

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 17 JULY 1884

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The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) replied—

No.

Mr. JORDAN asked the Minister for Works—

When it may be expected that the work of extending the wharf at South Brisbane will be commenced?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

As soon as the necessary funds are voted by Parliament the works will be proceeded with.

Mr. JORDAN asked the Colonial Treasurer—

When the lengthening of the Dry Dock at South Brisbane will be commenced?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) replied—

A tender has just been accepted for the first portion of the work.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What will be the length of that portion?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: 150 feet.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. NORTON said that, as a matter of some importance and as a personal explanation, he had a word to say with respect to what he had said last night concerning the Commissioner for Railways' Report. He said that on looking over the report he discovered a discrepancy between the report last issued and the report of last year, of some £90,000. He had not then had time to discover how the discrepancy arose, but he had since taken the opportunity to look into the matter, and he thought it better and more satisfactory to explain at once how it was the difference in the figures arose. The statement made in the report this year, he believed, was correct, and the statement in last year's report was incorrect. It was stated in the beginning of the Commissioner's last report that "No addition to the railway debt of the colony has been made during the year 1883." Seeing that, and finding that there was a difference of £90,000 between the railway debt this year and last year, he looked into the matter and found there was a sum of £90,000 omitted from last year's authorised loan for a branch line to the Upper Logan. He thought at first it was a clerical error, because the figures in the last report were £5,875,000 and in the other £5,785,000, and it seemed the figures were transposed, but it was an error of omission of £90,000. He thought it better to explain the matter at once after the statement he made last night.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

On the motion of Mr. MOREHEAD, it was resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a Return showing, in detail, all expenses incurred in the case of *Regina v. Hill*.

DRAINAGE OF LANDS BILL.

Mr. STEVENS moved—

That the House will, on Thursday, the 24th instant, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the Drainage of Lands within the Colony of Queensland.

Question put and passed.

PETTIGREW ESTATE ENABLING BILL.

Mr. FOOTE moved—

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to enable the Trustees for the time being of the Will of John Pettigrew, deceased, to sell and dispose of certain Trust Property comprised therein.

Question put and passed, and Bill read a first time.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 17 July, 1884.

Questions.—Personal Explanation.—Formal Motions.—
Drainage of Lands Bill.—Pettigrew Estate Enabling Bill.—Aborigines of Australia and New Guinea Restriction Bill.—Immigration Act Amendment Bill.—United Municipalities Act Amendment Bill.—third reading.—Divisional Boards Endowment Bill.—third reading.—Marsupials Destruction Act Continuation Bill.—third reading.—Burdekin Sugar Lands Selections.—Maryborough and Gympie Railway.—Registrar of Titles Bill.—committee.—Officials in Parliament Bill.—second reading.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. CHUBB asked the Minister for Works—

If it is the intention of the Government during the present session of Parliament to ask this House to approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the first section of the authorised Railway from Bowen to Houghton Gap, as laid upon the table of this House, 8th November, 1883?

1884—g

ABORIGINES OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW GUINEA RESTRICTION BILL.

The PREMIER moved—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to restrict the employment of Aboriginal Natives of Australia and New Guinea on ships in Queensland waters.

Question put and passed.

IMMIGRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The PREMIER moved—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Immigration Act of 1882.

Question put and passed.

UNITED MUNICIPALITIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

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

DIVISIONAL BOARDS ENDOWMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) moved that this Bill be now read a third time.

Question put and passed.

On the motion—That the title of the Bill be “A Bill to amend the law relating to the Endowment of Divisional Boards”—being put,

Mr. NORTON said that before the question was put—

The SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. member that, in accordance with the Sessional Order, no discussion can take place on the third reading of a Bill which has been declared formal.

Mr. NORTON: Then, sir, I must ask your ruling on the 241st Standing Order.

The SPEAKER: This is the first time a discussion has been attempted to be raised on the third reading of a Bill after it has been declared formal.

Mr. NORTON: But I want to raise a discussion as to the title of the Bill.

The SPEAKER: Then I understand the hon. member rises to a question of order.

Mr. NORTON said he wished to raise a question of order with regard to the title of the Bill. The 241st Standing Order provided that—

“After the third reading, and further proceedings thereon, a question is put, ‘That this Bill do now pass’; after which the title of the Bill shall be agreed to, or amended and agreed to.”

And the 16th Joint Standing Order provided that—

“The title of every Bill shall succinctly set forth the general object thereof.”

The question of order he wished to raise was whether the title of the Bill ought not to be amended. He contended that it certainly did not “succinctly set forth the general object thereof.”

The PREMIER: That is not a point of order. It is a question of opinion.

Mr. NORTON: I have raised the point of order, and I will take your ruling, Mr. Speaker—not that of the Premier.

The PREMIER rose to a point of order. The hon. member was digressing from the point of order, and endeavouring to raise discussion. He would ask whether the hon. member was not exceeding the limits to which an hon. member rising to a point of order was confined.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has a right to distinctly state what the point of order is.

Mr. NORTON said he did not wish to raise a discussion with regard to the matter; he only desired to point out that by the Standing Orders the title of every Bill should succinctly set forth the general object thereof. The point of order he wished decided was, whether the title of the Bill before them succinctly set forth the general object thereof. The title of the Bill was, “A Bill to amend the law relating to Endowments to Divisional Boards,” but the Bill went beyond that, and related to endowments to municipalities, and granted to them rights which they did not possess under any other Act in existence. That was the point of order.

The SPEAKER: I would direct the attention of the House to the Sessional Order, which is apparently inconsistent with the 241st Standing Order. The Sessional Order which the House has assented to is as follows:—

“No debate shall be allowed on any such ‘formal’ Motions or Orders of the Day, or upon the further proceedings following the reading of such Orders; but the House may proceed to division thereupon, without amendment or debate, as in the case of a motion for the first reading of a Bill.”

The 241st Standing Order says:—

“After the third reading, and further proceedings thereon, a question is put, ‘That this Bill do now pass’; after which the title of the Bill shall be agreed to, or amended and agreed to.”

So that the Sessional Order is really inconsistent with the Standing Order. On the question the hon. member has put to me as to whether the title of the Bill is consistent with its provisions, I regret to say I shall have to rule against him, because I think it is. I think the title of the Bill is fully consistent with the provisions of the Bill as agreed to by the House.

Mr. SCOTT said he thought it would be advisable that the question as to the clashing of the Sessional Order and the Standing Order should be settled at once. It had always been the practice of the House since that Sessional Order came into operation, that not only the third reading itself, but all consequent proceedings, should be taken as formal; but if the 241st Standing Order was to overrule that, it ought to be made known, so that if anyone wished to amend the title of a Bill they could call out “not formal.” It was quite easy to prevent it going through as formal.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he took it that the Speaker's ruling in no way affected the clashing which appeared to exist between the Sessional Order and the Standing Order. He had given his ruling—perhaps very properly—he (Mr. Morehead) was not going to cavil at it—that the title did cover the contents of the Bill; but he had given no opinion with regard to whether the Standing Order overruled the Sessional Order, or whether the Sessional Order overruled the Standing Order. He (Mr. Morehead) considered that the authority of the Standing Orders had received a very severe shock by the statement made by the Premier some years ago when he said that they had no force in law. He thought that that statement of the hon. the Premier had done more to weaken parliamentary government in the House than anything ever done by any other hon. member.

The PREMIER said that he wished to correct a mistake which the hon. member had fallen into, but he would first take the opportunity of saying a word about the Sessional Order. The Sessional Order was introduced for the purpose of superseding the Standing Orders. It had no other object. Under the Standing Orders, every

hon. member was free to speak on every motion, and the Sessional Order was introduced so that, by the unanimous consent of the House, debate should be precluded on certain questions; in other words, the Sessional Order superseded the Standing Orders. But for that Sessional Order, no motion for the first reading of the Bill could be taken without debate; because under the Standing Orders every member would have a right to speak. The hon. member had made a mistake in saying that he (the Premier) had said that the Standing Orders were of no effect.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That they had not the force of law.

The PREMIER said that what he had pointed out on that occasion was that the Standing Orders relating to punishment for contempt were defective. That was the only time on which he had adverted to the validity of the Standing Orders.

Question put and passed, and the Bill was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION ACT CONTINUATION BILL—THIRD READING.

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

BURDEKIN SUGAR LAND SELECTIONS.

Mr. ALAND said his reason for calling "not formal" to the motion standing in his name was because he wished to make a slight alteration in the 1st clause by inserting "or near" after "on," and "below the township of Mulgrave" after "river." He therefore moved—

That there be laid on the table of the House a Return showing,—

1. The names of all the persons who selected land for sugar-growing and other purposes on or near the delta of the Burdekin River, below the township of Mulgrave.
2. The date when said lands were selected, the price at which they were selected, and whether personally or by attorney or agent; if the latter, the names of the attorney or agent.
3. The character and value of the improvements effected on each selection.
4. The commencement of the term of the leases, date when certificates of fulfilment of conditions were applied for in each case, by whom the applications were made, and the date when said certificates were granted, and the name of the commissioner granting them.
5. The date when the certificates were confirmed by the Minister for Lands.
6. The date when balance of purchase money, if any, was paid.
7. Copies of reports, if any, of the District Commissioner of Crown Lands in relation to the fulfilment of conditions in each case.
8. The date when the Minister for Lands approved of the issue of the title-deeds in each case.
9. The date when the deeds in each case were signed by the Governor or Acting Governor.
10. The dates and particulars of subsequent transfers (if any).

Mr. MOREHEAD: I object to the alteration. The hon. member must ask the permission of the House.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion be amended as desired by the hon. member?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

MARYBOROUGH AND GYMPIE RAILWAY.

Mr. NORTON, in moving—

That there be laid upon the table of the House,—
1. Copy of report from District Engineer, Maryborough, dated 15th March, 1882, to the Chief Engineer of Southern Railways.

2. Copy of letter, dated 22nd March, 1882, to Mr. James Frost from R. Brassy (engine-driver in charge of engine employed to work for Messrs. Annear and Thorn on Maryborough and Gympie contract).

3. Copy of letter, dated 8th March, 1882, from John Drysdale (employed by Government on Maryborough and Gympie contract) to J. Thorneloe Smith, Esquire, District Engineer.

—said he was not aware of the reason why the motion was not allowed to go as "formal." He believed the papers were in the Works Office.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government have no objection to the production of the papers.

Mr. NORTON: Then I need say no more about them. Why did you make the motion "not formal"?

Question put and passed.

REGISTRAR OF TITLES BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House went into Committee to consider this Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

On clause 1—"Registrar of Titles to be appointed"—

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought they should have a full exposition of the measure from the hon. the Colonial Secretary before going further. He thought that they should have some good and sufficient reasons set forth as to why it was necessary to duplicate the position held by the Registrar-General, which, so far as they knew, had given general satisfaction. He (Mr. Morehead) in common with others, heard a great deal with regard to most public offices, and he had heard no complaint as to the working of that department, either on account of laxity in the manner in which the work was performed, or on any other ground. He assumed, from what he heard last night, that it was the intention of the Government to put £700 or £800 on the Estimates to pay this new official as soon as the Bill became law, and they should have some sound reason, which had not yet been given, as to why the appointment should be made. He hoped the Premier was not going to try and hurry the Bill through committee, but that he would give them all the information he could, and state what were the duties to be performed by the new officer. As he said last night, he now repeated, that the Civil Service of the colony was already too heavy. They were over civil-serviced. He knew that that was the opinion of many members of the Committee, who, perhaps, did not care to express their opinions. But he had no hesitation in expressing his, that they had a great many more Civil servants than they should have; that they were under-worked and over-paid; and before proceeding further he should like to know from the Colonial Secretary the necessity for the creation of this new office.

