

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 5 JUNE 1879

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 5 June, 1879.

Report of Committee.—Petition.—New Bills.—Impounding Act Amendment Bill—third reading.—Travelling Sheep Bill—second reading.—Manning's Retirement Act—Repeal.—Sale of Intoxicating Liquors.—Letters Patent and Registration.—Diseases in Plants and Animals.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

MR. MOREHEAD brought up the report of the Elections and Qualifications Committee, and moved that it be read.

Report read as follows:—

"REPORT from the Committee of Elections and Qualifications (in the matter of the Petition of William Graham against the Election and Return of William Miles and Francis Kates, the sitting members for the Electoral District of Darling Downs).

"The Committee of Elections and Qualifications, duly appointed on the 13th day of May last, to whom was referred a Petition from William Graham, praying that the recent Election for the Electoral District of Darling Downs may be declared null and void, and that a new election may be had for the said Electoral District, have determined, and do hereby accordingly declare, that the Election in question was wholly void.

"BOYD D. MOREHEAD,
"Chairman.

"Legislative Assembly,
"Committee Room No. 1,
"Brisbane, 5th June, 1879."

PETITION.

MR. ARCHER presented a petition from certain selectors of the districts near Rockhampton and Blackall, praying that the House will take into consideration the price of land in taking up selections, and grant them remedy by reduction of the price.

Petition received.

NEW BILLS.

MR. BEATTIE having obtained leave to bring in a Bill to give an additional Member to the Electoral District of Fortitude Valley, presented the Bill, which was read a first time, and the second reading fixed for that day fortnight (June 19).

The Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH having obtained leave to bring in a Bill to confer on the Mercantile Bank of Sydney—a Corporation created in the Colony of New South Wales by an Act of that Legislature, 37 Victoria—all the privileges of a Corporation in the Colony of Queensland, presented the Bill, and it was read a first time, and ordered to be printed.

IMPOUNDING ACT AMENDMENT BILL —THIRD READING.

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

TRAVELLING SHEEP BILL—SECOND READING.

MR. STEVENS moved the second reading of this Bill, and in doing so stated the principal reasons for introducing it. The first object was to prevent a comparatively few owners of sheep consuming the whole of the grass on the roads used by travelling stock. In New South Wales this evil had been carried to such an excess that it had been found necessary to legislate upon it. The same evils were going on in Queensland, arising from the fact that the owners of small pieces of country had immense numbers of stock—in some cases ten times as many as they could feed on their own runs—which they maintained by travelling them all over the country. In addition to New South Wales, they had found it necessary to legislate on this subject in South Australia, the Act passed there being very severe, and imposing on the owner of travelling stock a fee of 1s. per 100 head per mile, instead of about 2d., as in New South Wales, and as it was proposed to enforce here. In Victoria it was unnecessary to legislate on the subject, and they had no travelling sheep Act, all the roads being fenced in. Turning to Queensland, there were in the year 1874-75, 700,000 sheep passing up and down the Warrego. They were not going to any particular place, but they just travelled down one side of the river and up the other, completely stripping the whole of the country lying on the frontage of the river, of grass. To prove that these 700,000 sheep he had mentioned were not bound for any of the neighbouring colonies, there were in that year only 174,000 which left the colony over the border. The rest were not used for taking up and stocking fresh country, for very few sheep were sent out west during that year, cattle being chiefly used for new runs. In 1876, 57,000 left the colony across the border; in 1877, 173,000; and in 1878, 149,000; but during these years there was never less than three to four hundred thousand sheep, and sometimes considerably more, marching up and down the river bank, destroying every blade of grass. The roads, as a rule, mostly ran along the banks of the rivers, consequently stock travelling over them passed over the most valuable part of the runs which had river frontages, and made it impossible for the run-holder to make any provision for a drought by leaving that part of his run untouched and saving the grass on his frontage, because he never knew when a flock of travelling sheep might not come and sweep it off. The usual distance for a road for travelling stock was half-a-mile each side of the road, but as a fact it was more often a mile or two miles, and to endeavour to keep travelling sheep to the legal distance would require an army of men, to keep the road in that

district. It had now come to this, that those who had depended on their frontages for a supply of grass were completely disappointed, the travelling sheep having taken it all off. The evil pressed harder on the owners of sheep than of cattle, cattle being able to go much further for their grass and water than sheep. On runs taken up recently in the back country there was no provision yet for grass and water; and owners therefore relied for their permanent supply of grass and water on their frontages, especially during lambing time; but when the time for lambing came they found every blade of grass on the frontage gone, and the result was the nearly absolute loss of the lambing. There were others besides squatters who were considerably interested in the Bill, namely, the farmers and selectors, as their grass was of as much value to them as the squatter's grass was to him, and travelling sheep did them as much injury. In fact, everyone was injured by travelling stock—even people in cities, as they had to put up with inferior meat because the roads had been stripped of grass and the sheep were brought into the towns in poor condition. The Bill was somewhat similar to that in New South Wales, but was a little easier: for instance, the New South Wales Bill did not provide for men travelling with sheep being blocked by drought or floods, whereas the Bill before the House provided that in either of those two cases a deviation from the route might be authorised. Then, again, if sheep were sold on the road, and a new owner took charge of them, he should be deemed to have started afresh. There could not be a better season than the present for passing such a measure, as nearly the whole country was well supplied with grass and water, and consequently there were few sheep travelling; but if it was left till the dry season came on, it might be a hardship, as people might then be taken unawares. He believed that by some persons the charge of twopence per head for 100 miles was considered very heavy, but it was only half of what a man could rent a run for, whilst if it was made heavier it would not have the desired effect, as men would take the grass and run the risk of being found out. He could say a great deal more on the subject, but he did not think it was necessary for him to do so on the present occasion. He believed the Bill was worthy of the consideration of hon. members, and if it should pass the second reading he should be happy to give any information when it was in Committee, and he could speak more on the subject. He begged to move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

MR. STEVENSON said that, whilst congratulating the hon. member on having brought

forward the Bill, he regretted that it was not so comprehensive as it should be, and was not a very useful one at the present time. He considered it was a measure which it would be very easy to evade. Some portions of it, no doubt, were very good—such as the payment for travelling sheep—and no doubt a measure was very much wanted to prevent the devastation of grass by travelling sheep; but the Bill did not go far enough. He thought provision should be made to prevent the alienation of land within half-a-mile of the road, and that if that was done no person would object to pay a sum even for the first journey. If, for instance, a penny a head was imposed as a charge for travelling sheep, irrespective of distance, he believed that every owner travelling fat sheep to market would be willing to pay such a sum for the purpose of having a good route kept for them. Then with regard to the provision to which the hon. member had referred in case of sales, he thought that a charge of twopence per head per 100 miles would lead people to make bogus sales, so that sheep could travel back without any charge at all, but if the charge was lighter persons would not try to evade the payment of it. There was another difficulty in regard to clause 6. It would be a very difficult thing for most people to define what fat sheep were;—for instance, what might be called fat sheep on the coast line might be looked upon as very indifferent store sheep in the western country. An owner might make an excuse that he could not make his sheep any fatter; and, in fact, it would be more difficult to define what were fat sheep than the hon. mover of the Bill imagined. He thought it would be better to have an uniform charge for all sheep, and that if a charge of one penny was made for the whole journey it would not be so liable to evasion as the mode of charging proposed in the Bill. He thought the hon. member was deserving of thanks for introducing such a measure, which, however, would require some amendment in Committee.

MR. MOREHEAD said he agreed with the hon. mover to a certain extent, and at the same time did not agree with him. He did not think that a charge should be made for travelling sheep. It was perfectly well known to every squatter that where there was a road there was half-a-mile reserved on each side of it for travelling stock, and he did not see why persons should be charged for using that. At the same time, all persons who chose to take their stock outside that half-mile reserve should be made to pay for it. As a rule, the men who travelled sheep were those who overstocked their country, and they ought to pay. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Normanby in reference to the sixth clause, as a man might say that he had fat sheep, and that, not being able to get a market, he

was returning with them. There were other objections he could point out to the Bill, but he did not intend to oppose its passing the second reading. He thought the thanks of hon. members were due to the hon. mover of the Bill, and that the House should allow it to pass the second reading.

Mr. LUMLEY-HILL thought that any man who wanted to travel his sheep should be willing to pay a penny per head for the whole journey, with the reasonable expectation of finding grass, rather than travel them on a road where there was nothing to eat. He agreed with the hon. member for the Mitchell that it would be unwise to make exemptions in the case of fat sheep. If the effect of the Bill was to be to diminish the amount of travelling sheep that had been going on, he thought it would be counteracted by allowing the exemption proposed by clause 6, as any man, when his own country was bare, might say that he was taking fat sheep, and, finding on his arrival at the market that prices did not suit him, might turn back and travel his sheep free, through, perhaps, the best country. Another matter which had caused great devastation of the grass arose from men who had two runs—one a small one and the other, a hundred miles or so off, a much larger one; he would travel, say, from 60,000 to 70,000 sheep from his small homestead to his large western run for the purpose of shearing them, and thereby would devastate the road over which he passed. He should like to see such a man made to pay, as his run should support his sheep; and he should be able to shear them on it without travelling them a hundred miles away. He should like to see a measure dealing with the subject of travelling sheep introduced, but he was not prepared to support the Bill before them as it at present stood, as he considered it would not carry out the object its mover had in view.

