Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 31 JULY 1879

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 31 *July*, 1879.

Petitions. — Questions. — Motion for Adjournment. — Supply.

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

PETITIONS.

Mr. DICKSON presented a petition from Nehemiah Bartley, complaining of injustice he had suffered by the resumption of certain lands for road purposes, and asking for relief.

Petition received.

Mr. MOREHEAD presented a petition from residents of Cleveland and district, praying for the reservation of certain lands at Cleveland for the purposes of an Esplanade.

Petition received and read.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. HENDREN asked the Minister for Lands—

1. Is it the intention of the Government to throw open to selection by Conditional Purchase, and as Homestead Areas, the Unalienated Lands in East and West Moreton, including the land surveyed in large blocks and not sold, as also the lands under Pastoral Lease (whether the leases of same may have been sold for five years or not) in the two districts above-mentioned?

2. If it is the intention of the Government to throw the above-mentioned lands open for selection, when may prompt action be expected to be taken in this respect?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) replied—

1. The Government are prepared to throw open to selection any lands which are required for purposes of settlement, whether they are under lease or otherwise; but the lands which have been surveyed under the direction of the late Ministry, for sale by auction, in East and West Moreton, will be specially dealt with.

2. The answer to No. 1 is also a reply to the second query.

The Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH asked the Premier—

1. Is it the intention of the Colonial Treasurer to make any further Financial Statement with reference to the Loan Estimates lately submitted to this House?

2. If so, when does he propose to make such statement?

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) replied—

1. Yes; of course.

2. Next week, if possible.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. DICKSON rose to make an explanation in connection with the debate on the Government banking account on the previous day, and would conclude with a

motion. He deemed it better to make the explanation in this way than to make it when the motion for going into Committee of Supply was before the House, as he had no desire to re-open the debate on the banking question. He was, however, constrained to notice a comment made by the Colonial Treasurer in regard to certain statements made by him (Mr. Dickson) last night. The comment was made in replying to his (Mr. Dickson's) criticisms on an exchange operation taking place on July 10, when he told the House it had come to his knowledge that these exchanges were purchased at 5s. per cent. discount, and were afterwards re-sold to other banks at 5s. per cent. premium. In commenting on that statement, the Colonial Treasurer spoke as follows:—

"As to the assertion which was made by the hon. member for Enoggera, that this same exchange was afterwards sold by the Queensland National Bank at a profit in the town, it was completely false. From his knowledge of the transaction it was not a rosy thing for the National Bank to be offered the £100,000 on the same terms as were refused by the Union Bank. They declined, and said they could not afford to give it, but, two or three days after, during which they had telegraphed to Melbourne and Sydney, they said they would buy £20,000 of that exchange. Two or three days after they came again, and made an offer for £25,000 more, and, after that, for £30,000, making up the whole of the £75,000. Every penny of the amount of exchange was sold, and they had issued the documents to the Under Colonial Treasurer before they got his (Mr. McIlwraith's) notice. There was not one penny sold in the market for profit as the hon. member (Mr. Dickson) had stated."

At the time the Colonial Treasurer made that statement he (Mr. Dickson) took no exception to what he conceived was unnecessarily offensive language in saying that the statement he had made was completely false, and he would not have noticed the matter now had he not desired to show that he was not in the habit of making random statements in the House. Before he made a deliberate statement such as he had, he always endeavoured first to investigate its accuracy, and he would not put forward anything he did not believe to be true. As an honourable man, therefore, when he had been met with a contradiction by the Premier, he considered it his duty to immediately investigate the matter, and, if inaccurate, to distinctly state to the House he had made an inadvertent representation or prove that it was true. After what had occurred he determined to make himself fully acquainted with the whole of the circumstances of the case, and the first thing he did the next morning was to address a circular notice to the different bank managers in the city, omitting, of course, the National Bank, requesting to know if they could of their personal knowledge give him (Mr. Dickson) any confirmation of the truth of what he had said in the House. The circular read as follows:—

"Brisbane, 31st July, 1879.

"To the Manager of ————

"DEAR SIR,—Before entering on the banking debate in Parliament yesterday I received information that certain banks in this city had purchased from the Queensland National Bank portions of the exchange operations on London made by the Treasury on 10th July instant, and sold by the Treasury to the Queensland National Bank at 5s. per cent. discount. I also learned that the banks so purchasing paid the Queensland National Bank as high as 5s. per cent. premium therefor. The Colonial Treasurer denied this statement in the House. As one of the banks doing business in Brisbane, have you any objection to inform me if you have had any personal knowledge of the exchange above referred to, issued by the Treasury on 10th July in three sums of £30,000, £25,000, and £20,000 —sixty-days' sight drafts respectively? You will, of course, understand that I claim the right, if necessary, to make use in Parliament of your reply.

"Yours faithfully,

"JAMES R. DICKSON."

Up to the present time he had only received one answer, but that was sufficient for the purpose of substantiating what he had said. It was from the manager of the Bank of Australasia, and ran as follows:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter of this date, I have no objection to state for your information, that on the 10th instant I purchased from the Queensland National Bank a draft of the Colonial Treasurer on London, at sixty days' sight, for the sum of £25,000, drawn by him in that bank's favour, and I paid them a premium of five shillings per cent. on same.

"Yours faithfully,

"J. B. DIXON."

He (Mr. Dickson) saw the difficulty in which he was placed by the denial of the Colonial Treasurer, because, had the Queensland National Bank sold their own draft on London, it would have been impossible for him to have identified the transaction to the extent that this letter enabled him to do—to show that, whereas the draft of the Colonial Treasurer on London was sold by the Treasurer to the Queensland National Bank at 5 per cent. discount, it was re-sold to the Bank of Australasia at 5s. per cent. premium; thus completely substantiating the statement he had made at the previous sitting. He had produced ample vindication of his accuracy, but he had no wish to enter into the general merits of the transaction beyond referring to what he contended was a want of discretion in the Colonial Treasurer in placing his exchange.

The PREMIER said, in reply to the hon. member, that he made the statement referred to on the authority of the manager of the Queensland National Bank, and he had not the slightest doubt but that it was true. It was certainly curious that the same statement which had been read to the House by the hon. member just now had been handed to him (Mr. McIlwraith) by the Auditor-General, and there really seemed to be a nice little combination amongst the bank managers, the Auditor-General, and the member for Enoggera. They had all the facts at their fingers' ends, and those facts had been placed before him by the Auditor-General. He had taken steps to find out whether they were correct or not, and as soon as he succeeded he would lay the particulars before the House. He did not believe that the statement which the hon. gentleman had just made impugned, in the least, the statement he (Mr. McIlwraith) made to the House last night. The manager of the Queensland National Bank was a man of truth and honour, and the last man in the country to state anything which was not true, and he believed he would be able to substantiate all he had told him (Mr. McIlwraith) in spite of what the hon. member had said.

Mr. MILES said they had got into a deplorable position through the Queensland National Bank, and he asked the political directors of that institution whether it would not be better for them to resign their positions, or cancel the agreement, rather than see hon. members come to the House, day after day, to discuss the bank. He was not at all surprised at the debate which had taken place. All the bank's directors were political directors; one of them was a director with a seat in the Government, and the Colonial Treasurer, if not his co-director, was at any rate a shareholder, and he could not be surprised at the business time of the House being taken up, day after day, in discussing this wretched affair of the Queensland Bank. The hon. gentlemen complained of not being able to get on with the business of the country. If they wished to get on, the best thing they could do would be for these political directors to disconnect themselves with the bank: if they would not do that, then cancel the agreement. The question would take up the whole of the time of the House, and it would be continually cropping up. It was well known that the bank was one of the greatest political institutions in the colony. At the time of the general election it brought pressure to bear on those constituents who had over-drafts, and, in fact, it was a political job, and nothing short of it. He was glad the hon. member for Maryborough had spoken so boldly. It was a most unusual course of proceeding to see the Colonial Secretary, who was a director of the bank and a member of the Government, sitting in the Council and accepting the tender of the bank, of which he was a director, for the banking business of the Government. It was an unprecedented thing. The Minister for Works had introduced the case of the Treasurer of New South Wales being a bank director, but the cases were not parallel, for the Treasurer of New South Wales was not a director of the bank with which the Government did business. A more barefaced transaction than the one they had discussed last night he had never witnessed. The Government were hardly in their seats before they rushed to deprive the Union Bank of the Government business, and give it to a bank they were interested in themselves. That was as barefaced a thing as he had ever heard of. The result was that the Government account was now held by a bank of limited liability, while the other banks were institutions of large paid-up capital and unlimited liability, and consequently far safer places for the deposit of Government funds than institutions where the shareholders were only responsible for the amount of their shares. He hoped the House would feel it their duty to pursue such a course as would get rid of these political directors. The local proprietary would if they could, but it was the outside shareholders in the other colonies who sent in their proxies and elected these directors in rotation just as they thought proper. Take the whole history of the bank: one director retired and another succeeded him in the same interest, and, in short, they were just following in the footsteps of the City of Glasgow Bank. They took good care no stranger ever came in who would be likely to throw any light on their transactions. They would have one of their own ring in, even if they had to buy shares to qualify him for the position, so that their plots might not be discovered. The entire management of the bank was kept within three or four hands. When Mr. Buchanan went home he was succeeded by the hon. member for Mitchell, and at the next shuffle of the cards, when the Premier accepted office as Colonial Treasurer, his place was taken by the Colonial Secretary. The country was getting thoroughly roused and dissatisfied on this question, and in the interests of the public he would suggest that either the contract should be cancelled or the members of the Ministry should retire from the directory of the bank.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had not intended to speak on this question, but when he and his fellow directors of the Queensland National Bank had been compared by the hon. member for Darling Downs with the directors of the City of Glasgow Bank, he would be less than human to sit silent

longer. He and his fellow directors were not responsible to the hon. member; they were not put into office by him, nor was this the place to defend them. Indeed, the speech of the hon. member was the most discreditable exhibition ever seen here, save and except that made by the hon. member for Maryborough last night. He (Mr. Morehead) did not know what he had done—he was not a member of the Ministry—to deserve the strictures that had been passed upon him and the other directors of the bank. The hon. member had stated that politics were carried into the bank parlour, and he (Mr. Morehead) would give that statement a most unqualified denial. A man did not sink his individuality when he became a bank director; and it did not follow because he sat on the opposite side to the hon. member for Darling Downs that he was a less honest man or less capable of dealing with business as a bank director. Unless the hon. member could substantiate some charge—which he could not—he would act more judiciously in abstaining from remarks like those he had just made, because, in making these attacks on the directors of the bank, he was not injuring them but the whole body of the shareholders of that bank, by shaking public confidence in the institution. However high his envenomed spleen might rise against the directors, the hon. member had no right to diminish the value of property held by men who had nothing to do with the question at issue. The directors were quite willing to submit their actions to the proper tribunal—the shareholders; but he, on behalf of himself and his fellow directors, utterly denied the right of the hon. member for Darling Downs to sit in judgment upon their mode of managing an institution in which he was in no way concerned. If the hon. member was concerned in it, let him bring his charges before a meeting of the shareholders, for this was not the proper tribunal where the question should be tried.

Mr. Rea said it was monstrous that an attempt should be made to muzzle hon. members in their examination into the safety of the public funds, for they would be unworthy of their positions if they did not direct public attention to a case of favouritism unexampled in the history of this or any other colony. The hon. member for Mitchell ought to have been the last person to attempt to stifle discussion; and if the shareholders of the Queensland National Bank had been injured they had been injured by their own directors in taking part in a transaction which, when known in England, would be scouted from one end of the country to the other, because it placed the public funds in jeopardy. Would any private individual deposit half-a-million in that bank for three years? Not one; and yet millions sterling of the public funds were to be deposited there in opposition to the opinion of every commercial man in the House.

Mr. Groom said he did not rise to take part in the general discussion, but simply to reply to a remark made last night by the Minister for Works, which ought not to go uncontradicted. That hon. gentleman stated that the Colonial Treasurer of New South Wales was a bank director, and that no objection had been raised against his occupying the two positions. But there was no analogy whatever between the two cases. In New South Wales there was no such thing as a Government bank. The Bank of New South Wales had for a long time enjoyed a monopoly of the Government account — to such an extent, indeed, that they had been able to advance to the New Zealand Government a loan of a million sterling—not their own money, but capital which had been deposited with them by the Government of New South Wales. When that transaction took place the present Premier of the colony, Sir Henry Parkes, called in question the right of the then Treasurer, Mr. Stuart, to sit as a director of the Bank of New South Wales, and to lend a million sterling of the Government deposit to the New Zealand Government, and introduced a motion condemnatory of the Treasurer holding the two positions. Public opinion was almost equally divided on the question, and the motion was not pressed to a division. Warned by the action of Sir Henry Parkes on that occasion, succeeding Governments had distributed the public money amongst the various banks, and a part of it was lodged in the City Bank, of which Mr. Watson, the present Colonial Treasurer, was a director. During last session the validity of this dual position was tested by a motion that the two offices were inconsistent, and, although the motion was not carried on a division, yet it could not be said, as the Minister for Works wished to lead the House to infer last night, that the thing had been allowed to go unquestioned in N.S. Wales, because a large section of the Parliament and the whole of the Press of that colony were unanimous in their condemnation of the Colonial Treasurer being a director of the bank which dealt with even a very small portion—only £150,000—of the public account. His object in rising was to have put on record the fact, as opposed to the remark of the Minister for Works last night—that the position of Mr. Watson in N.S. Wales as Colonial Treasurer and a bank director had not been allowed to pass by the Parliament of that colony unchallenged. He hoped to have a further opportunity of addressing the House on the important debate initiated last night by the hon. member for Enoggera.

The PREMIER asked permission of the House to reply to an extraordinary statement made by the hon. member for Darling Downs—a statement like those he was in the habit of making, and which did not reflect much to his credit. The hon. member said that during the last general election the Queensland National Bank brought pressure to bear upon their constituents who happened to have overdrawn accounts. He (the Premier) was a director of the bank at that time, and gave the statement a straightforward denial. During all the years he had been a director of that bank he had never heard politics broached in connection with business, and, as a matter of principle, they were specially eschewed. He did not know of a single instance where pressure had been brought to bear against any constituent of the bank for any political purposes whatever. The whole of the directors were guiltless of using political influence; and the general manager would be dismissed at once if he attempted to do such a thing. There was no man freer from political bias one way or the other than the general manager of the bank.

