being chiefly occupied in receiving reports from various districts, which were sent by him to the Under Secretary for Works. He (the Minister for Works), therefore, came to the conclusion that it would be much better to confine Mr. Byerley's services to the Southern district, and to place Mr. Jardine in charge of the Central district, and Mr. McMillan in charge of the Northern district. Mr. Byerley would, by this means, be able to devote the whole of his time to the Southern district; each officer would be responsible for his own district; and the new arrangement made no difference with regard to salary.

Mr. McILWRAITH asked where was Mr. Byerley now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At Rockhampton.

Mr. PALMER said he should like the Minister for Works to speak a little more plainly. Had Mr. Byerley done anything contrary to the rules of the department that he should be reduced in title from "Inspector-General of Roads"—a title he never asked for, but which was forced upon him—to "Engineer of Roads, Southern Division." Was there any charge against him? and why had he been ordered to Rockhampton if he was Engineer of the Southern District? This was the most extraordinary way of treating an old public officer he had ever heard of. When that officer was in the North he was far better off. He had the same salary as now, and a house to live in; he was brought down here against his wish and promised £100 a-year additional, which he had never been paid. He was now in a worse position than ever, and the Government seemed inclined to heap indignity upon him. Of course such treatment would have no effect upon people who knew Mr. Byerley, but to strangers it looked like being disgraced. He thought some explanation should be given.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not attach much consequence to the title of "Inspector-General of Roads," and he did not think Mr. Byerley had suffered anything by the change that had been made. In fact, his title of inspector of roads was a misnomer, for he never inspected roads at all, and it was better to set aside a title when it was impossible for him to fulfil the duties. He had not the slightest intention of injuring Mr. Byerley, or throwing any contumely upon him. With reference to that gentleman superintending the erection of the Fitzroy Bridge, there had been a great many complaints about the way the work was being carried out, and the enormous expenditure that was going on, and Mr. Byerley, feeling that his professional reputation was at stake, was desirous to go there and supervise the construction

of the work. That, he (the Minister for Works) thought, was the right thing to do under the circumstances. The amount voted for the construction of this bridge was £38,000, and the amount expended up to date was £21,000. The work done was this :—

“The cylinders of the land pier have been sunk on the north side and the south anchorage and abutment have been nearly completed.

“All the plant has been purchased and nearly all the cylinders have been paid for. Half of the timber has been delivered and paid for, and most of the other material except the suspension chains which will cost about £3,000. The last shipment of cylinders is expected to arrive at Rockhampton shortly.”

There would be ten cylinders altogether, so that there were eight more to be sunk, half the timber to be provided, and there was only about £8,000 left to cover the whole. Seeing that the bridge was Mr. Byerley's design, and the estimate of the cost was also his, he thought it was only fair to give him an opportunity of constructing it within the amount of his estimate. In fact, he thought if Mr. Byerley had a friend, it was himself. When he visited Rockhampton some months ago he found the people were alarmed as to the state of the boiler on the works, being of opinion that it was not in sufficiently good repair, and they were afraid that if it were used it would do some damage. A survey of the boiler was made, resulting in its condemnation. Taking all these matters into consideration, it was only fair to Mr. Byerley to give him an opportunity of constructing the bridge under his own supervision and according to his own design, but he was very much afraid that it would not be completed within the estimate.

Mr. WALSH said that, judging by the speech of the honourable Minister for Works, the honourable gentleman had no confidence in Mr. Byerley and yet was going to employ him to supervise the construction of the work. If Mr. Byerley was really the Engineer of Roads for the Southern District, why was he “planted” in the North. There were surely important works in the South requiring his supervision. The explanation given by the Minister for Works was of the lamest kind. If the honourable gentleman thought that the Engineer of Roads for the Southern district should reside at Rockhampton, he should not differ from him, but it certainly seemed extraordinary.

Mr. BAILEY said there was one item he should like to have seen altered. The district road inspector of Maryborough had a large district to attend to, and hundreds of miles of roads to go over, and, in consequence of the appointment of an engineer of roads, had a great deal more to do in the shape of correspondence. He believed that

the road inspector was almost killed with overwork, and that he would be either dead or incapable in a few years, if his labours were not lightened. He had the whole of the Mount Perry and Bundaberg district, the Gympie, Noosa, and a great part of the road leading to Brisbane to look after, and it was impossible that he could do it; besides, the work had increased so much that he was required to stop half his time in the office. If Mr. Bragg was fit to be a road inspector, he was surely fit to prepare his own plans; but for every work, however small, the estimate and plan had first to be sent to Brisbane, and it frequently happened that plans were drawn up at the head office quite different from those submitted, the consequence being that the cost of the work was largely increased. Many bridges were required in the district, but one of his (Mr. Bailey's) reasons for not asking for them was, that however economical the local officers could construct them, the plans would be altered in the head office, and the cost increased; the work was also delayed, sometimes for twelve months. He had hoped that the Minister for Works would have subdivided the district and appointed an inspector for the Mount Perry and Bundaberg districts, and another for the Gympie, Noosa, and Maryborough districts.

Mr. BEOR would like to know how long it was contemplated that Mr. Byerley should remain at Rockhampton?

Mr. BAILEY: The longer the better.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed Mr. Byerley would remain there until the bridge was completed.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the Minister for Works had told them that the inspection of the roads was more than one man could perform, and that in consequence the system of appointing inspectors for each district had been introduced. In the Southern division, £110,000 was spent last year, being nearly three times as much as for the rest of the colony, and it was probable that an equal amount would be expended next year. If it was necessary to have an engineer of roads for the Southern district, did it not look like an absurdity to shift him to a place which enforced his residence in another district? If he had been shifted for some other reason, it ought to be given. The reasons given by the Government pointed evidently to this—that they considered the engineer of the Fitzroy viaduct was much to blame for the way he had carried out the work, that it was likely to prove a failure, and that the officer had been sent up there to prove himself a failure. The Minister for Works himself said the officer was not fit to carry out the work according to his estimate. It was perfectly impossible for Mr. Byerley when acting as engineer for the Fitzroy viaduct to supervise the amount that would pro-

bably be expended in the Southern division next year. It might be a matter of personal importance to the Minister for Works to prove Mr. Byerley incompetent, but surely it was his primary duty to see that the public works were properly carried out. The Government had acted in a most unbusiness like way. If Mr. Byerley was incompetent to manage the whole works of the colony before, he was less competent to manage two-thirds when he was removed from the district.

