

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 1884

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The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, in moving that £11,800 be voted for Provisional Schools, said that the increase of £2,250 was caused by the proposed increase of £10 to the salary of each provisional teacher.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, in moving that £2,523 be voted for Grammar School Scholarships and Exhibitions to Universities, said that the item varied but little from what it was last year. The amount voted for scholarships in 1884 was somewhat larger, but the amounts voted for exhibitions to universities was precisely the same.

Mr. SCOTT said he wished to call the attention of the Minister for Public Instruction to the fact that they did not get a sufficient return for the money they voted for public schools. There was an immense number of youngsters knocking about who were not getting the benefit of that money, and he thought that something ought to be done towards increasing the attendance at the schools. He had frequently seen a great number of boys who ought to be at school, playing the truant, the parents of whom, he believed, thought them to be at school. Something might very well be done, as was done in some of the other colonies, by the appointment of truant inspectors, who went about and found boys who were not at school. Adopting such a course would not be going the length of enforcing the compulsory clauses, and it would bring the matter more under the notice of the department and the parents than it was at present. It would tend very much to increase the attendance at schools, and it was a great pity those boys should be growing up in ignorance, and he might say vice, in the way they were. Boys who habitually kept away from school and deceived their parents were likely to turn out badly sooner or later, and it would be far better for the Minister to take the matter into consideration and appoint people to go about not only Brisbane, but other towns, to see what boys were not attending school, and report to the department and the parents accordingly.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the subject was discussed a little last evening in the absence of the hon. gentleman, and he then said that he did not see his way to take action at present with regard to enforcing the compulsory clauses. The question required more consideration than they were able to give it at present. Of course the hon. gentleman was aware that a great deal of expense would necessarily be attendant upon the establishment of truant inspectors. If hon. gentlemen would look at the figures given in the report of last year, they would see that there was very little to complain of. Considering the circumstances of the colony, a very large percentage of the children were attending school; only 2 per cent. of the whole number of children in the colony not doing so, which was a remarkably small proportion. There were 228 schools whose teachers reported that there were no children living in the neighbourhood whose education was neglected. That was very satisfactory. No doubt there were many children in Brisbane, and in one or two other large towns, who did not go to school regularly; but he did not think it was necessary to enforce the compulsory clauses. His opinion had changed during the last three or four years on that point. About four years ago he remembered saying that he thought it was time that the compulsory clauses were enforced, at any rate in Brisbane. On further consideration he had modified his opinion in that respect.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 27 November, 1884.

Formal Motion.—Question.—Supply—resumption of Committee.—Adjournment.

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

FORMAL MOTION.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN (in the absence of Mr. Stevenson) moved—

That there be laid on the table of the House, all correspondence relating to the separation of No. 1 subdivision of the Belyando Division from that division, and its proclamation as a separate division.

Question put and passed.

QUESTION.

Mr. ARCHER (in the absence of Mr. Morehead) asked the Minister for Works—

1. Whether within the last six weeks any petitions have been received by the Minister for Works complaining of the conduct of Mr. Warden Lukin, and praying for a departmental inquiry?

2. If such petitions have been received, whether it is intended to accede to the prayer of the petitioners?

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

1. No.

2. A petition complaining of Warden Lukin's conduct was received at this office on the 17th September last. It is not intended to take any further action in the matter.

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply.

Mr. ARCHER said it would be in the recollection of the Minister that the question of scholarships being made available to the denominational schools had been brought under his notice. They knew very well that there were places in the different parts of the colony where the smaller State schools were not able to enter boys for examination, but he thought if the parents of boys in denominational schools chose to supplement the education of their children by private tuition they should be allowed to compete for scholarships. He saw no reason also why those educated in private schools should not have a similar advantage, and he would like to hear from the hon. gentleman whether he had given any consideration to the matter which was brought before him some few weeks ago.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the matter was mentioned some time since on a motion for adjournment, and his attention was particularly called to the fact that only children were allowed to compete for scholarships who attended the State schools. He promised to give the question his immediate attention, and the system had already been extended to denominational schools. There would be a good many candidates from those schools at this year's examinations; but as far as private schools were concerned, he would say that the scholarships had been instituted as a part of the system of State primary instruction. The scholarships were instituted as an encouragement and reward to children in the State schools, and he did not feel called upon to apply the system to private schools. It was not intended that rewards should be given to children of persons who could afford to pay for the education of their own children in grammar schools. Certainly there were many people sending their children to State schools who could well afford to send them to private schools; but if they could get the advantage of that, he did not think it was desirable that those who could and did pay for the private education of their children should take advantage of the scholarships. That was the way it struck him at present, and he did not think he was likely to alter his opinion in that respect.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, was the Secretary for Public Instruction frightened at the proposition? If the system of public education was perfect, and if the State paid so much for it, he should not be afraid of the competition of the children of those parents who paid for education. In fact, it would be a very good test of the system to allow private schools to compete with the State schools, and he did not think anything of the argument of the hon. gentleman that those children should not be admitted to competition for scholarships because they were educated at the cost of the individual. He thought that was an extra reason why such a privilege should be given to those who were educated in private schools, and the hon. gentleman would see that his argument was utterly illogical. He hoped those children who were educated at the cost of their parents would be allowed to compete in the open market with those educated at the cost of the State.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said, so far as the competition went, the result of the examination of the grammar schools every year showed that those who held State school scholarships comprised more than 50 per cent. of the prize-takers. It was, therefore, not a question of competition at all. The system was not instituted for the purpose of allowing those who could afford to pay for education to obtain secondary free education for their children. It was instituted originally by the late