Mr. SIMPSON thought the Bill had been drafted entirely to suit the views of owners of large outside runs. Taking the Darling Downs, for instance, which was the largest sheep district in Queensland—

HON. MEMBERS: No, no.

Mr. SIMPSON thought if it was not the largest it was nearly the largest;—well, there people had to travel sheep along roads between fences, and he should like to know whether they were to be charged? There was no doubt that some such Bill as the present was wanted, but it would require the insertion of a great many clauses to meet the views of holders of freehold lands in the inside districts, where there were nothing but lanes between fences on which to travel sheep.

Mr. DAVENPORT said he was not prepared to support the Bill in its present form.

There was no doubt that considerable injustice was done by travelling the stock of persons, who, not having holdings, consumed the grass of others. He believed that the country was full of cattle reserves, and yet no mention was made of those reserves in the Bill, as should have been done. Then, again, supposing a stockholder was compelled by a drought, or other visitation of Providence, to travel his sheep, it would be rather hard upon him that he should be made to pay the sum proposed by the Bill. There were many objections to be raised to the Bill, and he would ask the hon. member in charge of it to allow it to be referred to a Select Committee.

Mr. LOW said he might mention that from Dalby to Brisbane the grass was so bad that sheep ought not to be charged anything for travelling on it;—the same remark applied to the road from Warwick to Brisbane.

Mr. STUBLEY considered the Bill was a very necessary one, as it was high time steps should be taken to stop persons from travelling their sheep and consuming the grass of the public as they had been in the habit of doing. The Bill was a judicious one as it was, and, when a little amended, he would vote for it. The hon. member for Normanby made some suggestion about a reserve of half-a-mile on each side of the Roma road. That amount of reserve was secured on roads through Crown lands, but it could not be expected where lands had been taken up. The want of grass was a difficulty which had to be contended with near a market, but it was not to be expected that half-a-mile of paddocks on each side of the road could be reserved, even if the owners of stock paid a shilling per head. If they required feed for their sheep they must do as others did—hire a paddock and pay for it.

Mr. NORTON agreed to a very great extent with the remarks of the hon. member for the Mitchell, that no charge should be made for stock going to market under any circumstances whatever. The real object of the Bill was to prevent those who had overstocked their runs from leaving them in a dry season, and taking their sheep on to the runs of those who had taken some thought for the future, and, by lightly stocking the country, saved sufficient grass to maintain their stock in time of drought. It was worthy of remark, that those who suffered most from the evils complained of were those who maintained their country in as good state for grazing as it was when first taken up; while those who travelled their sheep about were generally compelled to do so because they had rendered their own country unfit for grazing. Some protection should therefore be given to those who made provision

for the future, and had regard for the maintenance of the public estate. The evil was one which affected owners of cattle stations very considerably. The district which he represented was principally occupied by cattle stations, and some years ago a good many sheep came into it travelling for grass. They had been kept on the stations to which they belonged until nearly dead, and then sent down to the coast to manure the cattle runs with their carcasses. This was not at all beneficial to the cattle runs, as the cattle did not like the smell of sheep, and for weeks after would not graze where sheep had been. There was a great inducement to send sheep on to cattle runs, because, however heavily they might be stocked, there was always sufficient grass left by the cattle to make them a paradise for sheep travelling over them. There were some defects in the Bill which might be remedied in Committee, but he should be very glad to support the second reading.

The Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH said he should like to know what the Government meant to do with respect to this Bill. Hon. members had heard no opinion from any member of the Government, and did not know whether they had any.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer): Silence gives consent.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was quite refreshing to find one subject upon which hon. members on the other (Ministerial) side differed, and upon which they might express their own opinions. They had been seen, on some occasions, expressing opinions one way and voting another. With regard to the Bill, he had heard that some measure of the kind was very necessary; but, after the extraordinary conflict of opinion expressed on the other side of the House by hon. members who were pastoral tenants and specially interested in the matter, the House should have some authoritative information from the Government as to the merits of the Bill. If there was nothing to be said for it, it should not be allowed to go into Committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said if the leader of the Opposition copied the Government he would hold his tongue when he had nothing to say about the subject. From the fact that the Government were prepared to allow the Bill to pass its second reading the House would take it for granted that they thought it ought to pass.

Question put and passed.

The Bill was read a second time, and the committal made an Order of the Day for Thursday, 19th instant.

MANNING'S RETIREMENT ACT— REPEAL.

Mr. MESTON said he was desirous of postponing the second reading of this Bill

to enable him to obtain some information which he was anxious to have before the second reading. He moved, therefore, that it be postponed.

Question put and passed.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS.

On the motion of Mr. McLEAN, the House, in Committee of the Whole, affirmed the following resolutions:—

1. That it is desirable to introduce a Bill to enable owners and occupiers of property in certain districts, townships, and cities, to prohibit the common sale of intoxicating liquors within such districts, townships, and cities.

2. That an Address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to recommend to this House the necessary appropriation for defraying the expenses of elections under the said Bill.

LETTERS PATENT AND REGISTRATION.

On the motion of Mr. MACKAY, the House, in Committee of the Whole, affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Law relating to the issue of Letters Patent and of Registration for new Inventions and Improvements in Manufactures.

The report was adopted by the House; and the Bill was introduced, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Thursday, the 19th instant.

DISEASES IN PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Mr. MACKAY moved—

1. That in order to enable the Board of Inquiry into Diseases of Plants and Animals to carry on the investigations already commenced concerning rust in wheat and maize, and the other matters for which the Board was appointed—

2. In the opinion of this House the moneys voted by Parliament, and unexpended, should be placed to the credit of said Board, in order to carry on the inquiries concerning rust in wheat, &c.

In bringing this matter forward he said he had no desire to make it a party question, and he sincerely hoped that the Government would not oppose the motion. He had looked somewhat earnestly into the proceedings of this Board during the years they had been carrying on their operations since 1875, when the Board was called into existence by the action of this House. Much to his regret, he recently had occasion to speak about the action of the Minister for Lands in practically putting a stop to the proceedings of the Board. The difficulty arose in consequence of a letter written by the Minister for Lands to the secretary of the Board, checking their operations by saying that no more money would be placed to their credit. Previous Governments had been

in the habit of placing some £300 at a time, as requested, at the disposal of the Board of Inquiry, to enable them to carry on their proceedings, and each year a report was published stating what the Board had been doing. They had been carrying on a large amount of correspondence with various parts of this colony and other colonies, and they had one of the best secretaries in the colony in the Chief Inspector of Stock (Mr. Gordon);—in fact, it was altogether a very businesslike organisation. After that letter had been received from the Minister, a deputation from the Board immediately waited upon him at his office, and he (Mr. Mackay) was present. They then stated their case to the Minister—with the perfect understanding that the public funds were not so plentiful as they had been—explaining that the Board were prepared to carry on their operations with as little money as they possibly could. An arrangement was come to that the Board should be enabled to carry on the responsibility that rested upon them, as far as wages were concerned, by receiving £4 10s. or £5 a week. That would have enabled the Board to carry on their experimental farming at New Farm. For the information of hon. members, he might state that the Board of Inquiry was the only body in Queensland now carrying on public experiments with sugar-cane. And it was also to the credit of the colony—even though it might be a scientific subject which called up sneers upon the faces of some gentlemen—that they had been the direct means of solving the serious difficulty which had met sugar-growers, viz., the rust in sugar-cane. Many hon. members knew how that difficulty had paralysed the sugar industry for several years. And it was by the direct agency of a member of that Board that the cause had been discovered. Dr. Bancroft, a member of the Board, had discovered precisely what it was, and he was now recognised by scientific men all over the world as the discoverer of the cause of rust in sugar-cane. That gentleman's investigations were carried on through the agency of the Board at his own expense, except the facilities which the Board could place at his disposal. It might at once be stated that the Board was not a political organization in any sense of the term;—there were gentlemen of all shades of opinion in connection with it. The Board was constituted on the 19th February, 1875, by proclamation in the *Government Gazette*, of which the following was a copy:—

"His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has been pleased to appoint the undermentioned gentlemen to form a Board to inquire into and report upon—

"1. The causes and best methods of prevention and of cure of diseases in sheep, cattle, and horses.

"2. The same as to wheat, sugar-cane, vines, bananas, and other cultivated plants.

"3. The best method of improving the natural pastures of the colony;—

Joseph Bancroft, M.D.

Joseph Carter

George Grimes

Charles Robert Haly

Robert Muir

Alexander Raff

Augustus Charles Gregory, F.R.G.S.

