

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 1879

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 10 September, 1879.

Divisional Boards Bill—third reading.—Formal Motion*
—Motion for Adjournment.—Mineral Oils Bill—
re-committal.—Supply—committee.

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

DIVISIONAL BOARDS BILL—THIRD
READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By Mr. COOPER—

1. That the Bill to enable John Hurley and others to construct a Line of Railway from the

Burram Coal Mines to the Mary River be referred to a Select Committee.

2. That such Committee have power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House, and consist of Mr. Macrossan, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Bailey, Mr. Beor, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Norton, and the Mover.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. MOREHEAD moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of pointing out what appeared to be a great mistake on the part of the Government in their appointment of the Executive Commissioner to the Sydney Exhibition. He must say that not only was he himself surprised, but many others also, when they saw the nomination of Mr. Gresley Lukin to fill the position, and from the time it was gazetted till now he (Mr. Morehead) had been pursuing his researches in order to discover where that gentleman's competence for the position came in; but he had not found it. He did not see that either by ability or position, or in any way whatever, was Mr. Lukin entitled to the office he now held. There were many men in this colony and in New South Wales who would have filled it with greater honour and credit than Mr. Lukin. He had only been able to discover one reason in his favour, and that was the notorious success which followed the sending of Mr. Mackay to Philadelphia. The late Government having succeeded in getting such an admirable man from the *Courier* office, the present Government concluded that another suitable man could be got only from that establishment, and accordingly selected Mr. Lukin for the position of Commissioner. He could quite understand why Mr. Lukin had not gone to America, because a man of so much importance in his own estimation might, if he had gone there, have caused the world to revolve in the other direction. Mr. Lukin would certainly astonish the Commissioners for the other colonies, and might have such an effect on them as was said to be produced by a celebrated vermin-destroying powder—they would tumble over and die on the spot. There was great danger to the colony from the way in which the *Courier* newspaper was petted by every Government which came into office. Let hon. members look at the extraordinary character of the proprietary of the paper. There were three individuals concerned in it besides Mr. Lukin, all of whom might be called Civil Servants—two of them were Civil Servants, and the third, Mr. Browne, was the partner of a Civil Servant. And this was the power that was to rule the colony! He would like to read an extract in reference to the Press in America, which, although it did not apply so much here as in America, it did so to a certain extent, and some of the remarks

were absolutely applicable to the present state of affairs. The extract read as follows:—

“Among measures to be adopted, I would suggest to make as earnest and vigorous an assault on the Press as has already been made, and with effect, on the Church. The Church has much improved within a few years, but the Press is almost, without exception, corrupt. I believe that in this country the Press exerts a greater and more pernicious influence than the Church did in its worst period in the middle ages. We are not a religious people, but we are a nation of politicians. We do not care for the Bible, but we do care for the newspaper. At any meeting of politicians—like that at Concord the other evening, for instance—how impertinent it would be to quote from the Bible—how pertinent to quote from a newspaper, on the Constitution. The newspaper is a bible which we read every morning and every afternoon, standing and sitting, riding and walking. It is a bible which every man carries in his pocket, which lies on every table and counter, and which the mail and thousands of missionaries are continually dispersing. It is, in fact, the only book which America has printed and which America reads. So wide is its influence. The editor is a preacher whom you voluntarily support. Your tax is commonly one cent. daily, and it costs you nothing for pew hire. But how many of these preachers preach the truth? I repeat the testimony of many an intelligent foreigner, as well as my own convictions, when I say that probably no country was ever ruled by so mean a class of tyrants as, with a few noble exceptions, are the editors of the periodical Press in this country. And, as they live and rule only by their servility and appealing to the worse and not the better nature of man, the people who read them are in the condition of the dog that returns to his vomit.”

Every word of this applied to Mr. Lukin, even if it did not apply to the editors of other newspapers in the colony. He was a man who had taken advantage of everything in his power to malign and blacken the characters of any persons with whom he was at personal variance. He had abused him (Mr. Morehead), and he was at liberty to do so as much as he liked. That did not matter; but he was in the habit of abusing every person who was a friend of the man he disliked. He (Mr. Morehead) would repeat—it was a disgrace to the colony to be represented at the Sydney Exhibition by such a man, who had no title or right to the appointment. It would have been a graceful act if the Government had offered such an appointment to one who would have been admirably adapted for it, who would have done the work conscientiously and well, and who would have been an honour to the position—viz., the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas). No one could deny that that hon. gentleman would have been a credit to the colony. With reference to Mr. Lukin's management so far as it had gone, what did they find? This great and illustrious indi-

vidual could not do without two secretaries;—Mr. Layton was sent down as one, but that was not enough; it had been found necessary to appoint another. And probably Mr. Lukin was so great that he moved about in two cabs and lived at two clubs. He (Mr. Morehead) was able to inform the House from private sources in Sydney, that this Executive Commissioner was looked upon as an object of curiosity and caused no little amusement. Even the street arabs shrunk away and turned pale as the great man walked down the street. The fact was, it was impossible for any man in the world to be as wise as Mr. Lukin looked; and when he had his umbrella under his arm and stood with his arms folded and eyes turned sideways, he looked as he had seen him when playing the character of *Iago*. Mr. Lukin, however, might possibly make a mistake from his own point of view. Mr. Mackay received some honour and any amount of titles in America, but it was because he was not known; Mr. Lukin, at Sydney, would find that he was not far enough away from home, and that no prophet was without honour save in his own country. He (Mr. Morehead) could assure the House that Mr. Lukin was not thought very much of in Sydney; and when the sister colony was getting out from all parts of the world distinguished men, Queensland should have been represented by one who would have done her credit, which Mr. Lukin did not in any way whatever. He would now point out what a large expenditure and even waste of money there was in return for very little at this Exhibition. Already, as was seen by the returns laid upon the table to-day, £3,250 had been expended, and he had no doubt the amount would swell up to £7,000 or £8,000 before it was over. He believed Mr. Lukin knew nothing about finances, and it was too much to hope that the larger sum would not be realized. Mr. Lukin had gone down to Sydney to suit his own convenience, and he came up the other day to pay a flying visit, having been informed, so it was said, that the Ministry were in danger. He stopped twenty-four hours, and, the Opposition breaking to pieces, Mr. Lukin packed up his portmanteau and returned to Sydney with a consciousness that he had kept his friends in office. He (Mr. Morehead), however, seriously hoped there would be some expression of opinion from the House as to the propriety of this appointment. There were a dozen men in the Assembly, and outside of the House, and in New South Wales, who were better qualified to fill it, and he considered the Government had shown great lack of judgment in selecting the man they had for such a position. He trusted the whole colony was not going to be ruled by the *Courier*, and that whenever honours and emoluments

were to be given, people not connected with a newspaper might have some chance of getting it.

The PREMIER said that if the hon. gentleman had wished to get an expression of opinion from members as to the appointment of Mr. Lukin, he should have adopted some other course than moving the adjournment of the House. As to any influence the *Courier* might have upon the Government, if the hon. gentleman had ever observed the conduct of the Government he would have seen that he was wrong. Nor did he know what influence the *Courier* had upon the appointment of Mr. Lukin as Executive Commissioner, but he did believe that it was the best appointment that could be made. The hon. member (Mr. Morehead) had said that the hon. member for Maryborough would have done more credit to the colony. He (Mr. McIlwraith) differed from him, and as to Mr. Lukin's being fit for the appointment he had not the slightest doubt in the world. Whatever credit was due to the originator of the great society in Queensland was certainly due to Mr. Lukin; for, however hard Mr. Palmer might have worked, the original work was done by Mr. Lukin, and it was on account of his success in starting it that the appointment was made. As to the details, they were not in his (Mr. McIlwraith's) department; but he did not think the amount expended on the Exhibition would reach £7,000 or £8,000; in fact, he would take care that it should not. He believed it would cost £5,000, and no more. The Government had sanctioned £3,000, but the expenses had been more than was anticipated. As to the criticisms of the hon. member for the Mitchell of Mr. Lukin, nothing that had been said changed his opinion that the latter gentleman was a fit and proper person to send to Sydney as Executive Commissioner.

Mr. HILL said it struck him as very odd that Governments could not go outside the *Courier* office for representatives to these International Exhibitions. It looked too much like pandering to the Fourth Estate, and for his part he thought that the Press was acquiring, not only in this colony, but in other parts of the world, too much power, and taking too much upon themselves. Only yesterday, in the *Courier* he read that Lord Chelmsford, when he was leaving Cape Town, said—

"If, gentlemen, party feeling and political bias are to be allowed in the future to colour the writings and warp the judgment of those newspaper correspondents who accompany our armies when in the field, and if, whilst active operations are actually going on, persistent attempts to lower the general in the estimation of those he is commanding are to be considered as not exceeding the license granted to the

Press, I foresee that the gravest consequences to our arms must ensue, and I fear that the proper conduct of a campaign will become almost impossible."

That was, no doubt, a different matter from that under discussion, but a fair parallel could be drawn, because persistent attempts were made by the Press here to lower certain members of the Assembly in the eyes of their constituencies. In this respect he considered the Press was exceeding its license very much, and he complained of it the more because many of the censures and scurrilous writings were directed only against a few individuals on one side of the House. If one of its own satellites disgraced or misconducted himself in any way, the thing was unblushingly ignored. The most arrogant and idiotic speech he had heard in the House during the session was not criticised at all in the *Courier*, but the actions and words of others on his (Mr. Hill's) side of the House had been criticised in a most unfair and positively untrue manner. The Government had therefore shown an undue deference to that newspaper by appointing Mr. Lukin as a representative of the colony, which he in the true sense of the word was not. He did not see how a newspaper-editor man could be considered the representative man of a colony like this. What had Mr. Lukin done to deserve the distinction? What had he had to do with forming or making the colony; and what interests had he at stake? The *Courier* newspaper was a commercial speculation, and it was Mr. Lukin's business to make it sweet and saleable to the people of Brisbane; but to do this he was resorting to very unfair and unjust strictures, and treating public questions in a thoroughly one-sided manner. He (Mr. Hill) would have been better pleased to have seen either the hon. member for Maryborough or the Colonial Secretary appointed. They would have been truly representative men, and would have earned the esteem and respect of everyone in Sydney.

Mr. BAILEY said if a complaint with regard to the Press had come from the Opposition side of the House there would have been more excuse for it, for if any body of men had been thoroughly misrepresented, and both their actions and words placed wrongly before the people, it was the Opposition during the present session. If the *Courier* had been, as it had, a subservient servant of the Government, why should hon. gentlemen on the Ministerial side complain? The *Courier* had always condoned the offences and held up for admiration the party at present in power. It had been for years, more or less, the servant of that party, and these remarks would apply to other newspapers than the *Courier*. With very few exceptions, the newspapers of the colony adopted the same course, so

that either all the newspapers were wrong or all the members of the Opposition were wrong. This, however, was a kind of thing that cured itself. The Opposition held their peace, knowing full well that the people would before long force the editors of these newspapers to tell them the truth; and for their own sakes, as commercial transactions, to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He objected very much to the editor of a newspaper being brought to book in the House. If an editor slandered and maligned a man there were the courts of law for redress, and they, as members of the Assembly, should not abuse their privileges by discussing the offenders in the House. The papers might say what they pleased. False statements brought about their own remedy; and if people were told lies one year they would cease to believe them the next. He was rather gratified to hear where some of the revenue of the colony was going. With a decreasing revenue, the House had decided that the people in the country districts should make their own roads and bridges. Besides doing that, those people were constantly paying taxes, and they must be very pleased to hear that Mr. Gresley Lukin, with two secretaries and a few odd men, would take some £5,000 or £6,000 of the money they had contributed to the general revenue. In a few days they might hear of another even larger sum being uselessly frittered away by what he must call a very cruel Government.