The PREMIER said that he explained yesterday why the Bill had been introduced. The connection between the Registrar-General and the Real Property Act was at present merely nominal—practically, the work of the latter branch was done by an officer who took no responsibility whatever; whilst the nominal responsibility was taken by the Registrar-General. The amount of work to be done when the Act first came into force in 1861 was very small indeed, but within the last twenty-three years it had greatly increased and had nearly doubled within the last few years. It had been the opinion of many practical men for some years that the two offices ought to be separated in form as they really were in fact. The present officer in charge, as he had said, took no responsibility, and any questions that arose had to be referred

to the Registrar-General, whose other duties kept him entirely apart from that branch of the office. Those who were more familiar with the working of the Real Property Act than he was—that was to say, the office-working—had over and over again urged upon him the necessity for the proposed change. He had resisted the change on previous occasions when he had had something to do with the office, because he thought that the time was not ripe for it, but since that time the work had actually doubled. Yesterday, he had compared the work of 1881 to that at the present time, and showed by figures how the work had increased. He thought now, that the time had certainly arrived when the office should be put on a separate footing. As to the increase of expenditure mentioned by the hon. member, he did not believe it would amount to more than £300 a year. Then with regard to the Civil Service being already overstaffed, that depended altogether upon whether the Government wanted the work done, and properly done, or not; and he maintained that, to do the work that had to be done, the Civil Service was far from being over-staffed, and it was at times almost impossible to get some of the work done. He knew that from his own experience within the last few months; and, compared with the neighbouring colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, the Civil Service here was very small indeed in proportion to the work to be done.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, replying to the latter portion of the Premier's speech, he would ask, if the Civil Service was not over-staffed, what became of the charges made against the late Government about making billets for their friends and relatives? Surely, if the Premier came into office and found the Government departments under-staffed, he should either substantiate or withdraw his previous charge. But what had the hon. gentleman done since he came into power? Finding the departments under-staffed, he had not only not made any serious effort to increase the Civil Service, but he had actually reduced the working hours of labour, and as matters now stood a Civil servant did absolutely less work than any other employé in the colony. The extra hour which they so much complained of, and which the late Government were urged, time after time, to knock off under pain of losing the Civil Service vote, was never altered by them, and it was left to the present Government, immediately after taking office, to reduce the working hours of the Civil Service; and in that manner still further throwing the work into arrear if it was in arrear already. The hon. member had landed himself in a very illogical position, and he did not think he had made out a good case for the creation of the new office. Matters, he believed, would not be helped by the new arrangement. If it was necessary, let them give Mr. Mylne more pay for the work he was doing—and no doubt he deserved it—but why create a new appointment? There was sometimes a great deal of friction under the existing state of affairs between the Registrar-General and the permanent head of the Colonial Secretary's Office, as the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan, could inform the House; and it would be found that there would be still more if there were two heads of the same department. He repeated that if they made two heads of this department they would create an amount of friction that might do an incalculable amount of harm to the general public. He believed himself in subordinating the officials in a department under one head, to whom they could all appeal. It was said that two heads were better than one, and so they might be, under certain circumstances, but in this case a very great

deal of trouble might be caused by having two heads.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down referred to there being two heads to the department if this appointment was made, but certainly the intention of the Bill was not to appoint two heads to the department, but to sever into two departments an office that was at present under one nominal head. That was what he understood the object of the Bill to be, and the hon. gentleman knew very well that the subject had come up in the House in years past and had received the strongest advocacy from those who knew most about it. It was most undesirable that the work of that office should continue to be associated with the Registrar-General's Office; and he was not only certain that it was in the interests of the public and the department that the Bill had been brought forward, but that the hon. gentleman in charge of it deserved commendation for making the change. The Real Property branch and the Registrar-General's branch were just as much related to each other as the Department of the Inspector of Police was related to the Works Department. To his mind it was a reform that should not be delayed much longer, and that ought to have been made five or six years ago when he advocated it. There was no relationship whatever between the registration of births, deaths, and marriages, the statistical branch, and the Real Property Office; and he, therefore, had much pleasure in supporting the clause.

Mr. NORTON said he wished to know from the Colonial Treasurer whether there was any intention on the part of the Government to reduce the fees in the Real Property Office. The matter had been alluded to on the previous evening, and, as there was a profit on the working of the department, he should like to know whether anything was to be done towards reducing the fees.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the matter had not received any consideration from the Government. He did not know of any sufficient argument for reducing the fees at the present time. The fact that there was a surplus on the working of the department might be accounted for by the fact that, during the last two or three years, there had been a very large number of transactions in land; but it was possible that such a large revenue would not be received in future years. They had no right to expect, because there had been large land speculations lately, that that was evidence they would continue to the same extent in the future. He, therefore, thought that the mere fact of there being a surplus on the working of the office was not sufficient to justify a reduction of the fees, which, he maintained, were not oppressive on the community. But he looked at the matter in another light. The returns laid on the table showed that, while there was a surplus, the expenditure was only charged with the salaries of officers. The department, however, should be dealt with as a mercantile establishment, and charges allowed for rent for the buildings occupied. The usual allowances, in fact, should be made when computing the pecuniary position of the office. At the present time he was averse to interfering with the ordinary sources of revenue, unless it could be clearly shown that the charges were oppressive on any section of the community.

Mr. CHUBB said that on the question whether the fees should be reduced or not a good deal might be said on both sides. He would take that opportunity of drawing the attention of the Colonial Secretary to an imposition practised in the Real Property Office, of a monstrous character. The Real Property Act

provided that 10s. 6d. should be charged for obtaining acknowledgments of married women. Other Acts provided that those acknowledgments might be taken by commissioners, in the country, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they were taken there and the fees paid to the commissioners; nevertheless, when the acknowledgments came to the Real Property Office, the Registrar-General demanded another 10s. 6d.—a demand that he (Mr. Chubb) maintained was illegal, and should not be allowed for one moment. The matter was submitted to him, officially, when he was Attorney-General, and he gave an opinion that it was an illegal charge. Whether any steps had been taken to remedy it, he did not know, but if not, he trusted the Colonial Secretary would see that the charge was dispensed with, for it was what he called nothing less than downright robbery.

The PREMIER said the matter had not previously been brought under his notice; or he should at once have given directions that no such fee was to be demanded by the Registrar-General. If the fee had been paid once, it certainly ought not to be paid again. The matter was one that could be easily remedied by the head of the department.

Mr. JORDAN said the hon. member for Bowen was quite correct in what he said. The fee was charged by order of a former Colonial Secretary, who was guided, he believed, by the opinion of the Auditor-General that 10s. 6d. must be demanded in the Registrar-General's office in such cases as those to which the hon. member for Bowen alluded. When the order was given by the Colonial Secretary, he (Mr. Jordan) expressed his strong protest against it, as it was a great hardship and an imposition on the public.

Mr. ISAMBERT said that that instance of charging fees was another proof of the necessity of a Bill to abolish fees to public officials, and that if any were paid they should go into the revenue. In the present instance, therefore, the Bill would correct an incongruity. He was very glad that the Colonial Treasurer did not see his way to reduce the fees in the Real Property Office. Very often when a Government reduced its income it was followed by a deficit.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. member is speaking to the wrong Bill, but it does not matter.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 2—"Duties of Registrar-General under Real Property Act and Acts relating to registration of deeds to be transferred to Registrar of Titles"—

The PREMIER said that since the Bill had been framed his attention had been called to the fact that, in one or two Acts not mentioned in it, the department was called by other names—"Office of the Registry of Deeds," "Office of the Registrar-General," and there might be other terms which he did not remember. In order to cover any case of that kind, he proposed to verbally amend the clause by inserting "or any other Act relating to the registration of deeds or other instruments" after the word "them" in the 3rd line of the clause, and by omitting the word "recited" in the 9th line of the clause.

Amendments agreed to, and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3 passed as printed.

On clause 4—"Real Property Acts and Acts relating to registration of deeds to be read as if 'Registrar of Titles' were substituted for 'Registrar-General' in them"—

The PREMIER moved the insertion of "and all other Acts relating to the registration of deeds or other instruments in the office of the Registrar-General" after the word "Acts" in the 2nd line of the clause, and of the words "or any of them" after the word "Acts" in the 3rd line of the clause.

Amendments agreed to, and clause, as amended, put and passed.

The PREMIER moved the insertion of the words "office of the Registrar-General" after "words" in the 7th line of clause 4.

Mr. NORTON said he did not object to the amendment, but, at the same time, he must point out that the clause which it was proposed to amend had been passed before the amendment was proposed. The Premier was not listening to what was going on when the clause was put. As he said before, he did not object to the amendment, but he thought it was rather a loose way of conducting business.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he distinctly objected to it, as it was establishing a very bad precedent indeed. If the hon. member wanted to further amend the 4th clause, he could recommit the Bill. It was certainly surprising to that Committee, as he believed it would be surprising to the outside public, to know that, with all the legal talent embraced in the Cabinet, the Government should come down with a slipshod measure like that before the Committee. The only amendments moved were proposed by the Premier himself; the Bill was so imperfect—although he believed it was simply a compilation—that the hon. gentleman had to amend it from time to time, and he had brought them into the present trouble. The hon. gentleman knew as well as he did that the 4th clause had been passed, and that the amendment could not be put. As a matter of precedent the amendment ought not to be allowed, even though it would be inconvenient to the Government, and still more inconvenient to the Committee, to be detained for the recommitment of the Bill. There was an old proverb that "too many cooks spoil the broth," and it certainly appeared that too many lawyers would make bad laws if they were allowed to go on. He hoped the Chairman would rule that the amendment was not in order.

Mr. BROOKES said the remarks made by the leader of the Opposition provoked him to say that, when those on the Ministerial side of the House sat on the other side, most of the important amendments made in the measures introduced came from the present Premier, and it seemed rather strange that he should now be taunted with bringing in imperfect Bills.

Mr. ARCHER said he should think that the hon. the Premier was highly delighted to hear the opinions that had fallen from the junior member for North Brisbane. He believed, however, the hon. gentleman could stand on his own footing without any patting on the back from anybody else. With reference to the question raised by the hon. member for Port Curtis, he thought the 4th clause had been passed, and that the Premier would not like to break the rules of that Committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He cannot.

Mr. ARCHER said he would ask the Chairman's decision whether the clause had been passed or not.

The PREMIER said if the clause had been passed he must, of course, withdraw the amendment. It was simply a question of fact; if the clause had passed he had allowed it to do so quite inadvertently, and he had never known an inadvertence of that kind taken notice of on any previous occasion, although it had occurred hundreds of times. He had certainly never taken

formal notice of such a thing: he had perhaps called the attention of the gentleman in charge of the Bill to a circumstance of that kind when it occurred, but he had not brought it under the notice of the Chairman. Of course, as he had already said, if the clause was passed there was no other course open but to withdraw the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN said the fact of the matter was, that the clause was carried, and he had proceeded to call clause 5.

Mr. ARCHER said he could not but think that the Chairman might have mentioned whether the clause was passed, and have kept the Premier in order; because it was a very simple matter to recommit the Bill.

Amendment withdrawn.

On clause 5—"Registrar of Titles to have seal of office"—

The PREMIER said his attention had been called to the fact that the "Royal arms of England," although used in several previous enactments, was an incorrect expression, and that it should be the "Royal arms of the United Kingdom." He moved that the clause be amended to that effect.

Mr. CHUBB said that the clause proposed to give the Registrar of Titles a seal of office for the purpose of the Real Property Act of 1861 and the Real Property Act of 1877, but, under the Registration of Deeds Act, office copies of deeds were issued as evidence, and to make them evidence they were required to have the seal of the office.