Mr. MILES: I only spoke from rumour; I have no personal knowledge of it.

The PREMIER: Then it is disgraceful.

Mr. MCLEAN said there appeared a certain amount of truth in the remarks of the hon. member for Enoggera. The position was certainly a very curious one. The statement of the Premier and the manager of the Queensland National Bank was pitted against the statement of the hon. member for Enoggera and the letter of the manager of the Bank of Australasia. He wished to know whether, when the Premier had inquired into the facts, he would communicate the result to the House, so that they might know which to believe?

The PREMIER: If you had listened to what I said you would have known that I have already promised to do so.

Question of adjournment put and negatived.

SUPPLY.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House went into Committee of Supply.

Question put—That £400 be granted for the Assistant Under Colonial Secretary.

Mr. BAILEY moved, as an amendment, that the amount be reduced by £29 11s.

Mr. DICKSON asked if it was the intention of the Colonial Treasurer to accept the amendment?

Mr. SIMPSON said that, as it had been decided not to make a uniform reduction throughout the service, he should vote for the Estimates of the Government.

The PREMIER said the Government had not the slightest intention to depart from their Estimates. If a general reduction of salaries had been determined upon by them, they would themselves have embodied it in the Estimates. On the last occasion an understanding was arrived at that three divisions of the Committee would determine whether all salaries above £500 should be reduced by 10 per cent.; salaries from £300 to £500 by 7½ per cent.; and all salaries under £300 by 5 per cent. Had the Committee agreed to the three reductions the test would have been accepted; but, as the second one was lost by the casting-vote of the Chairman, the test failed, and the Estimates remained as they were brought forward. With regard to the reduction made in the first item, as many hon. members voted in favour of that reduction as a matter of test, the Government, in fairness to that officer, would on a future occasion submit to the House a proposition to reinstate his salary at the old figure. The test vote having been lost, the Committee ought to have an opportunity of reconsidering their decision on that item. He trusted the hon. member for Wide Bay did not intend to try a course of simple obstruction for the purpose of carrying his point. If the majority of the Committee decided that salaries should not be reduced, their decision was not likely to be changed by hon. members tiring out their patience for two or three days by moving the reduction of the vote shilling by shilling.

Mr. BAILEY said that if the test had been lost it had been through the Chairman having chosen on that occasion to vote for increasing instead of lessening the burdens of the people, and also the accidental absence from the House of an hon. member who voted for the first reduction. He had moved the reduction with the sincere desire to help the Government. They had proposed a course of retrenchment, and he wished to assist them to carry it out fairly. Had he not moved that small reduction some other hon. member would probably have been prepared to reduce it much more, and he wished to prevent attacks on individuals by equalising all round. It was clearly not in accordance with a policy of retrenchment to burden the people with the excessive salaries raised at the instance of a most extravagant Government in prosperous times. He was not inclined to obstruct the business of the House, but he desired to see a vote taken to ascertain whether or not the policy of retrenchment was to be carried out.

Mr. GROOM said it seemed to him that, as Artemus Ward put it, "Things were getting very much mixed." This was the first time he had heard the vote of the Chairman of Committees called into question. He considered the Chairman had given his vote conscientiously, and as any other hon. member in his place would have given it—namely, for a reconsideration of the subject, and not with a view to

increase the burdens of the people. The Chairman was, however, placed in a very peculiar position in relation to this vote. He (Mr. Groom) understood the Colonial Secretary to distinctly state, when the subject was last before the Committee, that he was prepared to take the opinion of the Committee in a moderately full House. They had a good House on that occasion, and the first reduction was carried; and, had it not been for the hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. Macfarlane) leaving, the second would also have been affirmed. It would almost appear, now, as though advantage was being taken of a thin House. He certainly understood from the debate the other evening that a majority of the Committee affirmed the principle that the Civil Servants should participate in the reduction of incomes now affecting nearly all classes of the community. One of the most strenuous advocates of reduction was the hon. member for the Gregory, who stated that he had been compelled to reduce the wages of his men, but in prosperous times would restore them. The Colonial Secretary followed, and said he would accept a test vote in a moderately full House. A division took place of twenty-three to twenty-two, which, numerically speaking, showed a very fair House. Now, in a thin House, and when some hon. members favourable to reductions were absent, the discussion was renewed. The hon. member (Mr. Dickson), who represented a large number of Civil Servants, said he trusted the Government would adhere faithfully to their Estimates. Did he mean that while all classes of the community were under depression, and the grants to public institutions had to be refused, the Committee were to continue the salaries paid during the prosperous days of the colony? He (Mr. Groom) could remember when the Colonial Secretary came down to the House and proposed a reduction of 5 per cent. all round, commencing with a reduction of £200 on his own salary, saying that when prosperous times came again the salaries would be again increased. Whatever might have been the distresses in 1866, when 300 men came down to Government House, and the Governor of the colony was ready to emb rk in the "Kate" to get away from the hoots and groans of the navvies, they were but a fleabite as compared with the present necessities of the people. There were, he knew, many deserving servants in the Service whose salaries ought not to be reduced. He would instance the Government Printer. In 1866, when the House numbered only twenty-six members, Mr. Belbridge received £600 a year. The papers then were comparatively few, and the work light. Now, when they had a House of fifty-five members, a daily *Hansard*, and an amount of papers that might be estimated from the bulky-sized documents on the table, the Government Printer received only £600 a year, the same as in 1866, notwithstanding his increased responsibilities and increased work. To apply a hard-and-fast line of reduction in that case would be manifestly unjust, and many hon. members could no doubt point to other officers equally entitled to consideration. It was just as well the Committee should come to an understanding as to the course to be adopted. If there were to be no reductions, in place of the Chairman sitting evening after evening they might take each department in a lump sum. There were some hon. members who, being afraid of their constituents, had not the courage of their opinions on this matter, and it was better that they should go to a division and let the public know who was right and who was wrong. It was no use listening to speeches *ad infinitum* with no practical result. The first of the proposed tests had been carried, the second was a "tie," and was declared negatived on the casting-vote of the Chairman. Had it not been for the absence of the hon. member for Ipswich, and he believed the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates), it would probably have been carried. If hon. members, a number of whose constituents were Civil Servants, were going to vote against their convictions they were unworthy to occupy seats in the House. He had among his constituents some Civil Servants, but whether they voted for him or not he considered that, as all classes—high and low, rich and poor—were obliged to live now on pinched incomes, it was only fair that the same principle should be applied to Civil Servants. This might possibly not be the proper way of introducing reductions. The proper way would, perhaps, be to introduce a Bill as was done in 1872—so as to secure to the Civil Servant what was due to him under the Civil Service Act. If Civil Servants were not to participate in the depression of the times, the Committee might say so this afternoon and make an end of it. That hon. members representing a large number of Civil Servants should take the action they had in this matter was to him the strongest argument in favour of the proposed Bill of the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan). Those hon. members, therefore, who opposed the reductions for the sake of the votes of Civil Servants were really their greatest enemies, and were taking the very best course to secure the carrying of that Bill. As far as their votes were concerned, he believed Civil Servants did not care much one way or the other, but they would not be ordinary human beings if they did not care about a matter affecting their salaries. The matter should be decided one way or the other. If there were to be no reductions, the Estimates might be proposed *in globo* and got through that

night. There was a strong disposition to get through the business in order that hon. members might put in an appearance at the Sydney Exhibition, and the best means of effecting that happy result would be to accept the decision of the Committee at once, and take the Estimates as printed. If that proposition were made and resolved in the affirmative, he should simply walk out of the House and retire to better occupations.

The PREMIER said the suggestion was a valuable one, and the adoption of that course would no doubt be beneficial. With reference to the position of the Committee, the first test had been carried, but the second had been lost; and the Committee had really affirmed that the reduction was not to take place. That was the position the Government meant to take up.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not understand the matter in that way at all. The second test vote was put, and neither carried nor negatived. There was a "tie," and under those circumstances the ordinary course for the Chairman would have been to vote for the lower sum. The Chairman would no doubt have done so but for the fact that it was a test vote, and therefore it was not right that the vote should be decided by his voice. The reason he gave was, that the matter might be left open for further discussion. The hon. member for Wide Bay was now simply bringing that vote forward for further discussion. The proposition could not be said to have been negatived, when the Chairman gave as the reason of his vote that the matter should be left open for further discussion. That was the general impression, and after the division the other night there was a good deal of discussion outside the House as to what would be the result next time. The test had not been determined, as the other two votes were yet to be considered.

The PREMIER said he differed from the hon. gentleman. The proposition was that if the three test votes were carried for reductions of 10, 7½, and 5 per cent. respectively, a reduction at those rates would be made upon the whole of the Estimates; but the 7½ per cent. reduction had not been carried, and could not possibly be carried, because £30 was 7½ per cent. on £400, and the Committee had affirmed that that reduction should not be made. It could not possibly be put again, and some fresh proposition must be made. Coming to another point the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) said the Chairman ought to have given his vote the other way, but in a question of this kind the Chairman should not be bound by the rule laid down by the hon. member. He had as much right to exercise his judgment as any member of the Committee, and he (Mr. McIlwraith) believed that he had voted according to his own conscience.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he had expressed no objection to the Chairman's vote, but had merely called attention to the fact that he had voted with the "Noes" in order to leave the matter open. He (Mr. Griffith) understood, and he was sure nearly every other hon. member in the Committee supposed, that the question would be again tested to-day. As to the point that a proposition for a reduction of 7½ per cent. could not be again put, it was simply hair-splitting, for one penny less would do it. He confessed he was surprised at the Premier saying that the second proposition had been negatived and the test question disposed of, as, after members left the House last Wednesday, a great deal of discussion took place as to how the division would go the next time. He understood, still, that the division was to be taken over again as a test. The Government could, no doubt, go back from their position, and say that they would not accept it in that light, but they would certainly be departing from what was commonly understood, he believed, by a large majority of the Committee. He hoped, for his part, that the reduction would not be carried.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said that on the last occasion he stated that it was desirable and perfectly fair that the Civil Service should, with the rest of the community, bear some of the burdens entailed by the depressed times, and therefore he was in favour of a certain general reduction. Considering that the question of a general reduction was one of great moment and fairly open to argument, and that, if carried, it would cause great hardship to the Civil Servants, he held that such a sweeping decision should only be arrived at provided the feeling of the country and of its representatives was strongly in favour of it. In consequence of the test question being carried by so small a majority on the first division, and lost by the casting-vote of the Chairman on the second, he should now vote against a general reduction.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said that had he been present when the second test division was taken last Wednesday, he should have voted with the "Ayes," as he had done in the first division; but, unfortunately, he was obliged to leave the House before it came on, in order to reach home that evening. As the parties were equal, and the Chairman gave his casting-vote, so as to leave things as they were, he understood, with a great number of members, that the vote had to be taken again. It had been urged on the previous occasion that it would be unfair to reduce the Civil Servants, because they did not participate in the good times with the rest of the community; but he would point out that while this might be the case they ran no risk in the bad times; their salaries were always the same, and they suffered no losses. In

the present state of the colony all the Civil Servants should be expected to participate in the bad times. He should not, however, be a party to a reduction of one salary and leaving the others in the same position: unless the test was taken in three classes of salaries he should not support it, not thinking it fair to make one suffer and leave the others go scot-free.

Mr. DICKSON said he agreed with the interpretation placed upon last Wednesday's proceedings by the Colonial Treasurer. He understood that if three consecutive motions for reductions of 10, 7½, and 5 per cent. were carried, the Government would accept the decision as the scale of reductions upon salaries of over £500, of between £300 and £500, and between £200 and £300. The second division was not carried, and therefore the Committee reverted to the original position. But he would submit to the Colonial Treasurer that it would not be wise to waste valuable time, and, as any hon. member could attack these items continuously, it would be more expeditious to take the two subsequent divisions with the understanding that if either was lost the test question fell through. They could not now vote 7½ per cent. exactly; but they could get an approximate amount. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member (Mr. Groom), he did not occupy the distinguised position that had been assigned to him of being the representative of the Civil Servants in the House. There might be a large number of Civil Servants in his electorate, but he believed there were in other electorates Civil Service electors equally as numerous;—at anyrate, he dissented from the view expressed by the hon. member that his (Mr. Dickson's) actions were influenced by the consideration that many of his constituents were members of the Civil Service. He looked at the matter in a broad light, and also took it that the proper course to adopt was to deal with the various items on their independent merits. Apart from the individual injustice that would be inflicted if the proposed reductions were carried, an injury would be done to the general community. They were already stinted enough in the circulation of money, and, if these reductions were carried, the incomes of Civil Servants would not only be lessened, but there would be a considerably increased depression throughout the trading circles in the whole colony. A sweeping reduction ought to have been a measure contemplated and prepared by the Government. If he had the honour to represent particularly the Civil Servants in the House, as had been suggested, he might remind hon. members that the Civil Servants in his electorate had been lately called upon to pay more revenue to the Treasury in the shape of increased railway fares.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, as one who had taken an active part on last Wednesday in discussing the question of a general reduction of the salaries of Civil Servants, he wished to say that he supported such a reduction under the impression that a large majority of the Committee would agree with that view; but, finding that this was not the case, he intended to withdraw from his opposition to the Estimates. When a sweeping reduction was made it should be by the decision of a large majority; this was not the case in this instance, and he was not going to continue in the course in which he had started. He would like it to be placed on record that his assistance in carrying what had been called the test vote was brought about by the action of the hon. member (Mr. Miles). When it came to a division, though, that hon. member "ratted," as he generally did. He would support the Estimates as they stood, reserving to himself the right to discuss the reduction of any particular salary and the abolition of any particular office.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said that the Colonial Secretary most distinctly stated, last Wednesday, that, if the proposed reductions on three classes of salaries were carried in a moderately full House, such as he considered the House then assembled to be, he would accept it as an expression of opinion, and would propose that all other salaries should be reduced at the same rate; but the conditions laid down by the Colonial Secretary were broken through by the second vote not being carried. The Chairman certainly said that he gave his casting-vote with the "Noes" in order to leave the matter over for further consideration, which he (Mr. Rutledge) interpreted to mean that fresh steps should be taken. The state of things was not now similar to what existed the other evening. They had a certain number of members in attendance that they had not now, and they had members actuated by certain views and feelings which were not now held by them. The conditions necessary to enable the Committee to accept the terms of the Colonial Secretary were wanting, and they were wasting a lot of time. He did not know what the hon. member (Mr. Groom) meant by saying that he would accept the Estimates *in globo*, if the proposed reductions were not to be carried. He (Mr. Rutledge) hoped the Colonial Treasurer would not attempt to pass the Estimates in that form; he would have nothing thrust down his throat, and the Committee having failed to affirm the principle proposed by certain members last week, they had nothing to do, now, but to treat the Estimates as they had been in the past. As to the remarks of the hon. member (Mr. Groom), he would simply say that there was no feeling or desire on his part to propitiate any class of his constituents. He stood up for justice for all

persons, not caring who they were or to which party they belonged. He would not be a party to seeing the power which the Committee possessed abused, as it would be by cutting and clipping the salaries in the Estimates without respect of persons and the peculiar circumstances of individual cases.