Mr. FOOTE thought the Minister for Works had acted in the most practical manner possible. He had given the officer who had designed a certain important work the supervision of its construction, affording him at the same time the opportunity of proving his capacity. He hoped the honourable gentleman would adhere to his purpose and receive the support of the committee; and he held that when a man proved himself a failure he should be dismissed from his post. He noticed that for several places district road inspectors were put down, whilst for East and West Moreton there were three officers who were called foremen of works. Why were they called by this name, and what were their duties?

Mr. BEOR considered it showed the disorganised state of the Ministry that when he got up to ask how long was it contemplated that Mr. Byerley should remain at Rockhampton, he was replied to by the member for Wide Bay, and replied to not very courteously.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had got up and stated that Mr. Byerley would remain until the bridge was completed.

Mr. BEOR: How long will it take to complete the bridge?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That depends entirely upon Mr. Byerley.

Mr. THOMPSON asked what object the Ministry had in concealing from the committee when Mr. Byerley would come back?

Mr. STEVENSON said the Minister for Works would not expedite his estimates by delaying his answers to questions. Had Mr. Byerley been sent North for a stated time? He believed that he had gone for a period of twelve months. He was rather amused at the way the Minister for Works had pretended to be Mr. Byerley's friend, by sending him to supervise the work he had designed after coming to the conclusion that it would be a failure. Had he sent Mr. Byerley to carry out the work at the beginning, there would have been some sense in his conduct. He (Mr. Stevenson) did not know that any *bonâ fide* complaints had been made about the way the bridge was being carried out. A portion of the Rockhampton Press was continually harping upon it, because its conductors had a personal spite about the matter. He believed that at the time Mr. Byerley was

sent North, he had got a really good man who was conducting the works to the satisfaction of the people of Rockhampton. The previous resident inspector did not, he believed, carry on the work to their satisfaction, and Mr. Byerley, through being kept running up and down looking after the cylinders, had no opportunity of looking after it.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Rockhampton) said he went over the works carefully about a month ago, and did not believe the bridge would be a failure. Great difficulties had been put in Mr. Byerley's way. He was compelled by Mr. Thorn to begin the bridge before he was ready, and, unfortunately, yielded to the pressure that was brought to bear on him. Tenders for the cylinders were called, and the lowest was accepted, it being guaranteed by two responsible sureties. It was found out that the contractor could not carry out his tender, and it had to be cancelled. Then the contract was taken by Mort and Company, and fulfilled; but, the cylinders being exceedingly bulky things, great difficulty was found in having them taken to Rockhampton. He believed that they were now all on the banks of the Fitzroy. With respect to the boiler, he knew that the attention of the Minister for Works, when he visited Rockhampton, was called to it as being unsafe. It was examined by a competent engineer, who said that it was not the best boiler, but was calculated to stand a pressure of 65 lbs. to the inch; it was required to pump air into the cylinders, for which purpose a pressure of not more than 20 lbs. was needed. During Mr. Byerley's absence the boiler was taken down, and was employed at another work standing about an equal amount of pressure. The Minister for Works should not have paid attention to all that had been said about the works. Previously to Mr. Byerley being sent up, a Mr. Terry was employed as inspector, whose speciality was bridge-building, and he believed that it would have been only necessary for Mr. Byerley to make a visit of inspection once every four or six weeks. He (Mr. Macfarlane) went over the work minutely, and everything seemed to him to be going on satisfactorily. All the most difficult cylinders had been sunk, and the men were ready to begin with the next ones. Mr. Terry had told him distinctly that the bridge would be finished at not more than 5 per cent. beyond the estimate. If an engineer finished such a work at between 5 and 10 per cent. of the estimate, the committee ought to praise instead of blame him. If he recollected rightly, the bridges over the Mary and Pine rivers were constructed under Mr. Byerley's supervision. He knew that Mr. Byerley had a great many enemies, and there was one paper in Rockhampton which was continually abusing him. He,

for one, thoroughly believed that the bridge would be successfully completed at a cost of not more than ten per cent. over the estimate. Both Mr. Byerley and Mr. Terry had told him that if the plant coming from England arrived safely the bridge would be completed within twelve months.

Mr. BEON said it certainly must be satisfactory to the private friends of Mr. Byerley to hear from the Minister for Works that he had been sent to Rockhampton at his own desire, and that his appointment to the position of Engineer of Roads for the Southern District in place of his former position of inspector-general was not intended as a reduction in his status. The country had a right to know, however, how long the Southern district was to be deprived of its engineer for roads. The Minister for Works, notwithstanding the evasive answers that he had given to him, must have formed some opinion as to the length of time Mr. Byerley was intended to be kept in the Central district. It was certainly an extraordinary procedure that the Southern district should be robbed of his services for twelve months, as had been stated, or possibly longer.

Mr. PERKINS said it was very evident that a huge blunder had been made with respect to the Fitzroy Bridge. Over twelve months ago he heard stories about it, and the accounts he had since received were to the effect that the work was one continual series of blunders. People at Rockhampton had told him that the money might as well have been thrown into the Fitzroy. The Minister for Works had been blamed for removing Mr. Byerley; but if that officer had been left in Brisbane, and any error were made, the excuse would have been given that he had no opportunity of carrying out his designs. He was quite sure that when the bridge was completed Mr. Byerley himself, and the people of Queensland would have reason to repent that it was ever undertaken.