The PREMIER wished to explain that the £3,250 would be mainly employed in the purchase of exhibits.

Mr. REA said that although there might be room for criticism as to the use which Mr. Lukin made of his newspaper, yet there was no doubt the Postmaster-General was equally open to remark, for he might be looked upon as the maligner-in-chief of the Opposition; and it was certain that no public writer more abused his position than he did by misrepresenting the information which he obtained as a Minister of the Crown. As to Mr. Lukin's qualifications as representative of the colony at Sydney, he need only say that if he were as successful—which he believed would be the case—as his predecessor was at Philadelphia, the colony would have no reason to complain.

Mr. MOREHEAD wished, in reply, to say a word on the Premier's statement that the Commission would not cost more than £5,000. The Colonial Secretary distinctly informed the House, when the vote for £3,200 was agreed to, that he would take care the amount should not be exceeded. The chances were that it would be doubled and trebled before the Exhibition was over. He sincerely trusted the Government would not allow Mr. Lukin to buy more

grosses of green spectacles, as Mr. Mackay did at Philadelphia. They had no guarantee that such would not be the case; and when they were told that Mr. Lukin was to have two secretaries and two or three clerks, it was surely high time to protest against such an extravagant waste of the public funds. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Wide Bay he need only remark that, though expressed from an Opposition point of view, they were identical in meaning with those expressed by the hon. member for Gregory. The gist of the remarks of both speakers was that there was no truth in the Press, and such, therefore, must be the case. He did not think the appointment of Mr. Lukin could be justified when better men were obtainable. There were hon. members on either side of the House, and in both Houses, who would have filled the office with far more credit to the colony.

The PREMIER: How could they get away?

Mr. MOREHEAD said they could have got away in the same manner that Mr. Simpson and other hon. members had got away—in the same way as the members of the Victorian Legislature, who had been appointed to represent that colony, had got away. The services of leading and eminent men might have been secured, and Mr. Lukin was neither a leading nor an eminent man. That gentleman was simply the editor of what he was pleased to term "the leading journal in the colony," an opinion which he (Mr. Morehead) did not share; and that was all. In no way whatever could Mr. Lukin be considered a fit and proper representative of the colony, but whatever might be the description of representatives sent by the other colonies he would be an admirable foil.

Mr. SCOTT wished to point out that there seemed to be some misapprehensions as to the expenditure of the money. The National Association were appointed to carry out the matter of the representation of the colony at the Sydney Exhibition, and they appointed a sub-committee who had the expenditure of the vote. A great portion of that money had been spent in purchasing specimens which were of intrinsic value, and by the re-sale of which most of the money would be recovered. For the expenditure of that money the sub-committee of the National Association, and not Mr. Lukin, was responsible.

The Hon. G. THORN said he noticed a statement in the *Melbourne Argus* of September 3rd, to the effect that complimentary season tickets for the Exhibition had been presented to the members of the Victorian Legislature. He wished to know from the Speaker, whether similar invitations had been sent to members of the Queensland Parliament?

The SPEAKER: In answer to the hon. member, I have to say that I have received a telegram—as has also the President of the Legislative Council—from the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, stating that season tickets will be given to the members of this Legislature.

Mr. MESTON said he felt bound to say a few words justifying the high character of the Queensland Press as compared with that of the other colonies and of America. Had he been aware that the question was to be brought forward, he would have been better prepared to speak on so important a subject. No doubt the actions of hon. members were sadly misinterpreted occasionally in the Press; but it was much better for the Press to err on the side of rashness than to hide their faults by not speaking out. In the Press, as in all other occupations, there were men of honour and men the reverse of honourable, and Pressmen did not claim infallibility more than any other class of the community; but the nature of their occupation tended to make them view public affairs calmly, dispassionately, and impartially. Hardly any hon. member had escaped being slandered, and unjustly slandered, in some paper or other during the session. He had not escaped journalistic castigation, nor did he desire to when it was deserved, and he fully recognised the justice of it. Certainly, if writers for the Press took the trouble to investigate facts a little more closely before commenting on them, the tone of the Press would be raised considerably; but misjudgments were not to be wondered at considering the pressure under which leading articles on a whole night's debate were written. Some papers, no doubt, took a one-sided view of politics, and it might be said that it was the duty of a public writer to regard impartially both sides of the House, and administer praise or censure wherever either was deserved. He had been much amused by a recent article in the *Rockhampton Bulletin*—and here he would tell the hon. member (Mr. Rea) that the Postmaster-General, though the proprietor of the *Bulletin*, could not be responsible for every article that appeared in it—which criticised deprecatingly the members of the Opposition without saying a syllable about the shortcomings of the Ministry and their followers. The portion of the article to which he referred ran as follows:—

"Mr. Griffith, the leader, is a good draughtsman, clever debater, and merciless vivisector, and that is all. Mr. Dickson knows a little about finance, but he would make a good original for Carlyle's famous 'Dryasdust.' The House is almost in a state of mental coma after a two or three hours' lesson of this gentleman's polysyllabic monotone, varied only by an occasional classic quotation grotesquely mispronounced and often ludicrously misapplied.

Mr. Garrick never gets beyond the limits of personal banter or frothy declamation. Mr. McLean ranges about the low-level platitudes of a Good Templar platform. Mr. Groom is a mere glib talker, dependent upon Sir Henry Parkes for ideas and stock Parliamentary phrases for the means of decently clothing them. This gentleman never speaks without forgetting that he is not on the stump; and his most potential deliverances travel in a small circle which does not extend beyond the limits of Darling Downs. Mr. Rutledge is the most promising and agreeable speaker of the party, but he is rather too fresh from the pulpit and too innocent of practical politics to assist very materially in giving tone to the debates. Mr. Miles is nothing when not an obstructionist. Mr. Paterson's strength lies in his commanding attitude, studied diction, and ostensible moderation. His weakness arises from the conviction he carries to the mind of his auditors that every speech has been painfully rehearsed before the looking-glass, and also from his eccentric use of certain high-sounding but not always appropriate words. Mr. Rea is as spiteful as a native cat. Mr. Meston dwells among heathen gods and Greek roots. Mr. Grimes reminds one of a mechanical nutmeg-grater. Mr. Bailey is a pert little jack-in-the-box, who might be a good speaker were he industrious and politically honest. Mr. Stubbley is a conceited bore. The only really capable political speaker on the Opposition side is Mr. Douglas, and even he is too impractical and crotchety to be of much service in legislation. Mr. Griffith excepted, there is a remarkable absence even of destructive talent on the Opposition benches. The capacity to talk drivel is very distinctly shown, but more than that is expected from an Opposition of twenty-four honourables, comprising fourteen aspirants to high office."

That was, no doubt, unjustly severe, and to some extent libellous; but the greatest offenders in that direction in the Queensland Press compared very favourably with the *Melbourne Argus*, *Age*, and *Australasian*, a perusal of which could only lead to the conclusion that there was not an honest man in the Victorian Assembly. Every member of Parliament was *ex-officio* a gentleman and a man of honour; and the Press ought to deal with them on that assumption, and, instead of trying to depreciate, place them in as favourable a light as possible before the people of the colony. This House would compare favourably with any Assembly in the Australian colonies, and, indeed, judging from scenes which had lately taken place in the House of Commons, with any in the world; and, as he had said before, the Press of the colony ought to criticise it impartially, giving censure and commendation wherever they were due. With one or two exceptions, the Press of Queensland was one of which they might justly be proud. Having edited a Queensland newspaper for three years, he was acquainted with the peculiarities and capacities of all the journalists

in the colony, and could say without hesitation that they were worthy of their position and their position was worthy of them. It was the privilege of members as public men to be misrepresented, and even grossly abused, by the Press occasionally, but they should not allow themselves to be swayed one way or the other by outside expressions of opinion. If the Press and the public agreed with them, all well and good; and if the contrary, so much the worse for the public and the Press. On the whole, hon. members had very little to complain of the Press of the colony, and it was better for the Press to err on the side of rashness than take no notice of their faults.

Question of adjournment put and negatived.

MINERAL OILS BILL—RE-COMMITTAL.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Order of the Day for the third reading of this Bill was discharged from the paper, and it was re-committed for the purpose of re-considering clause 6.

The PREMIER moved that clause 6—Penalty for selling dangerous oil—as read, stand part of the Bill.

Mr. DICKSON said the clause was originally introduced by the hon. member for North Brisbane (Mr. Griffith); and at the time he (Mr. Dickson) was apprehensive that such a restrictive measure would tend to interfere with traders. Subsequent inquiries had induced him to represent to the Premier that the Bill in its present shape would prevent large numbers of traders from selling kerosine oil at all, because in a large parcel there might be some portion which would bring the vendor under the heavy penalty provided. Believing that the Bill would be better without the clause, he proposed that it should be omitted.

Question put and negatived.

The Bill was reported to the House, read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council with message in the usual form.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

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

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) moved that £2,830 be granted for Public Works Office.

Mr. DICKSON said, before going into the consideration of these Estimates he should like to be informed whether the reductions which appeared were intended to be permanent, or whether they were on a par with those in other Estimates—framed in a spirit of retrenchment which subsequent experience had shown to be impracticable? Other Estimates—notably, for police and other services—had been restored to nearly their original condition. In this case there

was a reduction of ten persons—thirty-three were provided for, in place of forty-three last year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Estimates had been framed with a view to retrenchment, and for the purpose of carrying out retrenchment as far as possible. There were some slight differences in the number to be employed, which he would explain as they went along.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £2,060 be granted for Buildings Branch.

Mr. DICKSON asked how the Minister for Works would be able to make such a material reduction in the staff of that particular branch in view of the proposed large loan expenditure on public works, which would necessitate an increase rather than a reduction? Would the hon. gentleman state why he had reduced this branch by two foremen of works and one draftsman, making a total reduction of £637?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said one foreman of works had been transferred to the school department and the other was no longer required. As to the amount to be expended from Loan, nearly three years would be required to carry out the proposed works, and there were quite enough foremen of works to carry them out within that time.

Mr. THORN asked which were the foremen whose services had been dispensed with? He understood that it had been found necessary to appoint supernumerary foremen, and if these were struck off the Estimates they would probably be paid out of some other vote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said Mr. Ferguson had been transferred to the school branch, and Mr. Whitecross was no longer required.

Mr. McLEAN said that if the construction of buildings was not efficiently looked after the country would lose thousands for the tens saved in the salaries of foremen. This appeared to be one of the very worst examples of the retrenchment policy. He had known Mr. Whitecross for a great number of years, and could testify that there was not a better tradesman in the colony.

Mr. THORN said that, unless contractors were closely watched when the foundations were being laid, the buildings might have to be taken down again, as was sometimes the case in the early days of the colony. This was a very false piece of economy; instead of decreasing the number it should be increased, considering the large amount placed on the Estimates for the northern part of the colony. It had been his practice when Minister for Works to appoint foremen to watch the contractors, and he did not desire to see the Government asking for a large sum of money to re-erect buildings through the neglect of

such precautions. He presumed that many buildings would be started simultaneously in the North—if it were not so there would be a great outcry—and the foreman could not be ubiquitous. He wished to see the North go ahead, and he hoped the money voted would be expended at once. It was worth remark that all the retrenchments in every department were effected among the working classes. There was a strong feeling out of doors that the working classes were not dealt with fairly by the present Government, and in order that that feeling might be removed he should like to see all classes treated alike. This officer had a great deal to do and grave responsibilities, and he ought to be reinstated. If the man were incompetent perhaps the Minister for Works would get a competent man in his place, but he deprecated the striking off of a man of that stamp in the present circumstances of the colony, if the Government were really in earnest with regard to the works in the northern part of the colony.