The PREMIER was sorry that there should be any difference of opinion as to the result of the division that was taken as a test vote. The proposition agreed to was, that if the three first motions were carried, the reductions were affirmed; the first was carried, but the second was not—it did not require to be negatived; it was not carried, and the test had therefore been applied and had failed. Of course, if the leader of the Opposition chose to say that the test had not been taken, and a part of the Committee made an agreement to support that view, no progress could be made, and the best way would be to take the test over again, relying upon the common-sense of the Committee to see if any unfairness was proposed. They were not afraid to take a fresh division, and he suggested that course because the Estimates would be got through quicker.

Mr. SIMPSON said he certainly understood that the test question was disposed of the other evening. He still believed in a fair general reduction, but as the second test division was lost he should vote with the Government. The majority by which the first division was carried was so extremely small that it seemed scarcely necessary to give any other reason for withdrawing from opposition to the salaries on the Estimates; it was so very small that, in his opinion, it was quite fair to let the salaries go in the usual way. He thought that salaries ought not to be cut down, but that wherever Civil Servants could be dispensed with altogether he should vote for such reductions. The test vote having been lost, he should vote for the salaries as they appeared on the Estimates.

Mr. GROOM said he must enter his protest against it being understood that when the Chairman gave his casting-vote with the "Noes," on Wednesday last, that the test question was lost.

The PREMIER: I will accept another.

Mr. GROOM said the Premier expressed his willingness to accept another, but they all knew perfectly well what the result of that division would be. They had heard from some hon. members that pressure had been brought to bear upon them in connection with this question since the last division, and he was sorry to hear such statements made. If there was anything that would assist the passing of the Bill to disfranchise the Civil Servants of the colony it was the declaration they had heard from hon. members opposite, this evening, which would go a long way to cause that Bill to be carried. He could not understand how hon. members opposite could say that the test vote was not practically carried the other evening. When they divided then, at eleven o'clock, owing to the absence of one or two members, there was only a majority of one in favour of that question, and had those members been present the division would have stood at 25 or 26 as against 22. When the second item was taken, in consequence of one member having gone away, the division was equal, and the Chairman gave his casting-vote, very properly, for the reconsideration of the question. How, therefore, could the test vote be said to be gone? He was, however, prepared to accept a division on the question of a general reduction, and if it were carried adversely to let the Estimates go as they were. He was prepared to accept a general reduction, but if that were not carried he would be no party to cheese-paring—cutting down the salary of this man, that man, and the other. There were many humble men in the public service who had no friends in that House to speak a word for them, and he should be no party to singling out such men for reductions. They should treat all—rich and poor, high and low—alike; and if there was to be a reduction at all, let all participate in it. If the test vote were negatived he would be no party to cutting down individual salaries, and in that case he supposed the Colonial Secretary would place on the Supplementary Estimates the amount by which the Under Colonial Secretary's salary was reduced the other evening, because that officer should not be singled out for reduction above all others.

Mr. KINGSFORD was of opinion that the test question was disposed of, the other evening, because a division was taken and accepted as a decision, and it was not in the power of the House to reconsider the question. He certainly understood the test question was lost.

Mr. MILES would vote against the test question. If there was any item in the whole of the Estimates which would be unfairly dealt with by the test question it was the one now before the Committee. The Assistant Under Colonial Secretary was put down at £400 a year. This officer was really chief clerk in the Colonial Secretary's Department, and he (Mr. Miles) found that the chief clerk in the Treasury received £450, and in the Works and Lands and Customs departments the chief clerks received £500 a year; so that this officer was really the lowest paid chief clerk in the Service. He objected to the test question, because it was utterly impossible to deal fairly with the Civil Servants on that principle. He cared nothing for the taunts of the hon. member for Mitchell, but would vote just as he thought

proper, and he had given very good reasons for the way he should vote.

Mr. MESTON said he voted the other night in favour of a *pro ratâ* reduction, because he deemed it fair and equitable, and also for the purpose of facilitating the passing of the Estimates. He did so on the distinct understanding that the Committee should reserve to itself the power to exercise a discretion with regard to exceptional cases, because he held that there were salaries included in that *pro ratâ* reduction which should not be reduced; that there were others that ought to be reduced more than the *pro ratâ* amount, and that there were others that ought to be entirely abolished. It appeared to him perfectly clear that, owing to the recantation of one or two members, who, he had no doubt were perfectly sincere, there was very little chance now of carrying the *pro ratâ* reduction, and he therefore thought the best course to adopt would be to take the items *seriatim*, and let the Committee exercise its discretion as to those to be reduced and those that should remain as they were.

Mr. SHEAFFE thought that in the present depressed times, when the incomes of all classes were reduced, the Civil Servants might very fairly have their salaries reduced also; but he would not be a party to reducing the salaries of one portion of the Service and not the other portions. The other evening they reduced the salaries of all Civil Servants who were in the receipt of over £500 a year by 10 per cent., and it was understood that all salaries from £300 to £500 were to be reduced 7½ per cent. He voted for the reduction of the higher salaries by 10 per cent., and should vote for the reduction of the next by 7½ per cent., and of the others by 5 per cent. A good deal had been said about Civil Servants doing more work than they were paying for; but it was not individual cases they were to take into consideration now—it was the general question; and if the other evening they were justified in reducing certain salaries by 10 per cent., they were now equally justified in making the other reductions. But he would not individualise any party, and as long as the reduction was carried right through the Estimates, from top to bottom, he should vote for it.

Mr. REA said their proceedings in this matter would not be complete unless they had a recantation by the Premier of what was stated in the Governor's Opening Speech. This was what he wished to be recalled from that speech, and then hon. members could vote as they liked:—

> "The depression in commerce and manufacturing industry which prevails in Europe having re-acted upon this colony has aggravated the losses suffered by our producers through the late disastrous seasons, and must force upon us economy, personal as well as national."

He said, looking at that statement, the Estimates before the House were a hoax. They were precisely the same as those of last year, except in the item of police. Therefore, this pretext in the Opening Speech was all moonshine, and never was intended to be carried out. It had been said that the vote the other evening was a narrow one; but he thought it was an astounding vote, and such as he never expected to see—hon. members opposite voting against the Government on any pretence; but it appeared that they were to-night settling down into their places instead of kicking over the traces. He thought it would be the duty of all hon. members who really wished to see economy practised to take every individual item and see how much it could be reduced by.

Mr. MOREHEAD wished to point out that a very weak spot in the armour of those hon. members who advocated a general reduction in the salaries of the Civil Servants was, that they seemed to forget that they had already voted a considerable number of salaries on the Estimates, and were these men to be put in a different position from the others in the Civil Service? Those salaries had been voted, and would no doubt be well earned; and when they got through two or three pages of the Estimates they came to the conclusion that a general reduction of the salaries of Civil Servants was required. He thought this fact ought to induce some gentlemen opposite who were opposing this item to withdraw their objection. He thought it was a fatal objection to the retrenchment scheme as proposed. He was one of those who supported that scheme, under the wing of the member for Darling Downs (Mr. Miles); and having noticed this, he must say that he was sitting on pins and needles in case any hon. member opposite of very economical views might find it out. Speaking now on the other side, he thought it would be very unfair, after having got through one or two pages of the Estimates on the old scale, to now start retrenchment. For these reasons, as well as those he had given before, he should vote with the Government, and he thought he made a mistake in not doing so before.

Mr. REA said it was quite a mistake to say they had passed anything worth speaking of. They had only passed the votes for the two Houses, and they had only just come to the departments and offices.

Mr. BEOR said, when he spoke on the last occasion this question was before the Committee he did so upon the first blush of the thing; and, upon serious reflection, he had come to the conclusion that it would not be right or wise to inflict the amount of embarrassment and distress which would be inflicted by the measure of reduction proposed the other evening, for the sake of

the sum that would be economised by it. The right way to economise was by doing away with superfluous offices, and not by striking off portions of salaries; and, having come to this conclusion, he should vote against the test question.

Mr. HENDREN said, when the item of £400 was previously under discussion, it seemed to be the settled determination of the whole Committee that there should be a *pro ratâ* reduction throughout the Estimates. They had previously reduced the salary of one of the oldest, best, and most efficient officers by 10 per cent., and he was very sorry for it; but having carried that reduction, and established a precedent, he did not see how they could go back unless they rescinded the previous vote. Unless that vote were rescinded, he should propose that all other votes of the same kind should be dealt with in the same manner. At present, they seemed to have got into a muddle.

Mr. BAILEY said, before they came to a division he wished the Committee to understand that they were not exactly the men who were voting for the reduction of salaries. They were the representatives of the taxpayers of the colony, who had to pay these salaries; and he would ask the Committee whether they could pick out twenty taxpayers in the colony who enjoyed an income of £400 last year, who enjoyed the same amount this year? He would ask, could they point out twenty taxpayers in the colony who were last year receiving £800 who were now in receipt of half that income? All this talk about inflicting suffering on Civil Servants was perfect rot. It was perfectly absurd to call it an infliction or a wrong upon a Civil Servant to deduct £30 from £400, a salary not paid for arduous or technical labour, but for work that could be done by any ordinary clerk at £100 a year. Yet to deduct £30 from that gentleman's salary, in the present depressed state of the colony, was considered by some hon. members a wrong and an injustice. He knew from his experience that hon. members had always been too ready to increase the salaries of Civil Servants, but never to reduce them. He had never seen a committee of the House willing to reduce salaries, and he was afraid he never should.

Mr. GARRICK said that last time the question was before the Committee he had voted for a reduction, and he should do so again. It was not a very pleasant thing to do, and he did not know that any vote he had ever given had caused him such pain as the one he should now give. Some arguments which had been raised on behalf of the Civil Servants certainly had considerable force, but not sufficient to prevent him from voting for the reductions. It was said that the Civil Servants in prosperous times did not share the general prosperity, and that it was very hard that in times of depression they should be made to share the general adversity; but in the prosperous times, from 1868 to 1870, if hon. members would refer to the Estimates of those years, they would see that the Civil Servants had shared in the prosperity. If they were likely to have only one year, or even two years, of adversity he would not attempt to touch the salaries of Civil Servants, but hon. members would remember that the people of the colony had been suffering from very hard times for at least three years, and, as had been truly said, many persons had not only lost their incomes, but had actually been living on their capital. The hon. member (Mr. Rutledge) said that the Committee ought to do justice, and he (Mr. Garrick) believed they were all anxious to do justice. The hon. member, no doubt, thought he was doing justice, but he (Mr. Garrick) considered he was doing the same in saying that they ought to put on the shoulders of Civil Servants part of the general burden from which the colony was suffering. It seemed something like justice, when the revenue would be short of the expenditure, that the taxpayers of the colony should make some reduction in the salaries of the Civil Servants whom they employed. The hon. member (Mr. Dickson) said that if the salaries were reduced it would cause a reduction of expenditure in the colony, but that argument was very hard upon the general taxpayer; and it was an *argumentum ad hominem* to say that, because the interests of those living in centres of population might be affected by the reduction of the salaries of Civil Servants, the taxpayers all over the colony should be called upon to pay the same salaries in the present depressed times as they paid in times of prosperity. He should, if prosperous times returned, be glad to support any proposition for enabling Civil Servants to feel the benefit of that prosperity. That time did not, however, seem very close at the present moment.

Mr. BAYNES said he agreed with the views expressed by the members for Toowoomba and Moreton. It was a fact well known to most hon. members that incomes were not within one-half of what they were three years ago. In the district he represented, the incomes of a large portion of his constituents were not within one-half of what they were three years ago; and that being the case, it was only just that the Civil Servants should share the depression. Some years ago an increase was voted to the Civil Servants *in globo*; therefore, the Committee should, upon this item, adopt the same course that was proposed a few nights ago with regard to other reductions. He for one should blush to think

that he had assisted to take off any man's salary without due consideration; and as he had given considerable attention to the matter, he should not humiliate himself by altering the vote he gave on a previous occasion.

Mr. GRIMES said he was not in the unfortunate position of having to change his vote. On a former occasion he took the side of justice, and he should do the same again.

Mr. KATES said that it was his intention to vote on the side of retrenchment, and the Treasurer should be thankful to members like himself for endeavouring to assist him in the work of retrenchment. There was to be a deficiency of some £200,000 in the revenue, and the £16,000 that they were told would be saved by these reductions would go a good way towards reducing that deficiency. He was sure that Civil Servants would not complain of having to share in the general depression, and he, for one, should assist in raising their salaries again when the times improved.

Question—That the item be reduced by £29 19s.—put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 14.

Messrs. Meston, Grimes, Garrick, Sheaffe, Rea, Baynes, Bailey, H. Palmer, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Hendren, Kates, Groom, Mackay, and Davenport.

NOES, 26.

Messrs. Griffith, Douglas, Dickson, Paterson, McLean, Perkins, Macrossan, Stubley, Cooper, Rutledge, McIlwraith, Beattie, Beor, Archer, Weld-Blundell, King, Simpson, Amhurst, Low, Kellett, Morehead, O'Sullivan, Stevens, Miles, Kingsford, and Norton.

Question resolved in the negative.

Question—That the sum of £3,405 be voted for the department of the Colonial Secretary—put.