The MINISTER for WORKS said the honourable member for Rockhampton had made some statements about the boiler, and cautioned him not to take notice of what was said by a particular newspaper. The honourable member himself drew his attention to the rotten state of the boiler, and that it might do serious damage if it exploded. He paid little attention to what he had heard on the subject until the honourable member spoke to him about it. The honourable member for Rockhampton now said the boiler was capable of a pressure of sixty-four pounds; but in a report to the department, Mr. Byerley stated it would not be wise to put more than forty-five pounds upon it. He believed Mr. Byerley had selected the best material at his command, but that he had made great mistakes. He built one portion of this boiler on the stone abutment and the other

portion on loose mud. The consequence was that it settled down and the affair broke in two. He was not blaming Mr. Byerley for this, because the work was carried on during his absence. There was another blunder which took place. A consignment of cement sent out from England was being unloaded from the vessel to the bridge, and the punt went down with 100 casks of cement. He was not blaming Mr. Byerley for that either, because he was not on the spot. But this resident engineer, who, unfortunately, made such a mess of things, was there. Mr. Byerley got rid of this gentleman, and then he employed Mr. Terry, who, the committee were told, was a man of high attainments, who had been in India and elsewhere. It was all right then; the bridge was going to be built rapidly and securely. But what did Mr. Terry do? He went and took possession of private property; trespassed upon a gentleman's land; closed it in with a fence; cut roads through it; erected workshops upon it; and, when the owner made his appearance in Rockhampton, he found that the Government had taken forcible possession of his land, and so dealt with it that he at once sent in a claim to the Government for £800. He (Mr. Miles) would not be doing his duty to the public if he did not try to remedy these blunders, and prevent them from being perpetrated in future by this engineer of high attainments who came from India and elsewhere. He had given the committee a sample of this gentleman's achievements. Did the honourable member for Rockhampton inspect all these things? Yet because he (Mr. Miles) attempted to put matters straight, he was accused of persecuting Mr. Byerley. He was doing nothing of the sort; he would not persecute anybody; but he would not be doing his duty to the public if he did not try to prevent a recurrence of these blunders. He complained strongly to Mr. Byerley of these things, and that gentleman's reply naturally was that he was not there. He (Mr. Miles) then told him that the sooner he got there the better, for it was a very extensive work, and he was responsible for its prompt and proper construction. He (Mr. Miles) could assure the honourable member for Bowen that the Southern district would not suffer from Mr. Byerley's absence in the North, and he hoped the honourable member would not sleep uneasily because of the prospect of Mr. Byerley not returning for twelve months. It had been said that he (Mr. Miles) ought to be able to give the committee full information about this bridge; he could do nothing of the kind, for Mr. Byerley had the whole and sole control of it. He designed it, framed the estimates, made his own contracts and had done what no other person in the Government service

would dare do, for he had made purchases of private individuals which he (the Minister for Works) would not think of doing. He had no wish to injure Mr. Byerley or say anything unkind of him, and if he was not his friend he was certainly not his enemy. But he had a public duty to perform, and would carry it out in defiance of Mr. Byerley or anybody else. He could not but think it was a misfortune for Mr. Byerley that his friends had raked up this question at all. He (Mr. Miles) was conscious that he had not acted harshly towards him but he must say he did not see the utility of his keeping the title of Inspector-General of Roads. The title was a misnomer from the first, for Mr. Byerley was engaged all day in his office in receiving reports from the engineers of roads in the various districts, which reports came from him to the Under Secretary, and from the Under Secretary to the Minister. He looked upon this position as saddling the department with two under secretaries, and was of opinion that the whole work could be done quite as well by one. Whatever he had done, he would say finally, that he had done it in the interest of the country, and without the slightest idea of doing Mr. Byerley any injury.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Rockhampton) had not accused the Minister for Works of persecuting Mr. Byerley; he did say he thought the honourable gentleman had unduly listened to popular rumour, and would say so still. As to the boiler, he could only say that he read in the *Northern Argus* that it was utterly unsafe, and, therefore, proposed to Mr. Miles that it be examined by a competent person. The Minister for Works stated that it might be worked up to forty-five pounds per square inch, but Mr. Byerley had stated that the highest possible pressure required was twenty pounds. As to Mr. Terry, it would be found that it was not possible to carry on a large public work without having some land to put their workshops upon, and they required to fence it to keep out loafers, and he thought the Government should have some mercy on Mr. Terry if he had trespassed, for they themselves had set a strong example, not by putting up a paling fence five feet high round a piece of land, but by taking property and digging tunnels thirty feet deep through it without the owner's permission. As to the damage done to the land, and the claim for £800, he would undertake to say that any jury would agree that the owner was very well paid if he got £20 for the use of it.

Mr. IVORY said the honourable member for Wide Bay drew attention to the work of the road inspector for Maryborough. Would the honourable Minister for Works tell him what amount of country was comprised within that gentleman's district;

for the honourable member for Wide Bay had stated that he had nothing to do with the Burnett district? The fact was, the honourable member for Wide Bay thought of nothing out of his own district; he was entirely a local man, and his views did not travel an inch beyond his own neighbourhood. Would the Minister for Works tell him how often this gentleman had inspected the roads in the Burnett district, and whether he had ever been there at all?

Mr. BAILEY would remind the honourable member that while he could not mention the whole district over which this officer had supervision, he did mention Mulgrave and Gayndah. He himself was ten days on the roads, and was amazed at the work done; but it was impossible that this gentleman could do all the work he was called upon to do; it was, in fact, killing the man.

Mr. IVORY said he did not represent the Mulgrave district. It was very probable this inspector had got too much work to do; so he should have assistance. In the South there was a district road inspector for Brisbane, and three foremen of works for East and West Moreton; yet in the district he represented, which if not so densely populated, was quite as important in its way, there was only one inspector, and he was being worked off his legs.