Mr. McLEAN said the Minister for Works had not told them who the draftsman was that was to be got rid of?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. REA asked the Minister for Works whether he had any objection to lay on the table of the House Mr. Ferguson's report of last January. He was one of the best officers that had ever been in the North, in watching closely the interests of the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that Robert Ferguson had been transferred to the school branch, and his brother, John Ferguson, had been removed from the North to Brisbane, which was promotion.

Mr. DICKSON said that if a competent officer were appointed to make a periodical inspection of buildings—especially those constructed of timber—a large amount would annually be saved to the country in repairs. Many valuable buildings, through the ravages of white-ant, and from other causes, became uninhabitable, and a large amount had to be put on the Estimates for restoring them to a proper condition. The appointment of such an officer would have been an act of economy in the true sense, and he should have been glad to have seen an amount on the Estimates for that purpose. The present method of getting repairs effected in the country districts was cumbersome in the extreme, and he would suggest that the Government representatives—sub-collectors of Customs or police magistrates—should be authorised to proceed with small expenditure when required for the purpose of keeping Government buildings in a proper state of preservation. The Minister for Works would be exercising due economy and regard for the public interests by appointing

a special officer to periodically inspect and report upon buildings of unsubstantial material.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said they did not want inspectors to look after wooden buildings, but to see that the stone or concrete foundations of the higher-class public buildings were properly laid. There was something in what the last speaker had said about too much "red-tape" being attached to the carrying out of small improvements, but if the hon. member's suggestion were followed it would leave the door open to imposition.

Mr. REA held that it would be a great mistake to do without supervision of wooden buildings, although they were not so important as stone ones.

Mr. McLEAN said that he and the member for Enoggera maintained that it was necessary to have an officer with whom the responsibility should lie of ascertaining, not only what was required to be done to the colony's public buildings, but of having it done; and that instead of dismissing any inspectors at present, there was rather a necessity for increasing them. The Minister for Works would find before long that he had made a mistake in the action he had taken. He (Mr. McLean) knew buildings which were suffering, not only from insufficient inspection at the time of erection, but at the present time. They were simply being left to rot. If an inspector of public buildings were appointed to go round, with power to get what repairs were found necessary effected, it would save the country hundreds of pounds.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that Mr. Stanley made a kind of inspection of buildings every year, and at the present moment was on his annual tour. As for the suggestion about the Customs officer or police magistrate being empowered to get repairs done, any officer in charge of a port and any police magistrate had only to send a requisition to get the work done; but they must not authorise it on their own responsibility. There were sufficient inspectors for all the public buildings going on, or likely to go on for some time.

Mr. THORN was understood to say there were too few foremen of works for the buildings branch.

Mr. RUTLEDGE asked whether it was the custom still for the Colonial Architect to take private work? If so, it was desirable that it should be stopped.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The practice has been discontinued.

Mr. DICKSON said that when public buildings of a cheaper class were constructed, requiring constant inspection, some proper person should be appointed to inspect them. The Colonial Architect had large and important works to look after, and these must so fully occupy the whole of his time that it was impos-

sible the various public offices throughout the colony could receive the amount of attention from him which they would secure from a special officer.

Mr. BEATTIE presumed that when a public building was being erected in any town some person was temporarily appointed to see that the work was properly carried out. He did not know, however, that it was necessary to have a permanent officer appointed purposely to look after every little contract entered into by the Government. An officer might periodically inspect all the public buildings throughout the various parts of the colony.

The Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH said he was convinced, from his experience of the Works Office, that the Colonial Architect had more work on his hands than he could manage; and that by the appointment of a competent assistant the country would save a great deal more than his salary would come to. It was quite impossible for one officer to do all the work that the Colonial Architect had to attend to, and he was satisfied that the present arrangement resulted in a great loss to the State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman no doubt spoke from experience, but he must remember that the most important buildings were now finished. Mr. Stanley was quite satisfied himself that he had plenty of time to do all that was required.

Mr. MESTON asked whether the courthouse at Toowoomba was constructed after the design of the Colonial Architect?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. MESTON said it was the most disgracefully designed building he ever saw in his life, and no amateur architect could possibly have prepared a worse design: a building more unfitted for the purpose intended could not be imagined. To reach what was intended as a gallery one had to go up a spiral staircase, for which not the slightest particle of light was provided, and when the gallery was reached it was impossible to see anybody or anything. If that building was a specimen of the architectural genius of the Colonial Architect, the colony had made a bad bargain in paying such a large salary.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £6,041 be granted for Roads and Bridges, Road Surveys, and Contingencies.

Mr. BAILEY asked whether the officers in the Estimate would be continued under the divisional boards, or whether the boards would have the option of employing their own road officers at any salary which they might think fit?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he should imagine that the divisional boards would have the right to employ their own officers if they thought fit.

Mr. McLEAN asked why the road inspector in the Logan district was transferred to Maryborough, and the Maryborough officer transferred to the Logan?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was found that the district road inspector at Maryborough had not been acting as he ought to have done, but there was not sufficient against him to dismiss him; consequently, he was removed to Beenleigh to be more under the eye of the head of the department. Another, who was a good officer, was transferred to Maryborough, which was promotion for him. Since the Maryborough road inspector had been sent to Beenleigh he had been dismissed, it having been found that his conduct was too bad. There was no definite charge made, but a great many rumours came to the head of the department, and Captain Whish was sent to Maryborough to report, and it was upon his report that the officer was transferred to Beenleigh. The intention of the Government was to bring down an officer from the North for the Logan.

Mr. THORN said the Southern district was without an engineer of roads, and he had heard complaints about it. He would like to know why Mr. Jones had been got rid of; he was an excellent officer, and one of the cleverest men in the colony. He should also like to know why the foreman of works in the Maranoa district had been got rid of?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said Mr. Jones was down on the Estimate as an assistant engineer, but he was in reality a draftsman. Mr. Byerley was still in charge of the Southern district, though he was superintending the erection of the Fitzroy bridge; he would return as soon as that work was finished. The foreman's services were dispensed with on the score of economy.

Mr. McLEAN disapproved of the action of the Government in dispensing with the services of the assistant engineer, who was a most efficient officer, and rendered great assistance to Mr. Byerley in the preparation of plans. As usual, the officer who did nearly all the work got least salary.

Mr. GROOM said he understood from the Minister for Works that Mr. Clinton, the officer in charge of the Darling Down district, had also been placed in charge of the Maranoa district, and received no increase of salary. Mr. Clinton was one of the most efficient officers in the department, and, considering the immense district he had to attend to and the arduous duties he had to perform, he certainly deserved a larger salary; and he hoped the Minister for Works would see his way to increase it, if not this year, at any rate next year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said Mr. Clinton had a very good man to assist him; he had the use of the railway as far

as Roma, and he received higher travelling allowance than any other officer.

Mr. KATES also bore testimony to the efficiency of Mr. Clinton, and expressed a hope that his salary would be increased.

Mr. BEATTIE thought the Minister for Works deserved credit for his action respecting the officer in charge of the Beenleigh district, if all he heard was correct. With regard to the assistant engineer, he did not see how the engineer of roads in the Southern Division was to get on without the assistance of an officer of that description; and it was to be regretted that the services of such an efficient officer should have been dispensed with. Was it the intention of the Government to place any officer in charge of the roads round about Brisbane, in place of the officer lately in charge who had retired after long service?

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Committee were entitled to some explanation of the policy of the Government in the future with regard to roads and bridges. When the Divisional Boards Bill came into operation what would all these officers have to do? The officer in charge of the Southern district was at present up North, and what would he have to do when he came back?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the officer referred to was sent up to the Central district by the late Government of which the hon. gentleman was a member, and they did very well without him; and he believed the present Government could do very well without him until he returned. Mr. Walne was in charge of the roads about Brisbane. When the Divisional Boards Bill came into operation these officers would have simply main roads to look after.

Mr. GRIFFITH said when the officer in charge of the Southern division was absent during the time the late Government were in office there was an assistant engineer, who did the work very well. Surely it was not necessary to keep a large staff like this for main roads, especially if these roads were to be kept by contract as contemplated by the Minister for Works?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there would be sufficient work for these officers until next year. It was time enough to deal with the officers on the staff when the Divisional Boards Bill was actually in operation.

Mr. McLEAN pointed out that the whole amount to be expended throughout the colony for this purpose was only about £70,000, and there were the same officers to do the work as last year, when there was double the amount to be expended. When was it the intention of the Government to bring the Divisional Boards Bill into operation in the more settled parts of the colony?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Government would bring the Bill into

operation as soon as possible, but they could not say when;—it would take some time.

Mr. THORN wished to know whether the inspector of road surveys had any assistance. It would be impossible for him to do his work without.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that road surveys were carried out by the Lands Department, and Captain Whish's duty was to mark out the line of road in the first place. He was assisted by a road-ranger and two men, who were paid out of the vote for opening new roads.

Mr. DICKSON wished to know where the vote for opening new roads was to be found in the Estimates?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he should have said "Contingencies."

Mr. GRIFFITH understood that the Committee had always set its face against paying salaries out of contingencies. The proper laying out of roads was a matter of very considerable importance, and by having road-rangers to mark out the best route for roads before survey an immense amount of trouble and expense connected with the future resumption of land for roads would be avoided. He hoped the Government were not going to do away with the reform in that respect instituted by the late Government.

Mr. REA asked whether it was the intention of the Government to appoint an officer in the Central and Northern districts to the same position as Captain Whish held in the Southern district?

Mr. McLEAN advocated the appointment of road-rangers as a means of saving great unnecessary expense; and contended that salaries for such officers should appear on the Estimates as heretofore, and not be paid out of contingencies.

Mr. RUTLEDGE thought it would be a great pity to do away with road-rangers. He could instance the case of the Upper Kedron road, in his own electorate, where, had there been a road-ranger to have preceded the surveyor, a great deal of money and inconvenience would have been saved. A large amount would have to be expended to make the road available for traffic. The unfortunate people in the locality had been obliged to turn out and work for ten days on the road to make it passable, and, therefore, he hoped that when they made an application to the Minister for Works for assistance, the hon. gentleman would take into consideration that those who helped themselves were worthy of help, and would give them something for their roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the reason why a road-ranger was not appointed in the Northern and Central districts was because there was not the same amount of selection going on in those districts that there was in the South.

Mr. REA said that before the Land Act of 1868 came into operation he did his utmost to induce the Government of the day to lay out the roads before survey, and he believed that if that had been done a large amount of money would have been saved.

Mr. McLEAN was of opinion that the salary of the road-ranger should appear on a supplementary estimate, in order that it might be seen that that officer was in the employment of the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed the officer in question to be a very good officer indeed. As regarded the men, they most likely would be employed in localities where their local knowledge would enable them to point out the best routes for roads. He believed that the salaries of the surveyor and the road-ranger would not be required after the Divisional Boards Bill came into operation.

Mr. Low said that although he had been a great many years in the colony, he should be glad to have a definition of the duties of a road-ranger. If they were the same in other districts as in his there was very little to thank those officers for, as they were never able to select a road that would be of benefit in wet weather, or to do work of that kind.

