

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**MONDAY, 21 JULY 1879**

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# QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

### SECOND SESSION OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT,

#### APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE, ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF MAY, IN THE FORTY-SECOND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF  
HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1879.

[VOLUME 2 OF 1879.]

#### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Monday, 21 July, 1879.*

Petition.—Formal Motion.—Tooth Estate Enabling Bill  
—third reading.—Motion for Adjournment.—Supply.

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

#### PETITION.

Mr. ARCHER presented a petition from  
residents in Sydney, praying for a delay in  
the consideration of the Pearl and Bêche-  
de-mer Fisheries Bill.

Petition read and received.

#### FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed  
to :—

By Mr. DAVENPORT—

For leave to bring in a Bill to Prohibit the  
Importation of Rabbits into the Colony of  
Queensland, and to restrict the Breeding of  
Rabbits within the said Colony.

#### TOOTH ESTATE ENABLING BILL— THIRD READING.

On the motion of the Hon. S. W. GRIF-  
FITH, this Bill was read a third time,  
passed, and ordered to be transmitted to  
the Legislative Council by message in the  
usual form.

#### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. STEVENSON moved the adjournment  
of the House, to draw attention to a para-  
graph which had appeared in Saturday's  
*Courier*, and which had something to do  
with himself. It ran as follows :—

"By an unfortunate slip of the pen the name  
of the member for Blackall was substituted for  
that of the member for Normanby in our article  
on the debate of Thursday night. We owe the  
correction to the hon. member, although we  
should imagine that few of our readers would  
fail to detect the mistake. It is simply impos-  
sible to conceive of Mr. Archer as taking part  
in an undignified and discreditable display of  
parliamentary tactics."

Everybody would agree that it was a very  
well deserved compliment which had been  
paid to the hon. member for Blackall; but  
why the paragraph should have been made  
the occasion for a sneaking and spiteful  
thrust at himself he could not see. He  
therefore wished to show that the attack  
was quite undeserved, and to make some  
explanation with regard to it. The para-  
graph referred to a leading article of the  
day before, and no doubt many hon. mem-  
bers like himself were amused at the sub-  
stitution of the name of the hon. member  
for Blackall for himself. Of course, he  
expected to see a correction in the paper  
on the day following; but he was surprised  
to find that, in making the correction, op-  
portunity should have been sought to make  
a cowardly attack on himself. He now  
wished to show that there was nothing  
discreditable in the stand he took on the  
Travelling Sheep Bill, and before he sat  
down he would show it. He quite ad-  
mitted that if he had at the commencement  
tried to throw out the Bill as a matter of  
personal feeling between himself and the  
hon. member who brought in the Bill it  
would have been discreditable; but there  
was no ill-feeling at all, and the hon. mem-  
ber (Mr. Stevens) would bear him out in  
saying that he regarded him as his friend.  
His (Mr. Stevenson's) speech on the second  
reading would show there was no ill-feeling  
on the matter, for he then said he would  
not oppose the second reading, but would  
propose some improvements in committee.  
He tried to do that, and he believed he was  
the first of "the sub-section," as it had  
been called, to analyse the Bill and to draw  
the attention of the hon. member for the  
Gregory to it; and he (Mr. Stevenson)  
was the first subsequently to take a stand  
against the Bill as a very bad measure.  
Further than that, he had also called the  
attention of the hon. member for the Mit-  
chell to it, and, after they had given the  
Bill a deliberate consideration, they asked

the opinion of one of the largest stock-owners in the colony—Mr. E. Wienholt—a man of large experience, on whose good sense they could rely. To further show the House there was no ill-feeling on his part towards the hon. member, he would give the conclusions they had come to. After deliberate consideration they decided the Bill was not worth amending, and that if it passed as it stood it should do so without their opposition, because if it became law one clause would stultify the others. They saw perfectly well that there were loopholes by which its provisions could be evaded. That was how the matter stood up to that time, and, with the exception of an amendment which he had intended to move in committee, he came into the House with the intention of allowing the Bill to pass in the form in which it then stood. But when he saw that the saving clauses were being expunged one after the other, he thought it time, in the interests of his constituents as well as those of other hon. members representing pastoral electorates, to oppose the Bill. The hon. member for the Mitchell did not happen just then to be in the House, but seeing the saving clauses being expunged he (Mr. Stevenson) took a stand against the Bill. If he did feel strongly against it, on behalf of his own constituents and those of the hon. members for the Gregory and the Mitchell, he had a right to do so, as, with the exception of the district represented by the hon. member who brought in the Bill, they represented the largest sheep districts in the colony. The Darling Downs was certainly a large sheep district, but it scarcely stood in the same position as the others. Under the circumstances, he might very well resort to parliamentary tactics without being described as "discreditable." He was in no way obstructing business, but using legitimate means to oppose the Bill. There were several ways of obstructing. Some, for instance, might think it discreditable for the leader of the Opposition and others to stand outside the bar, trying to prevent business by not making a House; but it was discreditable for a newspaper to take the opportunity of making the statement he had referred to by a sneaking paragraph on a day when the paper contained no report of the debate, and there was no *Hansard* to show what had taken place in the House—it was, in fact, cowardly. He wished, therefore, to put himself right with the House on this matter, and would repeat that there was no personal feeling between himself and the hon. member for the Warrego; and that while he could not object to the paying of a compliment to the hon. member for Blackall—and which he personally could endorse—it was very wrong to make that occasion an opportunity for a sneaking attack on an hon. member who might be moved by as great a desire to do

his duty by his constituents and his country as any other member in the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he fully agreed with his hon. friend that the paragraph referred to was discreditable only to the journal which inserted it. He himself had been grossly attacked in the same paper, and, though he did not propose to enter into the details at the moment, he would say somewhat of the course he intended to pursue. He proposed later on in the session, and he hoped before many days were past, to compare his career with that of Mr. Lukin, the editor of that journal. He (Mr. Morehead) intended to show up that gentleman in his true colours—where he started from, where he was, what he was doing, and where he was going to. He intended to point out the peculiar construction of the proprietary of the *Courier* newspaper, and he intended to point out to the House the connection some members bore to the House, and how those members were in the pay of the *Courier*. He intended to do all this fully, fairly, and freely, and point out that he had been grossly libelled and most scurrilously written of by that newspaper. He would give due notice of his intention, and hoped there would be a full House on the occasion; and he would, probably, follow this up by inquiring into the appointment of Mr. Lukin as Executive Commissioner to the Sydney Exhibition, and urging that it was an insult to the colony and an appointment that should never have been made. He believed when he took this course he should be able to prove his case.

Mr. STEVENS said he wished to correct the hon. member: the *Courier* had not called the Travelling Sheep Bill a bad Bill, but had said it might be.

Mr. STEVENSON, in reply, had nothing at all to say about the Bill being a bad one. He wished to explain his opposition to it, and would now withdraw the motion, by leave of the House.

Mr. BAILEY, before the motion was withdrawn, wished to give the Government an opportunity of explaining a matter in which he felt some interest. Hon. members would recollect one of the first measures they heard of was a measure for the election of members during recesses. That Bill was pronounced by Government as being one very necessary for a certain purpose. The hon. Premier, in speaking about it, said—

"Cases might easily occur where a seat might become vacant without either death or resignation of the member, and the House would meet without a member for a particular district. It had been the practice for the Speaker to issue a writ in such cases, but such a proceeding was evidently contrary to law."

Very little information had been given when the Bill was brought in, and it had remained for them to consult the journals in another place to find out what the real

reasons for its introduction were. A story had been told that a writ was issued for the election of a member during recess, and that that member was illegally elected; that the Speaker, by collusion with the hon. Premier and the leader of the Opposition, agreed to act illegally, and that those two members tacitly agreed there should be no objection raised in future. It was an extraordinary story, and he hoped it was not correct in its details, but it was told by a prominent supporter of the Government in another place, who might, perhaps, be aptly called their financial colleague without portfolio. Considering the importance which had been attached to the subject, he asked Government what they intended to do?—whether the Bill was to be buried, or whether this very necessary measure had been found no longer necessary? If no illegality had taken place, there was no need of the Bill. If such illegality had taken place, the House should have been informed of it in a proper manner. If the Bill was not necessary, why was the time of the House wasted in its discussion?—and if it was necessary, why had it been shelved by the representative of the Government in another place?

Motion withdrawn.

Mr. BAILEY gave notice of question on the subject to which he had referred.

#### SUPPLY.

On the motion by the PREMIER, that the House go into Committee of Supply—

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was convenient, on the motion to go into Committee of Supply, to call attention to matters which required consideration. Several things had been mentioned during the present session which were not capable of being fully explained at the time, but concerning which returns had since been laid on the table enabling the House and the country to form an opinion upon their merits. Some of those matters deserved more than the passing notice they received before the House was in possession of the details concerning them. To one of these he would now refer—namely, the question of the ballast on the Western Railway line, to which he called the attention of the House on the first day of its meeting. They knew very little about it then, except that during the election for the Northern Downs the Minister for Works had been to the portion of the line under construction, the result being to give certain instructions as to the nature of the ballast to be used, which it was alleged at the time would prevent the contract being performed except at an immense loss to the contractors. Common report said at the time that the cause of this was that several persons employed on the works were electors,

and that the contractors were not supporting the Government candidate. The correspondence with reference to that transaction had since been published, and they could form an opinion as to the conduct of the Minister for Works. It was not his intention to make any charge against that hon. gentleman, but simply to call the attention of the House to the facts. The correspondence began by a memo. from the Minister for Works, dated the 17th April, which, singularly enough, was the polling-day at the Northern Downs election. The memo. commences:—

“Mr. Herbert will draw the attention of the Chief Engineer of S. and W. Railway to the fact that the contractors on No. 5 section, Western line, are using ballast not provided in the specifications.

“For bottom ballast they are using a kind of hardened clay or clay-stone, and for top ballast a gravel composed of one-half fine gravel and the other half fine sand.”

The Minister for Works found this out just at the time the election was going on. The Chief Engineer, it must be remembered, was the judge under the contract and the arbitrator between the Government and the contractors, and it was upon the faith of his integrity and independence that contracts were entered into and carried out. The memo. concluded—

“Mr. Herbert will also ask the Chief Engineer by what authority such a departure from the specifications has been permitted, at the same time drawing his attention to No. 40 of the general conditions of contract.”

In reply to this the Chief Engineer wrote—

“I have the honour respectfully to submit that, in deciding upon the kind of ballast to be used by the contractors, I have not departed from the conditions of the contract, inasmuch as those conditions clearly define it to be the duty of the Chief Engineer to interpret and apply the specification, and constitute him the judge of the ‘nature and quality of the material used’ and ‘mode of their use’ in connection with the works included in the contract.

“In the discharge of these duties the Chief Engineer must frequently be called upon to exercise a discretionary power; for, as the terms of the specification are made of a general character, it would be practically impossible to carry out any extensive railway work if its terms had in all cases to be strictly enforced according to their literal interpretation. Hence the necessity that the Chief Engineer should place a reasonable construction on the wording of the specification and, whilst acting up to the spirit of its provision, vary or modify its terms in such manner as may appear to him called for by the special circumstances affecting each particular case. It might not, for instance, be possible in some cases to obtain material strictly corresponding to the description given in the specification within a reasonable distance of the line; and it then becomes the duty of the Chief Engineer to use discrimination in applying the available material in such

a manner as will, in his opinion, best secure the object aimed at by the specification—viz., the construction of a substantial and durable road. Were this otherwise the cost of construction would be largely increased without any corresponding advantage to the work, as contractors would be obliged to tender at higher rates to protect themselves against the loss that would certainly accrue through a rigid and unreasonable rendering of the literal terms of the specification."

The Chief Engineer had been asked by the contractors what kind of ballast might be used, and he had told them that the gravel ballast found near the line, if of fair quality, would be accepted. In this case it was the only ballast obtainable nearer than Bowenville, seventeen miles this side of Dalby. Mr. Stanley proceeded to say—

"In arriving at this decision I submit that I acted in the best interests of the Government, as the result fully bears out; for, whilst keeping the cost of the permanent way within reasonable limits, the character of the road, as constructed between Chinchilla and Dulacca, is equal, if not superior, to any portion of the original line, and has been carried out at a cost considerably below that of any other railway in the colony."

"The ballast now being used on the 5th section is for the most part the same as that adopted on the two preceding—in fact, is obtained from Fountain's ballast pit, near Miles—and consists of a fine water-worn gravel mixed with sand. Besides this a smaller quantity of a kind of argillaceous sandstone, which has become hardened by atmospheric action on the iron contained in it, has been used as bottom ballast, after samples of it had been exposed for several months to the action of the weather and found to stand."

"The question as to whether this ballast (I refer to the gravel as being that chiefly used) complies with the terms of the specification, resolves itself into what is to be considered as constituting 'good clean gravel,' my interpretation being that the stone itself should be of a durable nature, and free from clay or other objectionable matter. An admixture of clean sand I do not hold to be detrimental as with some descriptions of gravel, especially when much waterworn as in the present instance. Sand is required to assist in binding the stone together, and retaining the sleepers in place. I am therefore of opinion that the gravel ballast in question is in accordance with the spirit and intention of the specification, if not its literal interpretation; and, in confirmation of that opinion, I need only point to the condition of the line between Chinchilla and Dulacca (a distance of over fifty miles), where the same description of ballast has been almost exclusively used."

Such were the reasons given by the Chief Engineer. What followed? One would expect the Chief Engineer would have been reminded in a general way to see that the contract was being properly carried out. Nothing of the kind. The Minister for Works took upon himself to overrule

the Chief Engineer—one of the parties to the contract chose to overrule the decision of the arbitrator, and to impose his *ipse dixit* on the contractor. In a memo. of the 25th April, the Minister for Works said—

"Referring to your letter of the 22nd instant regarding the ballast now being used upon the construction works—No. 5 Section, Western Railway—I have the honour to state that the clauses of the general conditions to which you refer, in my opinion, give you no powers beyond those which are necessary to enable you to enforce the provisions of the contract in accordance with the general conditions, plans, specifications, &c. This is evident by the wording of the 5th clause, to which you have referred, which states that the works shall be executed in a substantial and workmanlike manner, with materials of the best description, according to the true intent and meaning of the specifications and drawings. Herein, therefore, no 'waiver' is contemplated, and the 40th clause confirms that interpretation. You had, therefore, no authority to alter or depart from the clear and explicit definition of the ballast to be used, as given in the 93rd clause of the specifications, without referring an important question of the kind for the consideration of the Government, in the event of circumstances rendering it necessary to use ballast of an inferior description to that specified as 'good clean gravel.'"