Board of Education about fifteen years ago, and it was intended to apply only to those attending State schools. Otherwise he did not believe in giving free instruction in the secondary schools, except in exceptional cases, and as a reward to children of special ability.

Mr. ARCHER said they had voted extra salaries for more inspectors; would they now be able to inspect all denominational schools?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the present arrangement was that all denominational schools in the dioceses of Brisbane and Rockhampton were inspected. The services of the inspectors had been placed at the disposal of the heads of the church in those dioceses for the inspection of schools if desired; with the additional number of inspectors it would be possible to inspect all the schools.

Mr. ARCHER said next year the hon. gentleman was prepared to put denominational schools on the same footing as State schools?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It has already been done. Competition would be open to all those schools this year.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member had rather contradicted himself. He said he was not in favour of the higher primary education. The country had been bound, unfortunately, some years ago to the present system, and they had to deal now with secondary education. He thought, with regard to those prizes, that they should be open to all comers. There were two classes of children—those educated at the expense of the State, and those educated at the expense of their parents; and why the two classes should not come into competition he could not see. The prizes should not, at any rate, be set apart solely for those who were educated up to a certain point on the primary system at the expense of the State; and if the two classes were to compete they would soon see which was the better system of education. He certainly thought, and he believed the members of the Committee would agree with him, that it would be more beneficial to the State that such a state of affairs should exist, so that they might really have some public test as to which system of education was the best. There was no doubt that those educated in State schools would be at an advantage owing to the very much larger number. At all events, he thought the thing should be tried. He did not see why John Smith and William Brown, who possibly were in equal circumstances—if one went to a State school, and the other to a private school—should not both be allowed to compete for the prizes offered by the State. He thought it was unfair to private schools and private individuals that those prizes were not allowed to be competed for by their children.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he agreed with the Minister for Public Instruction in saying that secondary education should not be free, unless in exceptional cases. There was hope for the hon. gentleman; and he hoped that in a few years the hon. gentleman would be as far advanced as many hon. members in that Committee were. But the hon. gentleman's argument was unreasonable. He said that the prizes in the grammar schools were intended for the children in State schools whose parents could not give them secondary education. That would be a good argument if it were a correct one so far as actually concerned the education of children in private schools. But what were the facts? All private schools, except the Catholic schools, had been driven out of the education market by the Act. As a rule, nineteen out of every twenty well-to-do people in the colony sent their children to State schools, so that

really the argument fell to the ground. It would only be made to apply to Catholic schools. He did not believe in secondary education being given unless it was made to apply in all cases. The whole colony had to bear the taxation which kept the system up; and as they could not without a very inquisitorial system select those people who were well able to educate their children from those who were not, he thought it was only reasonable that the prizes should be thrown open to all, no matter whether they came from Catholic or private schools. To that extent he disagreed with the hon. gentleman. There was another matter which cropped up last night which seemed not to have come under the notice of the hon. gentleman before. That was that children in private schools going in for pupil teachers were obliged to obtain 60 per cent., instead of 50 per cent. obtained by others. The hon. gentleman said he had never heard of that before, and had not had time to consider it. Had the hon. gentleman seen the Under Secretary of Education since, and if so, could he come to any decision on the matter? It was one that did not require a great amount of thought to arrive at a decision, especially as he believed the hon. gentleman was getting more liberal as he grew older.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he was glad to find the hon. gentleman thought so. He had not had time to consider the question, nor had he had time to go to the Education Office that day. He was desirous of ascertaining the reason for the introduction of a change in the interpretation of the regulation from what it was intended to mean. It was only fair that he should do that before he came to a conclusion.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £600 be granted in aid of Technical Education at the Brisbane School of Arts.