Mr. GRAHAM said he quite agreed with the remarks that had fallen from the honourable members for Burnett and Wide Bay, and that if they voted this £25 increase to this over-worked officer, he would not enjoy that for more than three months. This was another sample of the way in which all these estimates had been dealt with. A man who was willing to work, and, in fact, had worked himself nearly to death, received, not necessary assistance, but £25 increase to his salary, and that only when it was perfectly certain that he could only enjoy it, as he had said before, some three months. That was just like the "Joe Hume" of the House. He supposed that when this officer was gone, another would be appointed who would be worked to death in the same way, if he only allowed it to be done. A man was thoroughly a fool if he attempted to do more work than he was able.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was no doubt this officer had a very large district at present to attend to; but when the Local Government Bill came into operation, a considerable portion of the work in populous districts would be left to the shire councils, and so Mr. Bragg would be relieved. He hoped that answer would be satisfactory to the honourable member for Burnett.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked if the honourable gentleman was aware of the important amendment the Local Government Bill had undergone in another place?

Mr. STEVENSON said he did not agree in one of the assertions that had been made by the Minister for Works when he said that Mr. Byerley never inspected any of the roads, but simply remained in his office to receive reports. Anyone who knew Mr. Byerley knew that there was not a more energetic officer in the department than he was, and there was not a member of the House—certainly not a Northern member—who had not met him at different times in the North in all directions. He had met him since he had been appointed Inspector-General of Roads at least half-a-dozen times, and he knew that he had been about a great deal. It was a well-known fact that Mr. Byerley was the first to find the Gap through the Drummond Range, through which the future railway would go.

Mr. MACDONALD (who was almost inaudible) was understood to say that he had known Mr. Byerley for some time, and was able to judge of his professional character. It was extraordinary to notice the change of opinion that had taken place in regard to him. If it was not for the way in which public opinion, supported by a portion of the Press, was expressed, he (Mr. MacDONALD) believed there would have been a great deal more blundering and much more money wasted than there had been up to the present. There was no one who could conscientiously take Mr. Byerley's part in connection with this bridge matter. The honourable member for Rockhampton had said something about the boiler, that it was quite equal to what would be required of it; but if so, why was it pulled down and removed upon the report of a competent engineer? He was very sorry this discussion should have taken place. One honourable member had implied that there had been some unfairness in the conduct of the Minister for Works in sending Mr. Byerley to the North; it was implied that the Minister had not done his duty. The honourable member for Rockhampton must be aware that the change which had taken place during the recess—in removing Mr. Byerley, and giving the engineers of the Northern and Central Districts the whole responsibility of the works—would meet with general approval; either of those two gentlemen was more competent than he was, so that to require them to submit details to him would be quite a waste of time.

Mr. WALSH said he hoped the Minister for Works would repudiate the assistance of a gentleman who could inflict such stabs in the dark, and insinuate charges in such a *sub silentio* manner against a public officer. This had been done in such a way and in such a tone that the honourable member seemed to intend to keep all the malice and spleen to himself. If he wanted to make a charge, why did he not do it in

an open, manly way? and if it was to be against the Minister for Works, why did he not say so, and do it in a language that they could understand? Why did he get up and in a covert way and in a subdued tone that no one could hear, make charges of this nature? It was time they should take a determined stand against the way in which the honourable member addressed the Chamber. However, what he wished particularly, was to call attention to the way in which the item for the district road inspector, Maryborough, was put down. He was placed at a lower sum than those of Brisbane and Toowoomba, and he wished to know why he should not be of equal grade with them? He was a most efficient officer, had been an officer in Her Majesty's service, and while he did not challenge the fitness of the other officials, who were well deserving of the salary apportioned to them, he saw no reason why this gentleman should be rated lower than similar officials in other parts of the colony.

Mr. STEVENSON said that in reference to the remark of the honourable member for Blackall, as to the change that had taken place in reference to Mr. Byerley, he could say that he had undergone no change. As far back as seven years ago he had written to the *Rockhampton Bulletin* defending him against attacks made upon him.

Mr. MACDONALD said that there having been a change in the opinion of the *Rockhampton Bulletin*, he supposed the honourable member had changed his opinion also. However, it would have been more kind to Mr. Byerley if his name had not been mentioned, for the matter would not stand inquiring into. There was no doubt there had been an outrageous blunder committed, and he was very glad the Minister for Works had allowed this gentleman to go to the North, more especially as it was said that he was not responsible for what had been done during his absence. Mr. Byerley had forced this bridge on the Minister for Works. He insisted on pushing it forward instead of one which would have given greater satisfaction to the public. His ambition to be the architect of such a bridge induced him to attempt too much. Mr. Byerley's advice had been carried out in every respect. It was he who recommended the acceptance of the tenders for iron and other materials; he bought the cracked boiler, and, in fact, authorised the whole work to be done. The only thing he feared was, that Mr. Byerley might interfere with the engineer who had been there for the last six months and who thoroughly understood his work.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was not ashamed to hold the same views as the *Rockhampton Bulletin*; but he should feel himself in a very bad way if he were praised by the portion of the Press which patted the honourable member on the back,

and for whom, it was said, he was the Brisbane correspondent.

Mr. KIDGELL said he could endorse the opinion which had been expressed as to the multifarious duties performed by the district road inspector, Mr. Bragg. He would also point out that the inhabitants of the district suffered by reason of neglect, though through no fault of the inspector. He was convinced that if the district were better looked after, the expenditure of the money allocated by the present Estimates would be more satisfactory. It was for that reason he was compelled to ask the committee to recommend an additional sum for the roads of the district. Another grievance was, that not long since a bridge was built in Gympie, and the whole of the payments sanctioned had to percolate through the Maryborough office, causing sometimes a delay of several weeks. As the inspector was often travelling in distant parts of the district, the accounts had to wait for confirmation, and the contractors found great difficulty in keeping together the men, who complained they were not paid sometimes for six weeks or two months after their wages were due. He would also remind the present Minister for Works that the honourable George Thorn fully recognised this fact, and some twelve or fifteen months ago took measures to have an additional road inspector for the district. Nothing had been done up to the present, but he trusted the fact that several works were necessary would not be lost sight of. They did not want the inspector killed with work, nor did they want their requirements to be neglected. Now, the inspector was not seen sometimes for almost twelve months together.