Karl Theodore Staiger

Angus Mackay

Dr. Prentice

D. C. McConnel

R. Newton."

The honorary members of the Board were the Chief Inspector of Stock and the Curator of the Botanical Gardens; and the corresponding members were W. G. Bailey, M.L.A., George Clark, and William Archer. This proclamation was signed by T. B. Stephens, a gentleman whose name was respected all over the colony. He would briefly state what the Board had done during its existence. Its report had been sent out that morning, and dealt in a rather summary way with its operations. It was constituted in 1875, and the object in view was to inquire into the diseases in stock and plants; and a body of gentlemen were called upon by proclamation to give their services for the purposes stated. There had been some reference to repudiation the other evening, and he would submit that if money was voted for a specific purpose to the Board, and if, as the report showed, the members had almost sacredly attended to their instructions, and had carried out their duties as well as men in their position could do, it would be as clear a case of repudiation as could be imagined were the money refused and the operation of the Board brought to a standstill. The Board held meetings as the occasion arose, this plan being found the most advisable. One of the first subjects investigated was the pleuro in cattle. Several members of the Board presented papers, giving their thoughts on the subject; and other information had been gathered from several parts of the world. Although the Board had been unable to carry out experiments, the direct effect of their action had been that inoculation was recognised to be a necessary thing by gentlemen in the colony who had not previously considered it so;—it was largely due to the action of the Board that inoculation was acknowledged as necessary. Another matter investigated was the disease in sheep. Many hon. members would recollect how earnestly Mr. C. R. Haly, while a member of the House, had pleaded for investigation into this subject; and they would also remember the sneering objection made in reference to the action of the Board on the same matter. News came that a serious disease

existed in sheep. The Colonial Treasurer, no later than last night, had mentioned in his Financial Statement that there had been a very large decrease in the number of sheep. When the news came to the Board of the disease, they took the proper action—they selected the fittest man they could get and sent him to the spot where the disease was supposed to exist; and, although sneering remarks had been made in regard to their action—he would almost say a vulgarity had been committed, as usual, by the Minister for Lands, by stating that they had spent money in horseing a man about the country to inspect a sheep's liver—he did not think it would have been a creditable thing to the Board if they had not taken action after the matter had been brought under their notice;—it therefore came with bad grace to sneer at them. Exception had been taken to the cost of the inquiry, but the gentleman sent out was one of the cleverest men in the colony, and ought therefore to be well paid. He had paid that gentleman high charges himself, and, although he was not a rich man, he had never objected to the accounts rendered; and had he owned sheep, and found that they were dying from some unknown disease, he should have gladly paid the fee charged by Dr. Bancroft out of his own means. The inquiry led to a considerable amount of correspondence on the subject, and conversations that he had had with many gentlemen bore out precisely what they had heard at an earlier hour that evening. Dr. Bancroft's report tended clearly to show that the disease was brought about very largely by over-stocking runs. The investigation was made strictly by the advice of Mr. Haly, and it would be admitted by many that he was the proper person to give advice in such a case. The next matter dealt with, and one which was also strictly in accordance with the instructions laid down, was in relation to the native grasses. Considerable exception had been taken to the Board's action, which was brought about in this way: It would be remembered that in 1875 the Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland held an exhibition at Toowoomba, and offered a very handsome prize for the best essay on native grasses, with specimens of the grasses. He (Mr. Mackay) was the winner of that prize, and from the essay the Board's efforts sprang. They obtained the services of the cleverest botanist in the colony. Mr. F. M. Bailey, whose abilities were generally acknowledged. Their efforts were the direct means of keeping this gentleman in the colony at a very low salary;—he was an enthusiast in the science of botany, and salary was to him a secondary consideration. He collected grass seeds all through the colony, and they were sown in Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Warwick, Maryborough, and Rockhampton, and at various

times it had been his (Mr. Mackay's) duty to visit these places and report on the experiments. They had been reported upon several times, and the Press had taken up the matter, and had spoken very highly of what was being done. The expenses being heavy, and there being but a small amount at the disposal of the Board, it was thought advisable to curtail, and confine the experiments to New Farm, Brisbane; to Toowoomba, and Rockhampton. At the same time, the Superintendent of St. Helena took up the subject and worked it without any expense to the Board. The results of the experiments were shown at every exhibition of the National Association in Brisbane, and were sent to Sydney and various other places. Letters came from persons residing in the colony and out of it, stating that the grasses were now being grown by them at their own cost. The Board afterwards thought it advisable to publish a book—in regard to which, by the way, some not respectable remarks had been made by the Minister for Lands. He had the book about which so many sneering observations had been made, and he thought he could claim to know something about the subject, having won, as he had already stated, the prize of the Royal Society for the best essay on native grasses, and for collecting the grasses and having them on exhibition there. He had also some knowledge of what the cost of printing the work should be. He hoped hon. members would look at the work, for it was one of the most creditable things produced in the colony. He did not say there was everything in it that he would like, but it was a most creditable work for a young colony. As it stood, it represented some forty or fifty native grasses. The Board's experiments had extended to seventy or eighty varieties, and would continue, he hoped, until all were embraced. A gentleman who took an interest in these matters had only that day sent him a book which had been got up by the New Zealand Government on the native grasses of that country. It was a handsome work, but he was sure that it cost more money than the Queensland work. The action of the New Zealand Government showed that the Queensland Board was not doing such an outrageous thing as was asserted, apart from the fact that their efforts had been strictly in accordance with the proclaimed instructions. The result had been that a great deal of interest had been created in connection with the native grasses of the colony. At Toowoomba they had been grown somewhat extensively, and many gentlemen—squatters and selectors—had been so much interested that they were spending a great deal of time and money in cultivating them. The Board had also sent to Germany for some two tons of chloride of potassium, to try

experiments in their grounds in regard to grasses for sheep, it being represented that this was one of the mineral constituents through the absence of which sheep were suffering so much. It had been distributed through various parts of the colony. He might also state that the Board had been making collections of seeds of poisonous plants. A good deal of doubt existed on that subject. He himself doubted whether the large number set down as poisonous were really so. It was the intention to sow them at New Farm, and at the present time these experiments were going on. Hon. members would recollect how badly the sugar industry had suffered from the disease in cane some time ago, and, although he did not for a moment claim that the Board had been the means of eradicating it, yet it was an immense satisfaction to sugar-planters to know what the disease was and how to check it. News came to the colony about three months ago that at Porto Rico, one of the oldest sugar-growing countries in the world, an immense loss had arisen from a disease which, according to the description, was precisely similar to the one existing in Queensland. The immense crop of sugar produced in that country had in three years fallen off two-thirds, and skilful gentlemen had been sent to various parts of the world to make investigations, and he should not wonder if some were to come to Queensland to make inquiries and to collect sugar-cane for experiments at home—to just grope about in the way in which the Board did to ascertain the cause of the disease. He submitted that it was creditable to this young colony—situated at the ends of earth as it was sometimes said—that an unassuming Board should have been the means of ascertaining the cause of this disease. Another matter had been taken up by the Board: they imported various sorts of sugar-cane plants from different countries—from South America and the West Indies, and they had been grown at the experimental grounds and distributed. This work had not gone far yet, it taking several years to develop; but the result of their efforts would, he believed, give the colony varieties of suitable cane. The Board had also experimented with chemical agents to destroy the rust, the cause of which was now well known. They had also tested, in a practical manner, the capabilities of the colony for rice. In the library of the House there was as fine a specimen of rice as could perhaps be seen; it had been grown at New Farm, and nearly a ton would be sent to the next Sydney Exhibition. Through the kindness of the Colonial Secretary and the energy of the Superintendent at St. Helena, two acres of land were being prepared at St. Helena for rice culture—in low wet ground similar to that on which rice was grown

in Louisiana and other parts of the world. Amongst the good services done by the Board, and one which he should like to bring very prominently before the House, was their action in regard to the disease in grape vines known as "phylloxera." About two years ago a letter came to the Board stating that that disease had made its appearance in a certain locality which he would not name; inquiries were put on foot quietly, because, if it were suspected that phylloxera had broken out in the colony, every owner of a vineyard would be terrified. He could state absolutely that the disease was phylloxera, but through the action of the Board, and with scarcely a word being said, it was stamped out of the colony. Had the Board done nothing else, the £2,000 voted to them would have been well spent. Rust in wheat was a matter of primary importance to the colony, and the Board had been desirous of carrying on experiments for some time. They had taken this action—various kinds of wheat had been brought from climates approximating to that of Queensland—from South America, Southern Europe, Egypt, and other places; and large lots had been tested at Toowoomba and at New Farm. The seasons had been against the experiment, but the manager that the Board had at Toowoomba was a very capable man, and had stuck to the task well. He tried to bring on the wheat last year, but owing to the bad season did not succeed; the Board, however, obtained from his efforts much valuable information as to how the seasons affected the varieties tried. The last had only recently been got in for this year, and the Board had taken this action—they had made arrangements with twelve farmers to keep records in books that had been supplied to them of what they had sown, of the steeps used, of the soil, and other information, so that correct data might be obtained should rust break out. In South Australia and Victoria larger sums of money than had been voted here had been set aside for making investigations in rust, and one of the reasons which made him so anxious that the Board should be able to prosecute their inquiries was in order that they might be carried on in conjunction with the investigations in South Australia and Victoria. Were the £300 available here allowed to the Board, they would be enabled to secure for the colony the benefit of the £5,000, £6,000, or £7,000 being spent in the other colonies for a similar object. The rust in maize had been a very serious matter during the last two or three seasons, but the House would understand that the Board had been very cautious in speaking about the matter, as it was so easy to frighten people. Investigations had been going on, however, and would continue, he hoped, for the purpose of dis-

covering what the rust in maize as well as in wheat was. At the end of the report it was stated, in reference to what was contemplated by the Board, that they were desirous of carrying on the experiments for another year at Toowoomba and New Farm. The experiments at Toowoomba had been alluded to several times; but he would like the House to understand that they had been carried on at the expense of the Board. This was about as fine ground as any in the colony. They had got a very able man there, and it had been a privilege that they had been able to keep a man going at that place:—

“The Board is further desirous of following up the diseases of sheep and any others in live stock of any kind that may come within their province. The expenditure, in so far as wages’ payments go, amounts to about £4 10s. per week. For all the purposes in contemplation, £400 per annum, or at most £500 per annum, will suffice for the Board. Beyond bare travelling expenses, where asked to go out and investigate, and payment for professional services, the members of the Board have made no charges upon the funds. Full statements of all the outlay have been published annually.”