One would suppose the hon. gentleman had never seen a railway contract in his life before: and he told the Chief Engineer, in effect, that he was not to perform his duty. The memo. concluded thus—

"You will now be good enough to advise the contractors that the inferior ballast they are using will not be accepted on the works. As long as they are allowed to use the ballast inferior to that specified, and receive the high price paid therefor, no attempt will be made to supply a better description of ballast."

Mr. Stanley submitted, but protested. Writing on the 29th April, that gentleman said—

"I have advised Messrs. Bashford and Co., the contractors for No. 5 Section, Western Railway, that the ballast they are now using will not be accepted on the works, being considered inferior to that specified, and not worth the price being paid for it. I have also informed them that if they continue to use gravel as ballast it must be screened, so as to comply strictly with the terms of the specifications. I must, however, point out that if the ballast is screened it will, in my opinion, be found necessary eventually to add some blinding material to it, such as sand, as the stone by itself is too round to pack well and retain the sleepers in place. This can, of course, be put on at any future time when most convenient."

That was an extraordinary position for the Chief Engineer to be put in by the Minister for Works. The latter insisted that the contractors, who were not supposed to be on good terms with him, should treat the material in a manner which would entail upon them a large expenditure, and the

former said that if the contractors did so the ballast would be unfit for use. In another memo. dated the 1st May, to Mr. Stanley, the Minister for Works wrote—

“Referring to your memo. of 30th ultimo, *re* ballast, No. 5 section, I have the honour to inform you that it is your duty to see that the works are carried out according to the specifications, and that no materials are used except of the quality provided therein.”

The gist of that was that, notwithstanding the Chief Engineer's caution, he was to insist that worthless ballast should be used. Then ensued a long correspondence, from which it appeared that the Minister for Works had somewhat receded from the position he had taken up, and allowed the work to proceed. On the 1st May the contractors telegraphed to the Chief Engineer—

“Must pay off all ballast-men and plate-layers to-night unless answer to-day about bottom ballast two hundred (200) men idle now four days.”

In reference to this question, the Chief Engineer wrote on the 14th May—

“I have informed Messrs. Bashford and Co., in accordance with the verbal decision of the Honourable the Secretary for Public Works at the interview with Messrs. P. O'Sullivan, M.L.A., G. Bashford, and myself, on Monday afternoon last, the 12th instant, that they will be permitted to continue using the best of the sandstone for bottom ballast. This will enable operations to be resumed at once, and steps have already been taken by Mr. George Bashford to that end.”

Since then the work had been going on in the ordinary manner, and he supposed the Minister for Works must have seen that his position was scarcely tenable. If the Chief Engineer was not competent to settle a matter of that kind he was not fit for his position, and he (Mr. Griffith) would far sooner have the opinion of a professional engineer on a matter of that sort than that of the Minister for Works. The hon. gentleman announced that he had taken steps to have samples of the ballast analysed, but where he had got the samples from nobody knew. On the motion of a supporter of the Government, further correspondence on the subject was laid on the table, and from that return it appeared that the Minister for Works had written two singular letters, on the 1st May, to subordinate officers in neighbouring colonies. This was certainly an unusual thing for a Minister to do;—it was not in accordance with courtesy to the Minister for Works or the Commissioner for Railways in those colonies. The first of these letters was as follows, according to the written, not the printed document—

“Brisbane, May 1st, 1879.

“Public Works Office.

“R. Watson Esq., Engineer-in-Chief, Victoria.

“SIR—I am sending you two samples of ballast used on our Western line. You will oblige

me by giving your opinion as to their value as railway material. I would be glad of a reply at your earliest convenience.—I am, sir, yours respectfully,

“JOHN MACROSSAN.”

Did ever anyone hear of a Minister of the Crown writing a letter, on a matter to which the attention of Parliament was likely to be called, to a subordinate officer in a neighbouring colony, and signing himself “yours respectfully?” The hon. gentleman certainly did not rise to the dignity of his position. Mr. Watson's report was to this effect:—

“No. 1 is a very good hard gravel, and, if screened, would be excellent, especially for topping-up the line. I had it screened by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mesh sieve, and the result was 59 lbs. of gravel and 36 lbs. of small material; this 36 lbs. was then carefully washed, and 18 lbs. of it dissolved in the water and was lost, the remainder being clean sand. From this I consider about nineteen per cent. of the ballast—viz., the earth—would be lost after the first heavy rain if it were put on without being screened.

“No. 2. is a sandstone of great resisting power, not falling to pieces when boiled with sulphate of soda and allowed to crystallise—a very severe test, equal to being subjected to very hard frost. This was also screened in a way similar to the gravel, when it appeared there were 53 lbs. of stone and 6 lbs. of small stuff; on this latter being washed it was found that 3 lbs. had disappeared—i.e., about five per cent. of the whole. This would make a very good bottom ballast if broken to a six-inches gauge, and good top ballast if broken to a two and a-half inches gauge.”

The other letter—also signed “yours respectfully,” and couched in similar terms—was written to Mr. Mais, Engineer-in-Chief of South Australia. Mr. Mais evidently had no idea that the writer of the letter was the Minister for Works, for he addressed his reply to “J. Macrossan, Esquire, Public Works Office, Brisbane,” evidently thinking that the writer was a subordinate in that department. There was a reference to telegrams in this letter, so the return would seem to be incomplete. Mr. Mais said—

“The specification describes the ballast as being ‘good clean gravel,’ ‘hard sandstone,’ ‘ballast or other stone’ of approved quality, broken to a size that will pass in any direction through a ring three and a half inches diameter. Basing my opinion upon the above specification, and in connection with the samples submitted for my opinion, I beg to state that I consider the ballast in sample box No. 1 would not, in its present condition, be ‘good clean gravel,’ as specified; but it will make excellent ballast if it were screened on a nearly vertical screen, which would allow the excess of fine material to pass through it. I give this opinion on the assumption that the sample represents the bulk.

“With regard to the stone ballast contained in box No. 2, I am of opinion that it is stone of a quality that can fairly be accepted under the specification, but it requires going over with

a hammer to reduce it to the specified gauge, and clearing from foreign matter by screening or otherwise."

The business of the Works Department appeared from this to have been managed in a very singular way. The Minister for Works seemed to be unable to trust the officers of his department. If those were not private letters, this was a most remarkable instance of official letters being addressed by a Minister to a subordinate officer in another colony. Was that a specimen of the way the business of the Works Department had been carried on? If matters were always to be conducted in that way every contractor would have to take that consideration into account, especially if, as in this instance, he voted against the Government candidate. That fact might not have weighed in this instance; but there were, unfortunately, coincidences in point of time; and, however clean the hands of the Government might be, they should always appear to be clean as well as be clean. There was also another matter to which he would refer. A great deal had been said lately about retrenchment, and many dismissals had been made in Ipswich and elsewhere, all of which they had been told had been made with a view to retrenchment. He had been informed by an hon. member—who, unfortunately, was not in his place this afternoon—of a circumstance in connection with some dismissals, a short time ago, in Rockhampton. While he (Mr. Griffith) was in office he appointed a lad of about seventeen or eighteen years of age to a branch of the Works there to learn, at a salary of about £60 or £70 a-year. When the retrenchment began his services were summarily dispensed with on the score of economy. But what happened? Three or four days after a successor turned up at the same salary. The name of the lad removed was Robison; that of the one appointed, Kelly. What confidence, he would ask, was likely to exist in an Administration under which such things took place? The American system was apparently being introduced into the country in its worst forms, by Ministers making reprisals as soon as they got into office—dismissing officials and appointing their own friends; because the information he had went further, and said that the father of Kelly was, as might be supposed, not a supporter of the successful candidates at the last Rockhampton election. He should be glad if the Minister for Works would clear that up. As a citizen, and having all the interests he had in the world centred in the colony, he had the interest of the colony more at heart than the interests of parties in the House. He desired that the Administration should be above the suspicion of Americanising our system by taking revenge on their predecessors by dismissals from the Civil Service. He would

not mention any other matters on his occasion, and he hoped they would soon have cleared up all arrears of discussion. These were matters, however, which really required explanation, and he therefore took that opportunity of naming them.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) said that when a leader of the Opposition took advantage of the opportunity of the motion for the House going into Committee of Supply to bring forward a grievance, the matter was generally one of general, or, at least, considerable importance; but the hon. gentleman, in this case, had descended to such small criticisms of the action of the Ministry that he hardly thought the remarks were worth replying to at all. His contemptible allusions to the phraseology of the Minister for Works, and the manner in which that hon. gentleman had conducted his correspondence with an officer in a neighbouring colony, were quite out of place. As long as he did not infringe any of the rules which bound a Minister for the Crown, the hon. gentleman should be allowed to conduct his correspondence as he liked. In spite of the polish of the leader of the Opposition, the Minister for Works was as well able as that hon. gentleman to express his ideas, and they might have been spared the small criticism that a Minister for the Crown lowered his dignity by such correspondence. It might be according to the hon. gentleman's etiquette, but it was hardly in accordance with the etiquette of the House for the hon. gentleman to make charges against a Minister for the Crown on such slight ground as he had adduced. The hon. gentleman should have taken up some higher ground in dealing with the positions of the Engineer-in-Chief and the Minister for Works in reference to the action taken by the latter. The leader of the Opposition touched upon an important point, but instead of giving it due prominence he chose to give prominence to the insinuation that the hon. gentleman's action had been taken for electioneering purposes. He had said nothing in support of such a supposition, except that the letter impugning the decision of the Engineer-in-Chief and giving information to the contractor was written on the day of the Northern Downs election. How that made a coincidence he (the Premier) did not know. If the Minister for Works tried to improve his position at the election, surely he would not have dated the letter on the day on which the polling took place? From the fact that the hon. gentleman was at the Northern Downs during the election, the leader of the Opposition inferred that he must have been there for political purposes; but he forgot to refer to the number of times the hon. gentleman had been there before and since. No previous Minister for Works had given more attention to the work of his department or travelled more on that duty than his hon.

colleague; but because he happened to be there on that day the leader of the Opposition drew an inference which was not supported by the slightest proof. Leaving that aside, however, the hon. gentleman seemed to conclude, and wished the House to understand, that the position of the Engineer-in-Chief, being that of arbitrator between the Government and contractor, that that position must not be infringed by the Government bringing any bias to bear on the Engineer-in-Chief. There was not the slightest doubt that, according to the specifications, the Engineer-in-Chief was made arbitrator. It was unfortunate for the contractor that he should be forced to accept an Executive officer as arbitrator, but there could be no doubt that such was the case, and no man could take a contract without signing a specification to that effect. Occupying that position, it followed that he should not be interfered with in the exercise of his primary duty of acting between the Government and the contractors. But the Engineer-in-Chief was also the officer appointed by the Government to see the contracts carried out according to specification. He (the Premier) admitted that the dual position was not logical; but the hon. gentleman argued that, because the Engineer-in-Chief was made arbitrator, therefore the Minister for Works could not interfere and say, "You are not acting up to the contract." The Engineer-in-Chief had no power to alter the terms between the Government and a contractor. In this case the contractor said he would supply clean gravel at so much per yard; and the Minister for Works said, "You are not supplying clean gravel." The Engineer-in-Chief was then clearly bound to see that his subordinates carried out their work according to contract. It would be a most dangerous thing to allow an Engineer-in-Chief any such power as the hon. member for Brisbane claimed for him, because he would then virtually have power to give the contract to a contractor at any price he chose. The Minister for Works said that clean gravel was not being used, and the Engineer-in-Chief said he had full power and would accept it; but he did not say that it was clean gravel. The contractor ought to have supplied clean gravel or made an equivalent reduction in consideration of having used inferior material. The Minister for Works saw that the material was not according to specification, and he ascertained, from the best authority obtainable, that 19 per cent. of the gravel supplied would give way with the first rain. If he had not taken that action the Engineer-in-Chief would have allowed the contractor to have used ballast a fifth part of which would have been washed away. How could the Minister for Works be blamed for his action, by which a great

deal of money was saved to the country? Everyone who had seen the ballast would agree that he took a business-like view of the matter in accepting a greater quantity of the material to make up for the inferior quality. The telegrams referred to by the hon. gentleman should have been included in the return. They were from the Engineers, asking for copies of the specifications which had not reached their destination in time, and the copies were sent. The samples of ballast were got in the fairest possible way, and so as to satisfy all parties interested. He was present himself, and the contractor was present. With regard to another charge, that a boy had been discharged, and another taken on in his place, the hon. gentleman referred again to the Government as trying to implant American institutions in this colony; but that was a very small basis for such a tremendous assertion, and if the hon. gentleman supposed the Government would demean themselves to turning out one boy and put in another he was much mistaken. The hon. gentleman should have brought forward his charges with less insinuation, and, in the case of the position of the Engineer-in-Chief, he should have given more time for consideration. He seemed to insist that that officer should be allowed to act as arbitrator, but not allowed to exercise any authority on behalf of the Government. The Government had a right to insist that works should be carried out according to the specifications which the Engineers-in-Chief had themselves written out; and if no other remedy could be found in case the conditions were not carried out, an arbitrator should be appointed outside. If no other remedy could be found they must make someone outside—most likely the head of the department—responsible for the work carried out under his department.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) said, in answer to a few of the insinuations thrown out by the leader of the Opposition, he would say a few words. The matter of the ballast, as far as regards the difference of opinion between himself and the Engineer, had been fully explained by the Premier. With regard to the insinuation that he went to Northern Downs to influence an election there by putting pressure upon contractors, he would tell the House and the hon. gentleman at the head of the Opposition what they, perhaps, did not know before—namely, that one of the contractors came to him and asked to be allowed to throw up his contract, stating that he would, himself, come into the House and support the Government; and the other assured him that it was not by his knowledge, consent, or encouragement that any candidate came forward against the Govern-