Mr. BEATTIE pointed out that even after the Divisional Boards Bill was passed, it would be necessary to have a surveyor in districts where there was a large amount of unalienated land. He agreed that the salary of the road-ranger should be placed on the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. THORN said it was a great mistake to pay such an officer out of contingencies. Both the present Premier and the Colonial Secretary, when sitting in opposition, always expressed their disapproval of officers in a department being paid out of contingencies, as all the money voted by the House for contingencies might be paid in salaries. If an officer were employed by the Government his salary ought certainly to appear on the Estimates.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £46,700 be voted for Roads and Bridges in the Southern Division.

Mr. McLEAN said some explanation should be given as to the principle on which the lump sums were placed on the Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the money would be spent in accordance with the recommendations of the officers in charge of the districts. He could not say more than that; but the officers of the districts would be held responsible.

Mr. THORN considered that the item should be postponed until more information was given respecting it. In previous years the vote had always appeared in the form of a schedule showing the different

roads on which money was to be expended, and the amounts to each. According to the present plan one district might get a greater share of the money, and other localities which were in more need might get next to nothing. If he was a Minister he should not like to be entrusted with the expenditure of such a large sum without its being shown on the Estimates how the money was to be spent, as otherwise he might be charged with unfairness. He would like to know how much of the money was to be spent on the electorate of Northern Downs—although he must say that the Darling Downs district was dealt with very liberally?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the hon. member when in office scheduled the roads, and yet that did not save him from suspicion at all times. It did not matter how a Minister put down the vote for roads, because, whether the money was required or not, there was always pressure brought to bear by the people of the district to have the money voted for it expended; whereas under the system he now proposed money that was not required in one locality might be well spent in another which could not get money otherwise. He was not at all afraid of being accused of dealing out the money partially.

Mr. THORN explained that when he was in office he always called for reports of the condition of the various roads before he framed his estimate. That was the practice in New South Wales, and he believed it was the best one. He did not believe the Minister for Works would be guilty of acting with partiality, but still the public outside might accuse him of doing so, and he was anxious that the hon. gentleman should preserve his good name.

Mr. DICKSON asked on what basis the Minister for Works had made his apportionment of the vote, and whether he had acted on reports received from the various road inspectors before he framed his estimate, and had taken into consideration the requirements of each district? He must say that the new principle did not commend itself to him, for, whilst giving the Minister credit for dealing impartially, he could not disguise the fact that the hon. gentleman might be succeeded by someone who would be open to the suspicion that the vote might be applied for political purposes. He saw no good reason to depart from the principle hitherto adopted, and he believed that the people were better pleased if they saw what provision was made for the various roads, &c., in their districts. There were great disadvantages in putting a lump sum on the Estimates for roads and bridges instead of giving the details as in previous years. Had the Minister for Works based his calculations on the reports of the district road inspectors, because at present the distribution seemed to

be unfair? The manner in which the Estimates were brought down was no improvement on previous years, and would not give such satisfaction or confidence to the different districts. Notwithstanding that the Minister for Works might have the most laudable intentions to spend the money fairly and equitably, the different districts would rather have seen even diminished amounts placed to their credit, so long as they were sure they would be available for a particular work, than trust to the statement of a Minister that he would see the expenditure was made impartially. He was placed at a great disadvantage as regarded his own electorate;—the roads were numerous and required but a small expenditure for each, and his constituents would have been satisfied with it. While he believed the Minister for Works would attend to the requirements of this district, he could assure him that a sum of even £50 for a specific purpose would have given more satisfaction than a promise that double or treble that sum would be expended. In saying this he was expressing the opinions of settlers in all parts of the colony, who were desirous of seeing the amounts especially appropriated for their local wants. The Estimates were framed, no doubt, with a view to the Divisional Boards Bill speedily passing into law; but as that measure would not come into operation in the first half of the financial year, the hon. gentleman ought to submit a schedule of the different roads showing the contemplated expenditure on each. At present he could not see on what basis the distribution was to be made.

Mr. GROOM said the Minister for Works would have done better to furnish a schedule as far as these votes were concerned, showing where the money was to be placed. He had taken the trouble to look over the Estimates for New South Wales, and there was a marked contrast between the way in which those Estimates were drawn up for the information of members and the method carried out here. There the roads were divided into two classes—main roads and minor roads, and from the way in which the Estimates were prepared hon. members could see at a glance how much they were going to vote for each road. Page after page dealt with the roads, and not only did these roads appear separately in the Estimates-in-Chief, but there was another document prepared which showed in one column the amount required, in another the amount expended last year, and in another the rate per mile, and this enabled hon. members to see the amount of justice each district received. That system relieved the Minister for Works of the slightest imputation of favouritism or unfairness, for there was the fullest information before the House, even to the rates per mile,

The amount varied from £10 to £75 per mile. The latter sum was put down for the road from Stanthorpe to Glen Innes, and there was an item near it of a road 165 miles to Maryland, at £50 per mile, making a total of £8,250. By that plan far more information was supplied than to ask for lump sums of £20,000 for East and West Moreton, £13,500 for the Darling Downs, and so on. The Committee had no information as to where the money was to be spent, or how much was to be spent per mile, on the different roads. The present system was an undesirable innovation. Hitherto a schedule of the various items had been supplied, and hon. members knew exactly what they were voting. To take the Darling Downs, how could the Minister for Works make an equitable distribution of the £13,500, especially after the damage that had been done to the roads and bridges by the floods of the past fortnight, and with the likelihood, judging from the telegrams received from Sydney, of a repetition of them within a few hours? For the hon. gentleman himself it would be better had the item been scheduled, for without it he would have deputation after deputation waiting upon him to know if money could be spent on this, that, or the other road; whereas, if the Committee voted specific sums for specific purposes, the hon. gentleman could tell them they must be satisfied with the share that Parliament had voted for them. No one could tell how many bridges had been swept away by the floods, and those would have to be replaced. A former Minister asked for a special vote of £100,000 to make good the damage done by floods; and he should not be surprised if the present Minister for Works had to ask for a special vote of £30,000 or £50,000 for the same purpose. He would, in conclusion, draw the attention of the hon. gentleman to the southern portion of the electorate of Toowoomba, just outside the municipality, which was peopled by a large settlement of uncomplaining Germans, and who had received very little attention from the Government. He would not mention any roads in particular which stood in need of repairs; they were known to Mr. Clinton, and he trusted that in the apportionment of the vote they would not be forgotten.

Mr. AMHURST said he was not surprised at the complaints of the hon. member (Mr. Groom), nor should he be surprised if the hon. member for Moreton followed suit. Both their districts had hitherto been nursed in the lap of luxury at the expense of the rest of the colony. He believed it was the intention of the Government to do equal justice throughout the colony; and if any proof were needed of their wisdom in pressing forward the Divisional Boards Bill, it was the speech which the hon. member (Mr. Groom) had just delivered.

It was the old idea—there had been a flood, and the Government must give £100,000 to repair the roads and bridges. Let them all take a share in the work. Pioneers as they all were they could not have everything smooth, and they must do the best they could for themselves, with judicious Government aid, under all circumstances.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that if it was impossible for a Minister to distribute the vote in an equitable manner, when he had every information at his hands, and could visit each district personally if he chose, how could it be expected that the Committee could do it better? The old system had resulted in nothing but log-rolling on both sides, and if the items were scheduled now the same kind of thing would be repeated. It would be far better and easier to vote a lump sum on the knowledge the Minister had of the wants, and allow him to appropriate it as required. The argument of the hon. member (Mr. Groom) cut the ground from under his own feet. The hon. member referred to the damage done by floods to the roads. Supposing each item had been scheduled, how could the Minister appropriate more for any particular district than had been voted for it? It might be an easy matter to get a vote for unforeseen expenses, but it was a different thing to get the money afterwards. As far as Darling Downs was concerned—leaving the bad weather out of the question—the vote would meet all the requirements of the district as far as maintenance was concerned. Besides, the Divisional Boards Bill would, he hoped, be in working operation throughout the colony next year, and it would be within the power of the different divisions to obtain their share of the loan vote of £100,000, which, with the sums on the Estimates, would be more than sufficient to make the roads of the colony as good as they ever were. As to East and West Moreton, the same remark might be made, and there was already a larger extent of good roads and more bridges and culverts in those districts than in any other district in the colony. As to the district of Enoggera, it would without a doubt get its fair share so long as the hon. member (Mr. Dickson) could raise a weekly or fortnightly deputation—at which he was an adept—to press the Minister to make a particular road here and a particular bridge there. That hon. member would see that his district got its fair share of the £20,000. Although the new system might have some disadvantages, it would do away with the system of log-rolling which had prevailed here—at least, since he had been in the House.

Mr. HENDREN wished he could say the same of the roads about Ipswich as the Minister for Works had said of those about Brisbane. For instance, the road from the

town boundary to the coal mines was quite impassable. It was a perfectly level road two and a-half miles in length, and it was travelled over every day by twenty or thirty six-horse coal drays, carrying a ton and a-half each. He hoped the Minister for Works would authorise the repairing of that road, as until something was done the coal industry would be almost stopped and great inconvenience caused to a large farming district which was tapped by the same road.

Mr. KINGSFORD said if the Minister for Works would go with him he could point out a few spots in the district which he had not visited. If something were not done soon all communication would be shut off and each person imprisoned in his own domicile. A cursory glance at the Estimates in New South Wales would convince any hon. member that the elaborate and comprehensive way in which they were placed before that Assembly was much better than the form adopted here. Placing such large lump sums on the Estimates would increase the evil of deputationising a thousand fold. He should not be backward while others were scrambling to secure their share of expenditure; whereas, had the places been named at which the money would be spent, he should have been compelled to be satisfied. There was another reason why details should be given. He should not cast any reflection on the present Minister for Works—he believed a more honourable gentleman had never filled that office—but a large sum of money like that in hand for disposal gave the Minister an undue power, which, if unscrupulous, he might use for improper purposes. The influence which the late Government were said to have used by means of road gangs would be nothing compared with the influence that might be exerted by Ministers of the Crown having such large sums in their hands for disposal.

Mr. KATES said there was a difference of more than £9,000 in the Darling Downs vote—it was little more than half the amount voted last year. The hon. member for Northern Downs had said he had no reason to complain of the way in which his district had been treated by the Minister for Works. He (Mr. Kates) hoped, therefore, as Northern Downs seemed to be included in the Darling Downs vote, that the whole of the small amount proposed would be expended in the southern portion of the district. He could assure the hon. gentleman that the roads in that district—in two localities especially—stood in great need of attention. It was a pity that some other departments had not been selected for retrenchment to meet the deficiency.

Mr. REA said the Minister for Works had told the Committee that his previous knowledge of the roads in the East and West Moreton and Darling Downs districts was nothing

compared to what he had acquired since from personal experience; and he should like to know how much his knowledge had benefited with regard to the Rockhampton district? Had he personally examined the roads in that district?

Mr. BAILEY said that the people in his district were not able to deputationise the Minister, and had to trust entirely to his honour, integrity, and goodwill to the district supposed to be benefited. The amount of £9,700 was put down for the Wide Bay and Burnett district, and that, he was told, included the Mulgrave district. In the combined district there were five very long main roads—Maryborough to Bundaberg; Maryborough to Gayndah; Maryborough to Gympie; Gympie to Noosa; and Gympie to Brisbane. Some of the culverts had been washed away in the recent floods, and a week or two ago the roads were simply impassable. Would a certain sum be fixed for expenditure on those main roads, or would there be a danger of a large portion of the money being given to one favoured district while others were neglected?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if the hon. member's constituents could not deputationise, they sent a great many petitions. Nearly all the roads in the colony at the present time were impassable, but that was the fault of the rain and not of the Minister for Works. After a few days' hot sun the roads would be passable if no culverts had been washed away. The various sums would be apportioned, on the recommendation of the road inspectors, in accordance with requirements and from his own personal inspection; and he should endeavour to carry out the work so as to give satisfaction. In reply to the hon. member for Rockhampton, he might say that, before taking office, he was personally acquainted with many of the roads in the Central district, and nearly all in the North. He intended, moreover, to supplement that knowledge as soon as he possibly could.