Mr. GROOM said that after the last division the Committee might just as well come to an understanding. He, for one, must express his extreme surprise—to use a very moderate word—at the division which had taken place, and after such a division they might look upon the Opposition side of the House as a farce. Hon. members were sent there as the custodians of the public purse, and when he saw how schools of art and other educational institutions had been cut off by the present Government without a shilling; and that it was proposed, in order to meet the exigencies of the public service that all classes should share alike, what could he think of those hon. members who should support that reduction voting in the contrary direction? It appeared to him, more than ever it had done, that a very powerful influence was exercised by the Civil Servants. He attached very considerable importance to that question, and, although he was not pledged one way or the other, if anything would induce him to vote for the disfranchisement of the Civil Servants it was the division which had just taken place. He was confident, after that division, that there would be a feeling throughout the country in favour of supporting the Bill of the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan). That division was the most disastrous which had taken place for a long time, as hon. members had been distinctly returned on the question of retrenchment. It appeared that a pressure had been brought to bear on hon. members opposite since the Estimates were last before them—in fact, the Nihilism of Russia was nothing as compared with the Civil Servantism which prevailed in this colony at the present time. The question was virtually decided. Those hon. members who called themselves the Joseph Humes of the Committee need not ask him for his support in making any reductions, as he should give them none, except as regarded one department, representing £1,000, which he had always looked upon as a bugbear, and which was created solely for the purpose of giving an office to a gentleman who had nothing to do but to walk down Queen street and who called himself the handsomest man in Brisbane. If any hon. member would move for the abolition of that office he (Mr. Groom) should support it; but, after the recent division, he should not vote for a single reduction of salary.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that it was quite clear that the responsibility of the Estimates rested with the Government, as he had endeavoured over and over again since they had got into Committee of Supply to point out. If the Government had at the first put forward their efforts as they had done now to prevent a general reduction of salaries, the matter would have ended last Wednesday, but instead of doing that they had to shift the responsibility on to the Committee. He had not supported the reduction proposed, as he believed it would be a hardship and an injustice in many cases. There were many cases where reductions would be only just and proper, and in such instances it would be the duty of every hon. member, no matter where he sat, to vote for them.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had held himself wholly irresponsible for any test votes, as he wished throughout to be perfectly free. The hon. member for Toowoomba, earlier in the evening, quoted a case where a clear injustice would have been done if the test vote was carried, and scores of such cases might come before the Committee in carrying out general reductions. He had not altered his opinions in regard to the necessity for retrenchment, and he yielded to no hon. member in that respect, but he did not wish to carry out retrenchment where it was positively known that

it would be unjust. He could give the Committee a case in point, although not so strong as that put forward by the hon. member for Toowoomba. It was this—that there was one Under Secretary who was paid £100 a-year less than all the others, and, therefore, if the Committee went in for a general reduction, he would be treated the same as the other Under Secretaries, which would not be fair.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the sum of £8,160 be voted for the Department of the Registrar-General; and, in doing so, said there was a reduction of £135 on the amount voted last year.

Mr. MESTON asked how it was there were two Deputy Registrars-General provided for?

The PREMIER said there were two branches of the Registrar-General's Office: one officer being attached to the General Registry Branch, and one to the Real Property Office.

Mr. RUTLEDGE asked whether it was the intention of Government to permanently appoint the present Acting Master of Titles? Mr. Miller had performed the duties of the office very efficiently, but it was not a very satisfactory position for him to be in.

The PREMIER said the present officer had the position offered to him on probation, and the matter had not gone beyond that since. He did not know why he should not be permanently appointed.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS wished to know what determination the Government had arrived at in connection with some of the recommendations made by the Commission appointed a short time ago to report on the Real Property Office, and especially whether any steps had been taken in regard to the building. The Commission pointed out that the building was not fire-proof, and was in some respects very deficient for the custody of those valuable documents which should be protected in a proper manner. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government probably knew that a sum of money was voted for the purpose last year; and the Commission pointed out that there were buildings in the vicinity of the Real Property Office—alluding probably to the Auditor-General's Office and the office of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers—of a very inflammable character, and it was by no means desirable that documents in the custody of the Registrar-General should be exposed to risk. The Commission also pointed out the desirableness of having duplicate copies of titles in the office. The fees received by the office exceeded the amount expended; and when they considered that the whole of the conveyancing business was now done in the office, and that all titles were recorded there, it was a matter for serious consideration that there should be duplicate copies. If there was a surplus revenue from this office it could not be devoted to a better purpose than securing the duplication of the documents, to be kept in some other safe place, and thereby all risk from fire would be guarded against. The Commission referred to the confusion which might arise if the documents were destroyed by fire. There were, he understood, some repairs going on in the vault where many of the records were now kept, but it was a place very unsuitable for the purpose; it was ill-ventilated and not well drained.

The PREMIER replied that the Government had considered the recommendations of the Commission, but had not yet fully matured their plans. Without being in a position to give details, he might say it was intended to make provision for the security of the deeds in the Registry Office.

Mr. DICKSON said he should like to know if the Government had reconsidered their decision in regard to the remuneration of members of the Real Property Commission. That Commission did good service to the country; they obtained much evidence bearing directly upon the working of the Real Property Office; and made some very valuable recommendations besides those alluded to by the hon. member for Maryborough. After they had concluded their labours and sent in their valuable report, he was surprised to find that the members of the Commission were treated in what he and many others considered a remarkably shabby manner by the Government. Amongst the papers published in connection with this matter he found that the hon. member for North Brisbane, who was the chairman of the Commission, wrote to the Colonial Secretary on the 10th May, recommending:

"(1.) That a fee of, say, fifty pounds (£50) be paid to Mr. D. F. Jones for his services as Secretary and Shorthand Writer to the Commission.

"(2.) That a sum of, say, five pounds (£5) be paid to the messenger (Worsley) employed by him in connection with the work of the Commission.

"I am also requested by my brother Commissioners to remind you that, in several instances, it has been the practice that members of Royal Commissions in this colony, not being officers in the employment of the Government, should receive an honorarium for their services at a rate usually not less than two guineas (£2 2s.) per sitting, and to inquire whether the Government propose to observe this practice in the case of the Real Property Commission?"

The Colonial Secretary replied to this letter on the 12th May, as follows:—

"SIR,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of yours of the 18th ultimo, relative to payment of members of a Commission appointed to inquire into the working of "*The Real Property Act*," and of the reporter to that Commission, and the messenger employed.

"The reporter and the messenger are both paid servants of the Government, and the former, if I am rightly informed, is under special agreement to perform all such duties out of session.

"With respect to members of a commission, for services which I hold should have been performed by the Minister of the department himself, unless specially ordered to be done by Parliament, I am not prepared to recommend that any payment should be made, nor am I aware that there are any funds provided from which such payments could legally be made."

There were several important points involved in this correspondence. In the first place, the usual remuneration allowed to shorthand writers employed on Royal commissions during recesses appeared to have been denied, but he could not see why such special services, which were entirely unconnected with their Parliamentary engagements, should not be recognised, as they had always previously been, by remuneration to be determined by the members of the commission. The small sum recommended for the messenger stood upon a similar footing, and might fairly have been granted. With regard to the payment of members of commissions, although it might be undesirable that members of Parliament should receive remuneration for acting on them, still they would not get men of experience outside the Chamber to sit on commissions unless they received consideration. It could not be expected that business men would sit day after day collecting evidence and preparing reports on difficult and intricate subjects to the neglect of their own business unless they were entitled to receive remuneration for their services. The action of the Government in this instance, though consistent with the retrenchment they advocated, if enforced would have anything but a beneficial result, for, as he had said before, it would be impossible to find men with special knowledge of a subject, outside the Chamber, to sit on commissions without remuneration. He should be glad to hear from the Premier that the Government had receded from their position and were inclined to view the matter more liberally.

The PREMIER said that, since the close of the correspondence referred to, the matter had not received consideration by the Government. The grounds on which they came to the conclusions stated in the letter were, first, that the remuneration recommended to the shorthand-writer and the messenger was included in their annual payments, and, secondly, that the two guineas per sitting for each member was refused because the head of the department, the Colonial Secretary, thought, with the approval of the Cabinet, that the objects of the Commission would have been better served by an investigation by his predecessor in office.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he did not think such an investigation would have secured the satisfactory results obtained by the Royal Commission. What was required was an investigation by the outside public, by a body of independent and competent gentlemen sitting as a jury on the charges brought against the administration of the department. That, he felt, was a much more satisfactory means of allaying the public sentiment at the time with regard to the working of the Real Property Office, and on that ground the then Government decided to appoint the Commission. If the present Government could not coincide with that conclusion, and had decided not to give them any remuneration, they might at least have been thanked for their valuable services. Even that would have satisfied some of the members. They had nothing to do with the responsibility under which they were appointed, and, if there was any charge against him (Mr. Douglas) for having appointed the commission, it did not appertain to the gentlemen who accepted duties upon it. Whatever opinion the Colonial Secretary might have had with regard to his action in the matter, it should not have affected his consideration of the gentlemen who undertook those duties.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that, as the chairman of the Commission in question, and as one who was precluded under any circumstances from taking remuneration for his services upon it, he felt at liberty to say that the Commission devoted a great amount of time and attention to the matter, and elicited a large amount of valuable information. Under those circumstances, the members of the Commission were entitled to be treated with at least ordinary courtesy by the Government. But instead of that, the only recognition they got from the Colonial Secretary was that, as the work ought to have been performed by the head of the department, their services were not wanted. On behalf of his brother Commissioners, he felt bound to say that they had been very badly treated. He was not accustomed to a great amount of courtesy from the Colonial Secretary, and had that hon. gentleman been present to-night he should have said a good deal more on the subject. He protested against the discourtesy with which those gentlemen had been treated by the Government.

The PREMIER said it was unfair to his absent colleague to say that the letter was an act of discourtesy to the members of the Commission. That was the only way in which the Colonial Secretary could express his opinion that the inquiry was purely departmental, and ought to have been conducted by the Minister himself. Having seen and approved of the letter before it was sent, the blame, if any, he must share with the Colonial Secretary;

but he was certain that no discourtesy was intended. As to payment of members of commissions, he was of opinion that they should be paid; but, as this Commission had not been appointed by the present Government, and as they did not approve of its appointment—or, rather, that the work should have been done by the head of the department—the letter was the only way in which they could properly give expression to that opinion.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the Government might have found means of expressing that, and they might have treated the action of the past Government as a fact which had been decided upon, and which they were not called upon to revise. The Government were not bound to act in a spirit of contradiction in carrying out matters of administration in which a preceding Government had been concerned. In several such matters the present Ministry had shown a want of appreciation of their true position in that respect. They were bound to give decent effect to that portion of the administration of their predecessors which required to be carried out. He still thought the Government, while stating that they did not agree with the appointment of the Commission, might have expressed some sense of the services that had been rendered. After the decision arrived at by the House on a recent occasion, he did not see how a distinction could be made between members of the House sitting upon a commission and other commissioners. It was a practice authorised by precedent in the House of Commons, and if hon. members were properly fitted to serve, and the Government chose to entrust those duties to them, he saw no reason why they should not receive the customary fees.

Mr. HENDREN said he noticed there was an amount of £500 down for Deputy Registrar-General for the General Registry Branch and a like amount for Deputy Registrar-General in the Real Property Transfer Branch. There was also £700 for Master of Titles. Those items were the same as last year; but as a new office had been made, a good opportunity had offered itself for a *pro ratâ* retrenchment. The chief clerk in the Real Property Branch was put down at £400 last year, and only £300 this year. He would like to know the cause of the reduction, as it was not likely the work had decreased. There was also an item of £40 for an apprentice. The item for incidentals was reduced from £1,350 to £340. He should like to know what those incidentals were?

The PREMIER said in the case of the chief clerk there had been no reduction. The gentleman who last year received £400 was now the recipient of the £500 salary, and another gentleman filled his former office at the reduced salary of £300.

Mr. GROOM said the reply of the Premier to the hon. member was very curt, and did not give the explanation asked for. When the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had given the hon. member for Bundanba a proper reply, he (Mr. Groom) had a question to ask.

The PREMIER said he thought he had treated the hon. member with great courtesy, and had replied to his question with regard to the reduction of the item for chief clerk. With regard to the item for an apprentice, the boy in question was required by the exigencies of the Service.

Mr. HENDREN said he was satisfied with the reply, so far as the chief clerk was concerned, but the hon. gentlemen had not answered his question with regard to the two Deputy Registrars-General at £500 in the respective branches. Those were the salaries that should be reduced The Government had been very active in dismissing poor pick-and-shovel men and mechanics with large families, and here was a chance for them to extend their system of retrenchment. He did not know how it was that he had never yet got a satisfactory answer to any question which he had put to the Government; even when the production of correspondence was in question one half was suppressed. When hon. members on the Opposition side required the production of correspondence, or any kind of information, it was the duty of the Government to satisfy them and the people whose representatives they were. He was thoroughly dissatisfied with the way that information which he had endeavoured to obtain had been doled out. The top salaries in this department—Registrar-General and Master of Titles, at £700 each, and two Deputy Registrars-General at £500 each—were items which might have borne a little of the decreases necessary for economy, particularly when Ministers were knocking off poor fellows who were hardly able to get bread and butter.

Mr. GROOM said he believed a gentleman had been gazetted as Acting Master of Titles, and he would like to know whether the amount of £700 down on the Estimates was intended for a permanent Master of Titles? He was not present when the item in chief was proposed, but he wished to know whether a competent officer was in charge of the Real Property Transfer Branch. It was of the highest importance that a gentleman possessing a knowledge of the law in all its bearings should be head of this department; but, if he was correctly informed, the gentleman who had been appointed arrived in the colony scarcely two years ago, and knew nothing of the conditions and working of the Real Property Act, and as to his knowledge of colonial law he (Mr. Groom) would not attempt to describe it as it had been reported to him. He felt exceedingly dissatisfied

with the officer who had been appointed Acting Master of Titles. He wished distinctly to guard against the idea that he was making any imputation against this officer as a man; but from his want of knowledge of colonial law, and of the Real Property Act and matters connected with it, this gentleman could not properly discharge the duties imposed upon him. He (Mr. Groom) made this statement with good reasons, and knew that this appointment had given great dissatisfaction to the legal profession throughout the colony. They were considering the vote for an officer who had to deal with titles connected with the different estates throughout the colony, and it had already been proved that there might be incompetent masters of titles. Individual members of the community had sorry proof of the fact; they had been involved in ruin, probably, to the extent of several thousand pounds—ruin to themselves, their families, and their creditors. He said advisedly that a large portion of the public had no confidence in the Acting Master of Titles. Was this officer to be appointed permanent head of the Real Property Transfer Branch, or was he to be continued as Acting Master of Titles? He did not ask his question without cause. It had been said that the Committee were being over-ridden by a tyrannical majority, but, perhaps, in a moment of condescension, the gentleman at the head of the majority would deign to give the information desired.