The PREMIER said the best way to meet the point suggested by the hon. member, would be to leave out the limitation—"for the purpose of the Real Property Act of 1861 and the Real Property Act of 1877." The hon. gentleman could move that amendment, or he would move it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Let the Government amend their own Bill.

The PREMIER said the observation of the hon. member for Balonne came with very bad grace from a gentleman who had been a member of a Government who had not been singularly fortunate in framing their Bills.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, with regard to the remarks made by the Premier, he seemed to be in an irritable mood. He simply requested him to amend his own Bill, and certainly did so only as an act of kindness to the hon. gentleman. He was very sorry that the Premier should have lost his temper over it.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the word "England" in the 4th line be omitted, with the view of inserting the words "the United Kingdom."

Amendment put and passed.

Clause 5, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 6—"Office copies of transcripts of deeds registered in the New South Wales to be admissible in evidence"—passed as printed.

On clause 7—"Short title"—being put,

Mr. CHUBB said that on the second reading of the Bill he had proposed to make an amendment to provide for the issue of deeds of grant to a deceased person. That would be inconvenient in the present Bill; and as he understood that the Premier intended to introduce a Bill for other purposes in connection therewith, he should not move his amendment on the present occasion.

Clause put and passed.

On the preamble being put,

The PREMIER said he would move as a verbal amendment that after the word "instrument," in the 12th line, the words "and divers other Acts" be inserted.

Amendment agreed to, and the preamble, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Bill was recommitted, for the purpose of further considering clause 4.

On the motion of the PREMIER, clause 4 was further amended by the insertion of the words "Office of the Registrar-General" after the word "words" in the 7th line of the clause; by the insertion of the words "Office of the Registry" or other like words" after the word "Office" in the 8th line of the clause; and by the omission of the words "these words" and the insertion of the words "those words or any of them" after the word "whenever" in the 8th line of the clause.

Question—That clause 4, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought that the hon. Premier might thank him for taking the action that led to the recommitment of the Bill, because not only had he (Mr. Morehead) amended what he considered a breach of the privileges of Parliament, but the hon. gentleman had made a number of other amendments in the same clause since the Bill was recommitted. It was evident enough, therefore, that the hon. gentleman need not have been so angry when he (Mr. Morehead) suggested such action to the Committee. There was no desire on the Opposition side of the Committee but to make the Bill as perfect as possible, and they had no intention of hampering the Government in any way.

The PREMIER said that if the hon. gentleman's petty discourtesy had led to such a result as he claimed, he should thank him for it, but the amendments he proposed now were the amendments he was about to propose then. He proposed no new amendments.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he certainly took exception to the expression made use of by the hon. gentleman—"petty discourtesy." There had been no petty discourtesy on his part. He was trying to preserve the privileges of that Committee and to see that matters were managed decently and in order. He was very glad the amendment had been made. He did not believe they would have been made had he not taken the action he did, and they certainly would not have been made in a proper manner, but would have been made in a way which would have created a very bad precedent. No very great harm had come of the action he had taken, but very great good had been the result of it.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments. The report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT BILL— SECOND READING.

The PREMIER: I rise, sir, to move the second reading of a Bill to amend the law relating to Ministers of the Crown. It is proposed by the Bill, first, to increase the number of Ministers from six to seven; secondly, it is proposed to enable any six of those seven Ministers to represent the Government in the Legislative Assembly instead of, as at present, virtually only certain specified ones; and thirdly, it is proposed to allow volunteer officers to have seats in the Legislative Assembly. I will deal with the second point first. At the present time, under the Constitution Act, the law is that three officers, mentioned by name—the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, and the Colonial Treasurer—are eligible for seats in

the Assembly; and two other officers, to be designated by the Governor in Council. The Governor in Council might appoint that the Minister for Lands and the Postmaster-General, or the Minister for Works and the Postmaster-General, should be eligible for seats in the Assembly; but up to the present time the Ministers designated for seats in the Assembly have always been the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Works; probably because it would be highly inconvenient that, under ordinary circumstances, those officers should not be in the Assembly. That is the position of the law. There is nothing in that law to prevent the Colonial Secretary, or the Colonial Treasurer, or the Attorney-General, having seats in the Legislative Council, but of course it would be inconvenient, under existing circumstances, that they should go there, because five Ministers must be in the Assembly; and as it stands at present, the only Minister who can practically be in the Council is the Postmaster-General. That is an inconvenient arrangement; and it is one that does not prevail in any of the other colonies, and I am not aware of any reason why it should prevail here. It is highly desirable that the provisions should be made more flexible. I referred on a previous occasion to the practice in New South Wales, where, at one time or another, nearly every Minister, excepting the Colonial Treasurer and Minister for Works, has held a seat in the Legislative Council as representing the Government. That position has been held there by the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Public Instruction, the Postmaster-General, and certainly on one occasion, the Minister for Lands. In the Victorian Act dealing with officials in Parliament, the provisions are very much the same as in the Bill of which I am now moving the second reading. In South Australia, that position has been held by the Chief Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Instruction, and sometimes by the Commissioner for Lands or the Commissioner for Works. It is entirely a matter of convenience, and on that point I apprehend there will be no difference of opinion. As to the proposition to admit volunteer officers to seats in the Assembly, there can be no reason why they should not be qualified to sit here when they are qualified to sit in the House of Commons. Disqualification does not now extend to officers on half-pay, or officers in the navy or army, and I do not see why it should apply to officers who are in receipt of or what is really honorary pay for the days on which they are employed during the year. I desire to see officers of the Volunteer Force members of the House, and I desire to see members of the House taking an active interest in the Defence Force of the colony; and it would certainly be very undesirable that, because a man happens to be a member of the House, he should be disqualified from taking a position in connection with that force. Before adverting to this point of the proposed addition to the number of Ministers, I would call attention to the construction of the Bill. It is necessary, in dealing with this subject, to repeal the Civil List Act of 1874, because that Act gives pay to Ministers by name, and it is desirable that, there being provision for a change of name, salaries should be attached to the offices whatever the names of the officers may be. With regard to the appointment of an additional Minister, I do not think any persons who have had any experience of office will dispute that Ministers—some of them, at any rate—have a great deal of work to do, or that the work has very largely increased of late years. Hon. members on the other side of the House, and particularly the late Premier, have recognised the necessity for an additional Minister.

I will briefly remind hon. members of the changes that have taken place in the circumstances of the colony since the last increase in the number of Ministers took place. The last office created was that of Minister for Works, in May, 1867. The next Ministry—the Mackenzie Ministry—was of brief duration, and the Colonial Secretary took the portfolio of Minister for Works as well. That lasted till November, 1868; and from November, 1868, to the present time—nearly sixteen years—there have been six Ministers. Let us compare the revenue and expenditure in that year, when it was considered necessary to appoint another Minister to do the work, with the present time. In 1869—I will take that year, because there has been no addition to the number since then—the revenue was £738,000, and expenditure, £775,000. During the last twelve months the total revenue proper was £2,566,000, and the expenditure, £2,373,000. The transactions, therefore, to be supervised by Ministers have increased a great deal more than threefold. I will give another illustration of the change in the circumstances of the colony since 1869. At that time the number of members of the Assembly was thirty-two; now it is fifty-five. That is a considerable change. Those are the changes in the constitution of Parliament and in the revenue and expenditure of the colony. If one considers the change in the extent of settlement that has to be looked after, the number of towns and the different industries which have arisen since 1869, I think it will be seen to be even more marked, for in the practical boundary of settlement I think we may say that during the last fifteen years the colony has expanded at least threefold in nearly every direction; and the work thrown upon the various Ministers has increased in proportion. I would refer, for instance, to the two offices I hold at the present time. The Colonial Secretary's Department has supervision of an immense number of things inside the colony, and has also to do with all the external relations of the colony. My own opinion is that the Colonial Secretary should not have so much to do with the internal affairs of the colony. He has a great deal to do with the affairs outside; our affairs with Great Britain, corresponding with the Agent-General, and corresponding with the other colonies. The Agent-General is becoming more and more a medium of communication with the Imperial Government. The position of the colonies is being gradually changed, and we are being treated in a very different manner by the Imperial Government. As an illustration of that, I may mention that it is becoming, every year, of more and more frequent occurrence, that copies of despatches sent to the Governor are at the same time sent to the Agent-General; which is a recognition of an entirely different state of things from what prevailed a very short time since, when the Governor was considered the only medium of communication between the Colonial Office and the colonies. I have, of late, received from the Agent-General copies of despatches sent to the Governor, almost before they reached the Governor himself. Of course this gives rise to a great deal of correspondence, and I do not think what has occurred lately, and what is likely to occur in the future, will diminish the work which falls upon the officer of the Government who is called upon to supervise what I may call the foreign relations of the colony. I will just refer to some of the internal matters which are under the charge of the Colonial Secretary:—Registrar-General; Police, in all its branches, including police magistrates and benches; Water Police; Government printing; Agent-General; Immigration; Lunatic Asylums; and Reception Houses; Colonial Stores; Gaols;

Penal Establishments and Reformatories; Defence Force; Benevolent Institutions; Thursday Island; a good many ships, schooners, and several steamers; all charitable allowances; matters connected with the Medical Board and Board of Health; and all public institutions. That is a considerable number of things for one department to look after, and I think a great many of them might be transferred from the Colonial Secretary's to some other department. Then there is the department of Public Instruction. Only one member now in the House has held that office besides myself. I have held it a good many years; at one time I held it for three years. I know the work was considerable then, and it has prodigiously increased since. There has been an immense increase in the number of schools. The department is one—and I am sure the hon. member for Blackall will agree with me in this—which requires the personal supervision of the Minister. There is great danger in a department of that kind, if left entirely to an under secretary, of its becoming too much entangled with red tape, of too rigid rules of discipline being laid down. There are more matters of detail in it requiring the personal attendance of the Minister than in any other department. That is my opinion, and I know I find the work very considerable. It is of course quite impracticable that any Minister should continue to attend to these departments together. Then what is to be done? I am quite sure the Minister for Lands has quite enough to do. The hon. member for Townsville, the other day, in speaking on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech, said the Minister for Lands had not very much to do. I am under the impression, although I have never myself held the office, that he has a great deal to do; from the quantity of work which comes before the Executive Council, from that department, which is only a fragment of the work he has to do, his labours must be very great. As for the Minister for Works, nobody denies that he ought not to have another department put on him. The Attorney-General is sometimes said to have very little to do; but when I was Attorney-General—I have not held the post for some years, and I then sometimes acted for the Colonial Secretary also—the work in the Attorney-General's Department was much greater than in that of the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. CHUBB: And it has not decreased.

The PREMIER: I believe since that time it has largely increased; in fact, I know it has. The work given by the Divisional Boards Act alone would give as much work as was done by the Attorney-General in those days. I do not think it is practicable to burden the Attorney-General any more. My own opinion is, he wants assistance rather than additional work, judging from what I know of the administration of the department. The Colonial Treasurer is sometimes told that he has not very much to do; perhaps he has not so much departmental work as some of the other Ministers, but I believe it would be very undesirable to attach the Department of Public Instruction permanently to the Colonial Treasurer's Department, or to the Postmaster-General's Department. The Postmaster-General could not attend to the work of both departments.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Quite easily.

The PREMIER: Sometimes he might, sometimes not. The amount of work to be done by a Minister depends to a considerable extent upon the Minister himself. It is quite possible for a Minister to hold office and not discharge the duties of the office. I am bound to say I have seen instances of that during the number of years that I have taken part in public affairs—instances of

Ministers who did not discharge the functions of their office except to a nominal extent.

Mr. ARCHER: I hope the hon. gentleman is not speaking of his colleague the Minister for Works.