ment, but that he himself was in favour of the Government. His (the Minister for Works) visit to the Western Railway happened about the time of the election, because the information about the ballast not being up to specification was given to him three or four days before the election took place, and he immediately went up with the Commissioner for Railways. He would have taken the Engineer also, but he was out of town. That gentleman, however, met them, and together they went to the place and examined the ballast, and the Commissioner for Railways and himself (Minister for Works) took the samples fairly. The samples were got, not as insinuated by the hon. gentleman, but fairly in open daylight, off the road as the gravel was thrown up from the ballast trucks, in the presence of the contractor, himself (Minister for Works), and the Commissioner for Railways, and were there packed in boxes and sent off. Some of the samples were now in the Works Office, and they were, if anything, better than the bulk. The sample of stone ballast was undoubtedly much better, and the sample of the gravel was admitted to be better than that used on the line. The leader of the Opposition ought to be acquainted with the 40th clause of the general conditions signed by contractors, which deprived the Engineer entirely of the power of making one iota of difference without the consent of the Commissioner, which meant the consent of the Government. That consent was never obtained. As to the question of the boy, the hon. member should have been ashamed to bring forward such a matter without first ascertaining the facts of the case, which were these: Owing to the retrenchment carried out in different parts of the colony, the services of a boy who was in the Works Office as assistant clerk—named Kelly, or Kellett—were no longer required. He had been in the Service six or seven years, was an excellent clerk, and it was a question whether he should be dispensed with or his superior. The services of another boy, who had been in the Service only six or seven months, however, were dispensed with, and this boy was taken in his place. Was it not better that the boy who had been in the Service six or seven years should be retained in preference to one who had simply been a few months in the Service on trial, and had not shown any capabilities for doing the work? Upon that the hon. member based a charge of Americanising our institutions. When the hon. member had any grounds for making such charges, he (Minister for Works) hoped he would make them, as he and his hon. colleagues would be the last to Americanise our institutions in any way whatever.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS thought the Minister for Works must remember what

gave importance to this correspondence, and the remarks that had been made about it were some observations which fell from him in reference to the taking of the contract, and to the pressure alleged to have been brought to bear upon the Ministry at the time in order to secure the contract. It was that which had really given point to the correspondence, and if there had been any suspicion—any unworthy suspicion—it had commenced with the hon. gentleman himself. That suspicion was founded upon a belief on his part that the contract had been surreptitiously obtained—that influence had been brought to bear upon the then Minister for Works (Mr. Thorn) in order to induce him to accept the contract; and the statement made by the hon. gentleman did amount to an implied accusation against the Engineer-in-Chief. He (Mr. Douglas) did not mean to say that in so many words the hon. gentleman charged the Engineer-in-Chief with abusing his office to afford facilities to the successful contractor to obtain the contract; but unquestionably the inference to be drawn from his statement was, that by official influence of some kind, by pressure having been brought to bear by the successful contractor, the contract was accepted. Such a statement having been made, the hon. gentleman must not be surprised that notice had been taken of his subsequent action in connection with the carrying out of the contract. He (Mr. Douglas) hoped that the opportunity would arise for going at some length into the papers connected with the contract for 3 and 4 sections, Western Railway—on his own behalf as head of the then Government, and on behalf of a valued friend whom he believed to be quite incapable of any such corrupt conduct. The Minister for Works must, therefore, remember that after this suspicion—unworthy and unfounded suspicion, as he (Mr. Douglas) believed it—which led to his subsequent conduct in connection with the question of ballast, it was but natural notice should be taken of his conduct. Acting on that suspicion, the hon. gentleman—if he believed that either the then Minister for Works or the Engineer-in-Chief was capable of selling the rights of the Government in this respect—if he thought that either or both were capable of such conduct, as it would seem he did—was perfectly right, he (Mr. Douglas) would admit, in watching the Engineer-in-Chief; but he believed the hon. gentleman was perfectly wrong in thinking that either the then Minister for Works or the Engineer-in-Chief had done anything which justified any such suspicion.

The PREMIER: The whole correspondence justifies it.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that if it did he should take an early opportunity of going

into it, for there could not be a more offensive and a more unworthy charge brought against the then Ministry—that in this respect they or anybody connected with them were guilty of corruption in this matter. The Premier had charged him with an implied act of corruption in connection with road votes; but, when he brought him to book, all that it amounted to was that, in his opinion, the system of expending road votes was bad and might be unworthily used. The hon. gentleman shrunk from his challenge to prove that in any one instance he (Mr. Douglas) had been guilty of the conduct implied, and he supposed it would be the same when they came to the book in this matter—the charges would disappear as unfounded and as unworthily made.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** They have not disappeared in this.

**MR. DOUGLAS** said that was a matter of opinion. He did not think the hon. gentleman had acted fairly to the Engineer-in-Chief if he believed him incapable. That officer received a high salary because he was believed to be a competent man and an honest man; but if the hon. gentleman supposed for a moment that Mr. Stanley or anyone else was capable of giving way to the influence of the railway contractor, and was backed up in his belief by reliable proof, he was not justified in retaining that gentleman's services for one hour; but, at the same time, he would be doing him a cruel wrong if he allowed a suspicion to get abroad which impugned his character without good foundation. His (Mr. Douglas') own belief was that the Engineer-in-Chief was quite as much above any such collusion as had been referred to as his hon. friend, the late Minister for Works (Mr. Thorn) was, and that any charge of that kind against either the one or the other was unjustified and unworthy to be named. It ought not to be named without something like serious proof being offered in justification. The hon. gentleman was perfectly right to watch carefully the interests of the Government; but, at the same time, the hon. gentleman might faithfully and honestly discharge his duty, and yet not allow those who were employed under him to be subjected to unworthy suspicion. He did not intend to go into details; but it seemed to him (Mr. Douglas) that the broad characteristic of the correspondence was that of suspicion with regard to the Engineer-in-Chief and want of candour, as applied in his administration, to a man whom he (Mr. Douglas) believed to be an honest officer. The Premier had referred to the criticism of the leader of the Opposition in reference to the letter addressed by the Minister of Works to Mr. Watson, the Chief Engineer of Victoria. He did not place any great value upon the form in which these official

letters were couched; but there was a peculiarity about this letter, for it must be remembered that it assumed the form of an impeachment of the Engineer-in-Chief; and, if so, the Minister for Works should have been careful to have observed all the official forms, which certainly had their value. It was apparent that they had their value, for, in the subsequent correspondence, it would seem that Mr. Mais, the Chief Engineer of South Australia, who was appealed to, did not know who Mr. Macrossan was, and did not recognise him as Minister for Works. He replied to him as "J. Macrossan, Esquire, Public Works Office"—it might be as a subordinate officer. It was important that Mr. Mais, as Chief Engineer of South Australia, should have known that the letter written to him was an official application from the Minister for Works, in which an implied charge against the Engineer-in-Chief of this colony was involved: the letters to both Mr. Watson and Mr. Mais were in the nature of an appeal against the judgment of Mr. Stanley. He (Mr. Douglas) did not impute more than want of care to the Minister for Works. He did not think the hon. gentleman wished to imply distrust, and hoped that he did not; but the character of the correspondence and the manner in which the hon. gentleman carried out his administrative duties were certainly not those of an experienced Minister. Possibly, though, they might excuse the deficiency on the ground of the comparative inexperience of the hon. gentleman in these matters, and this was quite consistent with a zealous desire to do his duty. As having a larger amount of official experience, however, he might be permitted to assure the hon. gentleman that business of this kind would not be facilitated by indicating distrust in the public officials who were under him, which seemed to be the characteristic of this correspondence. Ministers ought to trust those placed under them, and whose trustworthiness had been tested by experience, until sound reasons could be adduced for believing that that trust should be withdrawn. The Premier had also referred to a defect in their system of administration of railway contracts—namely, to the principle of making the Engineer-in-Chief arbitrator. He believed the principle to be a wholesome one. No doubt the hon. gentleman was looking at the matter from his experience of railway making, and might feel that the contractor might suffer a certain amount of injury; but he (Mr. Douglas) maintained that the Government were more likely to suffer more serious injury if, on every paltry occasion, they should have to submit to arbitration;—the Government invariably went to the wall. By some unfortunate arrangement, wherever a case had to be submitted to arbitration,

the arbitrators seemed to arrive at the conclusion that the Government had a broad enough back to suffer; and the consequence was that the award was generally in favour of the contractor. He hoped, therefore, that in administering his office the Minister for Works would make no such alteration. He believed it a wholesome provision against which no valid ground had been urged, and with which the contractors had not found any great objection. The contractors, in accepting the contract, knew full well that they would have to submit to the Engineer-in-Chief, and had therefore only themselves to blame. The Premier had also said that it was an unwholesome thing that the Engineer-in-Chief should be able to influence the contract officially. But how could this be? The acceptance of the contract was in the hands of the Government, and in all cases the lowest tenderer, if he was a sufficiently sound man, received the contract, and it was a mere matter of competition. The Chief Engineer arrived at his estimate from the figures which the contractors gave. He did not see how the Engineer-in-Chief's private opinion could be brought to bear upon the contractor. The Premier's implied charge was that the contractor was aware of the Engineer's private opinion. What ground had the Premier for stating that? He (Mr. Douglas) believed that he had as little ground as for stating that his hon. friend (Mr. Thorn) had been corruptly influenced.

The PREMIER said he did not use a single expression to lead to the inference that any of the tenderers had any undue private communication with the Chief Engineer.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the hon. gentleman had unquestionably said that the private opinion of the Chief Engineer might affect the contractors; and had said it in connection with the subject in such a way as to lead him to believe that Mr. Stanley's private opinion was known.

The PREMIER said he was pointing out the advantage a tenderer who knew the private opinion of the Engineer on any subject would have over men who did not. Supposing a tenderer came up the line and presented Mr. Stanley with a certain kind of gravel, and asked whether that would be taken in fulfilment of the contract, and learnt that it would—he was perfectly entitled to get an opinion upon the point—he would have a great advantage over the man who tendered on the supposition that "good clean gravel" would be wanted, and under the belief that he would have to go forty or fifty miles for it. The one who had seen the Engineer-in-Chief, and knew his opinion, would be able to tender at a lower price, and would consequently have an advantage. He (Mr. McIlwraith) imputed no unfairness.

Mr. DOUGLAS would admit that in such a case it might lead to a man tendering at a lower price, but it in no way showed that Bashford and Co. were influenced by such knowledge. Both the Premier and the Minister for Works had repudiated that they were going to take advantage of their position to drift into what had been described as the American system, as applied to the colony's permanent officials. He was now about to draw the attention of the House to a subject connected with the matter, and, if the case referred to of the boy at Rockhampton had been considered a small one, he should be able to show that the one he was about to allude to was not a small matter, and indicated what the Government were capable of—what a grievous wrong had been inflicted upon an old and capable officer. The case he referred to was that of John Kelly, who was dismissed from his position as postmaster at Bundaberg, and he cited it as an instance of the tendency of the Government in the particular direction referred to. He had no vague assertions to make, but he would refer to a printed paper dealing with the dismissal of this man. He found that complaints about his conduct had been made against him, as had, no doubt, been brought against similar officers—complaints which had been inquired into and disposed of by the late Postmaster-General (Mr. Mein). This was one of these cases, however, where, on a new Government coming into office, the decision of their predecessors was revised, and a special inquiry was instituted into the conduct of Mr. Kelly in regard to certain matters which had already been disposed of. He found that on the 19th March, 1879, Mr. Scott, superintendent of mails, was directed to proceed to Bundaberg by the first opportunity, and hold an inquiry into the following matters:—

"1. Complaint made by Mr. Hulme that persons are allowed to assemble in the post office compartment at Bundaberg with closed doors.

"2. Complaint made by Mr. Lester that a letter addressed to him was opened by the postmaster.

"3. In September last complaint was made by Mr. Ivory of delay in delivery of letters and intemperance on the part of the postmaster. This was inquired into *privately* by the police magistrate. The question of postmaster's intemperance may be also again inquired into, and any further complaints made on the spot investigated."

This inquiry was authorised by the present Postmaster-General, and Mr. Scott was despatched to make it; the accusation in each case had been disposed of; so that, in reality, it was a raking up of matters which had been dealt with by the present Postmaster-General's predecessor, and in that respect bore the impression of what

the Government had been accused of—namely, of wrong-doing and political malevolence. The groundwork of the charge against Kelly was that he was connected with politics; the *gravamen* of the heaviest charge was at the instance of Mr. Hulme, who was secretary, he believed, to the election committee of the Premier. Mr. Hulme himself was not very anxious to prosecute the business to its final result; he even intimated that he merely made the accusation at the instance of the committee. Mr. Mein, in a minute on his letter, said—

“Mr. Hulme’s statements are not very clear; and he should be asked to state specifically the charge he prefers against the postmaster. No meetings of a political character should be held in public buildings; but I should not be justified in interfering with the freedom of the postmaster in inviting whom he likes to his private rooms, so long as no public scandal is created.”

And, in virtue of that memorandum, a letter was addressed to Mr. Hulme, and as there was no reply, he took it that Mr. Hulme did not desire to go on with the charge. There was no attempt made to prefer a direct charge, or to give any more explicit statement in accordance with the demands of the late Postmaster-General. It was at this stage that Mr. Scott, a clerk in the General Post Office, was despatched to Bundaberg in order to inquire into the case. Mr. Hulme was summoned to appear, and Mr. Andrew Mackay Goodwin, Mr. Walter Adams, and Mr. Edward Tanner, were called and examined, and the chief accusation was, that Kelly had invited Mr. Tanner, the opponent of the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government at the last election, into the post office in order to conspire with him. Mr. Tanner said he had never attended political meetings at the post office, nor had he known Mr. Kelly interfere in politics. Mr. John Rowland and Mr. Atkinson gave similar evidence; as also Mr. Thomas White, who was an opponent of Mr. Tanner’s—or, at any rate, he was on the other side. The Rev. James Williams also gave evidence, and Mr. Kelly, who was examined at his own request, said this—

“My name is John Kelly; I am postmaster at Bundaberg; with reference to the complaint that persons are allowed to assemble inside the post office, Bundaberg, with *closed* doors, I wish to say that any statement to that effect is untrue; no persons ever came inside the post office for any other purpose than to transact postal business, nor did I ever allow any political conversation to take place in the office, and I had nothing whatever to do with political matters, either in the office or in public; I knew nothing of any committee, either Mr. Tanner’s or Mr. McLlwraith’s; I did not know who they were.”

The result of this inquiry was certainly, in his opinion, to completely exculpate Mr. Kelly from having had anything to do with politics. However, a different opinion had been arrived at, although the case had been actually judged by the previous Postmaster-General, and the result of the whole inquiry was that Mr. Kelly’s services were dispensed with by Executive minute, dated the 8th of April—not exactly on the ground of the charge made against him, but simply because he was not required and economy might be brought about by his removal. He was then instructed to leave Bundaberg, and sent this telegram to the Under Secretary of the Post Office—

“What am I to do when I give over possession to Mr. Smith?”

There appeared to be no answer to that. He was simply to hand over charge of the office to Mr. Smith. He was not by Executive minute condemned upon the charge, but his services were dispensed with. Then, on arrival in Brisbane, he wrote, on the 16th of May last, to the Under Secretary—

“In accordance with your memorandum of the 25th or 26th ultimo, I have handed over the post office, Bundaberg, to Mr. Smith, the station master at that place.