The report dealt very fully with all the matters he had thus briefly brought before the House. He did not wish to take up the time of the House on a matter of this kind. He trusted hon. members had thought the subject over for themselves to a great extent, and he would only submit this—that as far as the members of the Board were concerned, although it would check their very laudable desire to carry on operations of this kind, in no other way would it affect them whether their labours were brought to a standstill or not. He submitted, however, that a very near approach to something like patriotism had animated the members of the Board, and if their operations were brought to a standstill through the action of Parliament it would be discreditable to the colony. Of course, their duty in that case was plain; and, in fact, it had been thought over by members of the Board, whether they should resign, and it was possible that some of them would resign anyhow, if the funds were not placed at their disposal. Even if the whole sum of £2,500 were in question, he submitted that the members of the Board were quite responsible enough for such a sum; but the amount still available was only £300, and they asked to have that sum placed at their disposal, as was done by the previous Governments. He wished to state again distinctly, that, according to his idea, if this money were withheld, it would be as clear a case of repudiation as ever came before a colonial Parliament; and that it would not redound to the credit or honour of the colony if it went abroad that the

labours of this Board had been brought to an end simply because there had been a refusal to place funds at their disposal. As he said before, this should not be a party question in any sense. He took great interest in the matter because he had read up what the Board had done very carefully; he had also been in the habit of attending their meetings, a privilege that had been of great service to him in many respects, and if he had been rather warm in his advocacy of the subject he would ask the pardon of hon. members. He did not intend to take up the time of the House, but merely wished to state the case as plainly as possible, to show that the Board had done good service to the country—service strictly in accordance with the proclamation calling them into existence. He hoped it would not be made a party question, and, with all sincerity, that the Government would not oppose the motion.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down seemed to insinuate by his speech that he (Mr. Perkins) and his hon. colleagues were enemies of agriculture; but it was because they were the friends of agriculture, and had a genuine and sincere desire to mitigate the many difficulties agriculturists laboured under in this colony, that they had interfered with this Board and endeavoured to direct their attention to the functions they were called to perform some four or five years ago. He did not intend to follow the hon. gentleman through his speech, nor had he much to complain of as to the hon. member's statements; but he had made a few errors, and some of his remarks were not very complimentary to himself (Mr. Perkins). The offensive manner in which the hon. member spoke of him would, he was sure, do him no good in the House. The hon. member had wandered into a long story as to the doings of the Board; but hon. members had the report before them, and he would invite their attention to it to see if they could discover anything in it. He had read the report in manuscript, written by the hon. member himself, and he failed to discover anything in it as to what the Board was up to. If they had been embarrassed or blocked in any way it was the hon. gentleman's own fault, for he could assure him that neither his hon. colleagues nor himself had any desire to block them in their operations or to injure agriculture in any possible way. An intention was expressed, at a Cabinet meeting, that if the Board directed their attention to the pursuits that were indicated when they were called into existence, the present Ministry would not be unwilling to support a vote for a liberal sum in the House, or perhaps put it on the Estimates. He would just state a few facts connected with the case, and hon. members would be able to judge for them-

selves. One matter the hon. member referred to was that he (Mr. Perkins) spoke in offensive terms of Dr. Bancroft, in giving an answer to a question in the House; but he would simply direct attention to the fact that he took the words from the report of the Auditor-General. The words were:—

“Horsing Dr. Bancroft to Taroom, £53 1s. 11d.”

Was there anything offensive or improper in that? If the Auditor-General, or the members of the Board themselves, or whoever drew up the report, thought proper to use the expression, surely he was justified in taking it from the best authority they had in the colony. He did not intend in any way to be offensive to Dr. Bancroft, or any member of the deputation. He would say more—he did not accuse Dr. Bancroft of going outside and inventing a report of that meeting; but some member of the deputation did go outside and mis-report, and convey to the public a different complexion altogether of the proceedings to what they really were;—it was an untruthful report. He did not know who did it, and they could divide it amongst themselves. The attention of the Government was first called to the existence of this Board in a very extraordinary way. A book of illustrated grasses—a copy of which he held in his hand—was shown to him, and it was stated that the cost of it was not under £500.

MR. MACKAY: £300.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS would repeat that the cost was not under £500. On looking at the report of the Auditor-General, to which he should refer presently, his attention was drawn to the fact that the money was not being properly expended. The consequence was that, he believed, a letter was sent to the secretary stating that no more money would be available until some explanation was given. The sequel was that a deputation, consisting of the hon. member and some other members of the Board, with the secretary, interviewed him one day in the Lands Office. The sum and substance of the proceedings of the deputation was that the hon. member, who had the principal share of the talk, agreed with him verbally to send in a brief report as to the results the Board had achieved during the time they had been in existence; and he further said that the Board had made an arrangement by which the expenses would not be more than £4 10s. per week, and certainly not outside £5. Soon after that, application was made for a sum of money, and the secretary was informed that Mr. Mackay had forgotten to send in the brief report he had promised. The report now before hon. members was not the report that hon. member promised. Other correspondence

followed, and ultimately the hon. member raised a question in the House owing to a paragraph in a Toowoomba paper, and what followed would be fresh in the recollection of hon. members. However, the hon. member again agreed with him in the House to explain the matter, and he gave an assurance that the Board would confine themselves to their proper functions. But again he forgot to do so, and the consequence was that they were landed at this stage, and the House was asked to dictate to the Government as to how they should deal with the matter. For the information of hon. members he would now read some items in the report, which was said to cover up to the 30th June, 1878; but he was justified in saying that they were reported on up to the 30th of September, 1878, and the balance of their transactions was in their cash-book. The items were:—F. M. Bailey, botanist, £151 10s.; J. H. Schmidt, £44 10s.; Dr. Bancroft, £122 10s.; George Grimes, £18 2s.; C. R. Haly, £55 7s. 6d.; Angus Mackay, £37 5s.; Robert Muir, £110 19s. 6d.; Karl Staiger, £65 9s. 6d.; travelling expenses—F. M. Bailey, £79 10s.; ditto ditto, J. A. Schmidt, £2.; horsing Dr. Bancroft to Taroom, £53 1s. 11d.; trenching, ploughing, stumping, and labour generally in connection with grasses, sugar-cane, &c., £145 17s. 1d.; purchase of sugar-cane, £27 16s. 6d.; lithographing grasses, rust in sugar-cane, &c., £91 6s. 8d.; electrotyping plants, &c., £241 2s. 11d.; drawing of rust in cane, £3. He would also point out that the whole of the proceeds of agriculture amounted to £2 13s. 6d.—produce of cane sold. He thought that quite justified him in calling the attention of the hon. member to the proceedings of the Board, and endeavouring to persuade him that the money, instead of being squandered in this fashion, should be devoted to the objects it was voted for. He maintained that, being a friend of agriculture—having been engaged for some time in agricultural pursuits—and feeling that it would succeed in this colony, he was quite justified in maintaining that the money that had been voted should be devoted to the purposes for which it was intended, and limiting the Board to their proper functions. He might furthermore say that if the hon. member had kept his word, and the promise he made at the deputation, no doubt they would have been able to adjust matters and arrange some plan by which the Board would be limited to a reasonable expenditure. But from the information from nearly all parts of the colony it was evident to the Government that they must retrench—no matter what Government was in it was clear that they must cut down expenses, whether the duty was a pleasing one or not. It was certainly not a pleasing duty to him,