Mr. GRAHAM said the case was almost worse than he at first sight thought. It appeared that not only was the inspector being killed, but the inhabitants of Gympie were also in danger. He hoped, therefore, the Minister for Works would take instant steps to prevent the district being devastated. The whole of the item appeared to him (Mr. Graham) to centre in Maryborough, and he should like to hear the Premier on the subject. Before many months elapsed that honourable member would probably require to woo the sweet voices of the electors, and it would be sad if he found all the inhabitants defunct. He could not, however, think that the constitutions of those inhabitants were so weak that they could be killed by the shortcomings of one road inspector.

Mr. HOCKINGS said, before the question went to a division, he should like to get some explanation as to the conduct of the Minister for Works in having removed the Engineer of Roads from the district charged with his large salary to enable him to carry on a work in another part of

the colony. He fully agreed, after hearing the explanation of the Minister for Works as to the propriety of placing that gentleman over the construction of the bridge he designed; but he could not but remember that honourable members had been very frequently warned of a systematic onslaught to be made by members on the Opposition side on the proposed votes for Works for the convenience of farmers in the East and West Moreton districts. He could not for a moment suppose that the Minister for Works was in collusion with those gentlemen, and that in addition to the unfortunate people in those districts being deprived of conveniences for transmitting their produce, the Minister for Works intended also to charge against the Southern districts an important officer who was occupied with work in the Central district. It might be that in anticipation of a large number of the votes being reduced, the Minister for Works considered that the services of that gentleman might not be so urgently required during the next twelve months. He would like to know the reason that the salary of the officer was put down for the Southern district while his services were bestowed on an important work in another district.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he understood from the honourable member for Gympie that the inhabitants of that district were kept alive by the visits of the district road inspector; and he could almost imagine the honourable member on the top of a watch-tower, and one of his constituents, like another Sister Anne, crying up to him "Do you see anyone coming?" He (Mr. Morehead) could point to many men of more or less fibre who had never heard of a road inspector, but who still lived and contributed to the revenue. It was a strong point in favour of those who argued that the Central districts were too much pampered; that a road inspector coming every three months to spend his money in a store, and waste money on the road, was a source of enjoyment to the inhabitants of a district. He trusted the honourable the Minister for Works, whom he had called without intention of hurting his feelings the "Joe Hume" of the House, would not listen to the wooing of the honourable member for Gympie, nor allow the road inspector to go there more often than he already did. He (Mr. Morehead) would point out the insufficient way in which the Minister for Works had been supported by his colleagues. He had been left to play a lone hand without the slightest assistance from his colleagues, except, perhaps, a side-wind assistance from the Attorney-General. It had been shown that the Estimates had been increased more than those of any other department; but it appeared the Minister who had stated he would sacrifice everything for the sake of

his country, would not sacrifice the one-third of the clerks who were not required. He would do everything except sacrifice office and power, and talked very big outside the House and inside when it suited his purpose; but, when brought to the sticking point, he jibbed. He hoped the honourable member for Gympie would not make any more attempts on the Treasury, nor expect the inspector to visit him more often. It was not likely that the honourable the Minister for Works would get on much further to-night, so he would advise him to move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said he did not know what the opinion of honourable members might be, but he knew very well what the opinion outside would be as to the manner in which business had been conducted to-night. He had been pained more by the remarks of the honourable member for Mitchell than by those of any other honourable member who had spoken. That honourable member tried to be witty and indulged in mimicry, and he would strongly advise him to put a stop to such conduct. If the honourable member would show a little more heart, his name would rise much higher in the estimation of the people of Queensland. They frequently heard of the honourable member insulting honourable members on this side of the House; and if tap-room oratory was to be introduced into an Assembly like this, the Legislature would sink beneath contempt. It was time the House raised a protest against the conduct of the honourable member for Mitchell.

Mr. WALSH said that if the Assembly desired to have a chaplain, the honourable member for Ipswich should put in his claim at once. What had that gentleman done in this Chamber as a senator, to justify him in lecturing any honourable member? He admitted that the honourable member was entitled to respect as a sedate old gentleman—like himself; but nothing more. What had he done to justify him in getting up and lecturing a gentleman who possessed certainly ten thousand times the brain that honourable member possessed, and who, as a colonial-born youth must have a great deal more experience than the honourable member for Ipswich. He looked upon that honourable member as a tool in the hands of the Government—if he might judge by his performances in this Chamber, but he had certainly done nothing to qualify himself for either the chaplain or the lecturer of the establishment.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said it was hardly fair to charge him with being a slavish supporter of the Ministry. On the second day he was in the House he divided against the Government, and had frequently done so since. In reference to the chaplaincy of the House, he should have

no objection to assume the office if the honourable member for Warrego would do the tomfoolery part of the business. For his own part, he could say that he had never obstructed business, which was certainly more than could be said by the honourable member for Warrego.

Mr. GRAHAM said the honourable member had done nothing but obstruct business by his two speeches. He did not object to any one lecturing the committee, so long as it was done in good taste, but in two instances the honourable member for Ipswich had stepped beyond the bounds of good taste, first by his allusion to tap-room oratory, and next by his connecting the honourable member for Warrego with tomfoolery. The honourable member was a little too young in the House to take such a step, and if he depended upon this line of business to make his mark in the House—and he (Mr. Graham) saw nothing else for him to depend upon—he would turn out a dismal failure.

Mr. FOOTE said that, bearing in mind the solemn and sedate aspect of the honourable member for Warrego when Speaker of the House, he thought no other honourable member was as well qualified for the chaplaincy of this Assembly.

Mr. GRAHAM rose to a point of order. It was out of order, he submitted, to make gibes at either the present or any past Speaker of the House.

The CHAIRMAN said he thought the debate was becoming somewhat irregular, and the best plan would be to return to the question before the committee.