Mr. GARRICK said the sum of £52,000 voted last year had not been enough to keep the roads in the East and West Moreton district in a proper state, and he failed to see how the work was to be done for £20,000. The Minister for Works had been, he believed, as far as Caboolture, but had he been to the heads of the rivers—North Pine, South Pine, Caboolture, Maroochie, and Mooloolah—he would have found that the farmers there were unable to get their produce to market. He did not know to what extent the £20,000 would be supplemented. He did not know whether any part of the £100,000 loan for road boards and shire councils would be given to the Moreton districts, but, seeing the state the roads must be in after the recent wet weather, £20,000 must

be perfectly useless to keep the roads here in traversable order during the present year; and as the Divisional Boards could not come in force before the end of the year he could not see that much could be got by rates. The vote before the Committee was a departure from what had been the practice since 1872. Ever since then the appropriations had been defined, and the present was the first occasion upon which Ministers had taken upon themselves to appropriate the whole vote. The Government might use it with judgment and impartiality; but, on the other hand, they might not do so. It was placing a huge power in their hands to allow them to appropriate the whole of the vote. They knew that most Governments were apt to show more consideration to those who supported them than to those who opposed them; and as within East and West Moreton, which districts were lumped in the Estimate, there were staunch supporters and opponents of the Government, he sincerely hoped that when next year came, and they should have to inquire as to how the money had been expended, they would learn that political considerations had not entered into it.

Mr. GRIMES said it appeared to him they were legislating in the dark with reference to this vote. They were given to understand that if the Divisional Boards Bill passed only main roads would be kept in order by the Government, and they should therefore have some schedule of what the Government called main roads. The Estimates should also be brought down in a form showing how the amount asked for was to be spent. The Committee could not tell whether the amount would be sufficient or not, and which roads the Government intended to make or keep in repair. Did the Government consider those main roads over which the mails were carried?

Mr. GARRICK said he should really like to get some information from the Minister for Works as to whether the road votes generally would be supplemented out of the £100,000 loan. He was quite confident that the £20,000 put down for the Moreton districts would not give the settlers in his district roads to their markets.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the £46,000 vote for roads and bridges for the Southern Division would be supplemented from the £100,000 loan. The Government would have to do it by careful discretion, and whatever the supplementary amount might be it would be spent under the authority of the Divisional Boards, and not the Government. Had it not been for the exceptional weather they had had and were likely to have, he was sorry to add, the £20,000 would have been quite sufficient for the requirements of East and West Moreton.

Mr. GARRICK would like to know upon what principle the £100,000 would be allocated? Ministers were asking a large power, not only with regard to these yearly sums for roads and bridges, but to the loan appropriation also.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman need not be afraid about the power of the Government as far as the £100,000 was concerned. The money would be apportioned in proportion to the rating of the district, and there would be no undue power in the hands of the Government. The divisional board, as soon as it was elected, could set to work to ascertain the value of the rateable property in the district. It might be twelve, fifteen, or eighteen months before a district might be brought under the Act; but, as soon as the rating was done and each district knew the amount for which it could demand an endowment, the Government would know the proportion of the loan vote which had to be given to the district.

Mr. GARRICK said the hon. gentleman put down twelve months as the earliest time within which the Divisional Boards Bill could be brought into operation; and it was clear, therefore, that the country would want something over and above the votes on the Estimates before that time. It was quite clear that the £20,000 would not be sufficient for the Moreton districts, and that, in the face of the admission of the Minister for Works that nothing was to be expected from rating for the next twelve months, an additional expenditure would be required before that time, so that the £100,000 on loan would be required irrespective of the allotments under the Divisional Boards Bill. The House was induced to pass that Bill on the understanding that this sum of £100,000 would be available during the current year. Any sum that the Government intended to give to the divisional boards should be submitted in a specified form.

Mr. BEATTIE would have been glad if a schedule of the manner in which Government intended to spend the vote before the Committee had been placed before hon. members; it would have been much more satisfactory to know the particular roads upon which it was proposed to spend the money, and it would have prevented a great deal of the complaints that had been heard of Ministers being "deputationised" by members and their constituents. Looking at the reductions proposed in this year's vote over last year's, he found that certain reductions had been made in the Roads and Bridges Department, and that the amount of the expenditure for superintendence and office work in connection with the £46,000 set down for the Southern Division came to something like £7,000. It was only a few hundreds less than last year when the expenditure was £98,000.

He thought that was too much. Was it the intention to keep up this expensive staff to simply to look after the main roads of the colony, presuming that the different populous districts would be brought under the operation of the Divisional Boards Bill, and that they would be taxed to pay these salaries in addition to their other taxes? That would be most unfair. He hoped the Minister for Works would agree to the suggestion of the hon. member (Mr. Dickson), and furnish a schedule showing the expenditure in each district, because it would be much more satisfactory in every way.

Mr. DICKSON said another inconvenience arising from the system adopted by the Minister for Works was that there would be no record in the Auditor-General's report of the expenditure upon the different roads of the colony. The Auditor-General was guided in his accounts by the distinct appropriations made by Parliament for the different services, and in his report for the year ending on the 30th June, 1880, they would find the expenditure *in globo*—so much for each of these districts, East and West Moreton, Darling Downs, Western district, and Wide Bay and Burnett districts—without any of the details they were accustomed to receive from that officer, showing the expenditure upon each road, and what had lapsed or remained to be carried forward to the ensuing year. This was a serious fault. It was at all times desirable that the accounts of the colony should be placed before the public as clearly as possible. He hoped the Minister for Works would promise to bring down a schedule of the expenditure on these roads, which would be a guide to the Auditor-General in showing the expenditure that had been authorised under respective Parliamentary appropriations. He also hoped the Works Department would adhere to the present system of keeping a separate account of the expenditure on each road, because if the House passed these estimates as now framed, and no separate accounts were kept in that department, they would be quite unable to trace how much money had been spent upon the individual roads of the colony. If the schedule he asked for were not forthcoming, one of the first things he should do next session would be to move for a return of the expenditure on the different roads of the colony; but that would be only a departmental return, and would not carry with it the same weight as the report of the Auditor-General. The omission of such information from the report of that officer was, to his mind, a fatal objection to the system now introduced by the Minister for Works.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Auditor-General need not alter his report in the slightest, because every sum of

money spent upon a road would be made a special appropriation, and that would be at the disposal of the Auditor-General for report just the same as at present. Every penny expended would be accounted for the same as before.

Mr. DICKSON said the Auditor-General was guided by parliamentary appropriations, and the money was expended accordingly. If expenditure for any service exceeded that, an Executive minute must be obtained for further expenditure, to be subsequently sanctioned by Parliament; and the hon. gentleman should not confuse a distinct parliamentary appropriation, which was accepted by the Auditor-General in framing his report, with expenditure upon Executive authority which must be obtained from time to time in anticipation of parliamentary appropriation.

The PREMIER said the objection raised by the hon. member had no practical effect whatever. The Auditor-General reported upon the accounts put before him by the Treasury Department, and it was in the power of the Treasury to put in detail as fully as they pleased the individual items that made up the total amounts put down on the Estimates. He further questioned very much whether the information in the Auditor-General's report should be given so much in detail. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Dickson) ignored altogether the reason the Ministry had for bringing forward these Estimates this year less in detail. It had been an acknowledged evil ever since he had been in the House that when items were given in detail—so much on one road and so much on another—it was impossible for members to arrive at any just conclusion as to the necessity of the vote. But as the Estimates were now prepared they were able to form a judgment as to whether the amount put down was sufficient for each district;—they could say, for instance, from their general knowledge of the country, whether £46,000 was sufficient for the Southern Division, but they could not arrive at a conclusion if the items were given in detail. With regard to the deputationalising of the Minister for Works, he did not look upon it as such a very great evil. No doubt the Minister might be influenced by the representations made to him, but he was not likely to be turned aside from what he believed to be the proper course to pursue. The Estimates were fairly apportioned to the different divisions of the colony. The hon. member for East Moreton complained very much of the amounts put down, but the Government could not put down larger amounts without facing additional taxation, which they declined to do. If any party in the House was prepared to take it in hand to increase the main estimate for the Public Works Department, let them do so; but the Gov-

ernment did not see their way to do it, or to increase the vote for the Southern division. He explained all about the £100,000 referred to when the Divisional Boards Bill was passing through. The main point the hon. member wished to know was whether during the current year the Government would expend any portion of that £100,000; and, as stated by the Minister for Works, with discretion they would. No prudent Treasurer would spend too much of a loan vote in anticipation. To ask how much of that £100,000 would be spent this year was a question which neither the Minister for Works nor the Treasurer could answer.

Mr. DICKSON said that the hon. gentleman showed that, by the system proposed by the Government, not only did they evade parliamentary control on the mode in which the money was to be spent, but it was possible, also, by it to mislead the Auditor-General. By appropriating these large sums the hon. gentleman set at defiance all inquiry by the Auditor-General, and could spend them in whatever direction the Minister for Works chose, and so long as the sum put down for the Southern Division was not exceeded the Auditor-General could make no objection whatever. That was altogether a different system from that which had been in force hitherto. The hon. gentleman knew that the Estimates passed by Parliament were a guide to the Auditor-General in checking the expenditure, but under the proposed system not only was no information vouchsafed to the Committee and the Committee itself debarred from expressing any opinion upon the various roads, but so long as the total vote was not exceeded the Auditor-General had no opportunity to report on the manner in which these services were treated. He was sorry to see that so large an expenditure was to be at the mercy of the Government of the day, and that not even the Auditor-General was to have any check over it. Although the present Government might not abuse the confidence that the Committee reposed in them, still they were introducing a vicious and dangerous principle into our financial system. For those reasons he should like to see them abandon it, and allow the expenditure for roads to be considered in the same way it had always been.

The PREMIER said it was evident there was some confusion in the mind of the hon. member as to the duties of the Auditor-General. Surely the hon. member did not mean to tell the Committee that part of the duties of an Auditor-General was to give an opinion as to the right of a Minister to expend money on a particular road in a district? The Government asked for £20,000 for the East and West Moreton districts. If they spent that money they would furnish vouchers of expen-

diture to the Auditor-General, who would examine them to see that the money had been spent on the roads in the Moreton districts and on nothing else, but whether it had been spent on one road or on another was nothing to the Auditor-General. That gentleman would receive vouchers in the usual way, and his duties would not be circumscribed in any one respect. All the Government said was, that they would not give in detail the expenditure on the various districts, as, if such details were printed in a schedule, the Committee was incompetent to say whether it was a proper schedule or not. They merely asked for a power that they already possessed and which Ministers always exercised. It was the system of passing paltry little sums of £100 or so every year that had forced the evil of deputations, and it was through it that extravagance was encouraged. The mere fact of £100 having been placed on the Estimates for a bit of road one year led people to think that the same amount should be voted year by year, and it was a most difficult thing to get an item off the Estimates when it had once appeared on them. That was another proof that the system proposed was the most sensible way of dealing with the question. He did not suppose his hon. colleague would have the slightest objection to lay on the table any information by which he had arrived at the requirements of the various districts.