“I arrived in Brisbane on Tuesday, the 13th instant, and now await your further orders as to my future destination or appointment in the General Post Office. I understand the memorandum to mean that my services as official postmaster at Bundaberg ceased with the office, but not with the Service.

“I therefore beg leave to request that you will further instruct me as to my position, and when my services will be required. I am now ready, and awaiting your reply.”

Mr. Buzacott (the Postmaster-General), in reply, put this memorandum on the paper—

“Applicant to be informed that no further employment can be offered him in this Department.”

And on the 22nd of that month the Under Secretary wrote him to that effect. This closed the career of John Kelly, after nineteen years in the public service. Being suspected of political malversation of office, he had been practically dismissed, and yet he had not been told he was dismissed. If the conduct imputed to him was such as it was said to be he deserved to be dismissed; but no such proof had been adduced, and yet his services were dispensed with, and he was told there was no further employment for him. He (Mr. Douglas) thought there was a maliciousness about the case which was not justified by anything that appeared in those papers. It was quite true that on one occasion Kelly seemed to have been seriously overcome by the effects of drink, but that was inquired into by the police magistrate

(Mr. Burkitt), who reported upon it some months previous to this last inquiry. Of course, no one could deny that Kelly had been the worse for liquor; but there were circumstances which, if anything could be taken to justify such an act on the part of a postmaster, might be held to do so. He did not seek to justify this conduct on the part of Mr. Kelly, but it was apparently not considered a very serious offence by his superiors, perhaps on account of his long service. Mr. Mein had the matter before him, and made this minute—

“This satisfactorily explains away the charge of habitual intemperance. Mr. Kelly should be advised that his position as a public officer imposes on him the duty of maintaining a strictly neutral position with regard to all movements of a public character, whether political or otherwise.”

He (Mr. Douglas) had not much more to add; he had gone over the principal points in the case; and it appeared to him that a cruel wrong had been committed. It was not urged that this man was dismissed in consequence of intemperance; but it was pretty clearly shown that it was in consequence of his supposed political tendencies that he was to be visited with this serious act of injustice—an act which might be applied to any other man in his position; and when the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government challenged, as he did that afternoon, proof as to the principles upon which the Government acted in these matters, he (Mr. Douglas) instanced this. They had already fully discussed the action of the Government in connection with the Ipswich workshops, and he believed that political considerations were more effectual there than any other considerations; but he did not intend to raise that discussion again. Here, however, was a case in which serious injustice had been done. This man had not been convicted; he had simply been disposed of under the convenient plea of economy, and, under the circumstances, he had no remedy. In connection with this matter, he had been told that even previous to the inquiry being held the position was offered to other postmasters in the northern district. He thought they ought to be informed whether such was the case or not. If such were the case, it clearly showed the intentions to dispose of Mr. Kelly even before any inquiry was made at all. He (Mr. Douglas) had little more to say; he had felt it his duty to bring under the notice of the House this glaring case of cruel injustice to a man who, whatever his failings might be, did not deserve the instant dismissal which had been awarded to him.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he wished the hon. member had kept the speech he had just made until the second reading of his

(Mr. O'Sullivan's) Bill for the disfranchisement of the Civil Servants on Thursday week. If he (Mr. O'Sullivan) could make such a speech as that in favour of his Bill, he had not the slightest doubt in the world he could carry it. It was most lamentable that three or four hours should be taken up with such able speeches signifying nothing, from the ablest men on the Opposition side. The only two points he (Mr. O'Sullivan) could pick out of the whole affair was, that a Minister of the Crown had no authority over the servants in his own department, that he was not to give them instructions, but they were to do as they liked; and the next was that Ministers were not to dismiss or replace any of the Civil Servants, because, if they did, such dismissals would be certainly from political motives. If the hon. member would take up on Thursday week the ground he did to-night and assist him (Mr. O'Sullivan), he would do much greater service to the employés of the State than he had done on this occasion. He knew nothing at all about Mr. Kelly, but he knew that the matter was too small for the leader of the Opposition to interfere with. If the Ministry had not power to dismiss servants that had been proved to have committed faults, then they had better go out of office altogether, and let the Civil Servants be the masters, as they really were at the present time. He hoped after this discussion, the work of the evening would be allowed to be gone on with.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he happened to have some knowledge of Mr. Kelly; not a very lengthy acquaintance, but sufficiently long to enable him to arrive at a fair estimate of his character as a man and a public servant. He had also gone through the correspondence on the case, and he quite agreed with the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) that the evidence there justified the supposition that Mr. Kelly had been made the victim of official wrath for his supposed political leanings. While it must be admitted that the head of a department should have control over the officers in his department, still there should be some limit to the extent to which the head of a department might make those under his control feel the application of the rod of his disfavour. The charges against Kelly were twofold: first, that he was guilty of meddling with politics; and, secondly, that he was in the habit of becoming intoxicated and being unable to discharge his duties;—but both these charges were thoroughly investigated at the time the charges were made. He (Mr. Rutledge) did not find fault with the residents of a locality for making complaints against a public servant guilty of any dereliction of duty or abuse of power, or the privileges of his office; because the public

had a perfect right to be protected against the wrongdoing of public servants; but when the public had taken their remedy, and memorialised the head of the department in reference to the conduct of Mr. Kelly, and the case was investigated, and the finding placed on record, in all fairness that should be an end of the matter. But what did they find from the correspondence? That a considerable time after Mr. Mein decided upon the charges brought against this man, an individual from the post office was sent to sneak into Bundaberg—to go crawling into the town, and pounce upon the postmaster suddenly, when he was not expecting an official visit, and take him in such a way that he would be placed at a disadvantage. Was that fair or unobjectionable? Then this man, after going about Bundaberg and finding nothing in Kelly to lead him to come to a conclusion that there was anything very seriously wrong, began to hold an inquiry into—what? Into the charges made months before and satisfactorily disposed of, and upon which the Postmaster-General's finding had been recorded. Those were the things which were all raked up, and those were the things which were charged against him, and upon the result of the investigation of which he was sent about his business. He (Mr. Rutledge) wanted to know whether that was fair and honourable dealing on the part of the Minister towards a public servant? Whether Kelly had been guilty of political meddling at Bundaberg during the election the papers should prove—he did not know anything about Kelly's political doings, or about the election at Bundaberg; but if it was satisfactorily proved that Kelly was guilty of political interference, then the papers should have stated that; but they had not done so. The charges of political interference had been satisfactorily disposed of; then it had been said that Kelly was guilty of intoxication. According to the papers they had proof that he was a member of a temperance lodge, and that he was in the habit of performing divine service as a Church of England lay-agent, on Sunday. If that was the case, the charge of drunkenness, if true, might have been made with better proof. It was most unlikely that a man of that kind could be guilty of habitual or even frequent drunkenness; there was nothing to show that, beyond one occasion, he was ever the worse for drink. He only had it that on a night when, in obedience to the dictates of humanity, he sat up with a dying man, he was in such an excited state from want of rest that he took a little wine or spirit; yet this circumstance had been quoted to prove that he was unfit to be postmaster at Bundaberg. The charges of political interference had not been proved to his

(Mr. Rutledge's) satisfaction. With regard to the Postmaster-General, who he (Mr. Rutledge) wished was a member of that House that he might answer what he had to say, that gentleman had not dealt fairly with Kelly. He had no right to go into the antecedents, as he had, of a public servant. Was it because a public servant had once committed a mistake that he was always to have it brought against him, or that a Minister was to rake up against him a charge of which he had been acquitted? Supposing Kelly had been guilty of political meddling, why should a Minister who took office long after that charge had been disposed of say that he was more intelligent than his predecessor; and, on the very insufficient finding of an officer secretly sent up by him, decide that this man Kelly was not fit to hold office—unfit after having been nineteen years in the public service? It might be accepted as a principle that a Minister who raked up old matters that had been long disposed of to warrant him in dismissing a public servant was guilty of a gross misconception of the powers that the people intrusted him with. He should be glad to hear the Premier, or the Colonial Secretary, deny any knowledge of this matter, or any complicity with the steps that had been taken. He should like to have his mind disabused of the idea that there had been some old grudge paid off by the dismissal of Kelly in this unceremonious way. If a man had been guilty of gross misconduct in the public service he should undoubtedly be punished; but when once he had been put on his trial for that offence, and acquitted, that should be sufficient. Even if a great criminal had been put on his trial properly, and had been acquitted by a jury, the country would under no circumstances put that man again on his trial. That was the spirit of the whole system of criminal jurisprudence; and it had been set at nought in this case, where a man had been acquitted and the charges made against him had been previously disproved satisfactorily to the head of the department.

Mr. DICKSON said he should like to have heard a member of the Government reply to the remarks made on his side of the House in reference to this case of Kelly. After the remarks of the hon. member for Enoggera, one of the Ministers might have said why such an extraordinary course was taken in the case of Kelly. The action of the Government in Kelly's case was extremely undignified. The charges against that officer were made and investigated by a former Ministry; and certainly, without some new circumstances arising which he (Mr. Dickson) had not heard of, he failed to see what, on the merits of the case itself, justified the Postmaster-General in despatch-

ing an emissary in such a secret manner as appeared to have been done with a view to substantiate old charges against Mr. Kelly.

The PREMIER: Where was the secrecy?

Mr. DICKSON said that the Postmaster-General had despatched an emissary, secretly, with the object of endeavouring to obtain secret information. Mr. Scott was sent up to inquire into the matter, and, finding he had not sufficient evidence voluntarily offered, sent a telegram suggesting fresh witnesses who would give information which they would not give unless they had instructions from head-quarters. It looked as if there was an intention on the part of some persons to aggravate circumstances against Mr. Kelly, with a view to some punishment to be inflicted on him. Even supposing the charges that were made were proved, they resolved themselves simply into these:—One by Mr. Hulme, dated the 26th November, 1878, that persons were allowed to assemble in the post office department at Bundaberg for some months past, and the doors were closed. The second was from Mr. Lester, that a letter from him was opened by the postmaster, who read the contents to see whether it was for him or not. In regard to that accusation, Mr. Lester refused, when Mr. Scott was sent to inquire into the circumstance again, to give any more information, stating that to his mind the whole thing was settled. Then, with regard to the complaint in the letter of September, 1878, from Mr. Ivory, in which it was stated that the postmaster was given to intemperance and delayed the delivery of letters, even supposing all these charges were sustained—and they had not been—the dismissal was too severe a punishment for the first offence on the part of a Civil Servant who had been nineteen years in the public service. Kelly might have been reduced to a lower rank in the service as a punishment, but he had not been offered any such opportunity to make amends for any mistakes he might have committed. He had been dismissed from his office after such period of Civil Service as nineteen years, during which time he (Mr. Dickson) could not gather from the correspondence before the House that any previous charges against him had been made. The hon. member for Maryborough had done good service in bringing the matter forward; they had a right to inquire into the matter before entering into Committee of Supply, as it was the business of the Chamber to see that no person was treated with injustice without the Government being called upon to give some explanation, which in the present instance the Government had not shown themselves willing to do. He did not intend to go into other cases, but merely to confine himself to this ques-

tion—whether Kelly should have been dismissed with a slur on his character, and with an improbability of getting employment in the colony, as would be the case, on account of such dismissal?—whether he should have been placed at such a great disadvantage?—and whether he should be precluded from getting employment in the colony which he might endeavour and desire to take? The action of the Government had been entirely incommensurate in extent to the offence committed, and the punishment awarded to Kelly had been such that it looked not like departmental punishment but political vindictiveness. He would now briefly advert to the question of the ballast papers, which involved a question of considerable magnitude, as to the precise position of the Chief Engineer of the colony. He had no doubt that the Minister for Works acted according to his judgment, but, judging from the papers before hon. members, the position of the Chief Engineer was thereby rendered extremely equivocal, and that officer did not care to undertake the responsibility of construction without having the Minister's authority for all details in his possession. The present Minister for Works might be succeeded by someone who had not the same knowledge he possessed, and it would then be unfortunate that the Chief Engineer should be interfered with in the same way. Even supposing that the action of the Minister for Works showed that he had taken the proper course, still it was a question whether that Minister should put his veto on the action of the Chief Engineer, who was the head of a professional department. He had a great respect for the Premier, and for his engineering ability; but he questioned whether his interference with the Chief Engineer of his department would be productive of public benefit in reference to the improvement of harbours and rivers. He believed that the public had more confidence in the ability of Mr. Stanley as Chief Engineer of Railways than in the Minister for Works. It was a question that could not be considered apart from the fact that the Minister for Works, possessing no technical knowledge, interfered with the professional head of the department. The only benefit he could see that the Minister for Works had obtained was, that he had ordered a quantity of ballast to be used that he had officially disapproved of previously, the complaint against that ballast being that it was too much mixed with sand. However, he was not going into that special case, being more desirous of discussing the particular question as to the Minister of the day interfering with the details of railway construction and the responsible officer who was entrusted with the carrying out of the

work. If there were sufficient grounds for such interference, it was time to displace the Chief Engineer, as he could not see that the country would be benefited by two gentlemen in the same department possessing equal authority but holding different opinions on such an important question as that of the construction of our lines of railway. If two were too many, then let the Engineer be dismissed rather than allow him to do that which was opposed to the public interests. The whole thing involved a most serious question, and he trusted that the debate on it would be resumed at some future time. Before sitting down, he wished to hear from the Premier what his intention was in going into Committee of Supply that evening. They had been previously informed by the hon. gentleman that he intended to take the Loan Estimates before going into Committee of Supply, and it would have been well if some notice had been given to hon. members before entering upon the consideration of the ordinary Estimates. There was one question he should like to have answered, and that was whether the Estimates laid on the table represented the number of officers at present in the Government service. Hon. members had been told that the Estimates had been framed on the principle of retrenchment, and he (Mr. Dickson) wished to know whether they had been framed on that basis, or whether the hon. Treasurer intended to come down with a large supplementary estimate? He did not wish to detain the House much longer; but he would repeat that he would be glad if the Colonial Treasurer would give some information to the House as to the exact position they were in upon going into the Estimates—that was to say, whether these Estimates represented the requirements of the public service under its different heads. The Government had stated that the Estimates were framed with a view to retrenchment; but it had since transpired that the contemplated reductions had not in all cases been carried out, and that possibly a full carrying out of them might be a matter of time. This was notably the case in regard to the police. It would be satisfactory, then, to know whether the Estimates-in-Chief were likely to be supplemented by further Estimates making provision for the large number of officers employed by the Government whose services were intended to have been dispensed with. This was quite pertinent to the question before the House. He would also refer to the peculiar position the Estimates occupied with regard to provision for roads and bridges. He understood from the Colonial Treasurer that he intended to learn the result of the debate on the Divisional Boards Bill before proceeding with the Estimates. Should anything occur to prevent the Divisional