Mr. FOOTE said that his honourable friend, the member for Ipswich, was new to the House, and had not been in the habit of seeing time wasted. He was, therefore, naturally indignant, and might perhaps have expressed himself too warmly for so young a member.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he could have borne the attack with comparative equanimity if it had come from the Minister for Works; but when he found a pillar of the Church, a true Christian, talking more virulently than "we pagans," he felt overcome with surprise and emotion. Such it was to be a narrow Christian.

Mr. MACROSSAN thought it was fortunate for the Minister for Works that this diversion had arisen, because the really important part of the vote was likely to pass through with little comment. He found on the page now under discussion there was £15,234 put down for salaries and allowances for the permanent staff of the roads and bridges department for the Southern district; for the Central division there was another permanent staff; and there was another for the Northern division—making a total of £53,000. In the face of that, he thought the objection of the Minister for Works

to be called the Joe Hume of the House was a very reasonable objection; and he was sure that House would never do for him what the House of Commons did for the real Joe Hume, for his persistent economy. If the honourable member had been an economist, he would have made some reduction in this large estimate. He stated, when at Gympie, that one-third of the clerks in his department could be dispensed with, and if he had dispensed with two or three, they might have given him credit for good intentions; but when, instead of that, they found a large increase, they had a right to complain. It was monstrous that they should spend £53,000 for the permanent staff for roads and bridges alone; and he was sure there were members in the House who would see a way of decreasing not only the expenses of the permanent staff, but the cost of roads and bridges themselves, and having the work done quite as well as it was at present.

Mr. WALSH asked the Minister for Works why the district road surveyor for the Maryborough district was paid less than the same officers for the Brisbane and Toowoomba districts?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he previously explained that these increases for road inspectors were placed on the Estimates last year, and withdrawn, and it was considered only fair to bring them forward again, so that the House might decide the matter. With regard to the district surveyor for Maryborough, the only reason he was aware of why his salary was less than the others was, that he had not been so long in the service.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the Minister for Works was not correct in stating that these increases were withdrawn last year. They were brought forward for the consideration of the House and not granted, and the committee was in no better position with regard to them now than they were last year. No reason had been given by the Government why these increases should be granted, and the fact that they were refused last year was no reason at all, except that they should not be brought forward this year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said his honourable friend, the Colonial Treasurer, had stated on a former occasion that there were no increases on the Estimates except those that were put on last year and withdrawn. These increases were not submitted to the House last year, and it was considered only fair to these officers, who had been a long time in the service, that they should be placed on the Estimates, so that the House might decide.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving £840 salaries in connection with road surveys, said, notwithstanding the House last

year refused to vote the salary of the road ranger, so requisite did he consider that officer, that he had continued his services and paid him out of contingencies. He believed honourable members would pardon him for his action in this matter, when he explained the whole matter. This road ranger, Ballinger, was an extremely useful officer for selecting and blazing roads so that the surveyors could be sent afterwards to survey the line. He had found from experience that when a professional surveyor was sent to survey a road he took it straight, no matter whether it was over a mountain, or a bog, or any other difficult country; and Ballinger was found very useful in selecting good roads, although they might be a little longer. He had been employed during the past twelve months, and had done a considerable amount of work. He had marked a road from Cumkillenbar to Brisbane for fat stock, found out good camping grounds for travelling stock, marked several roads leading from various localities to the railway lines. He had marked one from the Dawson to Dogwood Creek, and another from Juandah to the Dogwood railway station within thirty-eight miles, and over good firm ground. He (the Minister for Works) thought the money was well spent, and he hoped the committee would not refuse the vote. He might inform honourable members that this man had nothing to do with the electioneering agent, but was an intelligent, useful man.

Mr. THOMPSON said the Auditor-General in his report stated that the salaries of two officers which had been refused by the House had been paid by the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One.

Mr. THOMPSON said the Auditor-General's note said two—J. Ballinger, salary, £200 and £75 allowances, and C. Ballinger, salary, £200. Now, if a vote of that House was any good, or if the Auditor-General was any good at all, they should not allow this matter to pass without comment. Of course, a Government with a majority might do a great many things; but he thought this was highly improper. He did not care how the men were paid; the House knocked them off to all intents and purposes, and in spite of that they were retained in the public service and paid. If the Minister for Works retained the best one he should not object so much, but as to the other it was notorious that he was put on in spite of the wishes of the permanent part of the department, for political reasons during a period in the administration which was now a matter of history.

Mr. PERKINS asked whether the inspector of road surveys had an increase of £100 per annum?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that Captain Whish was inspector of road surveys last year at a salary of £300, and had

£400 a-year for allowances. This year, £100 was added to his salary and deducted from his allowance. He had to keep two horses and a chainman.

Mr. PERKINS said that last year complaints were made that the allowance was too heavy, and it seemed strange that this year matters should be reversed—£100 being set down for salary and £300 for allowances. The officer did not do anything like the work other men in the Government service did for £325, and he asserted that he did not spend anything like the amount allowed for expenses.

Mr. FOOTE asked what work Captain Whish was required to do? He knew roads which had been proclaimed for three or four years and which were not yet surveyed. It would be much better and cheaper to have a district surveyor. In the Rosewood Scrub there was a road which, under the present system, had cost more for surveying than for clearing and erecting culverts over the bad places. He knew another road which had been carried over a mountain whilst it might readily have been surveyed through a valley. To look at some of the roads, one would think no judgment had been exercised in selecting them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said Captain Whish's duties consisted of reporting upon the opening of roads. Applications to open new roads were made daily, and before the Works department could do anything in the matter, reference had to be made to Captain Whish for his report. Had honourable members taken the trouble to read his report, they would see how he was employed. He was constantly engaged, was a very useful officer, who was not overpaid; and, to carry out his work, had to keep two horses and a man.

Mr. MACROSSAN asked for information about the two men put down in the Estimate at £120 each.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied, they had nothing to do with Captain Whish. They belonged to the road ranger's party.

Mr. MACROSSAN said, it appeared, then, that a road ranger was appointed to discover and mark roads, and an inspector to look after his work. An alteration might be made in respect to the vote. The Minister for Works had made out a bad case for Captain Whish.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that roads marked by the ranger were surveyed by the Lands department, Captain Whish having nothing to do with that work. His work was in connection with the opening of roads through thickly-populated districts. The ranger was employed in the outside districts, marking and blazing roads.