but it had fallen upon this Government to carry it out, and they should endeavour to do so fearlessly and impartially. There was no endeavour or wish to interfere with agriculture or with the Board, so far as the performance of their proper functions was concerned. Altogether, the sum expended by the Board was £2,240, of which sum about £1,500 was squandered by the members in paying themselves what they called travelling expenses, and the balance in hand at the present time was shown by the paper he held in his hand to be £258 12s. 8d. He supposed that was the item the hon. member now wished to get handed over to the Board. He might inform hon. members that, on inquiry, he found there had been no agreement whatever with the Board to hand over to them large sums of money. It appeared that when they wanted money they got it, but there was no fixed sum that was to be handed over to them at any time. The hon. member, however, at once put his foot down and tried to dictate to him and the Ministry as to what sums they should hand over to the Board. There had been no objection to do so on the part of the Government; they did not wish to cripple the functions and operations of the Board in any way, but they wanted the Board to confine themselves to what Parliament intended they should do when they were first constituted. He was not going to deny the statements of the hon. gentleman in any way. He would admit that, if the Board had done one-tenth of what the hon. gentleman had alleged, they had done well; but from rumours outside—statements from owners of sheep and cattle, and sugar-planters, and growers of cereals—it was evident that none of them admitted the success had been anything like what had been stated by the hon. gentleman. He would furthermore inform the hon. member that he need not try to persuade the community of Queensland that the Board had discovered any antidote for pleuro-pneumonia. He (Mr. Perkins) could remember that in Victoria, nearly twenty years ago, inoculation was performed as an antidote for that disease. Whether Queensland stock-breeders or cattle-owners were asleep to what was going on in Victoria he did not know; but he thought some of them were quite as active here as they were in that colony. Hon. members would therefore see the fallacy of making such statements. As to the other statements the hon. gentleman made he did not intend to refer to them, although he could do so if he copied or imitated the hon. member; but he did not intend to do so either in the House or in any other place. The hon. member was quite welcome to follow the particular bent of his own inclinations so long as he found that course preferable; but he (Mr. Perkins) rose simply to assure

the House that he was a friend of agriculture, and wished to see it prosper in every way; and also to state the reasons why he interfered and stopped the proceedings of the Board in the direction they were going.

Mr. AMHURST said there was no doubt the Minister for Lands was responsible for the expenditure of all moneys going through his department, and it was his duty to see that they were properly expended. He was, therefore, simply performing his duty in the course he had taken in this case.

The PREMIER said he was quite sure that the House had not understood the true facts of the case as put before them by the hon. member for South Brisbane; and if that hon. member himself really understood what he was asking the House to acquiesce in, he (the Premier) thought he would pause before he took any such action. When the sum of £2,500 was voted, in 1874 and 1876, for the purpose of making inquiry into the diseases of stock and plants, the late Government appointed a Board for the purpose of carrying out the objects of that vote; but it could not for one moment be contended that once the Government appointed a Board all the responsibility of the Government ceased. The Government were decidedly responsible to see that the Board expended the money in accordance with the wishes of the House when the vote was granted, and that was all this Government had tried to do. From information obtained from members of the Board, it appeared that previously they had been accustomed to have money handed over to them for expenditure without any supervision whatever on the part of the Department for Lands, in which department the vote was given. The only supervision they had been subjected to was simply the annual auditing of the Auditor-General. When the present Government got into office, applications were made to the Minister for Lands to get the balance of this vote placed at the credit of the Board, and, the Government being anxious in this case, along with other votes, to see that the money was being spent judiciously, made inquiries to that effect. They found that, up to the present time, the Board had spent something like £2,200, leaving a balance of about £300, and they wished to know how that money had been expended—but they had not got the information up to the present time; and so far from his own colleague, the Minister for Lands, being solely responsible for not handing over the money to the Board, it was the unanimous decision of the Cabinet that it should not be handed over. He maintained that the Government would not have discharged their duty if they had not taken that course. He did not intend to cast the slightest

reflection on the Board, nor should any action taken by the Government have made any member of the Board think the Government wished to depreciate their services. All he said was this—that whether the Board had done good work or bad work it was quite plain that they had not done the work for which the House voted this money, and that was a perfectly good reason why the Government should take the action they had, and ask how the Board intended to spend the balance of this money before it was handed over to them. That was all they asked the Board to do—how they meant to spend this money? This money was granted on the motion of a great favourite in the House—Mr. Haly, late member for Leichhardt;—it was his own personal influence in the House that carried this vote, and it was to be almost exclusively devoted to inquiries into the disease of stock and plants. It was explained in detail by several speakers how the money was to be spent; but the only information the Government could get as to the transactions of the Board was this report, that came out a few days ago. The only other information they could get was the Auditor-General's report, and, on looking at this, hon. members would see how the money voted was spent. There were several items of expenditure: E. Way, £130; A. Macpherson, £133; F. M. Bailey, botanist, £151 10s.; J. H. Schmidt, £44 10s.;—in all, about £460. That expenditure was clearly contrary to the purposes for which the vote was given. No doubt the work was good work, but it was not the kind of work for which the House voted the money. The Board had even taken it upon themselves to publish a book, which was a credit to the botanist who prepared the designs, and to the printer, and was no doubt a most useful work; but the £300 or £400 which had been spent in the preparation of that book had been diverted entirely from the purposes which Parliament had in view when it voted them the money. That book had no connection whatever with the diseases of live-stock or plants; or, if it had, it was only in the remotest degree. There were other little peculiarities of expenditure which were never entertained by the House when it passed that vote of £2,500. In the accounts of expenditure certified by the Auditor-General, there was an item of £30 to the trustees of the Maryborough Botanic Garden, a similar amount to the trustees of the Rockhampton Botanic Garden, and another item or two of that nature. Was not that, he would ask, going altogether beyond the object of the vote? On the contrary, it was dispensing the patronage of the House, and diverting public money from its original purposes. He thought he had said enough to convince

the House that the society were diverting the money at their disposal from the object for which it was voted. All that the Government had done was to ask the Board what they were going to do with the money. The Board had never been stopped in any respect from spending the whole of that money, and the Government had always been prepared to pay their vouchers so long as the money was expended on the objects for which it was voted. They now asked that the whole of the money remaining should be put to their credit; and they refused to tell the Government how they were going to spend it. If the House voted £2,500 for a certain object, the responsibility of the Government was not to cease because they had appointed a Board to superintend its expenditure. It was the object of the Government to see that the Board did not go beyond their proper functions. He was sorry that the hon. member who moved the motion had introduced so much foreign matter into the discussion, for there had never been the slightest intention on the part of the Government to disparage the work of the Board. He believed that they had done good work, but it was not the work they were asked by the House to do. If the hon. member were to bring forward a motion asking for a certain amount of money to be devoted to a specific purpose, it would be considered on its merits; but he was asking that the Board should be allowed to spend the money exactly as they chose. The motion was almost worse than a vote of want of confidence, for it was setting a precedent which he was sure the House would never allow—namely, that as soon as money had been voted by the House the responsibility of the Government ceased when they had appointed a Board to carry out the objects for which the money was voted.

Mr. DOUGLAS said it was to be regretted that a difference of opinion had arisen between the Board and the Executive Government. He admitted, with the Premier, that it was the duty of the Government, after such a Board as this had been appointed, to see that the Board did really devote themselves to the objects for which the money was voted. But he had failed to gather that, on the whole, the money had not been expended on those objects. The book referred to by the Premier might not directly bear on the diseases of stock or plants, but it did refer to grasses. It was supposed that it would be desirable to ascertain which grasses were most suitable for cultivation; and a Board of Inquiry of this kind might very well devote a portion of the funds at its disposal towards ascertaining the nature of these grasses. And this was done, he believed, chiefly on the arguments brought forward by Mr. Haly himself. There were

certainly some items which showed there had been a slight departure from the original objects of the vote. The Minister for Lands had quoted certain items from the Auditor-General's report indicating that the Board had departed from what was their particular function, and had spent money for objects not within the scope of their inquiry. That hon. gentleman referred particularly to the expenses of Dr. Bancroft, Mr. Muir, Mr. Staiger, and Mr. Mackay as not coming within the scope of their inquiries; and spoke of them as items which, being improperly incurred, ought not to have been paid. He had not the paper before him, now, to refer to, but he understood that the expenses of Mr. Muir and Mr. Staiger were incurred whilst pursuing certain inquiries into the diseases in the sugar-cane, and certainly that came under the category of the duties of the Board as prescribed by the House. In carrying out that inquiry, these gentlemen had to travel to Maryborough and Mackay, and the Board was certainly justified in paying their travelling expenses; and in that respect the money was not ill-spent. He did not know whether the investigations of those gentlemen resulted in anything important, but there was no doubt the sugar-growers were anxious at that time about these diseases in the sugar-cane, and their reports were looked upon with a good deal of interest and curiosity. Indeed, the sugar-growers of Maryborough were so anxious at that time about the disease that they went to considerable expense in securing the services of Professor Liversedge. Then, again, the hon. gentleman seemed to take great exception to any money being allowed to Dr. Bancroft for having gone up to Taroom to prosecute some inquiries in connection with the examination of the livers of sheep. Without justifying this expenditure, he could quite conceive that it must have been considered a reasonable expenditure by the Board, who had, no doubt, good reasons for concluding that the investigation of the subject could be much more easily pursued on the spot than in Brisbane. He knew enough of Dr. Bancroft to believe that he would not needlessly leave his profession here, and the numerous claims upon his time, in order gratuitously to prosecute a scientific inquiry of some weeks' duration; and he had sufficient confidence in his judgment to suppose that he did not go on a fool's errand. Such being the case, Dr. Bancroft was entitled to some remuneration for loss of time. Those gentlemen certainly bestowed a good deal of time upon their duties, although it was quite possible that the result of their labours might not have come up to the standard which some hon. members considered they ought to have attained. It would have been far better to have relieved

those gentlemen altogether of those duties than to have withdrawn from them the confidence of the Government. A voluntary Board, undertaking duties for which they were not paid, expected to have a certain amount of confidence placed in them; and if that confidence was withdrawn, it would be far better that they should cease to exist. He understood the Board was anxious to secure this remaining balance, in order to carry out certain inquiries into the cause of rust in wheat, and he did not think the administration of the funds of this Board had been such as to justify Government in refusing to carry out this remaining experiment with the money they had in hand.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government have not refused.