Boards Bill from coming into operation, it must be admitted there was an entirely inadequate amount on the Estimates-in-Chief for the roads and bridges of the colony. It would be satisfactory, therefore, to hear what the intentions of the Government were, in case anything occurred to prevent the passing of the Divisional Boards Bill. Such a question could not be considered altogether *ultra vires*. There was no doubt these estimates were exceptionally framed, being framed contingent to the passing of certain measures now before the House. It was a matter of speculation whether some of such measures which to a great extent affected the Estimates would be successfully passed and become law this session. Before concluding, he thought he might advert to one other matter. The Estimates had evidently been framed to provide for the services which the Government thought, at the time they framed them, it would be necessary to maintain; but he observed now there was one service which was likely to be removed—namely, the gaol at Brisbane. The House had received no intimation from the Colonial Secretary what were his intentions with respect to the £3,000 which now stood upon the Estimates under this head. From what appeared in the public prints, he observed that there was a reduction—in fact, the dismissal of one or two head officers of that department, with the intention of transferring the prisoners to another establishment at St. Helena. In the House they had heard nothing in connection with the matter; and, as it was one of considerable importance on the Estimates, he was justified in referring to it at the present time. The Government had admitted that under existing circumstances the Estimates did not contain sufficient provision for the whole of the Civil Service now in the employ of the Government; while, on the other hand, votes for services were asked which it was evidently not intended to employ. The vote for the gaol would not be necessary if the prisoners in the Brisbane Gaol were removed to St. Helena, and the transfer of that department might very fairly be explained to the House: possibly, the attention of the Colonial Secretary had not been attracted to it before. He (Mr. Dickson) trusted, in the reply he might give to his hon. friend, the member for Maryborough, respecting the Bundaberg postmaster, he would refer to these matters, and especially inform the House of his intention regarding the gaol in Brisbane, and the future maintenance of the department. He presumed it was the intention of the Premier to proceed with the Estimates-in-Chief, but trusted he would, this week, as he had promised, put the House in possession of the Loan Estimates. They were anxiously looked forward to by the public,



and it would have relieved their anxiety if the Treasurer could have seen his way to postpone the Estimates-in-Chief and taken the vote on account, so as to consider the Loan Estimates first. The public were desirous of knowing as much as they could about the public works the Government intended to undertake, and if the course he suggested were adopted they would probably be put in possession of the facts they required.

Mr. Low desired to refer to the arguments of the hon. member for Enoggera, in regard to the case of Kelly. The first argument made use of by the hon. member (Mr. Rutledge) was, that, this case having been condoned, it was unfair and mean to make any inquiries into the proceedings of that person. It struck him (Mr. Low) as very necessary such inquiries should be made. Supposing a man were manager of a station or an establishment connected with gold-digging, and was responsible for the proper officers under him, it was his duty in the first place to see that he obtained men suitable to carry out his intentions with success. It had been argued that it was mean to make inquiries going back twenty years; but he differed from that view. Whenever he engaged a superintendent or manager or storekeeper, the first thing would certainly be to look at his past character, as it was very important to see whether a man, for instance, was temperate or not. He objected to the idea that no inquiry should be made whether persons were responsible for their situations—in fact, everyone receiving another into his employment without inquiring about him would not be doing as he ought. In the present case it had been clearly proved that Government were justified in making investigation, and the exception taken to their having done so was very futile and anything but well put forward.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had no intention of following hon. members through their comments in the case of what the hon. member (Mr. Dickson) had been pleased to call the postmaster-general of Bundaberg. He (Mr. Palmer) knew nothing about the case except what he gathered from the paper, but, if Government were to be hauled over the coals for every man they dismissed, there would be an end to Executive Government. Judging from the papers the man ought to have been dismissed long ago, and hon. members must agree with him that the other charges brought against the Government had been so paltry and so futile that he had not the slightest intention of replying to them—in fact, they did not need replying to—they answered themselves. What hon. members opposite meant by going into the subjects they had he could not make out, except it was to show that

they would not do any work on Monday night. If that was the case they would see who would get tired first. The hon. member (Mr. Dickson) had asked for a good deal of information, which he (Mr. Palmer) was not inclined to give him, and which no Government was bound to give—what course the Government wished to pursue. The hon. gentleman asked what the Government would do if they lost the Divisional Boards Bill. He had no right to ask any such questions. If the Government lost the Divisional Boards Bill—and it was hardly likely they would, with the majority at their back—then would be the time for the hon. member to ask what they intended to do. It was entirely useless to anticipate such an event at present. The hon. gentleman ought to have observed that the Premier gave notice, almost immediately the House met, to move the suspension of the Standing Orders to-morrow, to enable him to get a Bill through for temporary supplies.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I did not hear it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said hon. members ought to have heard it; it was moved in a distinct voice. The Colonial Treasurer intended to take a vote on account, which he presumed would not be refused. They might postpone the Estimates-in-Chief as long as they pleased, but they would have to be gone through;—indeed, they might have got half through the Estimates by this time if they had gone to work when the House met—he had seen it done in less time before to-day. With respect to the gaol, and the remark of the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson) that he had not given any explanation about his intentions, he had been under the impression that it would be quite time enough to do so when the gaol estimates came on. He had no hesitation in saying now what he meant to do. It ought to have been known, from the tenor of his speeches for years past, that whenever he came into office that abomination of desolation, the Brisbane Gaol, would be done away with. It was not fit to put a black man in, let alone a white man. The cells were a disgrace to civilization;—they might as well put a man into an oven. Nor could he see what they wanted with two penal establishments when the work could be much better done in one, and with the full consent of his colleagues he intended to remove the whole of the prisoners to St. Helena, where there was ample room with a few wooden additions, which would not cost the country more than £1,000. He intended to break up the gaol, to sell every stone of it and the ground it stood on, and wipe away what he considered a disgrace to the city. With that view the principal gaoler and the head turnkey had got three months' notice that their services would be dispensed with. He was not satisfied with

the management of that gaol. The Visiting Justice and the Under Secretary, whom he had sent to inquire into the escape of the French prisoner from the gaol, considered that it entailed disgrace on almost everybody connected with it. It was not on that account that he intended doing away with the gaol, because he had considered for years that it was not a fit place to put men into. When men did wrong the State had no right to torture them, and to lock men up in those cells facing the afternoon sun was downright inhumanity; and he had said so over and over again in the House. He did not think there was anything else that required explanation: if there was, he would tell it at the proper time, when the Estimates came on.

Mr. ARCHER said there seemed to be a difference of opinion with regard to the action of the Postmaster-General in dismissing the postmaster of Bundaberg—some saying he had done wisely, and others the reverse. When the hon. member for Maryborough asserted that the complaint which had been examined into by the present Postmaster-General had already been settled by his predecessor, he must have been mistaken. On the 17th December—long after that inquiry was held privately by the police magistrate—another charge of opening letters was brought against the postmaster by a man named Lester. This re-opened the whole question, and a public inquiry was held into the postmaster's conduct, including the complaint which had been settled at the private inquiry. It was unfair to insinuate that political reasons had anything to do with the second inquiry. Listening to what had been said by some hon. members, it was evident their prejudices prevented them from judging the facts calmly. The hon. member for Maryborough said little or nothing about the postmaster of Bundaberg having ever exceeded in his cups, and the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge) dealt very tenderly indeed with it, representing it as the venial offence of a man having sat up all night with a sick friend, and taken just a little drop too much while performing that Christian duty. But what did the evidence really say? A witness named Lapham deposed as follows—

"I reside near Bundaberg; I know Mr. Kelly, the postmaster at Bundaberg; I have seen him drunk in Bundaberg; I saw him drunk on the morning Mr. Young died; I was lodging with Mr. Kelly at Mrs. Thornton's at that time; when I went home from Mr. Young's about 3 a.m. on that day I saw Mr. Kelly sitting on the table; he had an empty gin bottle beside him; I said, 'I want a nip,' he gave me half-a-crown, and asked me to go and get a bottle of brandy; I got it, and we had two drinks each; he was drunk before I went for the brandy, and fell off the table."

If that was an example which the hon. member for Enoggera wished them to initiate as a matter of Christian duty, he had better read the evidence before making such a sweeping deduction. In cases of this kind it was exceedingly difficult to get evidence, and it was not obtained in this case until the Government insisted on the witnesses answering truly; and the cases enumerated in the evidence were, no doubt, only a few of the most obvious ones. When a man on two occasions got drunk, closed his office, and told stories about it, they might presume there was something more in the background. The whole of the evidence showed that the man was unfit for his duties, and he (Mr. Archer) cordially approved of the action taken by the Postmaster-General in dismissing him. If hon. members were to call the Government to account for every drunken man dismissed from office they would have enough to do. As a private man he declared his liberty to get drunk, but as a man in the service of another he could not blame his employer if he dismissed him for the offence.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said he wished for some information upon a matter concerning his own electorate. About eight days ago some extra work required to be done at the Ipswich workshops, and a number of men were taken on to do it. After one of those men had worked four days he was suddenly dismissed without any notice given or reason assigned. He did not object to the Minister for Works dismissing what men he pleased; what he complained of was his taking on a man and paying him off again without notice;—it was not treating the man fairly. He should like some information on the matter, so as to satisfy people who were talking about it outside.

Question put and passed, and the House went into Committee.

The PREMIER moved that the sum of £1,640 be granted for service during the year 1879-80 for salaries and contingencies in connection with His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. BAILEY drew attention to the sum of £500 for travelling expenses of His Excellency and staff on tours of inspection. He wished to know whether that sum had been paid during the last year, and whether the tours of inspection had been made?

The PREMIER said the sum was put down last year to meet travelling expenses, and it had been paid.

Mr. BAILEY did not know that His Excellency had made a single tour of inspection.

The PREMIER said His Excellency had paid a visit to Warwick, and he believed also to Stanthorpe. The amount was paid on vouchers sent in from His Excellency to the Treasury.

Mr. BAILEY said it was a most disgraceful scandal. The money could not have been paid for that purpose, and yet the vote was again put down on the Estimates by a Government of retrenchment—a Government that had been dismissing working men from one end of the colony to the other. At a time when the people were suffering under a weight of taxation they were hardly able to bear, the first item brought forward by the Government was a false item—designedly false—for tours of inspection which were not performed, and were not likely to be performed. There was a distinct agreement made, when the salary was increased to the present amount, that this item should never again appear—that the work should be done for a certain sum laid down, and the House should not be troubled with paltry amounts. It was an insult to the country to demand from the taxpayers £500 a year to enable His Excellency to travel on the Southern and Western Railway, on which line he (Mr. Bailey) believed His Excellency had a special carriage and travelled free.

The PREMIER said the hon. member was wrong in saying there was a distinct understanding that as soon as the salary was increased that item should not appear. Ever since the change was made the item had appeared upon the Estimates each year. The hon. member must know perfectly well that the Government could only take one course, as the expenditure of the amount was certified to by the proper officers. The clear duty of the hon. member, if he considered £500 too much, would be to move that the vote be reduced.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member for Wide Bay forgot that the Government had nothing to do with the matter. The amount had been put on the Estimates by the previous Ministry, and had appeared every year since the salary was increased. A great deal of unnecessary fire had been wasted by the hon. member; if he objected to the item let him move that it be reduced. The duty of the Government was not to keep tally of tours of inspection. The proper officer at the Treasury was bound to pay the vouchers, and more than that the Government had nothing to do with the matter.

Mr. BAILEY said hon. members were not responsible for the extravagance of past Governments; they were dealing with a Government of retrenchment and economy. Instead of having practised economy where it might be fairly practised, they accused them of having practised it to increase the hardships of the people. Here, where there was a fair opportunity, which every taxpayer would have hailed, of carrying out a good policy, the Government studiously avoided the very policy with which they had injured the people. He should take the suggestion of the Colonial Secretary, and move

that the amount be decreased by £500 for travelling expenses, and £300 for country residence. The country was not in a position to pay, in addition to a large salary, for those luxuries, and they were nothing else. He would first move that the sum of £500 be omitted.

Mr. REA said the Colonial Secretary had told them that it was not the function of the Government to look after those matters or to check them. He should like some member of the Government to tell the Committee whose function it was. The responsibility must lie somewhere inside the House or outside, and as a new member he wished to be informed where.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said that possibly His Excellency did intend to take some trip during the ensuing year. Hon. members should not assume that, because he had not made many excursions in the past, he was not going to do so in the future.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, in reply to the hon. member (Mr. Rutledge), said His Excellency was very anxious to go North, and that as soon as the Ministry could recommend it he would like to get away. His Excellency regretted exceedingly that he had not been able to make himself better acquainted with the northern part of the colony; but the Ministry had not thought it quite right that he should leave town during the session.

Mr. BAILEY said, supposing His Excellency did so, they had already paid the £500 on vouchers. He believed His Excellency went once to Warwick and once to Toowoomba, to the country residence for which they had the honour of paying £300 a year. They had already paid for all the tours of inspection that might be projected during the next twelve months, and if the money was not in the Treasury it ought to be there. If economy was to be practised, let it be practised in the proper place.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he concluded from what the Premier had said that the amount was paid monthly, as an addition to the salary. It was certainly not the intention of Parliament that it should be so paid. The sum was voted by Parliament in the same way as the travelling expenses of the judges—to be paid when actually expended. That was a matter of some consequence, as of the four items making up the amount the £500 was the least objectionable, if paid simply for expenses of travelling. He was not aware what the practice had been, but this looked like an addition of £1,640 to the Governor's salary.

Mr. REA said he had asked a question as to where the responsibility lay, and he hoped the question would be answered.

The PREMIER said the leader of the Opposition must have misunderstood him. It was not his intention to imply that the amount was an addition to the salary: the money was paid upon proper vouchers sent

down by His Excellency's officers, stating that the money had been expended.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the Under Colonial Secretary informed him that the vote was drawn in lump sums of £100 or £150 upon His Excellency's vouchers.

Mr. McLEAN said perhaps the Colonial Secretary would tell them whether the whole sum of £500 had been drawn, or whether there was some portion left?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Premier said it was all paid.

Mr. McLEAN said he should support an amendment that the item be done away with. If they were to vote £5,500 instead for His Excellency's salary, they should know exactly what they were doing. He had always believed that the vote was put down to be used as the necessity arose, but according to the Colonial Secretary this was not the case.