Mr. KINGSFORD said that a Minister had something more to do than merely to ask that Committee for a sum of money, as it was his duty to tell the Committee where and how such money was to be expended. He considered that if any information was required as to how money should be expended the representatives of the districts were the best persons to give it, and it was not right for the Government to ignore them altogether in the matter. The whole speech of the hon. gentleman teemed with this idea—that all the Committee had to do was to pass the money and leave the Government to spend it how and where they liked.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had misunderstood him, as he had stated over and over again what the Government intended to do with the money—namely, to expend £20,000 on the roads in the Moreton districts. If the Committee asked him to give detailed information of every little road, all he could say was that the Government were not prepared to do it; the Committee was not a suitable tribunal to submit such information to. The Minister for Works was a far more suitable tribunal, and it would be his duty to see that the money was properly expended. The system of schedules had only found favour in the Southern districts, as the Northern and Central districts had always had their money for roads voted in lump

sums. The Southern districts were always wanting to put in an additional item, until the schedule got so gigantic that some new system was necessary to overcome the difficulty.

Mr. THORN said that the Minister for Works made a great mistake in not coming down with a schedule of roads required; but shortly there would be several elections taking place in the southern part of the colony, and, let the Minister for Works be ever so immaculate, people out of doors would accuse him of corruption.

The PREMIER said the Minister for Works and himself sat down to study the schedule of last year, and found that the only information that could be given upon the items was from the road overseer for the district.

Mr. GARRICK said that in putting down a lump sum the first thing to be ascertained was the details. How, then, could the Minister for Works have arrived at this £20,000 if he had not full information? The Premier had said that they would not be troubled with the littleroads, but was not that in opposition to the very thing they had been striving for—the settlement of the colony? It was settlement which made the little roads necessary, and when there was a demand for them it was a good indication that settlement was going on. As there had been more settlement in the southern part of the colony than anywhere else, it was there the most roads were required, and there was no necessity for speaking of the little roads in a contemptuous way. The Premier had said the £20,000 was in the discretion of the Ministry; but, if they had complained of the want of information about that, how much more need had they to ask in reference to the £100,000? After what had been done in the past in electioneering matters, although the Ministry was a strong-minded one they were not so strong-minded as not to be made to give away something—that had been made evident already. He would also wish to know next year how the money had been expended?—would the Minister for Works keep the same sets of books in the Works Office as were now kept—a ledger account being opened for each road, or would there be but one account for the Moretons opened with this credit of £20,000? It was necessary that the books in the Works Department should be kept in such a way that when returns were called for they would show how the money had been expended. The Moretons comprised nine electorates, their representatives occupying various positions in the House, some on the Government benches and cross-benches, and others on the Opposition benches and cross-benches—and hon. members could draw their own inference from the fact that it was only the representatives of the Moretons sitting with the

Opposition who troubled themselves about how the money was to be spent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS hoped the members for the electorates of the Moretons would not be “drawn” by the hon. member. It was not much to be wondered at that members on the Government side did not speak, for they had sufficient confidence in the Government to anticipate that they would allocate the money fairly and impartially, and were tired of long speeches repeated over and over again. Probably, hon. members on the other side had as much confidence, but preferred to speak to their constituents to remaining silent. He had already answered the questions of the hon. member when he told the hon. member for Enoggera that the books in the Works Office would be kept in the way they had been, in such a manner that every item could be shown, and what road or bridge or culvert had had money spent on it. The hon. member was only raising a useless discussion when he asked for more information about the votes, because he had been told already that the £100,000 would be spent with discretion in anticipation of the levying of the rate. The hon. member forgot it might be struck many months before it was levied, but when it was struck Government would be in a position to apportion the money and give it to the divisional boards to spend. He, himself, did not want to spend the £100,000, and wished the divisional boards would spend the £20,000 as well as the other sum and relieve him of the responsibility. Hitherto, when the road votes came on for discussion, they had acted more like a parish meeting than an Assembly of legislators, and the system introduced here was the only one which could relieve them of that work, besides being the fairest and most honest way of expending the money for roads and bridges. If Government were not fit to be entrusted with this expenditure they were not fit to be a Ministry.

Mr. GARRICK said that in a little while it would be impossible to speak in the House since everything was to be called useless discussion, and every time they said anything they were to be accused of making a speech to their constituents. He had discrimination between the striking and the levying of the rate; he had said the striking of the rate could not be made for nine months of the financial year, but the divisional boards would in the meantime want something to go on with, and what he wanted to arrive at was, would any part of this £100,000 be given before the rate was struck, not before it was levied.

Mr. REA said that all Government appeared to have done was to take the last year's votes of the late Ministry and divide by half. That was all the trouble they had taken to get at what was necessary for

roads and bridges. There was a vagueness about this which was only part and parcel of everything they had done since May. As to the votes, they would be allocated by Ministers, in their discretion, where their supporters lay, and that was their reason for objecting to specific roads being mentioned. It would tie them down too much. Their railways were just the same. They would spend the money to favour their friends, and leave those out in the cold who were likely to vote against them.

Mr. DICKSON said that the Government had given an extraordinary amount of information to the Committee. The only thing he was surprised at was that they had brought down Estimates at all, and had not asked for a lump sum of £1,129,696 to defray the expenses of the colony. He could have quite understood the grandeur of such a conception, and it would have shown their appreciation of the criticisms directed against the Estimates by the Opposition. Hon. members on the other side did not seem to distress themselves very much about the matter. Had the Minister for Works been in Opposition he would have been one of the first to resist the attempt by any Government to obtain the command of £46,000 on such vague and indefinite terms.

Mr. McLEAN said that if the Minister for Works had informed the Committee, when the question was asked him at 5 o'clock, that he had arrived at his conclusions from a schedule in his possession based on the reports of the engineers, one-half the discussion would have been avoided. The knowledge of that fact would have been a satisfaction to the Committee.

Mr. BAILEY did not look upon the old system with any degree of favour. The money was allotted to the several districts, but the making of the roads was only a secondary consideration. But he wanted a little more information with regard to the Wide Bay and Burnett. A sum of £20,000 was voted for roads to goldfields. Would the Minister for Works say whether any portion of that sum would be expended on a road to the new goldfield lately discovered near Gympie? There were sixty or eighty miners working there under fearful disadvantages; they had proved the field to be a permanent one; and he (Mr. Bailey) believed it would be even better than Gympie.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member (Mr. Bailey) was very sanguine in saying that the new goldfield would be as good as Gympie. It was a bold assertion to make, for nothing was more deceptive than the first appearance of a new goldfield. However, if it turned out a really good field, he would certainly make a road to it. In reply to the assertion of the hon. member (Mr. Rea), that he would spend this money solely upon his supporters, he could only appeal to the members for Darling Downs

and Rosewood to say whether he had made any distinction in their electorates, with the money voted for them, with that of any represented by members sitting on this side. The Government had spent money all over the Darling Downs as voted, although a former Minister for Works said he would not spend a penny of it. When at Rosewood he saw that the farmers had roads which he was ashamed of, and at once spent between £700 and £800 upon them. A sufficient answer to the allegations of the hon. member was an appeal to his actions in the past.

Mr. REA said he found a sufficient justification for what he had said in the fact that it was not until a certain election was about to take place that they had any intimation that the Darling Downs was to have branch lines of railway.

Mr. BAYNES said he hoped the Minister for Works would visit the much-neglected district of the Burnett, for he, as a "supporter" of the hon. gentleman, could say that as yet no concession had been made to him. The late Government placed £2,000 on the Estimates for the Burnett district, and half of it had not been spent. The ex-Treasurer was a great hand at detailed statements, but he did not leave behind him any money to carry out those details. There was an elaborate set of details, but no money. Under the new régime, although the amount was small, he had no doubt the Government were sincere in their intention to spend it. He was surprised to hear the way in which the hon. member for North Brisbane spoke of the pastoral lessees the other evening. He could inform the Committee that the proprietors of Auburn Station had paid £1,000 a-year rent for the last eight years, during which time only £300 had been spent on their roads. His constituents had been shamefully treated by past Governments, and very much neglected by the present one. The Mackenzie bridge, near Gayndah, was now absolutely unsafe, and unless something were done to it there would be loss of life or property. The discussion that had just taken place was a strong argument in favour of the Divisional Boards Bill, for it seemed as though the House was degenerating into a vestry. The small sum of £9,700 was to be divided between the Wide Bay and Burnett district and the electorate of the Premier, and there would probably be very little left for the Burnett, especially the upper portion. He was sure, however, that his electorate would not be any longer neglected.

Mr. GROOM said if the House had degenerated into a vestry, the hon. member (Mr. Baynes) had made the most parochial speech, and apparently a successful one. The present state of things looked very like "bumbledom." If the present Ministry were not in power the vote would not be allowed

to pass to-night. When a vote for £2,000 for telegraphing and miscellaneous services was before the House the present Ministry, then in Opposition, refused to let it pass until a detailed statement was laid on the table; and, now that a vote of £46,000 was proposed, not the slightest information was vouchsafed. Hon. members' constituents were supposed not to know their own requirements so well as a Government sitting in Queen street. This was the first time a vote had been brought down in that form. The Premier should not forget that hon. members had a lively recollection of him in Opposition—a more bitter Opposition no Government could have. When a follower of Mr. Palmer he always insisted upon having full information upon all Estimates. Now he was bringing down an entirely new scheme; and, although he might think it a correct one, hon. members generally would consider that the different districts had a right to know what amount of money they would be entitled to from those votes. When at the tail-end of last session the hon. gentleman assisted his followers to obtain votes his argument was, "Who is so well able to judge of the requirements of a district as the member?" but now they were told they knew nothing whatever about the matter. It was the first time he had heard such an argument used, and it seemed strange to hear the hon. gentleman uttering such sentiments. The dictatorial speech of the Premier had almost inclined him to indulge in a little obstruction; but, in deference to hon. members on that side, he would not do so; but he would say that he had never before heard a Premier adopt such a dictatorial tone.

Mr. HORWITZ said the sum put down for the Darling Downs district was very small, and, when divided, the amount for his district would be hardly worth speaking about. The district was a very large one, and the sum proposed would be hardly sufficient to put one or two of the principal roads in a proper state of repair.

Mr. TYREL said he did not agree with the Premier that the Minister for Works was a better judge of the wants of the various districts than the members themselves. He knew something about his district, and he could assure the Committee that the road between Warwick and Stanthorpe was in a fearful state. He wished to draw the attention of the Committee to a curious method which had been adopted in Warwick towards repairing the road between there and Stanthorpe. A fee of £2 had been levied upon every dray travelling between those towns. On Friday last twelve waggons went into Stanthorpe; on Saturday five, on Monday seven, showing there was a considerable amount of traffic on the road. The drays had been from ten days to three weeks on the journey from the

railway station to Stanthorpe, owing to the fearfully bad state of the roads; and he thought that something should be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for the purpose of putting it in a passable state.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that in 1876 a sum of £100,000 was proposed on the Loan Estimates for roads and bridges, but the Opposition declined to discuss the matter until particulars were given of the works upon which it was intended to expend the money. Now the other view was taken. The present Government were so pure and virtuous that it really was an insult to suspect them of not spending the money in the most straightforward manner. What precautions had the Committee that this sum of money would not be administered to serve political purposes? He remembered the time when the road votes were said to be administered for electioneering purposes. In the face of the means employed by them to secure the Fortitude Valley and Darling Downs elections, it was useless for the Government to pretend to be more virtuous than any Ministry which had preceded them. There would be elections between now and next session, and the Government asked them to vote a sum of money which they might spend in any way they liked. The reasons given for discontinuing the wholesome practice adopted for the last seven years had been quite inadequate. He admitted there were inconveniences in both plans—those of the one now adopted were very obvious; the inconveniences of the other were, that the powers of the Ministry to expend money for political purposes were reduced to a minimum.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, £10,410 was granted for salaries, contingencies, and roads and bridges, Central Division.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £14,300 be granted for salaries, contingencies, roads and bridges, Northern Division.