Mr. DOUGLAS said they had brought things to this point—that the relations between the Government and the Board were of a very uncomfortable kind. This particular inquiry into rust in wheat was one of great importance, and the results of the experiments might be of considerable advantage to the country. Money might certainly be thrown away upon them, but had not thousands and thousands of pounds been thrown away on scientific experiments? Still it was necessary to go on with those scientific inquiries, for in the end it was certain that important results would be obtained. The most satisfactory way out of the difficulty would be to make this comparatively small balance available to the Board on the necessary condition that the Board should supply the necessary vouchers and details of expenditure. He took exception to the items read as being instances of mal-expenditure and mal-administration, for he believed the gentlemen connected with the Board were above doing anything mean or for their own personal advantage.

Mr. GRIMES said he had read, with considerable interest, the various reports issued by this Board, and he could not certainly look upon the actions of the Board in the same light as some hon. members opposite—namely, that during the course of its existence it had done no good. Those who made such a statement could not have perused carefully the various reports issued by the Board, nor could they have given any credence to the remarks of the hon. member who moved the resolution. The numerous inquiries conducted by the Board into the diseases of cattle and plants could not have been carried on without a considerable expenditure, the results of which had been important not only to agriculturists, but also to those engaged in pastoral pursuits. He would especially remark upon their inquiries into the diseases of sugar-cane. Mention had been made of the item paid for wages. He might explain that the money paid to

E. Way was for taking care of the various patches of grass now under cultivation in the garden at Toowoomba. For some time the Board had been cultivating grasses there in order to test their value as fodder, and obtain therefrom seed to cultivate in other places. The A. Macpherson referred to was the person in charge of the little farm the Board now held, and which was mentioned further on in the statement of expenditure. The sum paid to Mr. Bailey was for collecting the various grasses, and his salary as botanist to the Board. It was necessary, in pursuing investigations of this kind, that the Board should have the services of a thorough botanist, and he did not think the money paid to him had been thrown away. Various plants which were supposed to be poisonous had been submitted to Mr. Bailey for his report, and these reports had been extremely useful; indeed, if the colony could obtain the services of a botanist like Mr. Bailey for £150 a year, it was extremely fortunate; and if all the money voted by the House was put to as good and practical a use as the money expended by this Board the country would have no reason to complain. The inquiry into the diseases in sugar-cane had had important results, not only to this but to other countries, and the subject had been considered of such vast importance that a despatch had been received from the Imperial Government in regard to that subject. He should have great pleasure in supporting the resolution, for he believed that if the money was handed over to them it would be spent in a very profitable way. The Premier complained that the Board did not give information as to what they intended to spend the money upon, but that information was contained in this resolution. The Board desired to spend the money in pursuing investigations on rust in wheat—a very desirable thing, and one which would recommend itself, he felt sure, to the consideration of every member of the House.

Mr. REA, when listening to the remarks of hon. members on the other side of the House, and especially those hon. members who sat on the Ministerial benches, was struck forcibly by what the Premier had said, and by the Minister for Lands reading out the names of the gentlemen who had received any money payments out of the vote to the Board. His impression was that it was intended to be inferred from that that these money payments from the public purse had been made, not for the good of the public service, but that the recipients had put the money in their own pockets. It amounted to that, at any rate, when the Minister for Lands enumerated the names of those who had received money under the Board but not the items for which it was paid. This was not fair to those gentlemen, who had given their

time gratuitously to the objects of the Board, and it was most disgraceful that any hon. member holding Ministerial office should pass such a slur on some of the best names in the colony. It would be considered a reflection in the most degraded times of New South Wales to have cast such slurs upon the honourable names which had been mentioned, and it came with a very bad grace indeed from hon. members on the other side of the House. The misconception lay entirely at the hands of the hon. Premier, whose duty it was, when those payments came under his notice, to have sent to the Board and asked under what heading this money was paid. There were four or five headings under which the items in the lists might have been passed, and, if the Premier had only sent one of his subordinates to the Board requiring a classification of the amounts spent, he could have seen how much was required for vine disease, how much for sugar-cane disease, diseases in grass, diseases in sheep, pleuro in cattle, and so forth; and in twenty-four hours they would have been enumerated, and when put together it would have been seen they quite equalled the total of the money spent. It was not the Board who were to blame for any misconception of what was done with the money, but it was the fault of the Treasurer for not ascertaining a classification of the payments. He ought to have been doubly careful in this case not to throw the blame on the gentlemen who had undertaken to perform the work of the Board. But there was no doubt the Minister for Lands had just been obliged to do as he was told. These dealings with the Board opened their eyes to the workings of the interior of the Cabinet, and what had happened gave a very strong colouring to the supposition that the Cabinet consisted only of two members—the Premier and the Colonial Secretary. He (Mr. Rea) well understood their desire to crush this Board, for, in 1874, the Colonial Secretary denounced Boards of all kinds, because they formed a class of public servants who were not under the control of Ministers. That seemed to be the objection of the Colonial Secretary, and unless he could produce terror in the mind of any person in the public service that man had no business to be there. The Colonial Secretary's notion of conducting the public service was to bully, and the man he could not bully must be put out of the way. That was his (Mr. Rea's) opinion of how the Board got into its present position; but if they had done nothing else than prosecute their inquiries into cane disease and vine disease, all the money expended would have been well laid out in these items alone. Look at Victoria and South Australia, where they

were at their wits' end as to what they were to do about the phylloxera, a disease the care of the Board had kept out of this colony. If they had done nothing else, the Board deserved the thanks of the House for what they had done in that instance alone. Then, again, he would refer to the amount of money which had been expended in the colony of Victoria as compared with that spent here, and he believed that greater practical results had been produced here at a small cost than with all the large sums which had been spent in that colony. There was another thing which came with very bad grace from the Government, and that was their jeering at Dr. Bancroft for going on a long and weary journey for the purpose of tracing out the cause of a disease amongst sheep which had puzzled the men who owned the sheep. Such a slur came with very bad grace from those hon. members. With regard to pleuro, it had been stated that it was a disease which had long existed—and so it had, for it was many years since he had first heard of it in Victoria; but was that, he would ask, any reason why the cause of it should not be examined into by a Board here? All kinds of experiments had been tried in Victoria, and scientific men had held adverse opinions on the subject; and it was only a few years ago that some gentlemen in Sydney sent in a report which nobody could make head or tail of. He considered such a subject was a very proper thing for this Board to inquire into, and by means of experts to try and find a remedy; and, granting they had not found a remedy, they had thrown a great deal of light upon the disease. Hon. members had been over and over again impressed by hon. members of the Government with the necessity of watching over the public expenditure and exercising economy in every department; but how could he attach any faith to that statement, now made by the Minister for Lands and afterwards backed up by the Premier, when he remembered how those hon. gentlemen had on the 17th April taken thousands of pounds out of the Treasury to put it into the pockets of the coast squatters who had their runs given them at their own price? He thought that it was discreditable to hear a Board which had done so much for the interests of the colony spoken of in the way it had been by those hon. members. The point the Government seemed to make the greatest handle of was, that the Board had gone beyond its original functions; but if it could be found that any one of the items of expenditure was not included under the heads he had mentioned, he would vote against any further expenditure. In regard to the money which had been spent on printing the books on grasses, he felt satisfied that it would be found hereafter that the money had been well spent,

as every selector would find in that book an authorised description of the grasses which were most profitable for his use. It was a very short-sighted policy to deride books like those, which would be the basis of so much good to the selectors of the colony.

Mr. KINGSFORD said the hon. member who had just spoken reminded him of a celebrated character in Dickens' "Nicholas Nickleby," Mr. Newman Noggs, who was in the habit of tucking up his shirt sleeves and sparring away at an imaginary enemy. If his (Mr. Kingsford's) ears had not very much deceived him—and he had listened very attentively to the speech of the Premier in reply to that of the hon. member for South Brisbane—he had not discovered anything in that speech approaching to a reflection on the members of the Board. He was rather glad to say that, as he thought the debate might be very much shortened if hon. members merely confined themselves to the facts of the case. It was true that the hon. member for South Brisbane, in his opening speech, made some allusions to the hon. the Minister for Lands, but he did not think there had been any remark made by Ministers which could be called a slur or a reflection on those gentlemen who had devoted their time and talents to the good of the country. It was true that the hon. Premier passed some strictures on the way in which the money had been expended, and rightly so; but that was a thing altogether foreign to the charge which had been made against the Government of selfishly studying their own interests and ignoring those of the Board. He agreed to some extent with the hon. Premier that the money had not been judiciously expended in all instances; but, notwithstanding that, the members of the Board were worthy of all honour and credit and praise from that House for any action they might have taken for so many years and any good they might have done. He had watched narrowly the speeches made by hon. members of the Government, and he had not discovered that they had in any one instance refused to pay the balance due to the Board; and if he was right in his conclusion in that respect the whole debate fell to the ground. He thought, judging by the able and elaborate speech of the hon. member for South Brisbane, that the Government were decidedly opposed to granting any further sums to enable the Board to carry on their investigations; but he could not gather from the speech of the Premier anything to that effect, and until that doubt was removed he should advise the hon. mover of the resolution to accept the position that the Government would pay the £200 or £300 due to the Board. He would ask the Premier whether he was correct, as, if he was not, and the Govern-

ment refused to grant any more money to a Board which had done so much good to the country, they would have no sympathy from him. But he did not believe that there was a member of the Government so lost to the interests of the colony as to refuse the money said to be due to the Board, or even another £2,500 if necessary, to such a good purpose.