Mr. Beor said he had never heard a more unjustifiable attack upon the professional reputation of a man than the one made by the last speaker. He happened to know something of the gentleman who had been appointed Master of Titles, and of the office also, having filled it for some months, and he could say, advisedly, that it would have been very difficult for the Government to have got another gentleman as well qualified to fill the post as the gentleman who now held it. The hon. member for Toowoomba had said that the gentleman who held this position knew little of colonial law; but he (Mr. Beor) knew that that gentleman had studied carefully the real property law—not merely the real property law of this colony, but the real property law of the United Kingdom also; and the hon. member himself must know very little of the question if he considered it necessary, in order to understand the real property law of this colony, that a man should have a wide knowledge of the whole colonial law. It was entirely unnecessary. The real property law of this colony was separate and distinct of itself. He did not mean to say that Mr. Miller had not a competent knowledge of colonial law, but that it would matter very little whether he had or not. What was of importance was that he should know the real property law of Great Britain; for it would be idle and absurd for any man who knew the colonial law ever so well, but knew nothing of the real property law of England, to go into that office and attempt to cope with the real property law of this colony, and carry out his duty efficiently and sufficiently. As to Mr. Miller not having given satisfaction to the public, he was sure the hon. member was mistaken; and, as to the appointment being looked upon with dissatisfaction by members of the profession, he was perfectly certain the hon. member was misinformed, and that he had derived his information from sources which were not reliable when he made such a statement. He (Mr. Beor) was in the habit of going amongst members of the legal profession, and he believed the appointment was looked upon with the very greatest satisfaction. Mr. Miller was not only qualified by his knowledge of law, and of real property law particularly, to fill this office; but, what was of equal importance, he was a gentleman of very high honour and straightforward character, which was a thing of the greatest importance in an office of that kind.

Mr. Swanwick said he was in the habit of mixing with both branches of the legal profession every day, and he could say that no appointment the Government of the day could have made could have given greater satisfaction than that of Mr. Miller. When the hon. member remembered that hardly any barrister in the colony, however young he might be, was making less than from £300 to £500 a year, and that every solicitor in good practice was making from £500 to £1,000 a year and upwards, he would see how difficult it was for the Government to induce any member of the profession to take the position at the very short notice which the unfortunate and unexpected death of Mr. Henry Scott rendered necessary. He was sure that no one could have given greater satisfaction to the profession than Mr. Miller. He only hoped that gentleman might be induced to retain the position, and that a larger salary would be attached to it in order to prevail upon him to do so, because he was well fitted for the position, not only as regarded legal attainments, but also as a gentleman of high character, to fill the office.

Mr. Douglas said he only wished he had been born a barrister; it was so very comforting, on occasions of this kind, to feel that one could depend upon a good character from any member of the profession. This display of unanimity quite thrilled him. He must say that to a great extent he agreed with the remarks of the member for Toowoomba. He had not the intimate knowledge of Mr. Miller that the member for Bowen had, and he must admit that that hon. member's remarks carried a

great deal of weight. He was only sorry, for the sake of the public, that that hon. member himself did not continue to hold the office in question, because he believed he held it with satisfaction to the public, and, with his imperfect knowledge of Mr. Miller, he did not think that gentleman did. However, he had heard from members of the profession to-night that Mr. Miller was all a barrister ought to be, and that was very well; but he knew that in some directions the appointment had not been looked upon with that confidence which appeared to be entertained by the profession itself. He knew, at any rate, that Mr. Miller had not had much experience here, and that there were men who had served many long years here as solicitors who were thoroughly competent to fill the position, and who would enjoy the confidence of the public more than Mr. Miller did. He could instance Mr. Chubb, of Ipswich.

An HON. MEMBER: You have let it out, now.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he knew such a statement would be received with a sneer by members of the profession, but he believed that that branch of the profession was deserving of notice in the way of preferment, and he should be glad to see some really competent gentleman appointed to fill the position. As far as competency was concerned, he believed the present Deputy Registrar-General, Mr. Mylne, was quite as competent to fill the position of Master of Titles as any gentleman who ever filled it; but, of course, he was not qualified, he was not within the sacred circle of the law, and was, therefore, debarred from this preferment to which he would be perfectly entitled if he were within that circle. He made these remarks in a friendly spirit, and the statements of the hon. member for Bowen had disabused his mind to a great extent of any possible prejudice he might have had against Mr. Miller. But he should like to know why it was necessary—if it was necessary—that the Master of Titles should be restricted absolutely to doing the work of Master of Titles? Nine-tenths of the work of the office never came before the Master of Titles at all. That officer was called upon to pronounce upon certain doubtful and difficult cases, and would it not be possible for even £300 a year to retain the services of a gentleman of high standing in the profession to discharge the duties of the office, which did not occupy more than a couple of hours a day at the present time? It would give great satisfaction to the public, and establish greater confidence, if the services of a man of high standing were secured and a smaller amount voted on the understanding that it would not be necessary for the Master of Titles to restrict himself solely to the duties of that office.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he was sorry the hon. member for Toowoomba was not in the House when he (Mr. Rutledge) asked the Colonial Treasurer a question respecting this appointment. His reason for asking that question was that Mr. Miller might know what was his actual position. It was rather a serious position for a barrister to be placed in—to be debarred from practising his profession, and at the same time have no guarantee that he was ensuring a permanency in the way of salary. It was not fair that a professional man should be put in a position where on the one hand he was debarred from joining in the race with his brother barristers, and on the other was left in a state of uncertainty as to whether his present appointment would be confirmed. The hon. member for Maryborough referred to a gentleman of high standing in the other branch of the profession, a gentleman whom everybody who knew him would admit would make a most admirable Master of Titles. He (Mr. Rutledge) was perfectly satisfied, from what he knew of Mr. Chubb, that he would have given general satisfaction; but he was not appointed, and Mr. Miller had been, and it was very invidious to cast a slur upon him because somebody equally competent, no doubt, to perform the duties was not appointed. He could confirm all that had been said by the hon. member for Bowen of Mr. Miller. That gentleman was an honourable man, whose character was above suspicion; he was a barrister of the English Court, and one who would have had the best opportunities of rising in his profession, his father being a serjeant at law of the English Court. The hon. member for Toowoomba simply affirmed that of which he had not the means of forming a correct opinion, when he said that a Master of Titles here ought to have a thorough knowledge of the whole of the colonial law. What really was essential in a Master of Titles was, that he should have a thorough knowledge of the entire law of real property. There were a few small enactments in this colony, certainly, but the general body of English law was that on which the real property law was founded. There was in this colony a Real Property Act which they had not in England, but still their real property law was based upon English law. One thing was founded upon the other, and Mr. Miller knew both. It was really unfair to speak of the Master of Titles as hon. members had done, as the only result would be to induce him to throw up his office, and they would have a difficulty in finding another barrister to take it.

Mr. GROOM: There are plenty to take it.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said there was not a barrister who had been practising a month who would not make £300 a year. It was

true that £700 a year might be a sufficient salary for the work performed, and a barrister during the early part of his career might think himself well paid at that; but it was well known that members of the higher branch of the profession had chances of drawing golden prizes, and if a man detached himself from the practice of his profession he withdrew from any chance of such prizes.

Mr. DOUGLAS: Why is that necessary?

Mr. RUTLEDGE said it was because the moment a man accepted a Government office he should give up everything outside of it. It was high time a stop was put to this dual work—to doing work with one hand for the Government and with the other for the public. It was far better to detach a Master of Titles from his ordinary pursuits and tell him that he must do the best he could for the public service; if that was done his public duties would be efficiently discharged. But if a man was constantly attending to private business instead of to Government business, the private business would not suffer but the interests of the public would. It was far better to have a man devote his whole time to his public duties and to pay him a good salary, than to cheaply pay a man for discharging important functions and, perhaps, have to pay for his mistakes afterwards. With regard to Mr. Mylne, he would not say that that gentleman had not a thorough knowledge of the Real Property Act, but the Act stated that the Master of Titles must either be a barrister or an attorney of some years' standing, and Mr. Mylne was not one or the other, and consequently was debarred. He must disclaim the imputation that in selecting Mr. Miller for the appointment the Government had not made the best selection, although there were other candidates who might have efficiently performed the duties.

Mr. GROOM said he had no personal interest in discussing the matter, but he would ask in what position they stood in reference to it? Supposing the present Master of Titles were to dispute the validity of a title he could be the means of sending the parties to the Privy Council, and of causing them to incur the enormous expenses which were attached to a proceeding of that kind. He did not wish to impeach Mr. Miller's abilities in the slightest respect, but information had been conveyed to him by legal gentlemen in Brisbane of very long standing—not men who had only a reputation of to-day, but who had been practising in the city for a quarter of a century, and who know something of what real property was, and they said that it was of the highest importance that in appointing a Master of Titles the Government should have selected a legal gentleman of high standing, and who had a knowledge of the Real Property Act of this colony. The hon. member for Enoggera spoke about English legislation affecting real property law, but that could not apply to the Real Property Act of this colony. Titles here did not bear the signature of Queen Anne—in fact, he did not believe there was a title in Queensland that bore the signature of any Sovereign but Queen Victoria, with the exception, perhaps, of some which were granted in New South Wales before Queensland became a separate colony. The hon. member would confess that conveyancing was a distinct branch of the law, and that being the case, and the Real Property Act of this colony having been passed in 1861, how was it likely that a gentleman who had been only two and a-half years in the colony could know anything about it? That being the case, the appointment was not such a one as should have been made. He was also aware that in other towns of the colony there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the Acting Master of Titles. Unnecessary delays had been made and quibbles had been raised, and everybody knew that delay meant additional expense. They were bound to consider the general interests of the whole public, and Government need not go very far, if they liked, to find a satisfactory officer, without resorting to gentlemen who came out to the colony to pick up what they could get hold of. He had not taken action unadvisedly. If they could not get a competent Master of Titles at £700 a year, then they should increase the salary to £1,000 or £1,200, and secure a man in whom the country would have confidence. At present they were simply offering a premium for litigation.

Mr. GRIFFITH said there was a good deal of misunderstanding with respect to the position and duties of the Master of Titles. The hon. member (Mr. Groom) had said that it was unnecessary the Master should know anything of English real property law, and that it was sufficient if he was thoroughly acquainted with the colonial Acts; but in that he was mistaken, for the only duties imposed on him by the Real Property Act were in connection with land which was not under the Act, but was outside it; and, therefore, the Master must be well acquainted with the old law of England in relation to real property. With respect to the qualification of Mr. Miller, he (Mr. Griffith) did not know that this was the proper place or proper time to discuss the question. If an appointment were a glaringly improper one it might be right to bring up the subject in the House, but there appeared no reason for doing it in this case. He (Mr. Griffith) was probably in as good a

position to judge as anyone, and he believed the Acting Master of Titles was quite competent; and with regard to the grave complaints of the hon. member for Toowoomba, he (Mr. Griffith) had as good opportunities as anyone else of hearing of any public dissatisfaction, and he certainly had not heard of any. It was probable that the complaints to which the hon. member referred were not, therefore, very serious ones. On referring to the Governor's Speech, he found that it was there stated that the report of the Commission would be laid on the table of the House, and the House would be informed what steps Government would take upon the recommendation of the Commission. That information had not been given, and he had been expecting to hear from the Minister in charge of the department what change he proposed to make in the management of the Real Property Office, but he had heard nothing. Did the Government intend to create a permanent Master of Titles, because if he had not to do routine work, which could be done by the Deputy Registrar, or a chief clerk, was it necessary to pay a full salary merely that he might be in the office from nine o'clock till four? If he was to devote all his time to the office, he must be paid a full salary; but if, on the other hand, he were relieved of the routine, the work would not occupy half his time. The reason that Mr. Miller was appointed Acting Master was, as he had understood, that the whole question might be submitted to the House, so that Government might obtain the opinion of the Committee of Supply as to the manner in which the duties should be performed; and if they determined that the Master should be always in the office, he should be voted the full salary; but if the recommendation of the Commission were followed, then the salary should be reduced and the Master should not be expected to give full attendance. He did not know that any harm would arise from the Master practising, but at the present time there was undoubtedly a feeling amongst a section of the public that the Master ought always to be there, and no doubt it would be annoying for a person to come to the Real Property Office, expecting to see the officer, and find him away. It was rather unreasonable to expect that; but the whole thing really amounted to this—that the best reason they could give for reducing the salary of the Master was on the ground of economy. At present, the work to be done was work which need not occupy more than two or three days a week, and if they were going in for retrenchment it might be done here. The work could be done just as well under the altered system. This was a matter which could not have been elicited by any inquiry conducted by the head of the department, unless he had been a skilled professional man familiar with the work of the Real Property Office. Another recommendation of the Commission to which the same remark applied was, that the Master of Titles should be the legal adviser to the Government on all matters relating to titles issued by the Government, whether from the Lands Office or the Real Property Office.

The PREMIER, in reply to the hon. member for Toowoomba, said the present Master of Titles had so far given every satisfaction, both to the public and to the head of the department. With reference to the remarks of the hon. member for North Brisbane, he might say it was the intention of the Government to carry out the recommendations mentioned by him. They had recognised the necessity of removing the routine work from the Master of Titles, and wished to restrict his duties to those defined in the Real Property Act—namely, to investigate and deal with applications for bringing land under the provisions of that Act. Such duties were very limited now, and must ultimately cease, because all the property in the colony would soon be brought under the Act, and the Master of Titles would have no duties to perform, and all the rest would devolve upon the Registrar-General. Many duties now devolved upon the Master of Titles simply because by the practice of the office he had been allowed to do duties that really belonged to the Registrar-General. The object of the Government was to take those duties away from him and make him the legal adviser of the Government as to the kind of titles that ought to be issued. If the duties of the Master of Titles were simply to be those defined by the Act, £700 a-year would be too much for the purpose; but the Government deemed it advisable to adopt the recommendation of the Commission, and put upon him other duties not defined in the Act, and which justified the salary asked for him.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that, according to the last published statistics, the number of applications for the year 1877 was 200, and the number of transmissions by death 120, making a total of 320 different matters the Master of Titles had to deal with in a year —that was about six a week or one a day. Then there would be the additional work of advising the Government, which, although of great importance, would not occupy very much time. That was really the work of the Master of Titles. Double it, and say he had two transactions to look at in a day, he (Mr. Griffith) did not think that under these circumstances there were sufficient reasons why the Master should be always in the Real Property Office; and that his continual presence would be too dearly purchased at the price they were offering. The work was done just as well

under the old system when Mr. Bramston was Master of Titles, and even under the system now in force there was no necessity for the Master of Titles to give the whole of his time to the duties of his office.