The PREMIER said he had already explained that the item was not put down as an addition to His Excellency's salary, but was paid upon vouchers from His Excellency that the money had been expended. Since he had accepted office £150 had been paid by him in this form.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the item was not an increase to the Governor's salary; but the money was devoted to the purpose for which it was voted. He believed that the practice of auditing did not apply to the Governor's expenditure; but, nevertheless, detailed accounts were given.

The PREMIER said that, if the Committee voted £500 or £1,000 for travelling expenses of His Excellency, and vouchers were sent down that the money had been expended, he should pay them.

Mr. BAILEY said that, if the Colonial Treasurer would pay vouchers for travelling expenses when there had been no travelling done, he would be doing wrong. If the money had been obtained when no tours of inspection had been made, it looked like an accusation of obtaining money under false pretences. The Committee ought to strike the item off without another word.

Mr. MESTON said they had been told that this was not an addition to His Excellency's salary, but so long as the Governor received the money the effect upon the country would be exactly the same. Here was a glorious opportunity for the Government to show the sincerity of their professions with regard to retrenchment. It was a scandalous fraud to vote a sum of money which was not expended for the purpose it was intended. It had been shown that His Excellency did not travel, except so far as Toowoomba and some other places on the line, and that his expenses had been nothing. On the Estimates they had £5,000 down as salary for His Excellency, £500 for travelling expenses, and

nearly £800 for miscellaneous things, so that his salary came to about £6,300. He agreed with the member for Wide Bay that the item should be reduced by £500.

Mr. SIMPSON asked if the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) could tell the Committee whether, during the time he held office, the money was paid to His Excellency whether any trips were made or not?

Mr. DOUGLAS said he could state that the money voted for travelling expenses was given to that purpose, and paid to the Governor on the receipt of vouchers. It was one of the best purposes for which money could be voted; and it seemed necessary and expedient that His Excellency should be placed in a position to visit different parts of the colony. During his (Mr. Douglas') time His Excellency visited Maryborough, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, and Gympie; and on this occasion the accounts were paid in the ordinary form of detailed expenditure, vouchers being furnished by His Excellency's private secretary. He would deprecate what he thought would be false economy in reducing this amount. There was no better expenditure than one to bring the Governor in direct communication with the people on occasions that he could do so with propriety and with the concurrence of his Ministers. The best results flowed from these trips; and he knew that the Governor was also anxious to visit the other northern ports, and, if possible, some of the interior towns.

Mr. McLEAN said not a single member would object to voting any reasonable amount to enable His Excellency to visit different parts of the colony; but it would be interesting to the Committee to know whether there was an unexpended balance left of this vote at the end of the year, or whether vouchers were sent in for the exact amount. Lately they had a list of unexpended votes for roads and bridges, and it showed that a large amount had been unexpended by this Government of retrenchment. How much of this £500 had been allowed to lapse?

The PREMIER said according to his recollection the vote had always been expended, and often exceeded. The £500 voted last year had all been paid.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said that from the tone assumed by some hon. members it might be supposed that they thought that in reducing this amount they were reducing the salary or emoluments of an official in a high position; but surely hon. members did not suppose for a moment that if this amount were struck off, and if in consequence the Governor were prevented from making tours, His Excellency would be the sufferer? The probability was that these tours of inspection were only made at great personal inconvenience to His Excellency; if the amount was not voted, the

effect would be that he would not undertake his contemplated trip to the northern coast towns, and that he would confine himself to Brisbane, Toowoomba, or the few other places to which he might be bound to go at his own expense. So far from any good being done to the public generally by not voting this item, attacks would be made against the Government for refusing the means to His Excellency to see the colony. As to the objection that the Governor had not made any tours of inspection, there were many small tours which this vote was meant to cover. He had seen something of this, having been for some time on a Governor's staff; and he knew that there were small tours of inspection which need not come before the public, but which undoubtedly these sums barely covered. He had no doubt that a considerable number of small journeys—small visits—would very easily absorb this sum, and probably more. He knew that the sums usually placed on the Estimates did not cover by one-half the cost of trips undertaken by Governors.

Mr. KINGSFORD said the Government had made blunders enough since initiating their scheme of retrenchment, but if they had failed to include this sum they would have made the greatest blunder of all. The money was not for His Excellency's private use, but for the public service; and it was for the good of the country that His Excellency should be enabled to travel. The remarks of the hon. member for Rosewood were a scandalous libel upon Her Majesty's Representative.

Mr. MESTON, in reply to the hon. member for South Brisbane, explained that what he had said was, that to vote large sums of money which were not spent for the purpose intended was a scandalous fraud upon the country. He entirely agreed with the hon. member for Maryborough, and the hon. and aristocratic member for Clermont, that if the £500 was spent for the purpose intended, by all means let it be voted. It was well that His Excellency should come into contact with the people as much as possible, but the Committee ought to have some guarantee that the money would be legitimately spent. They now learnt from the Treasurer that this money had always been paid; but he was sure the expenses of the Governor in going to Toowoomba and back occasionally could not amount to so much. He (Mr. Meston) could visit his constituents, make an oratorical display, and not spend more than 10s. or 12s., and he could not see why His Excellency should require such a large amount as this for travelling expenses. If it were shown to be necessary, and that the Governor would expend it in travelling expenses, he should not move the omission of the item; but seeing that the money had not been spent in travelling

expenses—that His Excellency had travelled comparatively little, he did not think they were justified in voting this amount.

Mr. ARCHER thought that, as only a small part of the money had been spent by the present Government, the late Treasurer should give some explanation as to how it had been spent; and if there was any blame to attach, they would divide it equally in proportion to the sum spent by the different parties. He objected to any reduction of this £500, because he hoped the intention of the Governor to visit the North would be carried out, and that they would have the pleasure of seeing him, not only at Rockhampton, but a great deal further north.

Mr. DICKSON said the statement of the Treasurer was correct, that these moneys had been paid; and during the time he was in office, and particularly the latter part of it, he endeavoured to obtain information as to the expenditure on this head which His Excellency had undertaken. The difficulty in dealing with this vote was to confine it to defraying the expenses of His Excellency when on public business. Of course, if the money was voted without any condition the Treasurer was bound to pay the vouchers; he did not believe the House wished for a moment to restrict the Governor in expending even a much larger amount, if it were disbursed purely on account of public business and tours of inspection. When a former Governor contemplated going north, £1,000 was especially provided to defray the expenses of the trip; and when compiling the Estimates he endeavoured to learn from His Excellency whether he intended taking a long trip, in which case he would have asked the House to make sufficient provision. The objection was not so much to the amount as to the difficulty of the Committee being satisfied that it was only disbursed for public purposes. Sometimes, on these amounts being placed on the Estimates, their Governors, until informed as to the intention of the House, drew them as an addition to salary; and he thought if the Treasurer would promise, as he might very fairly do, that he would inform His Excellency that the money was only voted to defray expenses incurred by him in making tours for public purposes, the item would pass without further comment.

Mr. REA said some hon. members appeared to take a very high stand at the idea of inquiry into these matters, but they appeared to forget the whole spirit of our Constitution. Why, even the expenditure of the Royal Family had to be accounted for, and all he asked was that the hon. member who had the care of the public money should state specifically what the money was expended for. Surely that was not too much to ask; and if it was too

much information for the Governor to give, the sooner they got a new one who would give it the better. People holding even higher positions than Governors were not above giving statements of their expenditure; and if the information asked in this case were given, he was sure there would be no grumbling on that side of the House as to the amount to be voted.

Mr. RUTLEDGE thought unnecessary energy had been thrown into the discussion. He had too high an opinion of the Governor to suppose that, if he was aware that it was the intention of Parliament that this amount was to be devoted to travelling expenses, that he would send in vouchers and receive the money except for that purpose. He did not know what the impression of past Governors or the present Governor might be, but, as a rule, he believed that public functionaries who were allowed travelling expenses drew the money for those expenses whether it was expended or not; and, if the Governor had done so, he had merely followed the general practice. They ought to have too much respect for the Governor to haggle over £500 in the way some hon. members seemed disposed to do.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the question would be settled at once if the Treasurer would state whether this money would be spent for travelling expenses. He could not agree with the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge), that it was the universal practice of functionaries who were allowed travelling expenses to draw those expenses whether they were expended or not. He knew, in the department he had charge of, it was not allowed; and in one or two instances that came under his notice where it was done he put a stop to it. Of course, they always took the word of high officials that the money had been spent for travelling expenses, and no one would for a moment doubt the word of the Governor if he said it was spent in travelling. If the Treasurer said the money was to be paid only for expenses actually incurred, he believed the item would pass without further discussion.

The PREMIER said there was not the slightest misunderstanding. If this money was voted it would be paid as previous votes of £500 had been paid;—that was, that if he received vouchers from His Excellency's secretary that he incurred the expenses stated, the money would be paid. He required to give no assurance whatever in the matter. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Griffith) said that if an amount was put down as the expenses of judges he would accept it and make no inquiry, and he (the Premier) would do the same with these items. If the vouchers were sent in by His Excellency's private secretary, he (the Premier) should not inquire into the matter, but pay the money as it had been paid before. He did not inquire whether His

Excellency was going to travel or not, and was not in a position to say whether he would incur this expense or not; so that they could not get any further information than they had at present. With regard to the statement of the hon. member (Mr. Dickson), that he put on the Estimates the amount expected to be required by the Governor in tours of inspection, that must be a slip, because the amount had appeared on the Estimates as £500 ever since 1874.

Mr. DICKSON said what he said was, that in compiling the Estimates he inquired whether His Excellency intended taking any long trip, so as to make provision for it. In one year £1,000 additional was put down.

The PREMIER: £1,500; £500 on the Estimates, and £1,000 on the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that was on the occasion of the Governor's trip up north, and he could say, from personal knowledge, that quite that amount was expended on the two official trips to Maryborough, Rockhampton, and Gympie—in fact, he thought they got off very cheap at that price, because the Governor risked his life in the "Kate." He (Mr. Douglas) had some doubt as to the responsibility he incurred in advising His Excellency to do so, and he would not undertake it again. He did not think the Governor should be asked to go to sea in the "Kate," and if he went up north the expense would be much more than £500.

Mr. BAILEY objected to the item, because when the Bill was passed, in times of prosperity, increasing the Governor's salary, it was on the understanding that it should cover all these extra sums; but they were still asked for. He maintained that they had no right to be liberal with other people's money—to play ducks and drakes with the money of the taxpayers of the colony. These visits of the Governor reminded him of an old Scotchman who was always glad to see him when he paid his own expenses; and he believed that when the Governor went up north the people would be very much more pleased to see him if he paid expenses out of his £5,000, instead of the country being taxed another £1,000 for that purpose. At any rate, he should object very strongly to the item, and divide the Committee upon it.

Mr. STUBBLEY said he did not agree with the remarks of the hon. member in reference to the northern districts, as he believed those districts would be glad to pay more than £500 if the Governor would visit them. There was a motion on the paper by the hon. member for Bowen for separation of the northern part from the southern part of the colony, and the people in the north would now see that they would have to begin by paying a Governor £7,000 a year,

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said he was rather amused at the hon. member (Mr. Rutledge) saying he had too high an opinion of His Excellency the Governor to think he would send in vouchers for money which was not expended, but he (Mr. Macfarlane) should like to know something about the sum of £500 which was voted last year. He did not know whether the services for which that money was voted had been rendered, and even in the case of a Governor proper vouchers ought to be sent in. It was not only this £500 for travelling expenses that the Committee had to consider, but there was another £500 for uniforms, &c.; and he contended that as an increase of £1,000 had been made to the salary of the Governor not so long ago, that should be borne in mind when voting this money for expenses. It had been said that the same sum had been granted in former years, but that was no reason why that Committee should vote money in a slipshod way, unless there was an understanding that it was really required. It had also been said that tours of inspection might be made without the public being aware of them, but it was the first time he had heard of a Governor making visits in a hole-and-corner way. However, he was not averse to the money being voted, as the Committee should not begrudge the money if it was required; at the same time, he held the opinion expressed by the hon. member for Wide Bay, that if the £500 voted last year was not expended it should be made available for this year, and on that ground he should support the amendment.

Mr. BEOR said it was a most extraordinary proposition on the part of the hon. member for Wide Bay, that they should give the Governor a salary with one hand and take it away in the form of expenses with the other. He should be very sorry indeed to see the vote interfered with, because as a northern member he could say that it was a grievance in some northern towns that they never saw His Excellency. So far from interfering with the vote in any way he should rather see it supplemented, in order that the Governor might travel to the northern ports, where he ought to be seen as frequently as in the southern ports.

Question—That the item of £500 be omitted—put.

The Committee divided—:

AYES, 7.

Messrs. Meston, McLean, Bailey, Grimes, Rea, Macfarlane (Ipswich), and Hendren.

NOES, 30.

Messrs. Garrick, Griffith, Dickson, Perkins, McIlwraith, Macrossan, Baynes, Rutledge, Weld-Blundell, Swanwick, Archer, Horwitz, Amhurst, Beor, Stevenson, Hill, Sheaffe, Low,

Lalor, O'Sullivan, Kellett, Simpson, Morehead, Kates, Kingsford, Stevens, Norton, Stubley, Douglas, and Palmer.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. BAILEY moved that the item of £500 for "uniforms, forage, remounts, postage, and incidentals" be reduced by the sum of £400. He thought the Government might give them some information on the subject. They might allow the sum of £100 to remain for postage, uniforms, and horses, as he supposed there were one or two men to be supplied with uniforms, which would cost £10 only, and there would be another £10 for postage. As to uniforms, he had seen one Chinese gentleman walking about Government House on the previous day, and he was certain that the coat and shoes worn by him were not made in Queensland. The item had no business there; but, as it was there, if they allowed £100 to remain that would be as much as was required.

Mr. GRIFFITH observed, by the Auditor-General's report, that this amount was drawn in full. He could not help thinking that the items were never placed on the Estimates as additions to the Governor's salary; they were placed there to cover actual expenses incurred, and not to be drawn in full at stated periods. He was therefore disposed, unless the Colonial Treasurer could tell them something about it, to support some reduction. The amount for uniforms could not be very large—probably £20 apiece would be quite sufficient. They did not find the forage of the Governor's horses or of his staff; both of these were matters of his household expenditure. Then there was forage for the aide-de-camp and private secretary. It appeared that these items had been included on the Estimates for the past five years, but he had not noticed them before. The amount to cover postage and incidentals appeared unnecessarily large, and there should be some reduction. He did not care so much what it was; but he wished it understood that this amount was not a fixed sum in addition to salary.