The PREMIER: I am not speaking of any of my colleagues, nor am I speaking of the hon. member who interrupted me. I am happy to say that he performed the duties of the Education Department well, and so has every member who held that office, diligently and faithfully. I am not prepared to say exactly how the work is to be divided. Of course each Minister must have a separate establishment, a separate under secretary, and a separate staff. The Bill proposes that the additional Minister should be the Secretary for Public Instruction in the first instance; it may be altered at any time by a succeeding Government. I think a good deal of the work of the Colonial Secretary's Department would much more properly fall to the Secretary for Public Instruction; indeed, I fancy if there were a fair division the latter would have more to do than the Colonial Secretary. I consider that I have a great deal too much to do. If I had half as much work as I have to do with these two departments, I could do other things—not departmental, but public matters—a good deal better. It is necessary for men in public offices to have a little leisure occasionally; it is not possible for them to give the necessary thought to public matters if they are employed from daylight to late at night, which has been my case ever since I have been in office. I think I have given some reasons why there should be an additional Minister. There are several matters now under the Colonial Secretary which I think might properly be transferred to the Minister for Public Instruction. Amongst others, I think all charitable institutions—by which I mean asylums, benevolent institutions, hospitals, together with schools of arts—ought to be transferred. All matters affecting the question of health—a subject which, up to the present time, has received, practically, no attention from the Government—might also be transferred. There has been no health law yet in force here of any practical value; but I hope during the present session to be able to pass a law that will be of some use, and it will require a great deal of careful administration. That may or may not be a matter to be transferred. Gaols, I am disposed to think, should be transferred; the Colonial Secretary should be left, to a certain extent, Minister of the Interior; not altogether, but he should have a great deal that comes under that head left in his hands, and he should have more time and leisure—not leisure for idleness, but leisure for thinking—than is possible under the present arrangements. As hon. members will see, the Bill fixes the salaries of Ministers, and no change is proposed in the salaries now paid; but, as I have pointed out, it is necessary that such a clause should be inserted. I do not think I need explain more in detail the main objects of the Bill. It is very simple and sufficiently explains itself. Another provision I wish to advert to is contained in the 6th clause, which provides:—

"If any person accepts any two or more of the offices aforesaid, it shall not be competent for him to receive the full salary of more than one office, or to receive in addition thereto more than half of the salary of one other office."

Whether that stands or not is a matter of indifference, but in England it is the practice that when a Minister holds temporarily a second office he draws half the salary of the second office. Mr. Gladstone, as is well known, when for many years acting as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, drew the full salary

of one office and half the salary of the other. As I said before, whether that provision stands or not is a matter in which personally I take no interest, but as we were dealing with the general question I thought it would be as well to adopt the English practice. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: In rising to oppose the second reading of the Bill, I think I have good and sufficient reasons for so doing, the best sufficient reason being that to my mind—and I am sure, to the minds of many hon. members—no adequate argument has been brought forward by the hon. the Premier for this increase in the taxation of the people. The hon. gentleman has not in any way touched upon the necessity for the creation of this extra member, unless it be to give an already crowded Treasury bench another vote. I need only point to the hon. member for Maryborough as a most useful colleague, who is willing, and able, and I believe anxious to serve his country free of all expense. If, sir, he has all these qualifications, which I believe he has, why should we be asked to tax the country to pay for a Minister for Instruction? The hon. the Premier, in speaking in favour of the second reading of the Bill, stated that an immense amount of extra work had been thrown upon the Ministerial heads of departments of late years, but he forgot one or two very important points. He told us that there were now no more Ministers than there were years ago; that the Minister for Works had a great deal to do; and that the Colonial Secretary had a large number of offices to look after; but he forgot to tell us that the labour of the Works Department has been tremendously relieved by the passing of the Divisional Boards Act. An immense amount of work has been taken out of the hands of the Minister for Works since the time the hon. gentleman spoke of, by the passing of that Act. With regard to the Minister for Lands, there is a prospective alleviation of his troubles, because, if the Government succeed in passing their Land Bill, two commissioners are to be appointed, who will relieve him of almost all the work he has now to do, and, therefore, he will be quite competent to pursue the avocations of Minister for Instruction. While upon this point it may be as well to say that this Bill should have succeeded the Land Bill and not come before it, because, if the Land Bill pass as it now stands and becomes law, the Minister for Lands will have very little to do, and he will have plenty of time to attend to any extra portfolio that may be put upon him. The hon. the Premier evidently saw, as I think all of us will see, that the Attorney-General's position was one of the weak points in his defence. The Attorney-General could quite well, without giving himself any very great amount of extra work, attend to the Education Department; or, at all events, if he could not attend to that, he could have some of those heavy duties, which I admit are thrown upon the shoulders of the Colonial Secretary, passed over to him. There should be a redistribution of the work, and some addition could be made to the duties of the Attorney-General without overburdening him. With regard to the Postmaster-General, there is not the slightest doubt that, unless the Upper House is in session and he happens to be the Minister representing the Government there, he has not very much to do. When leading the Upper House I admit that he has a great deal to do, and perhaps requires support in that Chamber; and possibly a fifth wheel in that House would be of assistance to any Postmaster-General who may represent the Government there. I admit that, there being only one representative of the Government in the Upper House, the work is too much for him when the

House is in session. With regard to the work of the Treasurer, I am sure that hon. gentleman will admit that he does not in any way fully occupy his time with the duties of his office.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I admit nothing of the kind.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I have never been Treasurer, and probably never will be, and am not speaking from experience, but only stating what I have been told by many gentlemen who have occupied the position. Perhaps the hon. gentleman takes more interest in his work—I know he does take very great interest in the work of his department—or possibly others whom he had succeeded have not taken the same interest in it; or perhaps he works slower than they did. However, I have been told by gentlemen who have occupied the office, that there is really not enough work to occupy a Minister, at any rate when the House is out of session. If my contention is correct, we have seen that the Attorney-General, the Postmaster-General, the Colonial Treasurer, and even the Minister for Works, are not fully occupied; the Minister for Lands will have very little to do if the Land Bill pass, and, without making any allusion to the extra unpaid holder of a portfolio in the Ministry, the present paid Ministers could by a judicious arrangement find time to do the work of the extra Minister now proposed. That is what I believe, and I am sure that most members of the House agree with me. There has been no case made out for the creation of this new office; and I think nothing could more clearly show the non-necessity for the passing of any such measure than the 6th clause of the Bill, which says:—

“If any person accepts any two or more of the offices aforesaid—

Two or more! He might hold three, four, or five—

“It shall not be competent for him to receive the full salary of more than one office, or to receive in addition thereto more than half of the salary of one other office.”

Now, if this was a Bill of emergency—if there was an actual necessity for creating an additional Minister, and if it was a necessity that the State should justly pay another £1,000 a year for one, I could understand such a Bill being introduced. Here we have a provision by which one man may manipulate one, two, or more offices; and I think that that clause in itself shows the non-necessity for such an appointment—more especially when such volunteers as the hon. member for Maryborough can be obtained. I did hope and believe that the Premier would have come down with a very strong case indeed; would have shown us that the offices were overwhelmed with work, or that he would have given this House, as a reason for an additional Minister, that he had found all the Government work getting into arrears. But we have heard nothing of that sort. We have not heard from the Premier or any Minister that there were any arrears left in the departments when they came into office; that there were any pigeon-holes to clear out, or that there had been such an accumulation of work since the hon. gentleman came into power, as would lead to the necessity of this measure. Has the work increased so very much since this liberal and popular Administration came into power? So far as I am aware, the departments were fully and capably managed, possibly more so during the late Administration than they are at present. If there had been arrears of work, I think we should have heard of it from hon. gentlemen on the other side. If hon. gentlemen on this side of the House were capable, with a Ministry numbering the same as the present one, to do the work,

unless it can be pointed out to this House that the work has increased so much within the last few months, then we have no right to add further to the burdens of the people. I think further that there are many faults of detail in this measure, and there is one above all others I regret to notice—the use of the word “Governor” in place of “Governor in Council.” I notice that with pain, as I noticed the use of the word “I” in the speech delivered from the Throne. The hon. gentleman may think I am in error in mentioning this.

The PREMIER : Certainly.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Certainly I am right, and I will show that I am right.

The PREMIER : In all matters dealing with responsible Ministers, the Governor alone is mentioned.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I am not, thank God, a lawyer, but I will point out what I know on the subject. The 10th section of the Acts Shortening Act says :—

“Whenever the word ‘Her’ or ‘His’ Majesty should be used in any Act, the same shall be taken to include the successors to the Crown of England; and ‘Queensland’ shall mean Queensland and the dependencies thereof; and ‘Legislature’ the Legislature thereof for the time being, however constituted; and whenever the word ‘Governor’ shall be used, the same shall be construed to mean the Governor or other person for the time being lawfully administering the government of this colony; and the words ‘Governor in Council’ shall mean the Governor or other person acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council.”

The PREMIER : Exactly why the word “Governor” is used.

Mr. MOREHEAD : The word “Governor” is not used in any other similar Act.

The PREMIER : Always.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I maintain that it is not so, and that that word is put in here advisedly. The hon. gentleman may laugh and get his friends to laugh with him, but I say without hesitation that it appears to me a reign of personal government is being inaugurated in this colony. The hon. gentleman may laugh perhaps in another way when I read—as I intend to do when the proper time arrives—certain speeches which were delivered in another portion of this colony. I maintain that this attempt to force an additional Minister upon this House and the country is simply an intention to offer a bribe to some supporter of the Government on the other side. That is the only conclusion that we can come to. The necessity for the appointment has in no way been proved, and hardly asserted. It is simply something to dangle before supporters on the other side—possibly the hon. member for Moreton, whom I see is making notes on the subject. It may be intended for him; or, as has been hinted already, it may be to propitiate the wounded vanity of the hon. member for Bundamba, who has not even been put upon the Elections and Qualifications Committee. That, however, is a matter which you, Mr. Speaker, settle for yourself without any reference to the Government or to the hon. member for Bundamba himself—who has already distinguished himself—whose indiscretion and the course which he recommended the Government to take has led this House into a lamentable failure.

Mr. BROOKES : He is absent.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I do not care. He has just as much right to be present as I have, and I maintain that he has mulcted the House and the community in very considerable sums of money, and has dragged the honour of this House into the dirt; that is to say, the honour of the nineteen gentlemen who believed the

honour of the House offended already. The country has paid the piper for that little mistake, and will have to pay the piper for a great many more mistakes before it has done with the present Government. Whether this office is to be created for the hon. member for Bundamba I know not, but I maintain that it is wholly and solely intended to be created at the expense of the taxpayers of the colony, to provide an appointment for some supporter of the Government. I hope that some other member of the Government will get up and show sufficient reasons for this appointment. While on the subject of appointments, I would warn the Government of one thing, and I do so in all sincerity. If an appointment such as is hinted at in this morning’s *Courier* is made—I refer to the appointment of Mr. Frank B. Sheridan as Crown Prosecutor—there will be such disclosures made in this House, so damaging to the character of that man, that it would have been better for the Government never to have made the appointment. I warn them what will happen, and if they make the appointment in the face of that, let the blame rest upon them. Let it not be said that anything which comes from this side of the House comes in the shape of revenge or pique. If the rumour is confirmed, there will be things said that perhaps would be better left unrecorded in the records of this House. I have little more to say. I have pointed out as fully and fairly as I can that I see no necessity for the appointment of this additional Minister; that no case has been made out in its favour; that the work of the departments judiciously and properly distributed, having regard to the relief which the Divisional Boards Act has given to the Works Department and the prospective Land Act will give to the Lands Department, may be well done without an additional Minister; and having had no sufficient reason from the Premier himself, and no one having shown the necessity for this appointment, I hope the House will pause and seriously consider the effect of swelling the inordinate number of Ministers in this House compared with the number of its members. In the other colonies they may have one or two more Ministers. In New South Wales—

The PREMIER : There are nine Ministers there.