Mr. HENDREN said they had now a Registrar-General at £700 a year and a Master of Titles at £700 a year, while the late Mr. Scott, for the same salary, filled both positions, and the country never had reason to complain that he did not do his duty properly. There was now an opportunity to decrease this vote by £700 by again amalgamating the two offices, or doing away with one of the deputies. There were six clerks in the Registry Branch and thirteen in the Real Property Branch, so that there were certainly plenty of men to do the work. There was urgent necessity for retrenchment in this department.

Mr. RUTLEDGE thought that the office of Parliamentary Draughtsman might be very advantageously held by a Master of Titles. There was such an office in New South Wales; and if the duties were added to those of Master of Titles, the officer would have plenty of work to do and the money paid would be well earned.

Mr. GRIFFITH said there might be a difficulty in getting a competent man. In Great Britain there was a professional staff receiving high salaries. The present system of placing a sum of money on the Estimates to be expended by the Government in drawing Bills was probably more satisfactory, as they might get a gentleman who was duly qualified to deal with one particular subject but not experienced on others. He hoped the matter before the Committee would be further discussed, as there seemed to be an opportunity of making a reduction without detriment to the Public Service, and without doing the slightest injustice to anyone.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the Government might not perhaps be able, owing to the absence of the Colonial Secretary, to state definitely their determination, but they would probably be able to do so when the Administration of Justice Department vote came on for discussion. Before they went to division, he wished to draw attention to the diminution of the vote for incidentals from £1,350 to £340 on account of the completion of the work of compiling indices. Those indices had been compiled in consequence of a return moved for by the present Minister for Works (Mr. Macrossan). If annually supplemented and brought up to date, they would be of great use in informing the House as to the condition of landed property in the colony. Only a slight expenditure would be necessary to prepare annually to date these indices, which might be characterised as the Doomsday Book of the colony.

Mr. GROOM said it was necessary to deal with the question of the Master of Titles now, as they could not do so when the Administration of Justice Department was under consideration. Very possibly the item ought to have appeared there, but it did not.

Mr. PATERSON said in view of what had been said with respect to the permanency of the office, this item should receive a little more consideration. It appeared that, as time went on, the duties would become lighter, until the presence of that officer in the office would be nearly, if not quite, unnecessary. As some alteration was in contemplation, it would be well to regard the office for this year as temporary, and vote a smaller salary with the right of private practice. Gentlemen had held the office formerly on those terms without disadvantage to the colony, and one had stated that he could not find two hours' work, in two or three days' of the week. It had not been contradicted that the work was not sufficient to occupy the time of a professional man for the greater part of the day; and it was not good for any man to have too much idle time on his hands. He should therefore move that the item be reduced by £300, the understanding being that the Master of Titles should have the privilege previous temporary Masters of Titles had enjoyed, of practice outside the Real Property Office.

The PREMIER said that by carrying that amendment the office would be virtually confined to barristers. No solicitor with private practice would accept it, because the two positions would clash, and in the case of barristers the separate duties would be to some extent inconvenient. The better plan would be to add other duties, and let the Master of Titles remain entirely a Government Officer. With regard to the suggestion that the duties of Parliamentary Draughtsman should be added, that plan had been tried; but even by adding the whole of the amount on the Estimates for drafting Bills — £350, he believed — to the salary, they could not get a competent man to fill the two positions. He should be sorry to see a man appointed for the special duty of drafting Bills. To do that work, men must be selected who had a special knowledge of the subject regarding which a Bill had to be drafted. It would, perhaps, be better to leave the matter in abeyance; the present holder of the office was simply Acting Master of Titles. If the amendment was carried, and the salary fixed at £400, it would be an instruction to the Government to appoint some professional gentleman who would have the right of private practice, and whose duties would be simply those prescribed by the Act.

Mr. GRIFFITH was understood to say that he believed that would be the best

course; it was quite true it would have the effect of limiting the appointment to barristers, but it seemed to be admitted that £400 a year was sufficient for the work required to be done; and he did not think the country should pay an extra £300 a year merely not to limit the office to barristers. He did not know whether it would be inconvenient to the Government to take the opinion of the Committee now, but if it was left open matters would go on as at present. The subject had been investigated lately, and, as the Committee were fully informed upon it, they should dispose of it before proceeding further with the Estimates.

Mr. PATERSON said it was because he regarded the position as a temporary one that he had proposed his amendment. He believed that in the course of a few years they should not have a Master of Titles, and that, instead of extra duties being found for that officer to keep him fully occupied, another officer would be found to undertake the duties now performed by the Master of Titles. He could only speak of the gentleman who had held the office temporarily in terms of the highest praise. There was a plethora of members of the higher branch of the profession at present, and perhaps that circumstance should incline the Committee not to object to the appointment being confined to barristers.

The PREMIER did not see that there was any necessity for deferring the Estimates for the further discussion of this subject. He considered it plainly understood that the Master of Titles was to be confined to the performance of the duties defined by the Act. For that work £400 was quite sufficient, and he would accept the amendment.

Question—That the item objected to be reduced by £300—put and passed.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Do I understand that the Master of Titles will have the right of private practice?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Question—That £7,860 be granted for the service—put and passed.

The PREMIER, in moving that £6,620 be granted for Immigration, said there were some reductions in the home and Brisbane offices, but the real reductions on Immigration would be seen on the Loan Estimates. With regard to the item for six wardsmen, the Government had come to the conclusion to provide one-half the amount that was put down last year. The amount down for contingencies showed a reduction of £3,500, but the provision made was more than sufficient, it was believed, to carry the Government on for the present year.

Mr. HENDREN observed that though there were the same number of wardsmen as last year, the sum proposed was only one-half. He would like further information upon the matter.

The PREMIER said that when no immigrants were sent to the six places specified in the Estimates, it was unlikely that those having charge of the barracks would have much more to do than to look after the buildings. Under these circumstances, it was not unreasonable to expect that the duties should be done for half the amount provided last year.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said the Premier's explanation was but a partial one. If his argument would hold good in this instance, it would also apply to the other officers who were receiving large salaries. Last year he did all he could to reduce the salary of the Agent-General; he did not intend to follow the same course, but he did not think it fair to come down upon the wardsmen by reducing their salaries one-half. He supposed those six wardsmen had families, and the amount the Government proposed to pay them was £36 each. He had noticed that whenever an attempt was made to reduce the higher salaries it was firmly opposed; but when the reduction affected a poor working man silence was observed: the poor man must suffer, but the rich must not be touched. Even if the wardsman had little to do, he must be at his post just as if he had much to do. He knew that the Ipswich wardsman was a faithful servant, and took great interest in his work; were it not for his care and energy the immigrants would not leave the barracks so soon as they generally did. The least the Government could do would be to restore this item to what it was last year. It would be far better to dispense with their services altogether, and give them an opportunity of looking for something better, than to ask them to work for £36 a year.

Mr. GROOM said he should not trouble about the wardsmen, but leave that to be settled between the Government and the hon. member for Ipswich. They had higher game to deal with in this estimate. The Treasurer had proposed £1,300 for the Agent-General in England, £600 for his secretary, £300 for the indent clerk, and £400 for travelling and incidental expenses in connection with those offices. It would appear to the public that there was a reduction in this estimate from £10,590 in 1878-9, to £6,620 for this year; but how was that reduction effected? Not so far as the higher salaries were concerned in the remotest degree, but in accordance with the policy of the Government in stopping or partially stopping immigration. The reduction was not upon salaries, but in what was called "contingencies," an exceedingly obnoxious term on many occasions. He would now ask hon. members to turn to the Estimates on Loan Account, at page

68, and they would there find that the officers in the Agent-General's department were reduced from thirteen to six, and they had the usual expression which had appeared in the Estimates for a number of years, and of which he believed the Treasurer could give no more explanation than the gentlemen who occupied that position in previous years—that was the word "clerks." They were told last year that a "clerk" was understood to be a doorkeeper, who ushered in the great men who waited upon the Agent-General in London, and who, no doubt, he received with the greatest condescension possible. These "clerks" were reduced from ten to three, and their salaries from £1,315 to £400. In all sincerity, let them approach this question apart from party consideration, because if there was any vote to which the attention of the House should be directed apart from such considerations it was this. He had been in the colony for the last twenty-three years and had never seen it in the position it was in now. There were deserted wharves and Custom House! Where was the shipping coming to the port of Brisbane that they had been accustomed to in years past? Immigration was virtually stopped, and were they to still go on maintaining an expensive establishment in London, paying an Agent-General £1,300 a-year, a secretary £600, and a number of clerks who had nothing to do, when at the same time they were talking of economy in the colony, reducing salaries in every direction, knocking off subsidies to various public institutions, because they had no money to keep up previous expenditure? Would the Treasurer inform them when the next immigrant ship would leave the shores of England for this colony? They had been told that four immigrant ships were to leave England on the 19th of April, and after that no more were to leave until it suited the purposes of the Government to wire to the Agent-General that more were to be sent. What, then, were they keeping up this establishment for? He should like to know when Mr. Jordan occupied the position of Immigration Agent in England, and sent out to the colony from 30,000 to 40,000 of the best immigrants that had ever come to the colony, if he was paid £1,300 a year and his secretary £600, besides all the other etceteras? He (Mr. Groom) had consistently opposed this vote; he resisted it last year, and succeeded in reducing it from £1,500 to £1,300; and if he believed it unnecessary then, how much more did he consider it unnecessary now, when they were endeavouring to curtail expenditure in all directions, and when immigration was practically stopped? He would ask the Treasurer, was immigration to be continued?—when would the next immigrant ship leave England for the colony? If the hon. gentleman gave that information, he (Mr. Groom) would state the course he should adopt with regard to this vote; if not, he should take the same course that he did last session, and reduce it shilling by shilling.

After a pause,

Mr. GROOM said he hoped the hon. Treasurer would not treat the Committee with discourtesy, and refuse to give an answer.

The PREMIER said he did not catch the hon. member's question.

Mr. GROOM said he wished the hon. gentleman to inform the Committee and the country what course the Government intended to adopt with regard to immigration, and also what instructions had been sent to the Agent-General. If they were to understand the telegrams which had been sent home, immigration—English, Scotch, and Irish—he would not go beyond that—was to be stopped, and, therefore, he should like to know when the next immigrant ship might be expected to leave England?

The PREMIER said the hon. member could easily get the fullest information he sought by calling for the papers, which contained a record of the action taken by the Government up to the present time with regard to immigration. He should only be too glad to put those papers on the table, but, in the meantime, he might tell the hon. member what action the Government had taken. At first they telegraphed to the Agent-General to ease off emigration; but they re-considered the matter, and then telegraphed to stop it altogether—the first instructions were rescinded. Instructions had also been sent home that when immigration was resumed it would be upon a different basis, particulars of which would be sent. In easing off immigration, the Agent-General was to carry out all engagements made up to the time of receiving instructions, and the last ship for which engagements had been made arrived here to-day. Another vessel would also bring out all those who had paid a portion of their passage money, as they were entitled to their passages legally. All other engagements with regard to immigration were at a standstill, and would be so until instructions were sent home to resume it. When it was recommenced it would be upon a different basis, and he believed the arrangements would be of such a character as to ensure a better class of immigrants. He should be happy to lay the papers on the table, so that hon. members could see what had been done.

Mr. GROOM said he was sure the hon. gentleman, although not in charge of these particular Estimates, would understand that it was a usual courtesy to supply all information to the Committee. After hearing the explanation of the hon. gentleman, he would ask the Committee what necessity there was for voting

such an enormous sum of money as £2,600 for the immigration staff at home, in addition to which there was a sum of £1,682 on the Loan Estimates, including £800 for an Executive Engineer, whoever he might be. If he understood the hon. gentleman aright, it would be six months before another immigrant ship would leave England for this colony; and in the face of that, and in the face of a deficit in the revenue, he contended they had no right to keep up an expensive establishment in London doing nothing. It would be an injustice to move the striking out of the Agent-General's salary and to leave the others; and, therefore, with a view to test the opinion of the Committee, he would move that the first item of £1,300 for the salary of the Agent-General in England be reduced by £300.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said his contention was that if there was no immigration they did not want an Agent-General, and they should do as they used to many years ago —appoint a gentleman to act as Agent at a salary of £600 or £700 a year. He was not sure that he should care to go with the motion of the hon. member for Toowoomba. If an Agent-General was to be at home at all he should be paid, but if not he should go altogether. On that ground he hoped the hon. member would withdraw the amendment and let the whole item be put to the Committee.

Mr. PATERSON wished to know whether the proposed new arrangements contemplated in the matter of immigration would involve the continuance of an Agent-General or not, as the present was the proper time to have such information? It had suggested itself to him, that if they were to expend a similar amount to that voted last year for salaries, &c.—namely, £10,500 —for the purpose of introducing immigrants from other colonies, they would get a far better class of people than they had got from the mother country for some years past. A sum of £10,500 would pay for the passages of between 2,000 and 3,000 immigrants from other colonies — from centres of population which would be glad to be relieved of them—and we should thus get people far superior to those who had been sent from Britain. Ten or twelve years ago he mooted the idea that female servants should be introduced from Tasmania, where females preponderated, and no doubt the people in Tasmania, thinking highly of Queensland, were favourable to the idea. If the same facilities were given for immigration from the other colonies as were given from England, they would be largely availed of by the unemployed, who they were told were walking about seeking work. He wished to hear whether the department was to be carried on as hitherto?