The PREMIER said that it was not a fixed sum; but it was one which might be reduced, but could not be exceeded. If the expenditure were not required the amounts should not be drawn. As a matter of fact, the amount had been drawn monthly, as appeared to be the custom in previous years; but he had not the slightest doubt that the intention of Parliament in putting it down was that it should only be drawn for expenses actually incurred. Vouchers had been sent down by His Excellency's officer that this expenditure had been incurred.

Mr. MOREHEAD was glad to hear the explanation. It was time they settled that His Excellency should only be entitled to draw what he actually expended on this

account. It was never intended he should draw moneys from the country for purposes for which the Committee did not vote them. They all knew perfectly well there never had been any tours of inspection by the Governor; once he went to Warwick and had a free pass, and once he went to Maryborough. The fact was they had been bamboozled by this estimate; and he had no idea the Governor had power to draw these sums of money for one purpose and spend it in another. Was the salary of the aide-de-camp drawn?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that he dared say, nevertheless, everything else had been drawn. This item certainly could not represent more than £150, yet the taxpayers of the colony had been called upon to pay £500, while the Governor pouched £350 of it, and he (Mr. Morehead) might use very strong language as to the way in which it was done. He trusted the Committee would lay down a rule, now, for the guidance of all Governors—that they would not receive these moneys in a lump sum, but on a proper voucher only. He never was more astonished than when he heard that these moneys were paid by the Treasurer on the bare voucher of someone in Government House. If they were going in for a policy of retrenchment they should commence at the head. The Governor's salary was £5,000 a-year, which was an increased amount over what it formerly was; yet they were called on to swell the Civil list in a most improper way.

Mr. KATES said that, as they had been told the Treasury was empty, and it was necessary to retrench, they should commence that retrenchment at head-quarters. He should support the reduction.

Mr. McLEAN said the reason why he voted against the previous item was because he was one of those persons who believed that vouchers ought to be sent in only for moneys actually spent; and the Committee knew perfectly well that the Governor did not last year go on any tours of inspection that would warrant the House in voting £500. He would not refuse to vote the money if there was reason to believe that His Excellency would spend the amount on the object for which it was voted; and those who had voted for the hon. member for Wide Bay's amendment had no reason to be ashamed of their action. It was the general impression throughout the country that the expenditure of the Governor as well as any other person should be limited to a certain extent. He (Mr. McLean) was inclined to think that the present motion of the hon. member (Mr. Bailey) was sweeping, and the reduction by so much as £400 was probably too much. He had just been informed by the hon. member for Maryborough that the Governor's letters did not go free

in the colony; the despatches sent home went free, but in this colony the Governor paid his own postage expenses. He should be prepared to support any reasonable reduction of the amount of the item. The House or country ought not to be called upon to pay for the forage of the aide-de-camp or private secretary. The private secretary was paid a salary, and ought to provide his own forage; and as for an aide-de-camp, there had not been one for some time. Upon that question he should be glad to be informed whether any of the £40 for aide-de-camp's forage had been drawn?

Mr. SIMPSON said he had been rather amused at the virtue displayed by the Opposition members over this matter, commencing with the leader of the Opposition. Year after year these gentlemen had passed these items without criticism, and indeed were the authors of some of them; but now they were in Opposition they took a totally different course.

Mr. McLEAN said the hon. member, if he had been in the House on previous occasions, would have known that these votes never passed without criticism, and sometimes pretty severe criticism.

The PREMIER said, in reply to the question asked him a few minutes ago, he might state that the salary of the aide-de-camp was not drawn, and he thought it very unlikely that the allowance for forage was drawn. The member for Dalby was right in saying that these items had never been criticised before, and he doubted whether any member present had ever heard a debate like the present upon them. It was a strange thing that the Opposition should take this course when it was they themselves who increased the amounts.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the Committee had a perfect right to criticise these items, but on previous occasions they had undoubtedly passed without much comment. This simply arose from the fact that His Excellency did not keep up that state which some Governors had, and he expressed his own opinion when he said that this was much to be regretted. A considerable salary was paid to the Governor as head of the State in Queensland, and it was justly expected that a certain amount of ceremonial and dignity would be imparted to all his surroundings. He did not mean to say these were the essentials of a Governor's position in any way. He gladly testified to the admirable qualities of the Governor as a Governor. His Excellency understood his business and did it, and so long as he did that perhaps they had no reason to criticise his conduct; but he (Mr. Douglas) knew that Parliament had voted these sums in the past because they generally supposed they were expended for the purposes stated; and the reason why they were now criticised was that many of



those who both respected the Governor himself and his position had viewed with some regret the fact that he did not attach to the circumstances surrounding him that importance which should belong to a Governor. He (Mr. Douglas) did not hesitate to express this, though he did not wish it to be understood that he viewed these things as important. They were not important. If the Governor chose to do what he liked with his salary he had a perfect right to do so, and he would rather a Governor did not spend £500, and be a good Governor, than spend ten times the amount and be a bad Governor. It was well known that the Governor of Queensland did his duty to the satisfaction of Her Majesty and her advisers. The amendment now before the Committee was one that he viewed with some regret, and, although he had the greatest admiration for the manner in which His Excellency had filled his position strictly as a Governor, in other respects he was sorry that he had not followed in the steps of some of his predecessors.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, while he agreed with some of the remarks of the hon. member (Mr. Douglas), he did not entirely concur with them. The House voted a large sum of money with the fixed intention that a considerable amount should be spent in hospitalities and other essentials of the position. He maintained that a certain amount of the salary voted to the Governor should be dispensed in hospitality, and he was glad to hear the hon. member tell the Committee, what was well known outside, that the present Governor, in that respect, did not come up to the measure of his predecessors. Even if that were not the case, this was the time to criticise minutely every item of expenditure. The colony was getting deeper and deeper into debt, and the revenue was falling off, and if the Committee were to pass over this important item in silence, how could they honestly criticise in detail the items that were to come afterwards? It was said by one hon. member that, although the Governor's letters home were franked, yet he had to pay for his correspondence in the colony, and the cost of that correspondence was set down as a chief item in this sum of £500. Supposing the Governor sent half-ounce letters, he would have to write 6,000 a year before the postage on them cost him £50; if he wrote fourpenny letters the number would be 3,000; and, supposing they split the difference and made it 4,500, the cost for postage would only be £50. What was the use of saying that this item of postage was an element of cost to the Governor for the time being? The whole estimate was a monstrous one, and ought to be cut down. The colony was paying a great deal too much for Government. Queensland was positively a Republic, and

the Governor was simply the ornamental head of the State; and if he got his quiet £5,000 a year and a good Government House, and his £300 for a private residence, and his free-pass on the railway, and his goods duty free, and many other luxuries, he had got a very good billet. The sum ought to be narrowed down to the exact amount in which the Governor was out of pocket. It appeared that this was not the case, and that they were asked to pay large sums of money for one purpose which were devoted to another.

Mr. BAYNES said that, with our population of 220,000, the amount asked for represented just a halfpenny per head, and, in order to prevent the haggling, he would willingly pay his halfpenny—and as he had a household of twelve, his sixpence, in order to preserve the reputation of the colony. He denied that Queensland was a Republic, or anything like it. All Queenslanders were true loyal citizens. He should always support the Government when they went in for retrenchment, and he hoped to see them soon bringing in a measure to reduce their own salaries by one-half; but he objected to this disgraceful haggling over the Governor's allowances, and, to preserve the credit and reputation of the colony, would magnanimously pay his sixpence instead of halfpenny at the end of the year.

Mr. REA said hon. members were specially called upon to remember the words with which His Excellency opened Parliament—namely, that they should attend specially to the retrenchment of their expenditure. The argument of the hon. member for the Burnett, he was sure, would not go down with that hon. member's constituents. Such an argument was pure balderdash, and if applied to every £500 asked for would soon land the colony in a state of insolvency. The Government, in their retrenchment policy, ought to have begun with themselves instead of with the labourers, and then have gone on to the Governor. The extravagance of former Governments had nothing to do with the question now before the Committee.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he approved of the sentiments of the hon. member for Burnett, and utterly disclaimed for the colony the designation of a Republic. When younger he used to cherish Republican and radical ideas, but the older he grew and the more he studied constitutional questions the more convinced he became that the Constitution under which they lived was the most perfect on the face of the earth. They ought to carefully guard themselves against making rash comments on the character, conduct, or expenditure of the representative of the Queen. They were degrading the Governor in the estimation of the colony by going into details in this critical, analytical way;—a bare

statement of reasons why the sum was considered too large would be quite sufficient. He did not think His Excellency suffered by comparison with his immediate predecessor in this respect. The only difference he could see between them was that one kept a carriage while the other did not. They ought to be thankful that they had a Governor to whom they could look up, and to whom they could point as an example for their children. He would far rather pay a large salary to a Governor who was publicly and privately like Sir Arthur Kennedy than give a pittance to a Governor who would scatter his gifts in all directions and whose private character was not graced by those virtues which ought to be found in the representative of the Queen.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that as custodians of the public purse they had a right to inquire into all expenditure, no matter how good the person was. Good reason had been given why this particular item should be discussed, for it was shown that the money was drawn for the purpose for which it was voted and spent for another. It was all very well for the hon. member for Enoggera to get up and do a little highfalutin' about patriotism, for the colony, and even England itself, were Republics with a very thin skin over them. Indeed, England, he considered, possessed the purest system of Republicanism that existed; it had, like the colonies, an ornamental figure-head, but if the conduct of that ornamental figure-head did not please the masses of the people it would soon tumble down. He hoped the Government would accede to a moderate reduction, say £250, so as not to prolong the discussion.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said, in reply to the hon. member for Mitchell, that the Queen was not subject to the will of the people, because she held her throne by right of succession. Nor was it true to say that the country he belonged to had attempted to dethrone Her Majesty: he defied anyone to produce a single instance of that kind in the history of Ireland to prove such an assertion.

Mr. BAILEY said they were not there to discuss Republicanism, but, on the part of the taxpayers of the colony, to say how the taxes should be expended—properly or extravagantly. He had moved that the amount, being excessive, should be reduced.

Question—That the amount be reduced by £400—put and negatived.

Mr. BAILEY moved that the item be reduced by £250. He had been told by several hon. members that they would consider £250 a fair amount for the purpose.

Mr. KINGSFORD said he should oppose the amendment, as it looked like cheese-paring. Not a farthing more than the Governor actually spent need be paid; and this amendment was almost a reflec-

tion on the Governor that he was likely to tamper with the amount. A case had occurred in which a voucher was sent into the Treasury and payment refused. If the Governor did not travel the Treasury was not bound to pay.

Mr. DICKSON, in answer to the last speaker, said the amounts were paid upon voucher coming from the Governor's establishment and signed by the secretary. Hon. members were aware that the Governor's expenditure was exempt from detailed audit, and therefore the Treasurer was bound to pay a duly-signed voucher if he had money sufficient for that particular vote. This case was not on a par with votes that were audited in detail by the Auditor-General.

Mr. KELLETT said, from the information given to the Committee, it appeared to be an understood thing that whatever money was voted should be paid. If the Governor understood that those amounts were not to be paid in a lump sum, he (Mr. Kellett) was quite certain that he would not sign any voucher for them. It had apparently been an understood thing that the Governor should sign vouchers for these amounts in the same way that he signed vouchers for his salary.

Mr. REA said from all he could gather it appeared that if they put down £1,000 the whole amount would be expended—they would never want for a voucher. When extravagance in Victoria was at a great height a friend of his from South Australia drew a contrast between the expenditure in those two colonies, more especially in the item of mounted police. In Adelaide the horses were in better condition, and the whole establishment was in better order, though the service had not cost the twentieth part of the same service in Victoria. His friend attributed the difference to the economy that had been practiced since the Governor's drafts had been dishonoured in London. He said the beds of the horses were of sawdust, and were better than the straw beds of the horses in Victoria. On this occasion, when farmers' produce was so much reduced in value, he (Mr. Rea) was confident that £1 would now go as far as £2 would previously, and therefore the allowance formerly made might be very well reduced.

Mr. SWANWICK said the hon. member might have spared the Committee a great deal of what he had said about beds, as the question related to forage and expenses in connection with Government House. He had advocated a policy of retrenchment, and in this matter he should vote that the sum be reduced by £250. If it had been stated that had it been made known to His Excellency that the wish of the Committee was that the money should not be paid except as per voucher, a great deal of the expenditure would not have been in-

curred. The best way to get a knowledge of that kind known would be to put the matter on record in such a way as could not be mistaken. He should therefore support the proposition of the hon. member for Wide Bay.

Mr. GRIMES said it was his intention to vote on the side of economy. The hon. member for Burnett had expressed a fear that the debate would damage the credit of the colony in the home market, but he thought money-lenders would be more ready to lend money when they saw it was not lavishly expended. The hon. member had also expressed his willingness to pay his halfpenny; but, if every man, woman, and child were in as prosperous a condition as the hon. member, the subject would not have been discussed at all.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was quite as jealous of the reputation of the colony as the hon. member for the Burnett, and he would be glad to vote money if sure it would be spent in the way they were led to believe; but he did not believe in being cajoled into voting money under false pretences. It was perfectly well known that nothing would be said about only paying what was actually expended. He had no hesitation in saying—notwithstanding his respect for the Governor—that he had seen the Governor, with a guard of honour composed of Volunteers who paid for their own uniforms, turn out in a manner that was almost disrespectful to the people of the colony.

Mr. BAYNES said he must still maintain that they were depreciating the credit of the colony. The idea of the hon. member for Normanby using the word "cajole" in connection with the Governor was shameful. If such statements found their way to the London Stock Exchange they would certainly damage the credit of the colony.

Mr. MESTON said the hon. member for the Burnett told them that the reputation of the colony was in their hands; but he (Mr. Meston) would tell him that the money of the colony was in their hands, and the duty they owed to the country was to see that it was not squandered. The hon. member for Enoggera told them that he was going to take His Excellency as a model for his children. He (Mr. Meston) intended to take the hon. member for the Mitchell as a model for his children. The hon. member for the Burnett was dreadfully afraid of anything of a Republican nature. Did he think there was a Republican spirit breathed from the hon. member for Mitchell? Did he see another Robespierre, with the guillotine, and perhaps the hon. member for the Burnett's own neck in danger?—and did he picture him in his bath with a Queensland Charlotte Corday entering on tragic intent? He (Mr. Meston) agreed with the hon. member for Wide Bay that the amount should be reduced by

£400, but, as there was now no choice, he should be very happy to vote that the sum be reduced by £250.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL was understood to say that anybody reading their debates would imagine that they had as head of the colony a man who sent in false vouchers. Hon. members surely must be aware that in matters of this sort the Governor simply followed what was the custom;—in some places the custom was to send in claims every month for these allowances; in others it was usual to send in vouchers for the particular heads of expenditure, to defray expenses actually incurred; and, doubtless, if his Excellency learnt that it was the wish here that the latter practice should be followed, he would comply. So long as it had been the practice to draw a certain sum every month, and no exception was taken, it would probably be carried out.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he was sure the hon. member for Clermont was under a misapprehension as regarded his opening remarks. No doubt there had been a practice of this kind, and it had arisen inadvertently. He was not aware of it until about six months ago, and he then resolved to have it discussed on the first opportunity. No blame was imputed, or intended to be imputed, to anybody.