Mr. MOREHEAD : In the Lower House?

The PREMIER : Nine altogether.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Two in the Upper House, I suppose. Well, I say that whatever may be the precise number of Ministers in other colonies—there are over a hundred members in the Lower House in New South Wales—the proportion of Ministers will be dangerously large in this House, unless the number of members is very largely increased, if this addition is made to the number. There are many matters in the Bill which we shall have to discuss. The question of pensions in the 3rd clause will require serious consideration and considerable discussion.

The PREMIER : It is a re-enactment.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I am perfectly well aware that it is a re-enactment; but I want to know why the clause should be re-enacted. Government pensioners have of course a perfect right to sit in this House if they are elected by a constituency; but if they accept an office of profit under the Crown, the old regulation which was made under the Constitution Act of New South Wales—to the effect that their pensions should be deducted from the emoluments received from their office—should be introduced here. I shall oppose the Bill and divide the House on the second reading, because I hold that there is no necessity for its

introduction, and because I object to the extra tax being put on the people. In these views I think I shall have the support of a great many hon. members.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the hon. member for Balonne had objected to the increase in the number of Ministers because it was not required, but he had not been able to prove his case from his point of view. He thought it was very unfortunate that the hon. member should have gone outside the scope of the Bill to mention the name of a gentleman in connection with a rumoured appointment, in the manner he had done. The observations of the hon. member were anything but appropriate to the occasion, and it was not creditable to him that he should have introduced such a matter on the present occasion. The hon. gentleman, in referring to the Bill, had furnished the key-note for the best argument in its favour. He entertained some fearful apprehension of the danger accruing from what he called the reign of personal government. Well, if it were to be personal Ministerial government he (Mr. Dickson) thought it would be a great benefit. What they had to guard against was the reign of under secretaries, which previous Administrations had led to. They should endeavour to have Ministerial responsibility by the introduction of men who were prepared to conduct their department personally, and be responsible to the House individually. The hon. member for Balonne said there was not sufficient work for the present Ministers. That altogether depended upon how the work was done by Ministers. A Minister might visit his department for only half-an-hour a day; but if he wished to carry on the work efficiently it would absorb his whole time. The fact was that if it were not for the honour of the position, and for the spirit which a public man ought to have in accepting responsible public duties, it would not pay any gentleman to devote his whole time to the duties of a department in the same way that his colleagues and he himself did—that was, looking at it as a mere matter of profit. He himself would not accept a permanent position such as he now held if it were not for the honour attached to it, and also that he felt that his duty, as a public man, demanded that he should accept it when called upon to do so. The work in many of the departments had greatly increased during the last five years, and there was now an urgent demand for a new Minister to be appointed to relieve some of the departments. In his own department, almost every enactment that had been passed during the last five years had increased the work. The work in other departments had been largely increased by the Divisional Boards Act. The work of administering departments had also been largely increased by the immense amount of money that had been disbursed out of loans, and which was not referred to by the Premier. That hon. gentleman had pointed out that the revenue had increased to £2,500,000, as against £700,000 at the foundation of the colony, and he might have made his argument stronger by showing that at the present time the loan to be administered amounted to nearly two millions of money; and that in the Education Department alone there was an expenditure of between £300,000 or £400,000 annually, a larger sum than that expended in the various services connected with the Colonial Secretary's Department. He (Mr. Dickson) held that it was not wise or judicious that the departments of the State should be undermanned. It was false economy for Government departments to be conducted in such a manner, that Ministers were not thoroughly conversant with almost every transaction which occurred between the public and the

Government. It was not the duty of a Minister to act as a mere record clerk. He should be in a position to receive the public, and attend to public requirements, giving his attention to such representations as were from time to time made to him. Departmental matters of that kind occupied the time of Ministers to a considerable extent. He was altogether of opinion that, under the present form of government, Ministers should not be debarred from giving full attention to the representations made by the public. It would be admitted by all who heard the speech of the leader of the Opposition that his arguments against the Bill were mere allegations.

Mr. NORTON : No.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : They were mere allegations as to the intentions of the Government in introducing the Bill to dangle it before hon. members on the Government side to raise their expectations.

Mr. NORTON : Hear, hear !

The COLONIAL TREASURER : But his arguments in no wise contradicted or met the statement made by the Premier with regard to the increased amount of work which had devolved on the Ministerial heads of departments. And that was the real gist of the matter. The contention on his (Mr. Dickson's) side was that the amount of work connected with the departments had so largely increased within the last seven years—indeed, he might say within the shorter period of five years—owing to the expansion of the resources of the colony, and, he was glad to say, owing to the increased prosperity of the colony, that to conduct the Government in the true interests of the State there must be additional managing power. The members of the Government—he spoke of no particular party—in order to discharge their duties faithfully, should make themselves intimately acquainted with the requirements of the Public Service, and in doing so their time was so absorbed with departmental work that they were not in a position properly to attend to representations made by the public as to matters which did not come immediately under their notice. A Minister of the Crown ought not to degenerate into a mere clerk, recording what his under secretary placed before him; he ought to be in a position to receive the representations of the public, and thereby become acquainted with the requirements which necessarily must present themselves in different parts of the colony; in fact, a Minister should travel extensively and make himself acquainted with the requirements of his department throughout the length and breadth of the colony. But at the present time the majority of Ministers had not time for that purpose; and he could frankly say he was amazed at the amount of work his hon. colleague the Premier was able to discharge in connection with his duties as Colonial Secretary and Minister for Public Instruction. The amount of work done by that hon. gentleman entailed a greater strain than he could be expected to bear, and was such as must inflict injury, mental as well as pecuniary, on anyone engaged in professional or business pursuits. Of course the work of his department was the primary duty of a Minister; but he contended that a man should not be expected to wear himself out, body and soul, in discharging that duty. He could proceed to much greater length, if the necessity existed, to point out how the departmental duties of Ministers had increased of late years, but he did not wish to take up the time of the House unnecessarily. He had little to add to the arguments of the Premier, which had not been controverted. Not only had the Consolidated Revenue increased, but the trans-

actions in connection with loan had increased also. It had been contended that by legislation during the past few years the Works Department had been relieved of the supervision of local works; but he thought his hon. friend, the Minister for Works, could tell the House that his time was quite as fully occupied in attending to the wants and representations of divisional boards as ever it was when the whole works of the colony were under the supervision of the department. The Divisional Boards Act, the Local Government Act, and other legislation of late years, had thrust a great deal of additional work on the Colonial Treasurer in considering applications for loans and grants, and other financial arrangements connected with institutions brought into existence by that legislation. He had already said he considered it would be false economy of the State to deny itself that intelligent supervision and administration of its affairs which would be afforded by the creation of another department. He was absent from the House when reference was previously made to the subject by the late Premier, but from what he had read he had every reason to believe that that hon. gentleman recognised the fact that, in view of their growing requirements, increased Ministerial supervision was absolutely necessary. Indeed, he was reminded that the late Premier had distinctly promised his support to a measure for that purpose, and he was very glad to have that opportunity of stating his belief that, if the hon. gentleman were here, he would raise himself above a factious opposition to a measure of that sort, and admit that owing to the great expansion and growing requirements of the colony a departmental rearrangement was absolutely necessary. He (Mr. Dickson) thought the question ought not to be regarded as a party question. The present Government would not occupy those benches for ever, and the incoming Ministers, when they came into power, would, he had no doubt, adduce the same arguments as he was now advancing. Therefore he contended that the Bill ought not to be regarded as a mere party question. He did not think that the observations of the leader of the Opposition at all met the argument that, in order to satisfactorily administer the affairs of the colony with its increasing requirements, increased departmental supervision was absolutely demanded, and that that supervision should always be exercised by personal Ministerial inspection, and not delegated to the under secretaries of the different departments. He trusted that government by under secretaries would be a thing of the past; and that Ministers, both of the present and the future, would see that they were perfectly acquainted with departmental duties and departmental action, so that they might be able to defend their acts in that House. He was quite sure that the good sense of hon. members on both sides of the House would see that the measure was really necessary.

Mr. NORTON said he congratulated the Colonial Treasurer on the tone which he had adopted in speaking of the late Premier, and hoped that in future when hon. members on the Ministerial side of the House spoke of the late Premier they would do so in terms as respectful as those used by the Colonial Treasurer. It had not always been done. The hon. gentleman had not always done so himself.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Yes.

Mr. NORTON: Not always. It was not generally done. He would, however, do the hon. gentleman the credit to say that as a rule he had spoken of the late Premier with respect and commendation, but not always.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He did not always deserve it.

Mr. NORTON said some of the hon. gentleman's colleagues had done the very opposite. With regard to what had fallen from the hon. gentleman in supporting the Bill, he stated that one of his principal reasons for supporting the measure was, that he objected to government by under secretaries. But he must have forgotten the force of the argument—that Ministers should make themselves perfectly acquainted with the work of their respective departments—when he said it should be the business of Ministers to travel about the country; for, if they carried out the idea of travelling about a colony, they must leave their work to the under secretaries. The Ministers must be dependent upon the under secretaries, and the latter must have as much knowledge of their several departments as they had now. Ministers, whether they were presiding over a department, or their colleagues acting for them in their temporary absence from town, must trust to a certain extent—to a large extent—to the under secretaries. He did not mean to say that they ought not to carefully study the whole of the matters brought before them so far as lay in their power; but it was quite possible that some under secretaries had been allowed to have too much control. That, however, was the fault of the Ministers who presided over the departments, and not that of the under secretaries. The hon. Treasurer said he did not think Ministers ought to wear themselves out, body and soul; he did not think that hon. gentleman would do so. The hon. gentleman knew very well how to take good care of himself; he did not mean to say that he neglected his work, but that he would take care he did not overwork himself. The hon. member was not so fond of his office as to kill himself, nor did he want to make himself a public sacrifice in that way. Before a Minister thoroughly understood his work he had to work hard; but when he became accustomed to it he could do it without killing himself, and, at any rate, he could do it in such a way as to know what he was doing. He need not trust at all to under secretaries, except in matters of detail; those must always be left to them, however well the Minister might be up in his work. If he did not do so, the Minister became the very thing that the hon. member said he objected to Ministers becoming—a mere clerk. He did not care whether there were a dozen Ministers, or only six; whichever way it might be, the under secretary must be a man who could be and ought to be trusted, and if he was not that, he ought to be removed from his office, and someone else put in his place who was more fitted to fill it. There was a great deal, as the hon. member said, depending upon how the work was done. He was sure everyone would admit that, and they would find that the argument did not only apply to Ministers, but to men in business also. One man would do in ten minutes as much as would take another man half-a-day to do. There might be minutes on some papers in the different departments that would show whether a Minister could do his work quickly or not. There were some who could express in two lines what it would take another a whole sheetful not to express—what one would try to express in a whole sheet, and would fail to in the end, another would express in a few words. The hon. gentleman must know that perfectly well. He hoped the hon. gentleman would not be offended if he said that in his speeches he sometimes took a very long time to say what he intended. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman's Ministerial minutes were like that; but in speaking he always took a lot of words to say what might be said in a very few; but he did not think the hon. gentleman would do that in his minutes.