The PREMIER said that the stoppage of immigration involved the doing away with none of the permanent heads of the department at home. It made a little difference in the expenses of travelling about the country, but did not take so much work off their Agent-General's shoulders as to call for a reduction of his salary. The Agent-General was required; and, in reply to the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan), he would tell him that the system he considered would be cheaper had been tried by other colonies and had been found about the most expensive system of any. They might get a man at a salary of £500 or £600 a year, but the amount of his perquisites was so great, and which ultimately came out of the purse of the colony, that it became the more costly system of the two. The Agent-General's department had nothing specially to do with immigration, although immigration was the head under which it appeared in the Estimates. The office in Brisbane had been slightly reduced, and the staff might be further reduced if immigration were suspended for a longer period than was contemplated at the time the Estimates were framed. The contingencies had been reduced, but it was understood that if immigrants were not introduced the expenses under this head would not be incurred to the same extent. By referring to the Loan Fund Estimates hon. members would see that the expenses of active immigration had been curtailed. The Agent-General was in no way specially connected with it; the "despatching officer" was appointed by law, and was a permanent office, but a great reduction had been made in the number of clerks employed. It was only from custom that the Agent-General's department came under the head of immigration, and the provision for an Agency-General coming under that heading was apt to mislead hon. members. In regard to the suggestion of the hon. member (Mr. Paterson) to introduce immigrants from the other colonies, it looked very feasible, but on consideration it would be seen it would engage the colony in very questionable business. The question before the Committee was the reduction of the Agent-General's salary of £300 because his duties were lightened by a temporary stoppage of immigration; but that was not a sufficient reason for the reduction, because the Agent-General had other duties to perform.

Mr. PATERSON was satisfied with the information he had obtained, and was glad to hear the duties the Agent-General still continued to perform rendered the office requisite in London.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said that by abolishing the Agency-General they would do themselves more harm at home by that piece of parsimony than they could possibly do in any other way. It was essential the colony should be represented in England, and as the other colonies paid salaries of £1,500 a-year and more, there was nothing extra-

ordinary in this estimate. In the Governor's Speech it was said Government intended to place immigration in London under more efficient supervision. He did not know, at the time, whether it was contemplated to remove the present occupant of the position of Agent-General, but, as it was a good opportunity, he now asked the Government whether the interpretation he had made of that clause of the Speech was correct?

The PREMIER said there was no intention on the part of the Government to remove the Agent-General. The passage in the Governor's Speech simply referred to the instructions sent to the Agent-General with regard to the class of immigrants to be sent out.

Mr. DICKSON said that on a former occasion he had referred to an after-dinner speech of the Premier, in which he expressed very decided views in favour of a continuance of German immigration; and pointed out that that speech was almost immediately followed by an order from the Colonial Secretary to stop German immigration, and to reduce British immigration by one-third. He wished to know whether any instructions had been sent to the Agent-General to resume German immigration at any future time when the Government favoured the resumption of immigration from Great Britain? He (Mr. Dickson) looked upon German immigrants as having been of great value in *bonâ fide* settlement, and had felt much dissatisfied when the favourable speech of the Premier was not ratified by the action of his colleague.

The PREMIER said he had never made a speech of the kind referred to. When a German gentleman proposed the toast to which he responded at a dinner at Ipswich, he (the Premier) took occasion to defend himself from a charge brought against him that he had always been opposed to German immigration, and said that in some respects the Germans possessed qualities which neither the English, Irish, nor Scotch, possessed as immigrants. But he certainly never made a speech in favour of German immigration over British, because he did not believe in it, and as long as he was in office he should favour immigrants from Great Britain as against those from Germany. As to the instructions sent home, German immigration was stopped first simply because there were no contracts in existence for bringing out German immigrants. That was not the case with immigration from British ports, and the contracts which they were bound to carry out had not even yet expired.

Mr. DICKSON quoted a passage from the newspaper report of the speech referred to, in which the Premier was made to say of the Germans that "he acknowledged their value as settlers before even Englishmen, Scotchmen, or Irishmen."

The PREMIER said he had never expressed any such sentiment at any public meeting or banquet in his life, and if he did not contradict it before it was because his views on the matter were so well known that he did not think it worth while to do so.

Mr. PATERSON said it was impossible for the Premier, as a Scotchman, ever to have made such a statement; there was not a Scotchman on the face of the earth who believed he was inferior to a German, an Englishman, or an Irishman.

Mr. REA said they had now learnt that they must not attach any importance to the Premier's after-dinner speeches, and, further, that they must not attend to anything found in the Governor's Speech, and that it would not be difficult to load a ship with emigrants from the colony. The last statement was quite true, and it was occasioned by the Government supporting big-salaried officials and dismissing working men.

Mr. DOUGLAS expressed a hope that the correspondence with the Agent-General would be laid on the table at as early a period as possible. With regard to the vote under immediate consideration, he assumed that the amount was deliberately arrived at, and that that decision would not be interfered with now. The position of the Agent-General was that of a trusted officer to whom was confided the carrying out of important business transactions, and if the office was abolished the colony would have to pay far larger sums in the form of commissions to mercantile houses.

Mr. GROOM asked what contracts were now in existence in England for the conveyance of immigrants from Great Britain to Queensland? He understood the contract with McIlwraith and Company was for two years. If immigration was to be discontinued, were they to receive compensation for the discontinuance of the contract?

The PREMIER said that about June last year tenders were called for the conveyance of immigrants from the different ports of England, and the contracts were let to three firms. There was some doubt as to whether it would be a breach of contract to stop immigration, but whether or not the Government were bound to stop it. There was a clause in the agreement, however, somewhat to the effect that the contractors had no claim against the Government if they were unable to fill the ships, and the position of the Government was then such that they could not fill the ships. A letter had been sent to the Agent-General instructing him to inform the contractors of the state of the case, and make arrangements by which they would be entitled to send out the same number of ships as before, when immigration was resumed. There did not appear to be any likelihood of the Government getting into difficulties.

Mr. DOUGLAS: Will the hon. gentleman take an early opportunity of laying the papers on the table?

The PREMIER: Yes; and also correspondence connected with immigration.

Mr. DICKSON asked whether under the instructions German immigration would be resumed?

The PREMIER said no instructions had been sent with regard to German immigration.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) asked whether a sum of £220 would be placed on the Supplementary Estimates to make the salaries of wardsmen the same as last year?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the wardsman at Maryborough had to his knowledge efficiently discharged all the work of a clerk in connection with Polynesian immigration. He hoped the Colonial Treasurer would take that into consideration, and see that the officer was paid accordingly.

Mr. KINGSFORD asked whether the wardsmen received employment elsewhere?

The PREMIER was understood to say that nearly all were engaged elsewhere.

Mr. GROOM would call attention, on public grounds, to a sign of retrenchment in the wrong direction. A wardsman and his wife in charge of an immigration depôt were reduced from £80 to £40—a reduction of 100 per cent. The high-class Civil Servant—the eye-glass man who walked down Queen street with his umbrella, drove a buggy, and came to his office at eleven o'clock in the morning and left at two—was allowed to go scot-free, while the salaries of the real working bees were reduced.

The PREMIER said these wardsmen would have nothing to do in connection with immigration for at least six, if not nine months, and were able to take other employment.

Mr. SIMPSON said that as immigration was stopped, he understood that those people were acting merely as caretakers. Under those circumstances they were not badly off.

Mr. MOREHEAD said reference had been made to the subject of German immigration, and he wished to take the opportunity to put himself right, not only with the Committee, but also with the country. He had advisedly, and he thought properly, opposed German immigration upon two grounds: first, because he thought it was dearer to import Germans than our own flesh and blood; and, secondly and principally, because he held that the British colonies should be for the British people. He had been much misinterpreted and misunderstood by the public outside on those two points, and he wished to state his opinion clearly to the inhabitants of the colony. Until they had exhausted the British Islands they had no right to go abroad to get colonists. They could get plenty from our own country without going to Germany, and it was cheaper to import our own countrymen than the foreign element. In connection with this question, which was becoming a national one, he had found out lately that it had been asked, with reference to every election, "How is the German vote going?" He maintained that directly a particular vote came to be used as a factor in the electoral system, it was the duty of the State to intervene and consider how that factor originated. That factor was considered in America as the most dangerous that they had there; and in support of his statement he would point to two articles written in the April and May numbers, he believed, of the *North American Review*. The danger he had alluded to some eighteen months ago was one that was growing in America, and had been described by the writer in this review as a growing evil as well as danger—namely, the German element. The English nation was the freest people under God's sun, notwithstanding the opinion of the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) that the German nation was the freest. If the hon. member denied that he had said that, he would accept his denial; but the fact remained. He would further point out to the Committee that, if they imported Germans at the expense of the State, they would be creating here the same evil that existed and was growing in the United States. He would be the very last to prohibit German immigration, but let them come at their own expense. He would have the colony free to all, even to Chinamen, who were obnoxious to some members of the Committee; but he should not foster or assist the introduction of a foreign element; and if he did so it should not be in favour of the Germans. It had been proved by the writer of the articles in this American review that the German was the most dangerous element that could be introduced. By importing Germans, Communists were introduced. At the present moment the state of Germany was such that the authorities were attempting to expel the Socialists. That had been Prince Bismarck's policy from the commencement. He had tried by every restrictive law to make Socialists leave their land: and these were the men the colony was paying to have introduced. The position that he took up eighteen months ago, when he objected to German immigration being subsidised—and was in consequence held up to opprobrium—was the proper one, and was warranted by what he saw in other countries. In America there were German communities established for many years, who would not allow their children, who had been born and bred in the land, to learn English; and in this colony, in the Logan

electorate, according to a letter to the papers which had never been contradicted, German children were taken from schools because they were taught English. If this was to be a German colony, let it be so, and let the worst be known. Let it be known that the population was to be German Socialists. Their ideas might be right or wrong; he hoped they were utterly wrong, but, at any rate, let the colony know what it was doing by importing Germans. He had known as good men who were Germans as of any other nation; but he repeated, that until the colony had exhausted its natural source of supply, which he took to be the British Isles, they had no right to go further afield. He had been very much abused and misunderstood on this German question, and had he received fair play, which had not been given to him on the subject, the opinion outside would have been very different; his opinion, however, was, that in introducing the German element they were bringing a most dangerous one into the country. He should like to educate the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) in regard to his view that Germans were the freest nation. Did he know that in the year 1817, Germans were absolutely sold as slaves? They were then called Dutchmen, although the Dutch was a greater nation than the German was ever likely to be. They were sold as slaves in North America, and negroes were their purchasers. The hon. member for Brisbane laughed, but he was prepared to prove the statement. This vaunted nation was, within the first twenty years of this century, sold as slaves in America. So much for the vaunted freedom of the Germans! They had no right to introduce into this colony men from a nation which was so military-ridden as the German. There was no freer country under the sun than Queensland and the other Australian colonies; and if a race of men was brought here who had come from a land where they were subject to military conscription, where they might be torn from their homes at any time, and were bound to serve a certain number of years in the army, they were not introducing the class of people they should. They were bringing either "culls" or Socialists—men who were not considered by their native State capable of bearing military discipline, or men who, owing to their socialistic tendencies, were expelled from their country. They were bringing in weak or not strongly constitutioned men, or men whom Germany was pleased to get rid of. He took this opportunity of giving his opinion about German immigration, because he held that the views he expressed two years ago were fully and thoroughly confirmed by the arguments in this leading American review. If any member of the Committee would have the hardihood to dispute the opinion of that review, let him do so, and he would get the worst of the argument.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the hon. member claimed that he had been misrepresented in the attack that he made upon German colonists two years ago, and, in order that he should not be misunderstood, had told the Committee several times that German immigrants were either "culls" or "Socialists." The hon. member had not been misrepresented; or if there had been any misrepresentation heretofore it had been in his favour. The arguments that he had used to show why German immigrants made undesirable colonists would go to show that the New England States were necessarily not free states, because they were founded by an undesirable class of men: because men fled from persecution or despotism, they were unfit—according to the hon. member—to be the founders of a free country; but history showed that the founders of free countries had been men who were the most anxious and the most willing to run risks to escape from persecution or despotism. He was happy to think, however, that there was not one member, or more than one member, in the Assembly who agreed with the hon. member in the observations that he had made, and beyond this he did not think that his repeated attacks upon a most respectable and valuable class of the community deserved any notice.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he felt pained on listening to the deliberate and studied observations of the hon. member for Mitchell. He gave him credit for a great deal of personal courage, but the hon. member had allowed his courage to degenerate into audacity, when, in setting himself right on the subject of his opinion regarding German immigration, he also placed it on record that he was the inveterate opponent of that class of immigration to this colony. He was sorry that the hon. member, who no doubt, in common with many hon. members, boasted of his British descent, should have committed himself to observations reflecting so seriously upon a nationality to which they were indebted for all the grand and noble qualities which made the Anglo-Saxon race the premier race of the world. Should they say anything derogatory to their German colonists because they had been forced by the laws of their country to subject themselves to the conscription, to be called out for military service? Did they not know that those who elevated Britain out of the state of savagery in which it originally was, and laid the foundation of the great Empire they now beheld, were simply military men? Military discipline and training did not cause men to degenerate in their physical or moral qualities—the argument was all the other way. The poor ignorant Boor, who had never seen anything which tended

to give men an enlarged view of life, was not the man who, on emigrating, could be made an intelligent colonist. The German nation as a nation was educated, and was the foremost country in the world to insist upon compulsory education for the very humblest of its people; and it was too late in the day to begin and reflect upon that nation as not containing the elements of the foundation of a great nationality. They ought to be thankful that they were able to weave into the elements composing our infant nationality here the same materials that went to make their fatherland what it was. They were following a very excellent model in this matter, and what went to make England great would, by the operation of the same inevitable law, make us great. He was astonished that an hon. member with the intelligence the hon. member for Mitchell possessed should make use of the arguments he did about the German Socialists. They all knew that Socialism was a thing of comparatively recent date — one of those little social eruptions that sprung up on the surface, made a rumbling noise, and passed away to be heard of no more; and the sooner it broke out clearly and came to a head the sooner would Germany be relieved of it, and be better socially, politically, and in every other way. He did not place the slightest reliance on statements of writers in American reviews. Some of the writers in these American serials were the most flagitious liars that ever put pen to paper, and he placed no more reliance upon their statements than he did on those made by the gentlemen known as "Mark Twain" or "Petroleum *v.* Nasby." When these writers stated a fact so utterly abhorrent to our common-sense as that intelligent Europeans had been sold as slaves to Negroes, they committed themselves to a statement of startling absurdity which branded all their literary compositions in a way that rendered them utterly unworthy of acceptance by any man of common-sense. The dangers referred to by the hon. member for Mitchell were purely imaginary. He (Mr. Rutledge) hailed the advent of these men to our shores. They were characterised by intelligence and industry, and, while some people were crying out that they could not make a living upon less than 640 or 1,280 acres of land, these people settled upon ten and twenty acres, and not only kept themselves and their families respectably, but were saving money—and inculcating by their example thrift, and economy, and industry, which would do more than anything else to make this nation, as suggested in other respects, one of the greatest on the face of the earth.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member who had just sat down had challenged his statements, and talked very learnedly about what they wanted to weave into our infant nationality. He agreed with the hon. member that they were an infant nationality, but he joined issue with him as to what they should weave into it. They should weave into it their own flesh and blood, and not the foreign element. Upon that point he was willing to meet the hon. member upon any hustings or in any electorate in the colony. The hon. member also said that the authority he (Mr. Morehead) alluded to was not a competent authority;—whether it was competent or not he (Mr. Morehead) offered no opinion, but he would point out that he held in his hand the *North American Review* for April, 1879, a work that had been published for sixty-four years, and was a recognised authority in literature. The article he referred to, and would now quote from, was headed "German Socialism in America," and the text upon which it was founded was by Professor Fawcett, who would be taken as an authority by some hon. members, though perhaps the hon. member for Enoggera had never heard of him—his name was not the Rev. Mr. Buggins. The text was:—

"No one who watches events which are now happening can doubt that, if Socialism should continue to advance with so much rapidity as it has lately shown in Germany and the United States, the day is not far distant when the Socialists will be able to control the legislations of these countries."