Mr. GRIFFITH said as the road inspectors at Townsville and Mackay had been dispensed with, he would like to ask whether the remaining inspector would be able to manage for the North, and, if so, where his head-quarters would be?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the inspector's head-quarters were at Cooktown at present; but, in his opinion, they should be moved to Port Douglas, as being the more central portion of the Cook district. With one road inspector and the engineer of roads, who would have more time at his disposal, they should be able to carry on the Northern work equally as well as before.

Mr. DICKSON said before the vote passed it would be as well if the Minister for Works would state that no influence from the Opposition had induced him to make such a small provision for roads and bridges

for the Northern district. He was somewhat surprised at the hon. gentleman's temerity in considering that £12,400 was sufficient for the road requirements of that important division of the colony, as he was inclined to think that the whole sum could be expended in the Cook district alone. He would also like to ask whether the road inspectors, for whom no provision was made on the Estimates, were absolutely dismissed, or whether it was intended to employ them in some other department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied that the road inspector in the Southern Division retired on his allowance. The other inspectors were dismissed. If the Government could employ them in any other capacity with profit to the country they would have the preference.

In reply to Mr. BEATTIE,

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the road inspector who would be brought to the Logan from the North was Mr. Bergin, who was on a former Estimate, and was omitted by the late Government, but was kept employed at special work.

Mr. DICKSON said they had been told the Cooktown road inspector was to be the sole inspector for the Northern district, and yet his travelling allowance was less than one-third of the total travelling allowances given to the three Northern inspectors last year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that each of the three Northern road inspectors got £150; although £200 was down for the Cooktown officer, he only received £150. Practically the district would be little enlarged, for if the Cooktown inspector was stationed at Port Douglas, and Mr. Macmillan, the Northern engineer of roads, at Bowen, the North would be divided in two. Mr. Macmillan, as he had already said, would have more time on his hands when the Divisional Boards Bill got into operation.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was understood that main roads were to be kept in order by the Government. Would the hon. gentleman tell the Committee what roads there were in the Northern district except main roads?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS was understood to say that there were a great many roads about Mackay, Bowen, Townsville, Port Douglas, and Cooktown which were not main ones. When the railway to Charters Towers was finished it would be the main road for a large part of the district.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved £9,360 for buildings and general votes—Sub-division.

Mr. DICKSON asked why no provision was made on the Estimates for water-rates on Government buildings in Rockhampton and Brisbane?

The PREMIER said that there was a sum put on the Supplementary Estimates last year for this purpose, but it had not been asked for by the department this year.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Mr. Macrossan) moved £17,896 for the Department of Mines—Goldfields, Geological Survey, Government Analytical Chemist, and Museum.

Mr. SHEAFFE was understood to say that in moving the reduction of this item by £700, the salary of the present Under Secretary for Mines, he wished it to be clearly understood that he made no reflection upon the way in which that officer had conducted the department, but he thought the amount of work done in the department was so very small that the country did not require a highly-paid officer like the Under Secretary for Mines to discharge the duties. Prior to 1874 the work was done in the Works Department by Mr. A. O. Herbert, who was also Commissioner for Railways and Under Secretary for Works, so that that officer did what it now took three Under Secretaries to do; and he might also point out that since the collapse of mining, after the mania of 1871 and 1872, the great press of work in this department had considerably decreased. The creation of that new department was unnecessary, but the action of the present Government in carrying on the department was very excusable, because when they came into office they were saddled, as it were, with a legacy of the late Government, and until some action was taken in the matter it was their duty to perpetuate it: but he hoped to be able to show that such a highly-paid officer as the Under Secretary for Mines was not required. The other Under Secretaries had a great deal more work to do. The Under Secretary for Lands had the expenditure of £57,554; the Under Secretary for Works had to look after the expenditure of £93,343; of Public Instruction, £113,823; of the Treasury, £107,918; the Commissioner for Railways, £165,784; the Under Secretary for the Post Office, £108,130; and the Under Colonial Secretary had £279,000 to look after; while the Under Secretary for Mines had the gigantic sum of £17,896 to expend. He said to pay any officer £700 a year to look after the expenditure of £17,000 was an extravagance that they were hardly justified in perpetuating. The revenue derived from the Mines Department was only about £17,000; and as the expenditure was £17,890, the country lost something like £1,000, so that it was their imperative, though painful, duty to cut down the department, and they should do so as far as possible, in fairness. He would also point out that the Mines Department had not been conducted as it ought to have been under the circumstances. The present Under Secretary was

appointed in July, 1874, as Inspector of Mines, at a salary of £500, which had been increased to £700. Since 1874 the work of the department had been very inefficiently done. From that year until 1878 there was no report of the department laid before the House, although, while they had such a highly-paid officer in charge of it, the country had a right to expect, and to demand, a report. It was rather strange that, prior to the report of 1878 being published, Mr. Warden Gill was brought down to Brisbane for two or three months, and there was a strong suspicion that he was preparing the report that was laid on the table last year. He had no reason for supposing that the Under Secretary for Mines was not capable of drawing up a report of that sort; but, still, there was the fact that for three or four years no report was prepared, and as soon as Mr. Gill came down out came the report. That was bad enough, but he found in the next year that Mr. Gill was again requested or instructed to attend in Brisbane for two or three months, and shortly afterwards out came another report. These might be two "undesigned coincidences" with reference to this report and Mr. Gill, but hon. members could draw their own conclusions. There was another fact to which he would call attention—namely, that during the last few years two new wardenships had been created in the Palmer district, and two wardens, Messrs. Towner and Farrelly, had been appointed over the heads of those who had been in the department for years, and who had proved themselves well adapted for their duties in every way. He could not altogether acquit the present Under Secretary of the department of a certain amount of favouritism in reference to those appointments, and he thought that anyone on reading the papers which had been laid on the table would come to the same conclusion. He moved that the item of £700 be omitted.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the hon. member, in moving the omission of the item, must intend to abolish the Mines Department altogether. The reason given by the hon. member was that the permanent head of the department must have very little to do, as he had so little money to administer; but he might inform the hon. member that there were many departments which had no money whatever to administer. He was quite willing to admit that there was not so much work to do in the Mines Department as there ought to be, but that was not the fault of the department, but arose from a want of legislation, and he could assure the hon. member that if the Bill before the House was passed the gentleman at the head of the department would have quite enough to do. It was his intention, should he succeed in carrying the Bill,

to make the Under Secretary Chief Inspector of Mines also, and to give him plenty of work to do in addition to what he already had. He was quite sure that if he was able to carry out his idea of effecting a whole re-administration of the department, and of handing over to the Under Secretary all the copper, tin, coal, and other mines, that gentleman would have quite enough to do. With regard to the amendment, it would be rather an extraordinary thing to tell the other colonies that this colony had abolished its Mines Department. It was the attraction of the goldfields which had brought thousands of men to this colony from the neighbouring colonies without putting the colony to one shilling of expense; and if the Committee were to advertise, as they would do by abolishing the department, that the mines had fallen to the low condition referred to by the hon. member for Burke, they might bid adieu to any fresh accessions of miners from either Victoria or New South Wales. With regard to the appointments alluded to by the hon. member, the Under Secretary was not responsible for any appointment, but only the Minister who made it. It was true that a Minister might act on the advice of his Under Secretary, but still he was responsible, and therefore it was unfair to attempt to shift the responsibility from the shoulders of the Minister on to the head of the permanent head of the department. In reference to the appointments themselves, of Messrs. Towner and Farrelly, the last-named gentleman was far from a new chum, as he had had considerable experience in the Mines Department. The other officer, Mr. Towner, had not had the same experience in the department, but he had been a very active and energetic police officer, and he possessed qualities which the other did not. Being active and energetic, and having a large district to look after, he had been a most valuable officer in hunting up thousands of Chinamen to see that they did not defraud the State. Allusion had also been made to Mr. Gill, and to his having had to make way for those appointments; but Mr. Gill had not left the department, and was only on leave of absence for six months. He was not out of employment through the appointment of either Mr. Towner or Mr. Farrelly. He (Mr. Macrossan) had offered Mr. Gill two appointments, which that gentleman had refused for, no doubt, good reasons to himself. He hoped the amendment would be withdrawn, as no worse misfortune could happen to Queensland than the abolition of the Mines Department. No doubt, the mines were dull just now, but goldfields were always subject to periods of depression, and there was no reason to suppose that there would not be a change for the better. As he had already said, he looked upon it as most

unwise to do anything that would tend to cause the abolition of the Mines Department.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked if the Minister for Mines could inform him whether Mr. Towner was a relative of the Under Secretary of Mines?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of my own knowledge, I do not know.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had reason to believe that he was his nephew. He quite agreed with the Minister for Mines that the Mining Department was a very important one; but it might be very efficiently managed by the present chief clerk, and perhaps quite as well as by the Under Secretary, who seemed to have little else to do but to walk up and down Queen street.

Mr. THORN said that he appointed both the wardens who had been referred to, and he believed both gentlemen had proved themselves to be most efficient officers before he gave them those appointments. His principal object in appointing Mr. Towner was because he wanted him to hunt up the Chinamen who tried to defraud the revenue; and in a very short time, owing to that officer's exertions, the sum received from the Chinese was nearly quadrupled. With regard to Mr. Lukin, who was also an efficient officer, he might inform hon. members that that gentleman did a great deal more work than was supposed, and when the copper, tin, and other mines were placed under his charge, he would have more work to do than any other two Under Secretaries. Mr. Lukin even now did more work than the Under Secretary to the Treasury, and if Government added other duties to what he now did he would hold a very important position. At one time it was contemplated to appoint a Minister for Mines, and as there were only four Ministers in the House now they might fill up their number in that way. If the department were abolished he would look on it as a stab at one of the greatest industries in the colony.

Mr. ARCHER would vote against the reduction on different grounds. He had neither appointed these officers, nor was it necessary to have a salaried Minister for Mines; but if the Under Secretary was not wanted it was not for the House to knock him off—that was the duty of the Minister at the head of the department: the Assembly was a legislative, not an executive body. Ministers ought to have the moral courage to discharge every man who was not wanted; and if they found they had a Minister not capable of doing his duty in that respect they could teach him a lesson; but if he said an officer was necessary for the carrying on of a department they ought to take his word. The fact that there was not much doing in gold-mining just now was no reason that the department should be abolished all at once. As the Minister

for Works said, they hoped to see mining in a flourishing condition before long, and if the Mines Regulation Bill passed the Under Secretary would have plenty of work to do;—but, independently of that, if it was necessary to strike out this vote, it was also necessary to strike out that of the Minister for Works. But the Minister for Works was not culpable in retaining the services of an officer he considered necessary.

Mr. SHEAFFE said that if he had said anything in his previous remarks which had led hon. members to imagine he thought lightly of the mining industry it was a mistake. Nobody could have a higher opinion of the potential wealth of the colony derived from mines than he had, and it was not extravagant to say that he considered the future of Queensland would be largely made by her mines. He could not see that the services of this officer tended to increase the productive power of the colony; and, had he not understood that both copper and tin mining were at present under the control of that officer, he should have been still more anxious to carry his amendment. He did not wish hon. members to think that he wanted the Mines Office done away with; he wished to reduce the salary of the Under Secretary, who was unnecessary. He knew there was plenty to do in the department; but, as he believed it took a man of experience to do it, it could not be put under better superintendence than that of the hon. Minister for Works himself. In reference to appointments, he knew they were made by the then Minister; but he also had a strong impression that when an under secretary recommended an appointment it was very frequently made. Warden Farrelly had no right to have been placed in the department, and his appointment from goldfields orderly to goldfields warden was a grave miscarriage of justice.