The hon. gentleman liked to indulge in a very ornate style; he was rather fond of it, and they did not blame him for it; in fact, they rather liked it. There was another remark which fell from the hon. Treasurer in advocating the Bill, and that was that he did not think it was desirable that the departments should be undermanned. The leader of the Opposition had already pretty well answered that. He had reminded the House of how, as soon as the present Government took office, they reduced the hours of the clerks in the Civil Service, and the consequence was that, if there were not too many clerks before, the offices would be undermanned. They were paying those men the same salaries for doing less work, and other appointments had to be made to make up for the lesser amount of work which those men did. Hon. members opposite professed to be friends of the people, and talked very loudly about it, but what was the effect of their action in that matter? Was it not that the taxation of the people was increased? It was the people who had to pay for those luxuries and indulgences to Civil servants. Somebody must pay for the extra work, and that extra work had to be paid for by extra taxation. That was one of the measures taken by hon. gentlemen opposite to reduce the surplus which was left in the Treasury by the late Government, and to create a deficit in a very short time. He had not the slightest hesitation in saying that the hon. gentleman who sat opposite, talking so blandly, would have to record a deficit in the Treasury when another year had passed. He (Mr. Norton) had pointed out on a recent occasion, that already the returns furnished had shown that the revenue which had been received for the last quarter was very much less in proportion than that received for the other three quarters of the year; in some places it was less than half the average receipts of the three previous quarters. Surely that indicated something. They had heard a great deal of the revenue which their railways were bringing; but the revenue from railways for the last quarter, from March to June, was, he thought, under the average receipts for the previous three quarters; and so in all other important branches from which money was returned to the Treasury; in every one which indicated the progress or otherwise of the country, there was a tremendous reduction in proportion to the amount received during the three quarters previous. The hon. Treasurer knew that perfectly well, and he would ask him whether the present was a time when they could go in for any more expense unless there was an absolute necessity for it. He did not see that there was any necessity for it. As the leader of the Opposition had said, there was no necessity at present for it, and if the Land Bill passed, which his hon. friend the Minister for Lands had to get through if he could—if it passed in its present form, which provided for a board of two members with £1,000 a year each, and excluded the Minister for Lands from office, there would be much less work than there was now. The hon. gentleman would have nothing to do but walk up and down Queen street, and do the book, or else go into the Library and read papers. He had read through the Bill to see what the Ministerial duties could be in the event of that board being formed, and it appeared to him to take not only all the work out of the hands of the Minister, but all the responsibility; all that he would have to do was to receive reports from the commissioners in the country, and those he had to submit to the board. He was simply the channel through which those reports passed to the board, that he proposed to constitute and to give a higher power and higher responsibilities than his own.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is now going somewhat beyond the scope of the Bill.

Mr. NORTON said he was just going to stop. He thought it was time to drop that subject until the Land Bill came on; at the same time he thought it was a question which affected the present Bill to a large extent. If it could be shown that by the passing of that Bill the services of the Minister for Lands would be dispensed with it would also be shown that there could be no necessity for the extra Minister proposed by the Bill before them. Speaking of the departments being under-manned, he did not think there was the slightest reason to expect anything of the kind while the present Ministry were in power. He had heard that there were clerks appointed to departments of the Service, the officers in charge of which did not know what to do with them.

The PREMIER: Which departments?

Mr. NORTON said he was not mentioning any department. He had heard those reports in town. He did not distinguish any department, but he mentioned it as a report, and he said further that there appeared to him to be a strong colour of probability about the report. They knew that Ministers who were prepared to, and did, shorten the hours of labour of officers who were very lightly worked, might be very much tempted to commit other extravagancies, and might be easily induced to make appointments which were not really requisite. He was quite sure that the number of clerks who must have been appointed to do an equal amount of work to that done before the shortening of the hours of work of the Civil Servants, must entail a good deal of expense. The Colonial Treasurer stated that the real gist of the matter consisted in the fact that the departmental work of the various offices had greatly increased. There was a great deal of force in that argument; but it was necessary, before admitting that that was a solid and sufficient argument in favour of the creation of another portfolio, they should know that in the earlier time to which the present was compared there was an adequate amount of work for the Minister of the day. He believed that if the Ministers in those days worked so very much less than they did to-day they must have had very easy times of it. He believed that in those days the members of the Government had lots of time to go out of their offices for one-half of the day if they attended to the work of those offices for the other half. Therefore, until it was shown that the Ministers, in the time some years ago to which the present was compared, had a fair amount of work to do, the Colonial Treasurer's argument and comparison were worth nothing at all. With regard to the present work of the various departments, he believed the Premier had a great deal too much to do in the Colonial Secretary's Office. He believed he was the one Minister who ought to have most time on his hands, to enable him to think over the very important matters which were brought before him, and for which he was held more responsible than all the other Ministers together. He thought, however, some arrangement might be made by which he could be relieved without the necessity of appointing another Minister. He was quite sure the Colonial Treasurer was not so overburdened with work but that he could take some more. The Premier, while speaking, admitted that his hon. friend the member for Blackall was not one of those who neglected their work while in office. He did not think he was; at the same time that hon. gentleman himself said that the work of the office was comparatively light, and not such as to prevent his taking some more work.

He believed the hon. member was right, and he was sure he had not neglected his work or allowed it to get in arrears for a week, or at all, for that matter. Still he knew that, as he sat in his office, he often saw the hon. gentleman going to his work at twenty minutes to 10, and he then appeared to have plenty of time. When a gentleman could go to his work at 10 o'clock and have time to go out of the office during the day, and was not tied to it at night, it was evident that he was not overburdened with work. He did not mean to say that the present Colonial Treasurer spent too much time over his work, but it was quite possible that he could not get through the work as quickly as Mr. Archer did, and that would account for his taking a longer time over it. At the same time he was quite sure that any man of business could get through all the work of the office without at all distressing himself; and judging from the Colonial Treasurer's happy appearance and pleasant countenance, no one would suppose for a moment that the work which he did, in his office as a Minister, and in his private business, was at all distressing to him. Apart from that, they had heard of other offices where the work was said to be heavy. The work of the Attorney-General's Office might be very heavy, but he could not bring himself to believe that it was heavy. True, he did not know what the work was—

Mr. BROOKES: That's a fact!

Mr. NORTON said it was true he did not know what the work was, but he was, at the same time, quite sure that the Attorney-General had plenty of time for the work of his office. He could see that upon looking over the newspapers, as he found that the Attorney-General of the day had plenty of time to appear in the courts on private business; and he had also noticed that the Attorney-General did not always do the public business. He apparently could attend to private business, and at the same time paid others to transact the public business. Some principle, he thought, might be adopted to compel the Attorney-General to attend to the work of his department, as some Attorneys-General had done; and if that were the case, people would not be so ready to believe that he had too much time at his disposal. He next came to the Works Department, and he was forced to admit that there was a good deal of work to be done there. Anyone going into the office, until he got accustomed to it, would necessarily take a good deal of time in looking through papers, because there was always a good deal which took place before he entered the office, through which it was necessary he should look; but when he got accustomed to the department he could do the work without killing himself. With respect to the work in that department caused by the divisional boards, the Colonial Treasurer contended that, although the establishment of those boards relieved the department of a great deal of work which used to devolve upon it before the boards were created, the work which the boards themselves created was as great as the work before they came into existence. If that were the case, the work before the establishment of the boards must have been very light. He did not mean to say that there were not matters brought up in connection with divisional boards which did not require a great deal of consideration, but he said that all the work that had to be done in consequence of the establishment of those boards could easily be done by any Minister who devoted himself to it for one day in each week. Out of the many cases which were brought before the Minister, there were not half-a-dozen in

three months that gave any trouble. Some of them required a little consideration, but as a rule there was no difficulty about them. If the object had been to relieve the Minister of the work of the divisional boards, the Premier, instead of proposing the appointment of a new Minister, should have adopted the means open to him of reducing that work to its least possible extent. That the hon. gentleman had not done, although the opportunity had been given him to so amend the Divisional Boards Act as to free it from the difficulties connected with it, and so have given his colleague considerable relief. That could have been effected by placing the work of the divisional boards as much as possible in the hands of the boards themselves, and then they would not have to refer so continually to the Minister, and it would also have made self-government as perfect as it could possibly be. That Act, by means of comparatively few amendments, could be made so much more workable that the Minister would not have one-fourth the trouble with the boards that he now had. But, instead of doing that, the Premier asked the country to pay a thousand a year to another Minister, together with the incidental expenses connected with a fresh portfolio. The leader of the Opposition had already shown that the Bill itself condemned the arguments brought forward in its favour. The Bill provided that the work of two offices should be undertaken by one Minister; and not only that, but it made provision that he should be paid for doing the work of the two offices. There was no occasion for any such arrangement. If an office was vacant it ought to be filled up as soon as possible. That proposal condemned the whole Bill; it cut the ground from under the Premier's feet. Of course there might be occasions when a Minister was unable to attend to the duties of his office, and when one of his colleagues might have to undertake the work for him, but that was not the intention of the clause to which he was referring. The intention, as he understood it, was to enable one Minister to undertake two offices during the time that one portfolio was vacant; and that was a particularly objectionable provision. If, as he had said, a vacancy arose, it ought to be filled, and powers should not be given by the House to Ministers to keep the vacant portfolio dangling before the eyes of expectant supporters or wavering opponents, with a view of securing their support as long as it was required. He did not mean to say that that was the object the Premier had in view, but the Bill would put Ministers in a position to work it in that way, not only to the disadvantage of their opponents, but to the injury of the country, by bringing valued institutions into contempt. The Premier, in moving the second reading of the Bill, gave no reason why a Minister who undertook the two offices should receive the two salaries. Every hon. member on his own side, and most of those on the other, would agree with him that wherever there was a Ministerial vacancy it should be filled up at as early a date as possible, so that there should not be the slightest excuse for paying any Minister for carrying on the work of two offices. Besides, according to the Premier's own showing, Ministers were at present so overworked that they could scarcely fulfil the duties of their own offices; and yet, in spite of that, he proposed that they might, under certain circumstances, undertake double, or even treble work. He (Mr. Norton) did not think it necessary to say more on that subject. Other members wished to speak, and he had no intention to occupy the time of the House unnecessarily. The Premier had already charged the Opposition with having wasted the time of the House—a charge of

which they were certainly not guilty. What they had done was simply their duty, and yet, because they did not do it in a way pleasing to hon. members on the other side, they were accused of wasting the time of the House. Those charges would not hold good, and the more seldom they were made the better it would be for all parties. He should say no more on the subject at present, except that he intended to oppose the Bill, and to vote against it when it went to a division.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the hon. member for Port Curtis had just told the House that there was no necessity for any further remarks to be made on the subject. That remark might perhaps apply to the hon. member himself.

Mr. NORTON: I meant the remark to apply only to myself.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that whenever any supporter of the Government made a little slip of speech he was immediately, and often unfairly, picked up by someone on the other side. But there were always two sides to a question, and two people could play at that game. With all due deference to the explanation of the hon. member, he must say he did not think the hon. member really believed what he said. The hon. member ought to be very much more careful. The other night he jumped up, and attacked a sentence that he knew very well did not convey the meaning he attributed to it.