The PREMIER: If I may be allowed to repeat what I said some time ago, it is this:—The Government have never refused to grant to the Board the balance available, so long as they were satisfied that the Board would spend it on the objects for which it was voted by this House. They have been assured that they will get the money if they will expend it on the objects for which it was voted;—the money is there for them, as it has been all along, under those conditions.

Mr. MESTON said that the hon. member for South Brisbane had made out a very good case indeed, and he gave the hon. gentleman full credit as one who had always been anxious to further as much as possible the agricultural and horticultural interests of this colony. He should not follow that hon. member in all his arguments, although he might refer to some of them later on. No doubt the Board had done some good, but money had been squandered; notably, a sum of £175 paid to Dr. Bancroft for examining the liver of a sheep. He said "squandered" for this reason—that that liver could have been brought down to Brisbane at a very small cost, and the whole examination might have been made under a microscope with just as satisfactory results. He noticed in the report another sum of £170, paid to Messrs. Muir and Staiger for making inquiries into the cause of disease in sugar-cane. He had a very vivid impression of how that money came to be spent—Mr. Muir was his brother-in-law, and no doubt was the man best fitted to make such an inquiry; but he was free to admit that no results whatever followed from the expenditure of that money. Mr. Muir certainly wrote a long and valuable essay, but it was of no practical use for no one was any the wiser. After that some of the planters at Mackay and the northern sugar-fields subscribed, and sent to Sydney for Professor Liversedge to investigate into rust in cane. The learned gentleman made an analysis of the the different soils; but that, also, was equally valueless, though the expense did not come out of the funds of the Board. For a treatise on the nature of soils a sum of £250 had been expended, but that did not come from the Board. As to the diseases mentioned, they were of the nature of the potato disease, which had been under investigation ever since the potato famine in Ireland without any result being arrived at. Plants were subject to two

classes of diseases—those which occurred during the process of acclimatisation; and those which resulted from the soil, after much cultivation, having lost some of the properties essential to the perfect development of the plants. The hon. gentleman mentioned the introduction of rice as one of the effects of the labours of the Board; but rice was grown in Port Macquarie forty-five years ago, and the proper way to extend its cultivation was, not to grow it in one particular locality, but to distribute the seed among the farming population, to be sown and cultivated under various conditions. The real work of the Board was the introduction of plants and seeds, and there was no necessity for experimental farming. The farmers of the the colony could do the work more satisfactorily and effectively than the people of New Farm. Another question which he would like to touch upon was the introduction of game birds, and he was glad that the subject had been broached at the last meeting of the Acclimatisation Society, by Mr. Senior, who, as a genuine sportsman, took a thorough interest in such matters. A little money might very well be spent in the introduction of game birds—or even of hares—and he intended before the session closed to ask for a vote of £200 for that purpose. With regard to the phylloxera in vines, nothing more was known of it at the present time than in the beginning. Pliny in one of his histories said that phylloxera was known to the Gauls in Marseilles 500 years before Christ. It was also known in Sicily and Sardinia when Carthage traded with India. The following with regard to a disease somewhat similar appeared in Haydn's "Dictionary of Dates":—

"In the spring of 1875 Mr. E. Tucker, of Margate, observed a fungus (since named 'oidium Tuckeri') on grapes in the hot-houses of Mr. Slater, of Margate. It is a whitish mildew, and totally destroys the fruit. The spores of this oidium were found in the vineries of Versailles in 1847. The disease soon reached the trellised vines, and in 1850 many lost all their produce. In 1852 it spread over France, Italy, Spain, Syria; and in Zante and Cephalonia attacked the currants, reducing the crop to one-twelfth of the usual amount. Through its ravages the wine manufacture in Madeira ceased for several years. Many attempts have been made to arrest the progress of the disease, but without much effect. It has much abated in France, but not in Portugal."

It was not very satisfactory to ascertain whether the disease was a fungus or an insect without a remedy could be found. A man who had a pain in his back did not want to know whether it was caused by sciatica or rheumatism—he wanted a cure for it. There were certain diseases in plants of which we knew nothing more than was known in the earliest times, as the

human system was now subject to diseases known to Esculapius 2,500 years ago. The Board had no doubt done a great amount of good—it would have been an extraordinary thing if they had not, seeing the large amount of money which had been spent. Money might be well spent in discovering the cause of rust in wheat, and the remedy—he believed it was attributable to defect or deficiency in the soil—and the £300 might safely be given to the Board to continue their inquiries; but the House should have some guarantee of the manner in which it was to be spent, and that the Board would strictly confine themselves to the works they professed to undertake.

Mr. ARCHER agreed with other hon. members that no reflection whatever had been cast upon the gentlemen who composed the Board; but he thought the hon. member who introduced the motion had done so in an improper manner, because anyone who now voted with him would be voting for throwing money into the hands of men to be spent as they pleased. Hon. members were bound to see that money was spent in the way the House directed; but they would probably be exceedingly sorry if the Government said they would not supply the necessary funds to carry out those interesting experiments. The first thing to be done towards discovering a remedy was to know what the disease was; and if they found out exactly what the disease was they would probably find out the cure for it. If the disease in wheat could be lessened by one-half, or even one-third, an immense money gain would result to the colony. The hon. member—now he heard that the Government were prepared to meet the cheques of the Board as presented, so long as they could show they were carrying out the work for which they were appointed—would, no doubt, be satisfied. He (Mr. Archer) should be very sorry if the Government came to the resolution to stop experiments which were calculated to be of great advantage to the colony.

Mr. GRIFFITH thought the discussion had not wasted the time of the House. The evident impression on the part of the Board had been that they would not receive the support of the Government in their operations, and that impression had prevailed until this afternoon. The Government themselves had at least shown a want of that generous appreciation of the labours of those gentlemen, who had devoted themselves to valuable researches and made most important discoveries, which might have been expected from the Government. The best thanks of the colony and of the House were due to those gentlemen who had given their attention to this subject. They had made experiments and discoveries of very great value, and he was very glad to hear that the Government had no intention of discontinuing the sup-

port. There had been a very general impression that the Government intended to do so, and it was very satisfactory to find such was not the case. From what the hon. the Minister for Lands had said on a previous occasion, no one could come to any other conclusion, and he had left the impression, from what he said this afternoon, that the Board and the Government were at arms' length. He was glad to learn from the Premier—especially from his last observations—that that had been a misunderstanding. He was one of those persons who did not believe in Boards generally, because he considered the appointment of Boards was frequently a parting with the proper functions of Government. Some exceptions must, however, be made to the rule, and a Board of scientific gentlemen must be appointed to carry out scientific experiments. It was quite impossible that an officer of the Government should carry out such experiments, and the best results might be attained by an association of gentlemen of scientific and practical attainments devoting their spare time and their abilities to scientific researches. The discoveries already made were a credit, not only to those who had made them, but also to the colony. Among the gentlemen constituting the Board was a gentleman who had made some discoveries which had attracted attention all over the world. Amongst these was the discovery of the causes of rust in cane, about which there had been great doubt and anxiety; and no doubt if the researches were prosecuted more discoveries would follow. No one listening to the speech of the Minister for Lands could come to any other conclusion than that the Government would not let the Board go any further, because they had expended the greater part of the money for their private benefit. That hon. gentleman read a list of the moneys paid to members of the Board, mentioning the amounts but not saying what they were for. All the amounts he had mentioned were for travelling expenses; he also mentioned other amounts which were for wages and salaries. For instance, four sums, amounting to £459, had been paid to various persons for wages and salaries. How could experiments be conducted without employing some persons?—it was not to be expected that the members of the Board were going to keep private gardens and watch the diseases themselves. Another item criticised was the one for the book of grasses. There were two amounts—£91 for lithographing, including the lithographs of rust in sugar-cane, and £240 for electrotyping. That book, he could state from personal experience, had attracted a good deal of attention. Only last week he had received a letter from a distinguished gentle-