Such were the warning words recently uttered at the English University of Cambridge by the eminent economist and member of Parliament, Mr. Henry Fawcett. He thought a very good sermon might be preached upon that text; and if the facts were as Professor Fawcett believed, and as he (Mr. Morehead) and others believed, they would be perfectly justified in preventing the introduction of Germans in this colony. He would go further, in order to bear out what he said before:—

"In Germany, the classic land of modern Socialism, the new creed was first proclaimed. * * * * It seems, indeed, curious that Socialism, a movement so menacing to the peace of the military despotisms of the Russian and German Empires, should have reached our shores, and found foothold in this land of freedom and plenty. It was long believed that neither discord nor discontent could ever cross the threshold of the young Republic. She was the home of the oppressed, the asylum of the outcast. In a land flowing with milk and honey, where fortune and nature had vied each other in their gifts, men thought to see the realization of humanity's fondest hopes. Endowed with wealth, with all the fundamental principles of political liberty, a boundless and exhaustless territory, it seemed as if America were destined to dispel the night of ages and to regenerate mankind. With earnest solicitude the wisest heads of Europe watched the progress of the great experiments. But the outbreak of the war of secession, foreseen and

predicted by De Tocqueville, brought all calculation to a standstill, and modified and convulsed the whole condition of our social fabric. It introduced caste. It made the Republic a plutocracy. It altered and remoulded our commercial and economic systems. It fostered protection. It created speculation, extravagance, an immense debt, and poverty. It was through the operation of these changes and innovations that the prevalence of Socialistic principles became possible in the United States; and while we have been discussing the possibility of a Mongol invasion, and the incapacity of the negro for responsible Governments, we have failed to notice the new enemy who may at no distant day plunge capital and labour into a conflict calculated to test the strength of a weak Government even more severely than the late Civil war."

This review was only two months old, and he contended that what he had read showed that he was perfectly right, two years ago, in pointing out the danger impending over the State from the introduction of Germans. The danger which the United States now apprehended was not a Mongolian invasion, not the supremacy of the Negro, but the invasion of Germans. The hon. member for Enoggera did not exactly say that he (Mr. Morehead) had drawn upon his imagination for his facts, but he would lead people to believe so when he (Mr. Morehead) stated that in 1817 a number of Germans were purchased by free Negroes in America; but his statement was perfectly correct. This review said:—

"In the year 1817, six thousand German redemptioners were landed in Pennsylvania, where whole families were purchased by free negroes, of which there were then large numbers in Maryland. [See official report, p. 27, of Herr von Fürstenvärther, Stuttgart and Tubingen, 1818."

He had further stated that the Germans were a particularly clanish race, and did not readily amalgamate with those amongst whom they settled, and in support of that he would read this extract:—

"That the German, despite the quality of infection that characterises his doctrine, is of a clanish nature which with difficulty loses all trace of German origin, may be easily seen in Pennsylvania, the State which has suffered most from the ravages of Socialism. In that State there may be found at the present day whole communities of these people who have preserved the mother tongue to the exclusion of the English language."

The extracts he had read contained the words of a man who had evidently studied the subject, and he (Mr. Morehead) had done good service to the colony in referring to them and in describing the imminent danger the colony would be placed in if they continued German immigration to the same extent they had done. He looked upon this colony as his own, and that of his children, and he and his children would probably die in it, and therefore he had a right to protest against such a dangerous element being introduced. Some hon. members were not natives of the soil, but he was, and he wanted to hold it. He had no desire that the land which belonged to the great nation to which he was proud to belong should go into the hands of foreigners, and until they had exhausted the British Isles they had no right to introduce foreigners here. Before bringing his remarks to a close he would read the concluding paragraph of the article from which he had been quoting. The writer said—

"In conclusion, it may be well to say that no spirit of pessimism or sensation has prompted this task. In first directing his attention to Socialism in America, the writer was moved by motives of pure curiosity. No one could have been more surprised at the discovery of so perfect an organisation, the fanatic earnestness of its followers, and the strength of its numbers. Nor can we view, without grave apprehension, the fact that Prince Bismark is at present secretly encouraging the emigration to the United States of proscribed German agitators, and defraying their expenses from the enormous secret service fund at the command of the Imperial Chancellor. For the present we must part with our subject, postponing for final consideration in a succeeding paper the protective measures necessary to shield American society from the schemes of the German Government, and the menacing confederation which honeycombs the Union from sea to sea."

If he had done no other good in taking up the question that evening, he had shown that he was in earnest in pointing out to the Committee and to the country at large the danger to be apprehended from an encouragement of German immigration.

Mr. Horwitz said they had been told by the hon. member that Germans were not worthy to be in Queensland, and that English, Irish, and Scotch people should have the preference. He quite agreed with the hon. member in respect to the latter part of the remark, as this was an English colony. At the same time there had been a great many Germans brought to it who were no disgrace to it. The hon. member distinctly told them that he did not believe in any strangers coming to what he was pleased to claim as his country; but he (Mr. Horwitz) also claimed the colony as belonging to him in the same way as the hon. member did. The hon. member said he did not believe in Germans, but yet the hon. member believed in kanakas. He had not intended to take any part in the debate; but he noticed that no hon. member had expressed an opinion why immigration should be stopped. He considered that they should keep up English, Scotch, and Irish immigration, but not of the same character as formerly; and why should they import kanakas when they left off bringing white people? They should get

white people from the other colonies, and offer them inducements to come by either giving them land for nothing or else on the most liberal terms. They had been paying a large sum of money every year for immigrants, a great number of whom, immediately on their arrival, left for Sydney; but the hon. member was very glad to get rid of that population so long as he could get kanakas.

Mr. MOREHEAD as a matter of explanation stated that the only man he had in his own personal employment was a German.

Mr. MCLEAN said that representing as he did a large number of Germans, it would not be right if he did not enter his most emphatic protest against the statements which had been made that evening by the hon. member for Mitchell. That hon. member read extracts from the *North American Review*, and also told the Committee a great deal about Socialism in Germany, but what the Committee had to do was to look at the evidence they had before them: if they did so they would find with all the German population there was in the colony they had never been able to discover any traces of Socialism. He was as proud of his nationality as a Scotchman as any man, but he must do the Germans the justice to say that there was every reason to be proud of those who had come to the colony. They had been to a large extent the mainstay of the colony, as the greater portion of them were engaged in pursuits that would tend to make it a great nation. The letter which had been referred to had reference to the religious teaching only. The Germans were as a rule a most religious nation, and they held that their children should be taught religion in the schools. From what the Premier said at Ipswich, he (Mr. McLean) never thought that the Germans would again be subjected to such insults as had been cast upon them that evening by the hon. member for Mitchell.

The PREMIER said he had not thought hon. members opposite were so soft as to be "drawn" by the member for the Mitchell into making speeches that would make their return safe at the next election. The opinions which had been expressed by the hon. member for Mitchell were his own, and not those of himself (the Premier) or the Government. He (the Premier) did not wish to say what his opinions were in the matter, but he might say that he had done his best to restrain the hon. member from carrying on the discussion to the extent he had done that evening.

Mr. GROOM said he could not let the speech of the hon. member for Mitchell pass unnoticed, notwithstanding what had been said by the Premier, for this reason that the hon. member for Mitchell commenced his remarks by talking about the German vote. He (Mr. Groom) could state, without fear of contradiction, that the present Treasurer owed his seat to the German vote. He (Mr. Groom) and his colleague were returned by the German vote, and they both assisted to put the Premier in his present position; and the Minister for Lands was returned by the German vote, which materially assisted in putting the present Government in office. In regard to the remarks which were made by the member for Mitchell on a former occasion, he (Mr. Groom) had found great difficulty in reconciling himself to his German friends at Toowoomba on that account. They considered that he should have got up and defended them at the time He had advocated their cause before, and he did so now freely. The German colonists had done a great amount of good; they had lived on areas which other persons would have failed to live on, and as far as culture was concerned they had done more than any other class. They had heard a good deal about Socialism. Whatever else they might introduce, the Germans left that behind them on the Continent, and did not bring with them the heart-burnings and antagonisms which he feared some other classes of immigrants did, setting man against man, wife against husband, and sister against brother. He hoped the town of Toowoomba might never be surrounded by a worse class of people than German settlers.

Mr. GRIMES said that wherever he had seen Germans they were industrious, sober, and inoffensive, and he was pleased to add his testimony to their good character.

Mr. DICKSON said the hon. member for Mitchell had gone very fully into the question of German immigration at so late an hour as to place hon. members at a great disadvantage, for if it appeared from *Hansard* that his remarks had passed almost unchallenged, it would be assumed they could not be replied to. He dissented *in toto* from the opinions of the hon. member for Mitchell, whose remarks were a gross calumny on one of the most important sections of our community, who deserved to be respected by their fellow-colonists. He invited the contrast between the condition of the small holdings of the German settlers and those of our own nationality—the industry, frugality, and care of the former standing out in striking relief. It was not in regarding German settlement as a voting power that it should be considered, but as a class of settlers in the true sense conducing to the interests of the colony.

Mr. BEATTIE drew attention to the reduction of the salaries of the wardsmen in the depôts in the different towns of the colony, who, they were informed, were now only to be considered as caretakers with reduced pay, in consequence of the stoppage of immigration. Why had not such a reduction been made at the depôt in

Brisbane? Was the wardsman there to receive full salary for the purpose of paying attention to the South Sea Islanders introduced and placed in the depôt under his supervision? He hoped that officer would not be paid for his work out of the immigration vote, but out of the Polynesian vote, his services now being required for them only. The reduction of the salaries to £36 was a very important matter with those men, and although they had a house to live in with it, still it was hardly fair to them, and he hoped the full money would be put on the Supplementary Estimates. He had not seen the serious objections to the class of immigrants introduced during the past few years that some hon. members seemed to entertain, and the men he saw landed on the wharf that day were as healthy, hearty a set of men as were ever introduced into the colony. He hoped hon. members would not on every occasion take the opportunity of making a wholesale denunciation of the immigrants. They did not deserve it, and it tended to create a feeling in their minds which was one cause why they left the colony.

Mr. Rea had intended to call attention to the matters just mentioned in regard to wardsmen, but was glad it had been done by a member of a metropolitan constituency.

Mr. Douglas said the hon. member for the Mitchell had raised a discussion in which he had compared the German with others. They had been informed it was not a question of British or German immigration, as it had been decided there should be no immigration at all. That was the present position, and, much as he regretted it, they must submit; but, in the meantime, until the correspondence was laid on the table of the House, he should decline to say anything further, except to say that he would take an early opportunity, having seen the correspondence, of raising a discussion. While so far congratulating the hon. member for the Mitchell that he had treated the subject seriously, he (Mr. Douglas) regretted that the hon. member should have taken action simply for the purpose of branding their German fellow-countrymen as "culls" and Socialists. It was not necessary to go for information to America or anywhere else. They had proof before them;—they were in immediate intercourse with these their fellow-colonists, and knew that in all the attributes of good colonists the Germans stood with the first. The hon. member instanced a statement made by that writer, that Germans had been sold as slaves in one of the cities of America; but, supposing it were true, in the course of their own lifetime children in England had been worked almost as slaves underground; and at the present day there were dens of infamy and savagery in great cities like Glasgow, Liverpool, and London, which defied the treatment of the most philanthropic. But they also knew that that terrible barbarism which lay at the bottom of their civilisation existed alongside of the most wonderful vigour which they could not help recognising. It was no use reading quotations of that kind here, for scarcely a hundred years had elapsed since people were burnt as witches in Scotland, but they should not therefore affirm that the Scotch people were not characterised by the many virtues attributed to them. It was further imputed to the German settlers that they spoke a foreign language; but for generations the French colonists of Canada had retained their own language and were yet good colonists and British subjects; and there were also villages in Canada where purer Gaelic was spoken than in the Highlands of Scotland. This was a mere trait of their nationality which they carried with them to new countries, and which would, no doubt, be obliterated in time, and was not a sufficient ground for such an indictment as had been made against them by the hon. member for Mitchell.

Mr. Rea was surprised to find that no remonstrance had been made from the other side against the monstrous statements of the hon. member for Mitchell, while hon. members on this side had been roundly accused by the Premier of making electioneering speeches. The hon. member ought to be aware of what was done in Sydney in 1817, within a dozen yards of the house where he was born: it would compare in atrocity with anything ever done in Germany.

Question put and passed.

The Chairman left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at eight minutes to 12, till the following day (Friday).