Mr. BLACK said he had opposed that vote on a previous occasion, on the ground that it seemed to be merely an additional subsidy to the School of Arts; but he had looked through the report furnished this year in connection with the technical classes, and he was glad to see that the results appeared to be more encouraging than he had anticipated. The simple returns furnished last year did not lead to the hope that the results would be encouraging; but he was glad to know now that some reasonable results had been arrived at. The average attendance at the different classes was 114, and, what he thought was more encouraging, the subscriptions from the public amounted to £379, and the fees paid by the students, £267 18s. 6d., making together £646 18s. 6d., which was slightly more than the Government grant. He thought it would be, on the whole, more satisfactory, as the Technical College appeared to be nothing more than a branch of the School of Arts, if the contributions from the public and the fees from students annually were added together, and the Government aid given in the usual way at the rate of pound for pound. That would make the vote look less local and invidious; otherwise the Government might be asked to extend the same principle to other districts, which would not be a good plan.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said there was a good deal in what the hon. gentleman said. At present, however, the institution was only in an initiatory stage; it would be noticed that £1,700 had been spent for building; and he understood that a promise had been made by his predecessor that the £600 should be voted annually, for some time at any rate. When the institution was established on

a permanent footing, the plan suggested by the hon. member would probably be better—that the amount paid by the Government should depend upon the amount received from other sources.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, in moving that a sum of £13,076 be granted for Orphanages, said that there was not much change in the vote. There was an additional clerk at £100. The Inspector of Orphanages, it would be seen, was down for £300. When the Estimates were framed that office was filled by Dr. Wray, who was also Health Officer at Brisbane. He was no longer Inspector of Orphanages, and it had been found necessary to appoint a separate officer who would devote all his time to the duties, and give him a salary of £400, which was by no means excessive. Moreover, the duties would be very largely increased by the fact that the children boarded out from St. Vincent's Orphanage would in future be inspected in the same manner as those from the other institutions. A great number of children were now boarded out, and, as far as he had been able to ascertain, the system was working extremely well. Great care was taken in the selection of the persons to whom the children were sent; they were inspected periodically; and the mortality was extremely low indeed. The vote for the Infants' Home was very light; the children in that institution were to a very great extent the children of inmates of the Female Refuge, which was presided over by Mrs. Drew, and lately very few children had been sent there, as other arrangements had been made. Whether it would prove to be merely a temporary cessation in the sending of children there, or whether it would be discontinued altogether, he did not know. The vote for the Mackay Orphanage had been increased because of the larger number of children there. It received orphans, not only from Mackay, but from all the northern part of the colony—from Rockhampton to the extreme north. It was a Roman Catholic orphanage for the north of the colony.

Mr. BLACK said that, although the Mackay Orphanage was undoubtedly superintended by the Sisters of Mercy, he was glad to say it was an orphanage open to children of all denominations. He had every reason to believe that no children had ever been refused admission on account of the religion of their parents. He should be very sorry to think that any orphanage in the colony was conducted on such sectarian principles that religion would have anything to do with the admission of the children. He would like to ask the Minister whether there was any system in regard to the contributions which were supposed to be made by parents or guardians who were able to pay at all; because he noticed there was a very considerable difference in the receipts. On page 43 of the report of the Minister for Public Instruction, under the heading of "Private contributions from parents, guardians, etc., paid to consolidated revenue," he noticed that the amounts contributed to all the Southern orphanages was proportionately much less than the amounts received in the North. The Government aid to the Diamantina Orphanage was £3,945, and the private contributions amounted to £529, about one-eighth; Infants' Home, Brisbane—Government aid £234, private contributions £32, also about one-eighth; Nudgee—Government aid £3,408, private contributions £436, one-eighth again; in Rockhampton there was a terrible falling-off—Government aid £1,339, and private contributions only £87 15s. 11d., one-sixteenth of the whole; in Mackay there was £849 Government aid, and £153 private contributions, about one-sixth; at Townsville there was the same

proportion—£950 Government aid, and £147 private contributions. He would like to know whether there was any fixed scale in connection with the item, or whether it was left very much to the voluntary contributions of parents or guardians?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said that the Mackay Orphanage was a Roman Catholic institution, licensed under the Orphanages Act, just as much as the St. Vincent Orphanage was a Roman Catholic orphanage. He had no doubt that other children than Roman Catholics would be received there, or at any other orphanage; but, as a matter of fact, it was recognised as a Roman Catholic orphanage. As to making the parents pay for their children in the orphanages, that was a very important part of the business of the inspector. He devoted a great deal of his time to that duty, and it required a considerable amount of discretion. A great many cases came under his own notice where pressure was brought to bear on parents who could pay, though no actual penal steps were taken without his sanction.