Mr. HENDREN said if, from the amount of £500 down for uniforms, forage, postage, the latter item were withdrawn, the matter would be brought into a small compass. He fully concurred with the amendment.

Mr. REA said the item under discussion was as big now as during the highest time of prosperity; and, therefore, if they were going in for retrenchment, now was the proper time to initiate it.

Question—That the item objected to be reduced by £250—put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 20.

Messrs. Dickson, Rea, McLean, Bailey, Morehead, Rutledge, Meston, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Griffith, Grimes, Hendren, Davenport, Swanwick, Horwitz, Beor, Lalor, Stevenson, Kates, Hill, and Garrick.

NOES, 18.

Messrs. Macrossan, McIlwraith, Perkins, Baynes, Cooper, Weld - Blundell, Douglas, Stubley, Sheaffe, Simpson, Kellett, O'Sullivan, Low, Kingsford, Stevens, Norton, A. H. Palmer, and Amhurst.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. BAILEY moved that the item be further reduced by the amount of £300, for rent of country residence.

The PREMIER said this amount had been spent by His Excellency.

Mr. GRIFFITH did not think £300 was extravagant for a country residence, but

wished to know whether the amount was drawn as a fixed allowance irrespective of the amount paid for rent?

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman ought to know more about the matter than he (Mr. McIlwraith). He did not think the money had been paid unless the expense had been actually incurred.

Mr. STUBLEY did not consider £300 at all an unreasonable price for a country residence, and should vote for it. The only difficulty to his mind was whether they should provide two residences for the Governor.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said they must have a country residence for his Excellency, as he could not live in Brisbane during the summer months. More than the amount voted last year was spent upon the residence at Toowoomba.

Mr. GRIFFITH would again ask whether the amount was paid as a fixed allowance or for expenses actually incurred? He doubted very much whether £300 was paid for rent of a country residence last year, though no doubt it was spent in other ways connected with it.

Mr. MCLEAN thought it was absolutely necessary that the Governor should have some other place than Government House to reside in during the summer months. He could say that he saw a candle in Government House which had been in a bedroom all night, and on being brought down stairs it was doubled right over and hanging down the side of the candlestick. Government House was too hot for anyone to live in during the summer months.

Mr. MESTON thought they were called upon to pay rather too much. They were asked to pay for postage stamps, travelling expenses, rent, and, in addition to that, all the goods imported by the Governor were imported duty free. There was another matter he would mention, with reference to the Chinese in the service of His Excellency, and that was that they were getting opium into the colony duty free and reselling it to other Chinamen in Brisbane. He believed in a few days he could place himself in a position to prove this to the satisfaction of the House, and that was the reason why he mentioned it to-night. It was a matter requiring serious attention.

Mr. KINGSFORD contended that because Government House cost £25,000 was no reason why the Governor should be compelled to reside there during the summer months, and smother or die there from excessive heat.

Mr. DAVENPORT thought that, considering the trying nature of the summer in Brisbane, they should not object to granting His Excellency sufficient to provide a country residence.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he was rather amused at the story of the hon. member for Logan about the candle that went into a consump-

tion in consequence of the heat; but he must say that he should not object to live in Government House. He thought he could succeed in living there and maintaining his health, notwithstanding the bad character that had been attributed to Government House. But Government House had lately gone through a process of sanitation, and was, he believed, one of the healthiest places in Queensland. However, he thought it very desirable that the Governor should have a country residence, and he would go so far as to build something like a more permanent residence at Toowoomba, at a cost of, perhaps, £2,000 or £3,000. This, however, was the more economical way of proceeding, and it was a very reasonable claim that might be made by any Governor. He deprecated any statement as to the unhealthiness of Brisbane in summer. With proper sanitary precautions, he believed it could be made quite as healthy as any part of Queensland.

Mr. MOREHEAD agreed with a good deal that had been said by the hon. member who had just sat down, and thought that they should not provide too many luxuries for Governors, because, in his opinion, this colony was entitled to a young Governor, a man full of health and strength. He did not think they should be bound to find a sanatorium in summer for elderly gentlemen who were not able to stand the roughness of our summer months. They paid a very large salary, and they did not expect that a Governor who might or might not be worn out—he was not alluding to the present Governor in any way—should be sent out here; and if they made their Governors too comfortable that might be the result. The action of Parliament in fixing the salary of the Governor at an amount which would entitle him to retire upon pension as a first-class Governor might cut in two ways—it might lead to their getting a good young man or a good old man, but he thought it would be much better if they had a young man who was able to travel about the colony, and go everywhere and see everything, instead of remaining simply in the metropolis. These were substantial reasons why they should not make their Governors too comfortable, but at the same time he was not going to vote against this sum for a summer residence; but, when the time came that they had a younger man as Governor, he would oppose it. The hon. member for Rosewood (Mr. Meston) had made a very serious charge or statement, which he was sure that hon. member would not make unless he was sure that it could be borne out by facts, that a considerable amount of opium was imported into the colony under pretence of belonging to the Governor, or being imported for his staff, and that that opium

had been sold to other Chinamen and no duty paid. He hoped some steps would be taken to find out if this were really the case. He thought if the Governor kept European servants that difficulty would be got over at once, and they would hear nothing about the surreptitious reception of opium, which he believed to have taken place, as stated by the hon. member.

Mr. SWANWICK said, after what had fallen from the hon. member for Logan (Mr. McLean), Government House would become famous as the house in which candles coming down stairs turned over. He agreed with a good deal that had fallen from the last speaker; and believed that if His Excellency dispensed with his Chinese servants he would be a great deal more popular with all classes of the community.

Mr. STEVENSON liked to be consistent in his ideas of retrenchment, and, although he could not support the amendment to the full extent, he would do so to a certain extent on the same principle that he did the last vote. He knew no house in the colony for which £300 would have to be paid for four, five, or even six months of the year, and therefore he objected to that amount being voted, but he would not object to the Governor having a change for Brisbane for a few months and being allowed a reasonable sum for it.

Mr. RUTLEDGE was sorry that some hon. members seemed to be so determined about retrenchment in Government House. Comparing our expenses for that purpose with the expenses of the other colonies they were not excessive, and he believed such discussions as these would have the effect of bringing the colony into discredit in the estimation of future Governors or proposed Governors. The result would be that they would have sent here all the rag-tag-and-bob-tail of Governordom, and the colony would be depreciated in the estimation of Imperial officers worthy of the position of Governor, and they would not come here. Some hon. members seemed to think that £5,000 a year was a princely income for a Governor; but what was that to a man who had been enjoying the luxuries of English life? A man in some positions at home with £5,000 a year was a poor man. Many men in the colony made much more than £5,000 a year; and they ought to be above haggling over £300 a year for a summer residence. In his opinion they did not want a young Governor here, who might plunge the country into disaster, but a wise and experienced man. With reference to the Chinese question, everybody knew that he was one of the strongest anti-Chinese advocates in the colony; but he thought they were exceeding their functions by criticising the personal establishment of the Governor. Although he was strongly opposed to Chinese, he should never presume to say anything

about the private affairs of the Governor. The Governor did not take these servants from choice; but he had been living so long in a colony where he had been surrounded by Chinese almost exclusively that these men had become so attached to his person—they were like other Asiatics, so intense in their devotion that they would, from mere attachment, follow him all round the world. He thought they were wrong in interfering with the domestic affairs of the Governor.

Mr. SWANWICK pointed out that £5,000 was as large a salary as was paid to the head of Her Majesty's Government, Lord Beaconsfield, who filled a much more important office than the Governor here. As the hon. member had advocated this large salary not being cut down so that they might invite to the colony very able men, he would ask him to look back to the two last Governors they had had, who had not been such very able men, and who, he believed—at any rate, the present Governor had come to us from a Crown colony, and they ought not to have such men sent to preside over a free people such as they were in this colony.

Mr. REA said the member for Enoggera appeared to forget that a former Governor, Sir George Bowen, was very glad to come to this colony at a salary of £2,500, and he remembered the time in other colonies when they had far abler men than our late Governors at a far less salary.

Mr. BAYNES said in Victoria, which was the most democratic colony, they were paying just double what was paid to the Governor of this colony. In Victoria they paid £10,000, in New South Wales £7,000, and in South Australia £5,000. There were only two colonies in the whole group that were paying less than this colony was paying. He considered that Queensland should aspire to become a first-class colony, and not a second-rate colony, in the whole group. He believed the hon. member for the Mitchell was not serious when he said he should like to see a young man as Governor in this colony; for his part, he (Mr. Baynes) would rather see a gentleman of mature experience and judgment. He should oppose any reduction of the vote.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that mature judgment did not always follow with gray hairs. He fancied that William Pitt was about one-third of the age of the hon. member when he rose to eminence, and at the age of thirty he was Prime Minister of Great Britain. In reply to the remarks of the member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge), he would refer the hon. member to the parting speech of the present Governor on leaving Hongkong; if, after reading that, the hon. member retained his present opinion, he (Mr. Morehead) should be very much astonished.

Mr. REA said if the hon. member for the Burnett referred to the salary paid to the Governor of Victoria when that colony had a similar population to that of Queensland, he would find that the salary was one-half that now paid to the Governor of Queensland.

Mr. BAILEY said he was not going into the question of whether this Governor was the best we could get or not; but all he wanted to know was, whether the Government was prepared to pay the amount whether the expenditure was actually incurred or not?

Mr. DAVENPORT wished to explain that the Governor could not hire a house in Toowoomba for a few months only of the size that he required, but had to lease it for some time; in fact, there were very few residences available at Toowoomba large enough for His Excellency and his visitors and officers.

Mr. HENDREN said, in reference to the statements made by the member for Rosewood and the member for Mitchell, respecting the importation of opium by the Chinese servants of His Excellency, that some time ago he moved for a return of all dutiable goods imported free of duty for the use of His Excellency, and that opium did not appear in that return. Therefore, that return could not have been a full one if the statements made that evening were correct, and he believed they were. He should like to know whether what had been stated was correct or not, as it was objectionable to the colony that the Governor should not only engage Chinese servants, but that they should be allowed to import opium free of duty.

The PREMIER said the hon. member, some time ago, moved for a return of dutiable articles imported into the colony duty free for the use of the Governor, and it was the duty of the Collector of Customs to furnish that return. He remembered speaking to the Collector, and his saying that he considered it covered all goods imported for the use of His Excellency. If that was the case—and he (the Premier) believed it was so—there had been no opium imported for His Excellency. It was a great pity that the statement of the member for Rosewood should have been made when there was, so far as he (the Premier) could ascertain, no foundation whatever for it.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. members for Enoggera and Burnett had compared the salary paid to the present Governor with the salaries paid to Governors in other colonies; but it was not a matter of salary at all that the Committee were discussing. If it was he should have discussed it on its merits. There were a great many of the Government supporters who, like himself, were determined to go in for a policy of retrenchment rather than of taxation,

and he did not see why the policy of retrenchment should not hold as good when dealing with the expenditure of the Governor as with that of any Civil Servant. If the whole £300 was wanted to pay for a summer residence he should be willing to vote it, but he believed the Governor could get a very good house for half the money.

Mr. MESTON said, in reference to the remarks of the Premier, that the returns made by the Collector of Customs did not include any opium, and that therefore there was no foundation for the charge he (Mr. Meston) had made, he might state that a Chinaman employed by the Governor told a friend of his (Mr. Meston) that he was in the habit of selling opium to the Chinese residents in the town. That was *prima facie* in support of the statement he had made, as it was not likely that the Governor's servants could import opium at such a price as to enable them to sell it to the Chinese residents at a price below that charged by ordinary importers. He believed he should be able to show in a few days that the Chinese servants of the Governor had sold opium at a price utterly below that they could have sold it at if duty had been paid. In making his remarks he was not wanting in respect to the Governor or in allegiance to Her Majesty, but, whilst he regretted having had to say many things he had said that evening, he considered it had been his duty to do so, and if necessary he should repeat them.

Question put and negatived.

Mr. MESTON said it would be useless to move for a reduction of the item of £300, as he believed that that sum was actually paid. He was acquainted with the owner of the house rented by the Governor at Toowoomba, and that gentleman had been compelled to rent another house for a year.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked whether the £300 was to be treated in the same way as other contingencies?

The PREMIER said he did not quite understand the hon. member. If His Excellency sent down vouchers for any sum they would be paid by the Treasury as long as the vote was not exceeded.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that if any gentleman occupying the high position of His Excellency understood that a sum was voted for actual expenditure only he would send down vouchers accordingly. But he (Mr. Griffith) wished to know whether vouchers in this case were to be sent down for actual disbursement only? He hoped it was distinctly understood that the vote was to only cover disbursements actually made for rent.

The PREMIER said that was the meaning always attached to it. The Governor would not have sent down the vouchers unless the expenditure had been incurred.

Question—That £1,390 be voted for the service of His Excellency the Governor—put and passed.

The following sums were voted:—£689 for the service of the Executive Council; £3,450 for the service of the Legislative Council; £5,613 for the service of the Legislative Assembly.

The PREMIER moved that a sum not exceeding £3,017 be voted for the service of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly.

Mr. SIMPSON wished some information in reference to the item for the Refreshment-room. They had heard so much about retrenchment that they might as well cut down this item. He could get a meal in the Refreshment-room for 1s. which he could not get anywhere else for 2s. 6d.; and he did not see why, if they were going in for retrenchment, they should not give the odd 1s. 6d. themselves.

Mr. GRIFFITH said there was a large increase in the item for waiters and contingencies in the last few years: it was now £824, and in 1874 it was only £375.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It appeared on the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. GRIFFITH said there were now 55 members—13 more than in 1874, and about 15 of the other House would be a full average. He did not know how the money went.

The PREMIER thought one of the members of the Refreshment-room Committee would have been present to go into particulars. All the waiters were paid by Government; the cook was paid; and there was a shilling allowed for each meal supplied in addition to the shilling paid by the member.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and, on the motion of the PREMIER, adjourned at twelve minutes past 10 o'clock.