Mr. McILWRAITH hoped the committee were not losing sight of the very important point alluded to by the honourable member for Bremer. Last year the item for the

road ranger was submitted to the committee on the Estimates-in-Chief and the Supplementary Estimates, and on both occasions it was decided that the vote should not be passed. The Government did not take upon themselves the responsibility of deciding at a Cabinet meeting that the man should be employed, and of bringing the matter before the committee on the Supplementary Estimates; but the Minister deliberately kept on employing the officer, paying him from money voted for a different purpose. He had not seen a case where the decision of the committee had been so completely defied, and yet Ministers had not said one word in defence of their conduct except that the officer was necessary. If the Ministry was allowed to defy the committee in this way, he did not know what parliamentary government would come to. He did not wish to go into the question whether the road ranger was needed or not, but he wanted to show his respect for the decision of Parliament and his disapproval of the action of the Government in disregarding it, and would, therefore, move that the item of £200 set down for the road ranger should be omitted. It was the only way in which he could express his meaning.

Mr. THOMPSON said the Auditor-General's report referred to two officers who had been paid, notwithstanding that their salaries had been refused by the committee. Out of what fund was the other paid?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was inclined to accept the responsibility in this matter, but could explain that it was with very great reluctance that he had put down the amount, for the reason that last year the House had refused to vote it. But he was under the impression that it was not particularly against this road ranger that the charge of busying himself in electioneering had been made. The services of that individual were dispensed with, and he had not been paid; he had not been employed by Government since he had been in the Public Works office. However, he was responsible for this being on the Estimates, and he repeated that it was with reluctance he had placed it thereon, knowing that the House had refused the vote. But it would be a great loss if this man was dispensed with, as he was a very useful officer in selecting the best tracks for roads both through bush and mountain land; and therefore he trusted the honourable member for Maranoa would not press his motion. It was not without very great pressure that he did not dispense with this man, and he knew it was not right to set the decisions of the House at defiance.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he was glad to see the Minister for Works had some sense of the enormity of the offence he had committed against Parliament, though he was only now commencing to realise it. To

save them from so bad a precedent, the Minister should pay the money himself. If that were done he should withdraw his motion. But the duty of the Minister was to save them from a precedent of this kind, and from responsibilities he had himself personally incurred.

Mr. WALSH said he was not one of those who viewed these matters in a light spirit. That was not the way to deal with them. The honourable Minister for Works had said that it was expedient, notwithstanding the direct decision of Parliament, to retain this man because he was able to make good tracks through bogs and mountains. On that ground the Minister set the House at defiance, and came with a vague excuse to justify his conduct. In olden times if such a thing had been discovered in that House—such *laches* on the part of a Minister—the House would then and there have voted the Minister unworthy of the confidence of the country. But when the Minister for Works admitted that he defied the Assembly, he got cheered, and, as it were white-washed by the guiles and expressions of honourable members on the other side of the House. What hope was there for the country when they found a Minister admitting that he had gone in defiance of the expressed vote of last session, and was cheered by a party who were said to be the only exponents of parliamentary government in the country? He thought it must be very small.

The PREMIER said there was at least one word that might be said in favour of his honourable colleague. When this vote was brought before the House on a previous occasion there was a misapprehension of the terms on which it was proposed. The House had made up its mind not to employ one road ranger—Charles Ballinger—who had taken an undue part in politics, but somehow the other man was so mixed up in the discussion that the House refused to vote both the grants. The honourable member for Ipswich, who was then Minister for Works, rather hastily withdrew the vote without explaining the circumstances, possibly from a desire that it should not be known how far the one had been connected with politics, and the House polished off both these men, the one being a faithful servant doing good work, and the other not an unfaithful servant, but who had compromised his position by his connection with politics. His honourable friend had already said that he did not think it was desirable that they should take the sense of the House on the subject, and he did not think so either. This man's services had been useful, and his colleague, regarding the matter in that light, thought they should not be dispensed with; and that was the reason they had not been.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he did not wish to enter into any controversy now, but there

was one thing stated for which there could be no excuse at all. The man who, on account of his political connections, was supposed to have done something wrong, had, he found, been since employed by Government.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that it so appeared from the report of the Auditor-General, who would not have said so in an important case as this was, if there had been any ground for disputing it. In that report he found the words, "C. Ballinger, Crown ranger, £200." That, the Auditor-General said, was now being paid, and his report was dated the 24th of April. So that the auditor brought it forward as a distinct charge, that if the man was dismissed, he was again engaged, notwithstanding the decision of Parliament.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the honourable member for Maranoa had omitted the date of the letter in which he furnished that statement, which was the 17th January, 1878. The salary of Charles Ballinger ceased to be paid on the 31st December, 1877. The debate on the subject occurred at the end of September, 1877, but in consequence of Ballinger's connection with the service, he was allowed to fulfil his engagement to the end of the year. As to the other item, it might be that his honourable colleague looked upon the appointment of J. Ballinger as a new appointment, and he was certainly satisfied that he was competent to fulfil the duties of the particular office. He thought that in such a case his colleague was entitled to exercise his judgment. With regard to the payment to both the Ballinger's for 1877-8, it would appear on the Supplementary Estimates, and the opinion of the committee could then be more conveniently expressed than at the present time. There was no intention to conceal the payment made to either one or the other of those officers, on the Estimates for 1877-8.

Mr. McILWRAITH said there had been an attempt to conceal payment, because, if the Colonial Treasurer looked at the footnote, he would see that it would be necessary to alter the books of the Treasury, as the amount had been paid out of other votes. He did not wish, however, to stop the vote, but would express his sense of the conduct of the Ministry in actually spending money which the House had refused to vote. He would withdraw his amendment that the £200 be struck out on the condition that the Treasurer brought forward, as he had promised to do, the salaries of C. and J. Ballinger on the Supplementary Estimates. That would suit his purpose a great deal better, as he could then put before the Ministry the unconstitutional course they had adopted in paying money against the will of Parliament.