Mr. NORTON: When?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that with that observation he should say no more on that particular subject. The humility of speech of the hon. member was proverbial; he always approached the Speaker in the most humble manner, and attacked him in the most suave language. The hon. member's knowledge was so profound, and his sentences were so exquisitely perfect, that he could convey to the House in a very few words an amount of information that would take any other hon. member three-quarters of an hour. He stuck to his subject as a hedgehog stuck to its bristles. He never departed from it; he never wasted time—not he; he commanded the respectful attention and the mental agony of the occupants of the benches on the Ministerial side; and yet he wound up by saying he did not think anything more should be said on the subject to-night. If ever he (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) were Minister for Works for a few months, or a few weeks, if he could not make a better show than the hon. member had done since the session opened, he would put his head into a potato-bag—

Mr. MOREHEAD: A very appropriate place for it.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: And the hon. member for Darling Downs' kangaroo-rat included. Before returning to the serious path of the debate, he would like to say a word with respect to an observation that fell, the other evening, from the hon. member for Balonne, when an hon. member on the Government side of the House omitted one letter from a certain word in his speech. The hon. member who spoke last omitted two letters, or rather put two in that ought not to be there. He spoke of the Bill "if it passes." By the shades of Cobbett, who ever heard of a man saying, "Mr. Speaker, if that Bill should pass—if that Bill may pass—if that Bill will pass—if that Bill would pass," and a good deal more he might add! If the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House wished to go in for grammatical ultra-criticism, they

would be had on the hip, as he had the hon. member for Port Curtis when he spoke of "if the Bill passes." He was ashamed of the hon. member's grammar. However, he would pass those little matters by and tackle the matter at issue—whether it was desirable that another Minister of the Crown should be added to the number already subsisting. He was at issue with the Ministry on that point. He was not with the hon. member who last spoke, nor with the hon. member for Balonne, the leader of the Opposition, in saying that an additional Minister was not needed. He would go further and say what some members of the Ministry knew, as his opinion, some time ago, that at least two new Ministers were requisite. The hon. gentlemen on the Opposition benches might laugh; but would anyone deny that it was necessary that a Minister for Railways should be appointed, and that there was not work enough in that department for one Minister? He spoke certainly with a very moderate amount of knowledge in that matter; but when he was a junior clerk on one of the railways in Scotland, the traffic manager of the goods department of that railway had a great deal more salary than the Minister for Works in this colony, who governed the whole of the railways, and the traffic manager he spoke of had not nearly so many miles of railway to supervise in that section of the traffic as the Minister for Works had here. He was speaking seriously when he said that there was no subject in the colony of such vast interest to the commercial community, extending from Point Danger in the south to Cape York in the north, as the question of the appointment of a Minister for Railways. The whole of the western termini of the railways were dependent upon the efficient management of that department of the Public Service—the efficient traffic management of the railways; and in view of the fact that the department was expanding from week to week, or at any rate from quarter to quarter, it was a most desirable thing that there should be one man at the head of that most important section of the State's work. The Ministry had made a mistake. They should have had a Minister for Works, who should take all works external to railways into his charge, and who should also take all works at present attached to the Treasury; and having in view the fact that there were six Ministers in the colony in 1869 or thereabout, when there was no educational department or a mere embryo one, he unhesitatingly said that there should be a Minister for Education who should add to his duties such branches as might be reasonably taken from some of the other Ministerial departments. But that there should be a Minister for Railways pure and simple, he asserted would, without doubt, be affirmed by the House if the question were put before them that evening. The hon. the leader of the Opposition knew very well that his firm—he trusted the House would excuse his making an observation about a private matter—as the leading firm connected with the Western districts, had experienced great inconvenience and much loss to itself and its constituents from the inferior management of the whole Railway Department. In view of the fact that the department was a growing one; that they contemplated an enormous augmentation of their railway mileage; that they required a man not only to control the department as it was at present, but with a certain amount of leisure to develop and achieve improvements in the department, and make it not only equal to the railway departments of other parts of the world, but try to go ahead of them in inventing and achieving improvements, he considered that the Railway Department should have a

Minister entirely to itself. They had railways in the Southern district, in the Central district, and in the Northern district. There were ten Victorias in Queensland, as regarded its area, and they had a larger mileage in comparison with their population than any other colony in the Southern Hemisphere; and yet hon. members on the other side of the House talked about the undesirability of another Minister. He was disappointed that the Ministry of the party to which he was attached had come forward with a proposal for only one Minister. He distinctly affirmed, and he wished it to be placed upon record in *Hansard*, that they should have come forward with a proposition for at least two Ministers, in order to carry out efficiently the business of the country, and bring about what he was confident would be of great advantage to the people of the colony—namely, efficiency of management in the development of the several departments. It had been said, he thought by the leader of the Opposition, that no adequate reason had been given for the increased taxation of the people that would result if this extra Minister were appointed; and having stated what he (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) had with respect to the difference of opinion that existed between himself and the Ministry, as to whether one or two additional Ministers should be appointed, he should now proceed to support the “half-loaf” instead of no bread at all. Looking at the matter as he did, it was his duty to approve of an additional Minister. The colony possessed a vast territory, and the work of the departments had been very much increased by the opening up of that territory. The hon. the leader of the Opposition knew very well, from his experience as Postmaster-General, that sometimes a question in regard to a postal route or a coach subsidy might occupy his time for some hours, perhaps for many days, it being a matter of expenditure. Although the hon. gentleman had said that the office of Postmaster-General was a fitting position for an elderly Minister, he was certain that even he would admit that what the hon. member for Port Curtis said was correct—that one Minister might do in ten minutes what another would take two hours to do; but he (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) went further and said that one Minister might save the colony £10,000 in one hour, while another might lose the same amount in the same time. That brought him to the point alleged by even the leader of the Opposition, when he said that the Colonial Secretary's time was not fully occupied with Ministerial duties.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I did not say so.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON : He had taken the hon. gentleman's words down, and he said the Colonial Secretary did not fully occupy his time with Ministerial duties.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Not the Colonial Secretary. I said his time was too fully occupied.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON : The hon. gentleman also said his time was not fully occupied.

Mr. BROOKES : He said both.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON : That was what he said. Now, was it desirable that the Colonial Secretary should occupy his time in mere matters of detail? Had not the colony jumped from being entirely unknown into a great country? Why, when he was in his native country he searched all over the map of South Africa to find Queensland!

Mr. MOREHEAD : You ought to have been Minister for Education.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON : At last he found Dr. Lang, and learned from him

where Queensland was. In 1861 he could find no one else who could tell him where Queensland was. It was then an almost unknown country of vast extent, with the finest resources in the world. It now occupied a very different position, and yet they were told that in 1884 they were to have the same number of Ministers that they had in 1867! The thing was ridiculous. In 1860 the colony was not only comparatively unknown, financially, but its resources were totally unknown as far as the Western districts were concerned. They had discovered since the crisis of 1866 that, practically, Queensland had a territory ten times larger than it had then. In 1866 the men in the Western districts were ruined by their want of knowledge of the country, and now they knew that that country was capable of great expansion in the matter of pastoral settlement. That had all been brought about by the progressive railway system which had been introduced by the Liberal party in years gone by, and which must result in bringing about a vast amount of close settlement, compared with what had taken place heretofore. Let them look at the component parts of the last Ministry, and ask was it intended that Ministers should be men who were able to give their whole time to public matters? He said, no. He thought it would be a very bad thing for the colony, if men who could give their whole time to Ministerial duties were selected as Ministers by the Premier for the time being. Sir Thomas McIlwraith—they knew nothing of his private business—but generally speaking, they knew that he was not in a position, in connection with pastoral pursuits, to disable him from hiring men, probably as good as himself, to look after those matters, and attaching himself to Ministerial duties as he did, in the most efficient manner possible, according to his lights. Then there was the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, a man for whom they all had very great respect—a man who had risen by his own efforts, for, as he himself had told them, he had carried his pick and shovel in various parts of the colony in search of gold, and in that very operation he was making a man of himself. He did well for the country, and for himself. He was a man who could give his whole time to the details of his office; and while he (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) admitted that hon. member's determination to do his duty well, he must say that he did it too well, as witness the Sandgate and other railways, the routes of which were fixed by him during his *régime*. He wanted to do things too cheaply, and, in his endeavour to do so, the result was not satisfactory to the country or to the people along those lines. Then take the hon. member for Port Curtis, Mr. Norton, a gentleman entirely disconnected with everyday pursuits.

Mr. NORTON : How do you know?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON : They knew that from general knowledge, and the reputation of the hon. gentleman. He had no difficulty in finding someone to take his place in connection with his business as a cattle grazier. Then they had the leader of the Opposition, who, when in the Upper House, was an honourable exception to the rule. He had a very large and important business to attend to, but he sacrificed himself on the altar of his country, and devoted his time and services to it beneficially. At the same time he must take that opportunity of saying that while the hon. member charged some hon. members on the Government side of the House, including himself (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson), with a matter of bribery—to which he should refer again later on—he could point to the time when the

hon. gentleman stood in the very same position, and said to the leader on his own side of the House that the time was not far distant when he would be a member of the Ministry. He said to his friend on the right that the best thing Sir Thomas McIlwraith could do would be to give that gentleman a position in the Ministry. If ever he (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) took a position in any Ministry, it would be taken, he hoped and knew, entirely upon his merits as an administrator, and not because he had become a bore to his country or his party. The hon. the ex-Treasurer (Mr. Archer) was in very much the same position as the ex-Ministers he had already spoken of, and he must say it was a very good thing for the country if those gentlemen happened by chance, or otherwise, to be attached to the business they were reputed to be connected with; otherwise the country would not have had the advantage of their services. Their services were given to the country because they had time. Now, hon. members on his side of the House, representing as they did the beehive of the colony—the workers of the colony—were totally unable to give the whole of their time, day after day, in a Ministerial capacity. He was speaking now of the whole of the Government side of the House, from the Premier downwards; and he contended that if the country expected that any member of their party, from the Premier down to the lowest member on that side, should give up the whole of his time in the interests of the country, and that they should not be allowed to earn their bread and butter in a legitimate way—if the country expected all that, then politics were a very bad thing, and the country expected something that it should not expect. He did not think that any Minister of the Crown should be expected to give more than three or four days a week to his duties, and then not more than four hours out of every day. There were some members of the community, as he had already said, who could do more service to the country in one day than others could do in a month, and he thought that £1,000 was not too much pay for a man who did his duty. He would even go so far as to say that the Premier of this colony should have £2,000, and the other members of the Ministry £1,500 a year each. The last speaker—the hon. member, Mr. Norton—said that the present Bill was brought in for some expectant supporter of the Ministry.

Mr. NORTON: I did not say so.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he took the hon. member's words down at the time—an expectant supporter of the Ministry.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought it exceedingly probable, and more than likely, that he used the words.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he had got the hon. member (Mr. Norton's) name opposite the note he had taken.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member for Port Curtis states that he did not use the expression, the hon. member must accept the disclaimer.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said, if the hon. member assured him that he did not use the words, then he withdrew them willingly. The hon. member for Balonne had told them that he had heard no adequate reason given by the Colonial Secretary for the additional taxation involved by the appointment of an extra Minister. He (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) very much regretted the opposition to the Bill for this reason: that he held that if the colony had progressed as it had been progressing for the last fifteen years, extra Ministers

were required to conduct the business of the country. It was the inevitable result of the progress of the colony that an extra Minister should be appointed, and it was arguing against that progress to say that an extra man was not wanted. In 1867 there was very little work in connection with the Department of Works, and there certainly was no question then of the conservation of water. That was a matter which had not yet been touched upon during the debate, and he thought that some Minister out of the seven who would now form the Government must take in hand the question of the conservation and supply of water. That in itself was sufficient for any Minister without asking him to take charge of any other department. It had also been said that the Attorney-General had nothing to do, but he knew differently. He knew that the present Attorney-General had been working at least eight hours a day since he had been in office, and he was surprised that he had stuck to it in the way he had done. There was a great deal to do; whether it was on account of the deficiency of the staff he could not say, but that gentleman's hands were pretty full, and he had no occasion to take another department. The Colonial Secretary, he maintained, should be a man free to mould the policy of the country; free to think out and devise the best and most efficient means of governing the country, and he should not be hampered with the administration of a department. Advocating as he did the appointment of two Ministers it must be expected that he should support the appointment of one additional man, at all events. But before sitting down he wished to refer to the observation of the leader of the Opposition with respect to some of the hon. members on the Government side of the House, when he said that it was intended by the present Ministry to offer a bribe either to the member for Bundamba or to the member for Moreton. He thought it was due to the House that he should make that observation, on two grounds: first, because the leader of the Opposition knew in his heart that no overture whatever was made by him (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) to any member of the present Government.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I rise to make a personal explanation. I did not use the word "bribe" in reference to any offer to the hon. member. I merely mentioned the name of the hon. member for Moreton and the hon. member for Bundamba.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: With great respect, he begged to say that the hon. member did use the word "bribe"; he took it down. He repeated that he thought the leader of the Opposition believed in his heart that he (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) was above such a thing; and he challenged the hon. member to say that he ever, by word or otherwise, hinted that he was to receive any consideration whatever, either before or after the last election, with regard to the Ministry. The statement was a perfectly gratuitous one; and it was not consistent with the position he held in the House, and with his career in the colony, that he should be charged—having been a consistent supporter, as he always hoped to be, of the Liberal party—with being liable to be bribed on such a matter.