Mr. AMHURST said that at present the head of that department had two under secretaries—one for the Works and the other for the Mines—and as the former had by the Divisional Boards Bill been relieved of a good deal of work, one under secretary would in future be enough. There might be extra duties to perform in the Mines Office, but henceforward they would be better done by the Under Secretary for Works. He should vote for the amendment.

Mr. KING said that, in the remarks which had been made about the Under Secretary for Mines, consideration had not been given to the fact that at the time when the goldfields were going ahead there had frequently been complaints and dissatisfaction with regard to the different wardens; and it was within his (Mr. King's) own knowledge that the Under Secretary had repeatedly had occasion to visit the different

goldfields of the colony for the purpose of inquiring into those matters. It was necessary there should be a superior officer to visit the goldfields and conduct whatever investigations were necessary. The Under Secretary had in this manner visited Gympie and the Palmer and Charters Towers, and had thereby saved the Government a considerable amount of trouble from time to time. In New South Wales it used to be considered necessary to have officers on the goldfields for the purpose of supervising the work of the wardens generally, and he believed such an appointment was necessary in Queensland. It might be true that at the present time, owing to the falling-off in the yield of gold, the Under Secretary had not sufficient work to occupy him; but he was glad to hear from the Minister for Works that the intention was to entrust the administration of the Mines Regulation Bill to this officer, and when that Bill was passed there would be no doubt he would have plenty of work. As to the appointment of Mr. Farrelly, his promotion had not been correctly described. This officer was, first of all, on the vouchers as goldfields orderly to himself (Mr. King) at Gympie; but during the whole of the time he was there he did duty as clerk in the Warden's office. When the court at Gympie was abolished, Mr. Farrelly had the work so completely at his fingers' ends that he was recommended by the whole of the people on the goldfield for the appointment of mining registrar. In this position he performed his duties very satisfactorily indeed, and under these circumstances the Government were not only justified, but much to be commended, in giving him promotion when it occurred. As to Mr. Towner, the appointment that had been given to him was one which was very hard to fill up properly. No doubt, men might be got in Brisbane who would undertake to go up to the goldfields and do the work of junior wardens, but when they got there it would be found that they could not do it. Mr. Farrelly was himself glad the other day to get the opportunity of returning to his former appointment at Gympie and resigning the wardenship, and he believed that the appointment Mr. Towner now held was offered to a warden higher in the service, but declined. There was no reason to believe that Mr. Towner did not perform his duties satisfactorily, while there was reason to believe that he possessed the special qualifications necessary for the office. If they had a man who performed the duties pertaining to his office satisfactorily, it was not easy to see how any blame could be thrown upon either the Under Secretary or the Minister who made the appointment. Finally, he (Mr. King) agreed with the member for Blackall that this was an important appointment which the Government

proposed to retain, and it certainly was not the duty of the Committee to administer the government, but rather to make the Ministry administer it properly. In a matter like this they had no business to take the matter out of the hands of the Ministry unless they were prepared to dispense with their services.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said that some time ago he heard there was a disposition on the part of several hon. members to abolish this department, and from what had been said to him he was inclined to the opinion that it might be advantageous to do so. As the matter was important, he took the trouble to investigate the facts, and in order to form a correct conclusion he obtained some figures relating to the expenditure on the Mining Departments in New South Wales and Victoria. He would lay the results of his investigations before the Committee, and it would then, he thought, be generally admitted that it would be a most injudicious thing to abolish the Department of Mines. Taking, first, the expenditure at the Metropolitan office, he found that this in Melbourne, during the year 1878, amounted to £11,414; in Sydney, £8,011; and in Brisbane, £1,155. The number of miners employed in Victoria was 36,636, and the total revenue from the gold-mining industry last year was £14,814. The cost of collecting it was £72,195; or, in other words, the expenditure exceeded the revenue by more than £57,000. In New South Wales, 6,974 miners were employed on the goldfields, and the total revenue derived from them was £11,622;—the other figures he had been unable to ascertain. In Queensland, the number of miners was 14,490; the total revenue from the mines was £20,155; and the total expenditure on the collection of it was £17,000, the amount of revenue over expenditure being £3,000. Those were figures the significance of which could not be overlooked, and tended to show the impropriety of abolishing the Department of Mines, which the amendment virtually aimed at doing. The yield of gold in Victoria last year was 758,040 ounces, or £82 12s. per man; and the value of machinery on the goldfields was £1,903,475. In Queensland the yield of gold was 309,612 ounces, the average earnings of the European miners being £201 9s. 9d., or including Chinese, £74 per man; and the total value of the machinery on the fields was £269,930. This large industry was supervised by a department in the metropolis which cost only £1,100 a-year, or ten times less than that of Victoria, while the yield was only one-half less. Finding that it was contemplated to virtually abolish this department he had felt it his duty to see upon what grounds such a desire was founded, and he had come to the conclusion

already stated. It would be a gross injustice to miners as a body to abolish that which gave their occupation distinctive recognition in the colony as a separate industry. Surely the miners had been labouring under disabilities enough, and it ought not to be forgotten that when Gympie was discovered they came to the rescue of the colony and raised it from the depths of bankruptcy to the heights of prosperity. The State did not do much for miners; it did not provide a water-supply as in Victoria. More than this, a very large sum was debited to the Mines Department expenditure in this colony which in Victoria was debited to the administration of justice. There they paid police magistrates to do the duty of wardens, while here they paid wardens to do the duty of police magistrates, and mining registrars to do the work of clerks of petty sessions. With these facts before him, he thought it would be unwise to carry the amendment.

Mr. BAILEY said miners were not fools or children. They did not care whether there was a gentleman in Brisbane receiving £700 or £800 a-year and calling himself a Mines Department. What they wanted was roads to their goldfields, and did not care twopence if the Brisbane department was abolished altogether. By retrenching this salary—and it was evident the official had nothing to do for his money—the amount might go towards those roads which they so urgently needed. The adoption of the amendment would not abolish the Mines Department, for the department existed before the Under Secretary came into office. Give the miners good roads—that was all they wanted—and then the industry would prosper in Queensland as it had done in other colonies.

Mr. HENDREN hoped the Mines Regulation Bill would be pressed to a conclusion this session, for it would be thankfully received by a very large community. He should not vote for the amendment because, under the Mines Regulation Bill, general inspection of mines would be required, and the Under Secretary would find enough to do in seeing that the provisions of the Act were properly carried out.

Mr. HAMILTON said it was an absurdity to think that the passing of the amendment meant the virtual abolition of the Mines Department. One man could do all the necessary work of the department, and be well paid for it at £400 a-year. The work to be done was mainly clerical. One of the objections put forward against striking off the amount was that the Under Secretary was useful in deciding upon complaints as to the conduct of wardens in the goldfields; but it might just as well be said that an inspector of magistrates was necessary. The Under Secretary, since his

appointment in 1874, had made one trip to Gympie and two to the North. In the first case the trip was made, not to inquire into a complaint, but on business in connection with the Sydney Exhibition; and then, instead of travelling direct to Gympie and back, as he might have done for £6, he went *via* Maryborough, the journey occupying fifteen days—during which he was paid £1 1s. a-day—and costing twice as much for travelling expenses. The Minister for Works said this officer had nothing to do now, but when the Mines Regulation Bill passed he would be appointed chief inspector: but that Bill would be a perfect fraud if an incompetent man were appointed to that position—such was the opinion expressed by all mining men. Seeing that every inspector was to be a practical man, and would not be eligible unless he could pass an examination, what a farce it would be if the chief inspector did not understand the difference between a hole and a drive! For these reasons he should support the amendment.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Minister for Works had bestowed a faint praise on the appointment when he said that there was nothing to do now, but some day there might be. The hon. gentleman said that when the Mines Regulation Bill passed the Under Secretary would be chief inspector, but surely he was not serious in arguing like that—it looked like an invitation to the Committee to reject the vote. The Chief Inspector of Mines would necessarily have to be a practical, and not merely a theoretical, man. The Government were now getting nearly to the end of the Estimates, and if they had any intention of passing that Bill they would withdraw them for the present to go on with it. No one seriously believed, from the way the Government had arranged their business, that they had any hope of being able to pass the Bill. The hon. member for Blackall said that it was not for the Committee to relieve the Government of their responsibility of continuing or discontinuing an office; but, if that were the case, there would be no necessity to submit the Estimates at all. He (Mr. Griffith) believed the Under Secretary was a very competent officer who had done good service to the country; but, if he had nothing to do, they would scarcely find any item on the Estimates that could be omitted with less disadvantage. This was not a question of doing away with the department, but simply a question of whether £700 could be saved.

Question—That the item £700 be omitted—put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 10.

Messrs. Meston, Sheaffe, Hill, Morehead, Bailey, H. W. Palmer, Hamilton, Amhurst, Groom, and Griffith.

NOES, 21.

Messrs. Garrick, Dickson, Rea, McLean, Mellwraith, Thorn, King, O'Sullivan, Kates, Kellett, Stevens, Perkins, Macrossan, Rutledge, Paterson, Hendren, Tyrel, Archer, Horwitz, Kingsford, and Beattie.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Mr. AMHURST asked whether any allowances were paid?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the Under Secretary had nothing beyond his salary.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked for information about the trip to Gympie.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the Under Secretary travelled to Gympie entirely upon his authority. The trip was undertaken at the request of the committee of the National Association for the purpose of furthering the Sydney Exhibition, and was certainly a public service.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Did he not get travelling expenses?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the Under Secretary was on the same footing with other Under Secretaries—they all receive £1 ls. a-day and their fares when travelling.

Mr. GRIFFITH said a large sum of money had been spent on the Museum, but he saw nothing put down for a curator. Some hon. member suggested that the Under Secretary for Mines should have charge, and he was not at all sure that the suggestion might not be a very good one. If the Museum were to be anything more than a lumber-room, there must be in it a living man who would undertake the duty of collecting objects of instruction and interest in these colonies, and who would be capable of corresponding with similar institutions in other parts of the world. He was sorry to see nothing on the Estimates.

The PREMIER said there was an amount put on the Supplementary Estimates last year, but it was knocked off, the House considering that the country was not in a position to afford it. The position of analytical chemist and curator of the Museum should be filled by one man. They could not afford the salary that used to be voted for a keeper of the Museum, but which now appeared as for an analytical chemist.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that when the leader of the Opposition suggested that the Under Secretary for Mines should be put in the Museum the hon. gentleman must have meant as an exhibit, and he hoped that the Government would do that. How long had Warden Towner been in the Government Service?—what had he been in the Service?—and was he any relative of Mr. Lukin?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he had ascertained that Mr. Towner was a nephew of Mr. Lukin, and was four years sub-inspector of native police out in one of the western districts. He had been warden two-and-a-half years.

Mr. RUTLEDGE thought that some attention ought to be paid to the question of getting a curator for the Museum. It would be possible to make an arrangement whereby the services of some first-class analytical chemist, having the necessary literary attainments to fill the position also of curator, could be obtained. As to the gentleman who now filled the position of analytical chemist, he did not wish to say anything in disparagement of him, but doubtless some other duties could be found for him to perform.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR MINES, the Chairman left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at five minutes to 11 o'clock.