A very bad defence had been made. The Premier said that the case was not so bad after all, because the committee having acted under a misapprehension, the Government, finding such to be the case, took on the good man; but the Colonial Treasurer said the Government employed the bad man for three months after Parliament had said he should not be employed at all. The Premier's defence of the Minister for Works went for nothing at all; and the defence of the Colonial Treasurer would long be remembered in Parliament, because he had stood up and defended the action on the ground that this was a new appointment. The Government had submitted to the House the appointment of a certain individual to whom they were not allowed to pay salary, under the Audit Act, unless with the consent of Parliament. There was now a new doctrine by which when Parliament said money was not to be paid to a man, the Government could discharge a man two minutes before twelve o'clock, engage him at twelve, and call it a fresh appointment.

Mr. GRAHAM said, as this was a question to be discussed at some future time, and the Colonial Treasurer had stated that this was a new appointment, he should like to be informed whether J. Ballinger was ever off pay—whether, in fact, he was ever discharged?

Mr. PERKINS said he was beginning to think whether the Auditor-General could not be dispensed with, and also the practice of submitting votes to the House. In listening to the case of the Ballingers, he had thought that if the one notorious case which had been proved to the satisfaction of the committee had stood alone, it would have been well enough. But under the pretence of working under the Roads department, there were many who were doing worse, and the country was getting no return for the salaries that had been paid. On reading the Auditor-General's report, he had come to the conclusion that this was not the only case where salaries had been paid which were refused by the House. He heard for the first time that the wishes of the House were set at defiance by suspending a man for a day or a week and making a fresh appointment. When he found the Minister for Works conniving and winking at such a transaction, it seemed as though that gentleman must have lost a great deal of his character since he had been a member of the Government. From the way he talked out of the House, it was hard to understand how he could countenance such a thing. But he (Mr. Perkins) found there were also appointed some of the old identities who had filled some other occupations in life, and of whom members of the Ministry or Opposition seemed to know too much, or too little, so that those honourable members were always ready to stand up and choke off any allegation that

might be made against them. The Minister for Works had a long story written by Captain Whish, but there was no one to say how often the Captain had been at Kilcoy, Too-woomba, or Jimbour. He went to any place where he could get shelter, good company, and lodgings for the night. He (Mr. Perkins) denied that Captain Whish had been to those places in the interest of the country, and if he could get any support, he would move the reduction of his travelling allowance to £200. He would be satisfied, however, if the Minister for Works would promise that Captain Whish should not go to the Darling Downs. Whenever he went there, a carriage or buggy-and-pair met him, and he chalked out his roads so that they should lead to the house of the largest landed proprietor in the neighbourhood. He did not visit a selector or go over the road himself. If the Minister for Works would only keep him away from the Darling Downs and not permit him to alter the roads laid out by a man who received half the salary and rode his own horses, he (Mr. Perkins) would be perfectly satisfied. It seemed that, like some others, this gentleman belonged to a certain class, and some honourable members would sooner he should be kept silent.

Mr. MACROSSAN said, as the honourable member for the Maranoa had stated his intention to bring this matter on for discussion on some future occasion, he would only say that he was extremely sorry and surprised that both the Treasurer and the Premier should have treated this matter in the frivolous way they had. He did not expect that either of those gentlemen would have set a vote of that House at direct defiance, and treated the affair as a matter of no moment. As far as the remarks of the honourable member for Aubigny were concerned, he would only say that if that honourable member moved to reduce the allowance of Captain Whish he should support him.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was sorry that any honourable member should imagine that either the Premier or he had treated the matter frivolously. He had only considered that the present was an inopportune time to debate it, because the present vote was for 1878-9, and the irregularity referred to related to 1877-8. To show that he had not considered the matter frivolous, he might state that he had already given instructions that when the final Supplementary Estimates for that year were laid upon the table of the House, those two payments should be set forth. This would be done not to alter the books of the Treasury, but to obtain Parliamentary authority for the appropriation, and that an opportunity should be afforded to the Government to state their reason for taking the action which, without explanation, appeared

irregular. He trusted this would show that the Government had not treated the matter as one of no moment.

Mr. WALSH said the Colonial Treasurer, with all his attempts to show that the Government had acted in a *bonâ fide* manner, had stated that he considered the appointment to be a new one, and had dealt with it as such. A more outrageous statement than that had never been made before a body of reflecting individuals. Last session the House decided that neither of those two persons, however valuable their services might be, should be further employed. That was the result of their examination. The Government, apparently, accepted the determination, and the House had been misled by the conduct of the Government. When taxed with not carrying out the expressed determination of the Assembly, the Colonial Treasurer, who, of all others, should be the most determined to carry out the desire of the House, said that the reason why the salary had been placed on the Estimates was, that the office was a new appointment. That meant that Mr. Ballinger was called in by the officer of the department he had been working in, and told "Parliament has refused to vote your salary. You are dismissed now, but we are going to make a new appointment to evade the order and defy Parliament. We consider you too useful to be dispensed with." That was the English of it, and a more disastrous statement had never been made by a Minister nor accepted by the peoples' representatives in this colony.

Mr. IVORY was not at all surprised at the course pursued by the Government in reference to this matter. They had just shown that if an inch were given to them they took an ell. It would be in the remembrance of the committee that last year a Minister acted in defiance of a vote of the House of a previous session, by giving to a certain individual a bonus, and the House then supported the Government in that course of action. The Government were now doing a similar thing, and defending it on the ground that the appointment was a new one. It was high time that the House took a stand, and prevented such a course of action. It was a most unconstitutional course of procedure, and was justified by the Premier from one standpoint, and by the Colonial Treasurer, on the ground that this man, who had never really been out of Government employment, had been newly appointed.

With the consent of the committee, the amendment was withdrawn.

Question—That the sum of £840 be granted—put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House adjourned at 11 o'clock.