Mr. PALMER said that on this question he should vote with the party to which he belonged. After listening to the speech of the Colonial Secretary he had no doubt that he, at least, was over-worked. From what he knew of that hon. gentleman, he could say that if other Ministers had the same capacity for work that he had, three would be quite enough to do all the work of the Government, but the hon. gentleman was

considered a leviathan at work. The Minister for Works and the Colonial Treasurer had, he believed, also plenty to do. His duty to his constituents took him a good deal to the heads of departments, and he concluded from what he had seen that the Postmaster-General must have very little to do, for he had never had the honour of meeting him in his office but once, though he (Mr. Palmer) was there nearly every day in the week. He had, however, a very prompt under secretary, a gentleman to whom he (Mr. Palmer) was indebted at all times for the assistance he gave him. It was his opinion that the same principle should obtain in public offices as in private. He knew from his experience in mercantile affairs, that it was better to be a little under-manned than to have too many to do the work; the work would always be done better. He could not help thinking that if the new Land Bill was carried the Minister for Lands would have less to do than he had now. He was also disposed to think that the Government were more inclined to increase the Civil Service burdens placed on an overtaxed people than to reduce them. That was his opinion, from the different extra billets that were made. He would point out that the 6th clause of the Bill now before the House showed that the Premier admitted that any Minister was capable of carrying on the work of two officers, and admitted that Ministers had plenty of time; and it provided that they were entitled to half salary if they took another office. He agreed with what the hon. member for Moreton had said about the railways being rather loosely managed. Anyone who knew anything about railways in other colonies must come to the same conclusion; but whether a Minister for Railways would improve the management was open to serious doubt. With regard to what fell from the Colonial Treasurer, he always understood that the Divisional Boards Act relieved the central departments of a great deal of work; and he was rather surprised to hear the hon. gentleman say that it had increased his work. He should freely give his vote against the Bill. He was not sent into that House to vote absolutely with the party to which he belonged, and he was quite prepared to support any measure brought forward by the Government which he thought was for the good of the country. He was not compelled to vote on either side; but on the Bill before them he should support the party to which he belonged, freely and heartily.

Mr. KELLETT said that after the exhaustive speeches they had heard he would say little beyond the fact that he approved of the principle of the Bill. It had been fairly pointed out that in 1867 there were as many Ministers as at present, and the number should have been increased before now. He did not think that, because a man was chosen to be a Minister of the Crown, the whole of his time should be taken up in the work of his department. It was not advisable that it should be so, because men in a colony like Queensland should display ability in some work of their own before they were even thought of as Ministers of the Crown; and, having other business, it was necessary that they should have time to attend to that business. Some Ministers of the Crown had a great deal too much to do, and he agreed with the hon. member for Moreton, that the appointment of a Minister for Railways would be of great advantage to the people who used the railways, and to the colony generally. From what he knew of the Railway Department—and he had a good deal to do with it in connection with traffic—he could say that the Minister for Works had more work than he could do properly, even if he were a younger and smarter

man. He objected, however, to the new Minister being Secretary for Public Instruction. He should be Minister for Railways, and the Education Department could be undertaken by one of the other Ministers. The Premier had far more work than he ought to be asked to do. His attention was too much taken up with minor details of office, instead of which he should have more time to consider large public matters which were constantly coming before him. He was satisfied that there should be an additional Minister, and that the work of the different departments should be so regulated that an equal share should be taken by each Minister. He was not prepared, however, to say who was most over-worked or most under-worked, because he had had no experience in the working of a department. As he said before, there ought to be a Minister for Railways, who should have nothing else to do. Branch lines were being constructed in different places, the departmental work was growing, and the traffic constantly increasing, and a Minister who conscientiously did his work would have little time for anything else. He did not approve of the 6th clause, because he objected to any Minister receiving two salaries. Heretofore it had been the practice, if one Minister found it necessary to resign the work of his department for a time, for one of his colleagues to do the work without extra pay. But he held that when an office was vacated it should be filled up as soon as possible, and allowing another Minister to do the work for half-pay would not conduce to the appointment of another Minister to fill the vacancy. He had great pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MIDGLEY said that, out of deference to the sentiments of others, he should not vote against the Government on the question, but he certainly should not vote for the Bill, and he thought it his duty to give his opinions as clearly as he could on the measure. He had just now looked through the Governor's Speech, and he was confirmed in the expression that with almost everything in that Speech he could heartily agree; and no member in the House was more pleased with the evidence of sincerity and the promptness displayed by the Government in regard to the measures mentioned in that Speech. At the same time he almost felt that the Speech might be too good to be true. He had been led to suppose that there was a great deal of stuffing in Governor's Speeches, and that a great deal of what was said was never carried out; but so far there had been no indication of any such disposition. He was not going to pledge himself absolutely, unreservedly, and eternally to any Government on the strength of a Governor's Speech, having the impression that that might be as unwise as taking a wife on the strength of a matrimonial advertisement. As he said before, he was very well pleased with the Speech, and the House and the colony must be gratified with the evidences of determination and sincerity shown by the Government. Therefore he hoped it would not be considered that he was guilty of impertinence if he gave expression to his opinions on the Bill, with which he did not agree. He approached it from the standpoint of the Estimates, and intended to discuss it the same as any matter he found on the Estimates, in the discussion of which they were supposed to be perfectly free from party restraint. He was pleased to hear the hon. member for Moreton say at the outset of his speech that there were always two sides to a subject, for there were certainly two sides to the measure before the House. Certain members of the

Government were seriously overworked, but he considered that the remedy was to be found in the readjustment of work, and not in the creation of additional offices, and additional cost to the State. In the case of the Premier, they had the very best evidence of his patriotism in the manner in which he devoted himself to his work; and he was sure that the colony at large must be satisfied that to the Premier it could be no pecuniary advantage to be a Minister of the Crown. But there were other offices in connection with the Executive, and other officers, who might share the work which was to be done far more equitably than was the case at present. Among the chief of the arguments that had been advanced in favour of the additional appointment proposed by the Bill, at any rate, one of the chief arguments advanced by the Colonial Secretary was that the very large increase in the population of the colony justified the appointment of another Cabinet Minister. He did not think, reasoning by analogy, that that ground was tenable, and if they proceeded to a comparison with the neighbouring colonies they would find that it was not a sound argument. He would take the population and revenue of each for the year 1882. At the end of that year the population, in round numbers, of New South Wales was 817,000, of Victoria 906,000, while the population of Queensland was only 248,000, or about one-third or one-fourth of that of the neighbouring colonies. If it was necessary now that they should have seven Cabinet Ministers for a population of 248,000, and the number of Ministers was to be increased on the ground of increase of population, then by the time they reached the population of New South Wales or Victoria they would have well on to a score of Cabinet Ministers. With regard to revenue, he found that the revenue of Victoria for the year 1882 was about £5,500,000, of New South Wales £7,410,000, and Queensland £2,102,000. The expenditure was as follows:—Victoria £5,145,000, New South Wales £7,347,000, and Queensland £1,904,000. He thought that, proceeding on that basis—namely, the basis of population and revenue—the time had not yet come when circumstances warranted their going to the additional expenditure of another Cabinet Minister. Supposing they carried the argument still further, and had a population of millions in the colony, how many Ministers would be required then? The fact was, however, that only a few Ministers of State were required, and to the under secretaries—the officials who devoted all their time, all their energy, all their ability to the work in which they were employed—it was that the increase of supervision must necessarily go. In the service of the State, as in any army, there must be few to do the generalship, otherwise if the army were ever so well disciplined the result would be disastrous. Readjustment of the work of those already in office was what was required. But he took another ground of objection, and that was, that not only was the proposed increase of Cabinet Ministers inopportune, but it would be out of all proportion to the number of members of that House, which was a result not to be desired. The Ministers of the House already formed about one-eighth of the members of the House, and about one-fourth of the Ministerial side of the House.

The PREMIER: There are only five Ministers in the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Six.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he was speaking roughly. He thought the proposed measure was undesirable on that ground. The tendency, perhaps the inevitable tendency, of a man being a member of the Cabinet was, that he was in a great

measure subject to restraint; he was not free to say what he would like to say, or to do what he would like to do; and in the case of members of that House, or any deliberative assembly, such a thing was not to be desired. He shared in a great measure the fears of those who expressed the opinion that they were on the wrong track altogether—that, however prosperous the colony might be, or whatever might be the indications of immediate prosperity in the future, spendthrift expenditure might more than counterbalance their progress and prosperity. He repeated, though he did not want to be an alarmist, that he shared in the sentiment that they were going in the wrong direction. Fears that he had entertained before had, perhaps, proved groundless hitherto, but one swallow did not make a summer, and the same remark was applicable to the history of a people. They might be on the way to find themselves on the wrong side of the hedge—to find a deficit. There were to be two members of the Land Board—he was not now speaking on the Land question, but on the cost of the department; and the appointment of two members of the Land Board would not end the expenditure in that department. There would be a considerable increase under that head; two men would not be able to do the work without someone to be referee, and he must be paid of course. Then there was the Master of Titles, and a Board of Advice in London—he did not know whether there were any emoluments attached to that office—and also the shorter hours in the Civil Service, of which he had never shrunk from expressing his disapproval. There was a large increase in the Estimates last session, and he believed it was contemplated that there should be considerable increases in salaries this session. He would not for one moment bear the opprobrium or unpleasantness of being the only member on his side voting against the Government. He would not vote against them that night, but he could not vote with them on that particular measure. And, as regarded the 6th clause, he thought, if the Bill was carried, that was a highly objectionable provision which would no doubt be altered in committee. Another thing he would ask, and without any hesitation—namely, if the measure was passed, who was to be the future occupant of the new office? He thought one hon. member who had spoken that evening had shown his hand a little. He, for one, thought that the Government had gone quite far enough in the introduction of members of the legal profession into the Cabinet. He said it without any disrespect to any man—any member of the legal profession, probably, was as estimable a man as any man in that House—but still there were men in other callings or positions of life, and he thought they should have a fair show—a fair chance in some of the honours of office. Therefore it would be interesting to know who the new Minister would be. He spoke in the interests of the people, and deprecated the multiplication of officers and the increase of cost in the Civil Service.

Question put. The House divided:—

AYES, 22.

Messrs. Miles, Dickson, Griffith, Dutton, Sheridan, Smyth, Macdonald-Paterson, Kates, Buckland, Bale, Kellett, White, Jordan, Lambert, Grimes, Mellor, Aland, Campbell, Brookes, Moreton, Bailey, and Fraser.

NOES, 10.

Messrs. Norton, Chubb, Archer, Morehead, Palmer, Lator, Donaldson, Stevenson, Black, and Ferguson.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the commitment of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving that the House adjourn until Tuesday next, in accordance with a notice of motion given by him at an earlier period of the sitting, said that after the formal business, and taking the necessary steps for obtaining temporary Supply, the Government proposed to take the motion with regard to the Federal Council Bill and then the Public Officers Fees Bill.

The House adjourned at five minutes to 9 o'clock.