man residing in a neighbouring colony, inquiring where a copy could be procured, as he was very anxious to get one. That work, whether it came within the original functions of the Board or not, was a very valuable one. An hon. member had suggested that the Board was setting up as a rival to the Acclimatisation Society; but that society did not devote its attention to the diseases of plants, and how could the Board possibly experiment on diseases without having the plants under their observation? Surely, they must grow things which were subject to diseases. He observed that the Colonial Secretary, with his usual courtesies, interrupted him with a sound something like a hiss. The Board, if they performed their functions at all, must cultivate the plants liable to diseases and watch their growth. Who ever heard of a scientific body being condemned because their first experiments were unsuccessful? And, considering the short time this Board had been at work, he thought they had been remarkably successful. The result of the debate, so far, appeared to be that everybody agreed that the Board had done good, although some members were not generous enough to admit it. The Government ought not to divest themselves of their responsibility with regard to the proper expenditure of public money, but on the other hand there should be confidence between the Government and the Board. If they appointed a Board of independent gentlemen of high scientific attainments, it was indispensable that some amount of confidence should be reposed in them. He was glad that the Government did not intend to withdraw their assistance; but he hoped the Minister for Lands did not expect that the Board should first submit every penny of their expenditure, and say, "Please, shall we spend five pounds in investigating this or that disease?" That was not the spirit in which the Board should be treated. After the explanation given by the Premier, that they were willing to assist the Board to carry on their most valuable researches, he thought the hon. member for South Brisbane might very well be satisfied with the debate, and he would suggest to him that the best thing he could do was to withdraw the motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had listened with great attention to the speech of the leader of the Opposition, and the only deduction he had been able to draw from it was that, in his opinion, the duty of the Board was to acclimatise diseases in plants. He said they were not rivals of the Acclimatisation Society, because it was not the duty of that society to acclimatise diseases;—the inference, then, must be that it was the duty of the Board to do so. They had heard a great deal of high falutin about what the Board had done, but he should like to know what had they

really accomplished? The hon. member who had introduced the motion claimed for them that they had discovered a cure for pleuro-pneumonia.

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said hon. members had also heard him claim that they stopped the disease of worms in sheep, and that they had stamped out phylloxera. He should like to know what they really had to do with phylloxera? How did they stamp it out? Had it ever appeared in the colony? The House had heard a great deal of talk about the Board, and the science it had displayed in that book of grasses in which a bushman could not pick out more than three varieties that he knew. One of these was the spear grass, which could not be mistaken;—it was called a valuable grass, and it was stated in the book to be rather valuable food, but scarce except in the Rockhampton district. It was a grass that frightened the life out of the pastoral tenant. This was the information which was said to be so valuable, and upon which such a lot of money had been spent. He had never heard greater nonsense than the claims which had been set up for the labours of the Board. They had started a small model farm at New Farm, and were doing, there, precisely what was being done in the Botanical Gardens, and, to a greater extent, in the Acclimatisation grounds and at St. Helena. They laid claim to the experiments at St. Helena, but they had absolutely nothing to do with them, for they were all being carried out by the Government. The same work that the Board were doing at New Farm was also being done much more efficiently at Too-woomba, and could have been effected without a Board. Then they sent up the country a doctor of great science. Not a word had been hinted against him except by his friends. They sent him to look at some worms in sheep at the Dawson; but if they had brought the mountain to Mahomet instead of taking Mahomet to the mountain—if they had brought the diseased sheep's liver to the doctor, the cost of the inquiry would not have been a fiftieth or hundredth part of what it was. What good had resulted from it? Did it stamp out the worm disease? Hon. members knew better, and that hundreds and thousands of sheep had been lost through worms, and all the information, therefore, collected by the Board did not do one particle of good. He said without hesitation, if it had not been for the personal character of the then hon. member for Leichhardt (Mr. Haly) the vote would never have been got, and that it was strongly opposed by the Government of the day. He was sorry that the then Government had not stood out firmer against it, for he could not admit that any great benefit had followed from it. The Board

had produced a very pretty book with the names of Messrs. Bailey and Staiger on each page—it was a splendid advertisement for them—and out of the whole of the grasses illustrated hardly any bushman could recognise more than three or four, and they were of the worst description and hated by the pastoral tenant. If the hon. mover took the advice of the senior member for North Brisbane and withdrew the motion, he hoped he would not do so under any false idea that the Government were going to pursue a different policy with regard to the Board. All the Government had ever asked for was to be informed for what purpose the money voted was to be devoted, and that the Government would know before the Board got any more of the money. The Minister for Lands had nearly pledged himself to meet the current expenses up to £4 per week, but they would not get the money if—as he believed it was their intention—it was to be spent in the publication of another book, something in the same style as that one on the grasses, which, according to the leader of the Opposition, could not be procured. This immaculate Board published a certain number of copies of a book, and distributed them among their friends, but the work apparently could not be procured by the public. Of what good, then, was it to the public? If the Board thought they were going to get the balance to spend on a similar work to illustrate the disease in grape vines—the Government had heard that such a work was to be published at a great expense by them—if the Board thought that the money would be given for such a purpose, the hon. mover would go away with a false impression. Let the Board confine themselves to the inquiry of diseases in plants, such as the rust in wheat;—and here he would say that he could not for the life of him understand why there should be such a mighty hurry now to inquire into the rust in wheat, for there was no likelihood of the disease appearing until November. However, the Government would do as they had always been prepared to do;—if the Board would give them the information they were bound to give as to what the money was required for—and this they had never yet furnished, the money voted would be paid, but it must be expended for the purpose for which it was granted.

MR. MACKAY said he would not detain the House long in his reply to what had been said by the Minister for Lands and the Colonial Treasurer. The Minister for Lands had placed great stress upon the promise that the Board's expenses would be kept down to £4 per week. When it was given it was stated that that sum would merely keep the grounds going at New Farm and at Toowoomba and pay a small amount to the Board's *employés*; it was

also stated that it would not enable the Board to enter into other experiments, and that £300 would be sufficient to carry on for nearly twelve months longer. Seeing that the records of the Board for every year, together with its expenditure, were on the shelves of the Assembly Library, he could not understand members of the Government getting up and saying that he did not know what had been done with the money. He had already explained about the expenditure for the book on native grasses, and the reasons for the publication. As to the contention that the grasses illustrated were of no use and dangerous, he considered that one of the most valuable features in the book, and that it was desirable the public should know which were dangerous grasses. The Minister for Lands, with his usual fine diction, had pointed out that the Board had produced £2 for agricultural produce. That just gave him a key to his nature, if it were required. The hon. member's whole idea was just this—"How much money can be got out of the Board?" which was, however, never appointed to grow produce for the purpose of sale. It had been stated twice over by Ministers that he had claimed for the Board the discovery of an antidote for pleuro. What he said, however, was, that the action of the Board and the information given had convinced many gentlemen who were unbelievers previously, or nearly so, that inoculation was a necessary thing. Something had been said about money having been granted to parties in Maryborough and Rockhampton;—that was to carry on experiments with. Experiments could not be conducted without the expenditure of some money; but in these cases the amount had been small—in fact, a great deal had been done with small sums in all parts of the colony by the Board. It had also been said that the Board must state how they were going to expend these moneys. Well, he had represented that to the Minister for Lands several times, and had also stated that the desire of the Board at the present time was to carry on experiments in connection with rust in wheat—that was plain English, surely; and he would point out to the Colonial Secretary that the necessity for these experiments was simply that the wheat season was now commencing, and the Board was anxious to carry them out from the time of planting the seed to the end. He had also pointed out that with this £300 the Board hoped to be able, with the facilities they now had, to keep pace with the experiments being conducted in South Australia and Victoria by the best men there were in the colonies, and at an expenditure of thousands—more thousands than the Board had expended hundreds. It had been stated that there was no desire to withdraw these funds from the Board: did he understand from Ministers that they were prepared to place

moneys to the credit of the Board? If they were, then he would withdraw his motion.

The PREMIER said they were prepared to do nothing of the sort. He had explained over and over again what the Government were prepared to do.

Mr. MACKAY said that was just what he expected. The matter had been met with sneers and jeers by a number of gentlemen whose position should place them above that sort of thing, and seeing that scientific men were not so numerous in the colony, and that the members of the Board had devoted a considerable amount of time and attention to the matter, he thought a little latitude might have been allowed, if it were only to counterbalance the grog-and-swill influences which had such a hold in this country. As he said before, it mattered not to the Board—further than it would interfere with their desire to carry on experiments that would be beneficial to the country—whether the Government refused this money or not. If they refused it, they would simply snuff the Board out of existence, and the onus would rest with them. He should divide the House on the motion.

Question put, and the House divided :—

AYES, 14.

Messrs. Dickson, Griffith, Garrick, Kingsford, Grimes, Meston, Paterson, Rea, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Stubley, Bailey, Horwitz, Mackay, and Hendren.

NOES, 25.

Messrs. Palmer, McIlwraith, Perkins, Macrossan, Scott, Amhurst, Persse, Norton, Stevens, Walsh, Stevenson, Lalor, Morehead, H. Palmer, Low, Beor, Simpson, Sheaffe, Hamilton, Hill, Davenport, O'Sullivan, Macfarlane (Leichhardt), and Archer.

Resolved in the negative.

The house adjourned at fifteen minutes past 8, until Tuesday next.