Mr. ARCHER asked if the inspector had any other duties to perform?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said that that was a very important part of the work of the Inspector of Orphanages. Among his other duties was to report on all applications for admission to the orphanages. All the orphans had to come under his inspection; he had to deal with all applications to board the children out, or to hire them out; he had to report on them and the suitability of the persons so applying; to inspect all the children when boarded and hired out; and periodically inspect the orphanages themselves, and to take all the steps that could be taken to see that contributions were made by parents or guardians, and to get undertakings from the parents before admission that they would pay those contributions. Those were some of the duties of the Inspector of Orphanages.

Mr. ARCHER said that the hon. gentleman must have misunderstood him. He knew quite well what the duties of the Inspector of Orphanages were. But what he wished to ascertain was if the Inspector of Orphanages now appointed had anything else to do besides his work as Inspector of Orphanages, or if he was to be confined entirely to that work; because Dr. Wray had had other duties to perform as well as those of Inspector of Orphanages.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said that the present Inspector had no other duties to perform except as secretary to the Medical Board, which position he had held for a great many years.

Mr. ARCHER asked how the new orphanage at Townsville was getting on? The last time he was there, he found it was most necessary to have it finished as soon as possible.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the contract had been let some time ago, but he did not know what progress had been made with it.

Mr. ARCHER said he knew it was very much wanted.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Very badly indeed.

Mr. BLACK said he would like to ask the Minister for Public Instruction if there was any particular cause to be assigned for the apparently excessive mortality at the Nudgee Orphanage during the past twelve months. At page 43 of the report it was stated that in the Diamantina Orphanage only 4 died; in the Infants' Home,

9; he supposed infants were more liable to disease or sickness than older children. At Nudgee the mortality was as high as 12; at Rockhampton, 1; at Mackay, 2; and at Townsville, 1. He had no doubt that some reason might be assigned for it.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said that the inspector reported that the death-rate was low, and so he (the Minister for Public Instruction) thought. It was much lower than the mortality of children outside the orphanages; although the rate was not so extraordinarily low at Nudgee as in some of the other orphanages. What Dr. Wray said was—

"The children suffered from an epidemic of measles of a mild form during the winter. The general health for the year has been good and the death-rate low."

Mr. SCOTT asked how many children were boarded out from the Diamantina Orphanage or St. Vincent's Orphanage?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he could not give the number at the present time, but the number at the end of last year was given in the report. The number of children boarded out from Diamantina Orphanage was 120, and hired out 94. There were no children boarded out from Nudgee at that time, but 112 were hired out.

Mr. FERGUSON said there was one matter in connection with the orphanages which he wished to bring before the Committee in regard to the Rockhampton Orphanage, which had been managed by trustees since its formation—at all events for ten or fifteen years. The trustees, for some reason, resigned about twelve months ago. Whilst they were trustees of the orphanage they had acted as trustees for some of the inmates, and in that capacity had deposited sums of money in the savings banks for some of the orphans who had been receiving that money from relations. He wished to allude to a particular case—that of a girl named Sarah Bell. When that girl came to the age for her to leave the orphanage she was hired out to service, and she handed over her earnings to her trustees to be deposited by them to her credit in the savings bank as usual. Of course she was then altogether out of the control of the manager of the orphanage. Fresh trustees had been appointed on the resignation of the old ones, and the girl asked her trustees to withdraw her money from the bank. Her trustees made, of course, the usual application and signed the usual form, but the money was refused by the Colonial Treasurer, who gave as his reason that the money could only be withdrawn by the newly elected superintendent of the orphanage. Of course, the original trustees considered that the Government had no control whatever over the money of that girl when she was away from the orphanage, and they were acting as her trustees.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That has been made right.

Mr. FERGUSON said it could only have been lately. At any rate cases of that kind might happen again, and he wanted to know how they would be dealt with?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said a change had taken place in the managing committee of the Rockhampton Orphanage; he need not explain the reason why the old committee resigned. But when they did resign and ceased to act in the capacity of managers, all accounts standing in their name were transferred to their successors in office. When an application was made to the savings bank for the money belonging to this girl, Mr. Cribb objected to sign the necessary notice. As soon as that came to his notice he gave Mr. Cribb

instructions to do so, and he presumed they had been attended to. As far as he could see, a case of that kind was not likely to occur again.

Mr. SCOTT said he understood that the age at which children left the orphanage, or got out of the control of the authorities, was sixteen?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes.

Mr. SCOTT said that he and many others thought that that age, as far as girls were concerned, was too low. A girl leaving an orphanage at that age was hardly fit to take care of herself, and it would be better if some supervision could be kept over them until they were perhaps two or three years older.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the question was one which had frequently occupied his attention, but it was a very difficult one to deal with. Supposing a girl of eighteen was nominally under the supervision of the Department of Public Instruction, what real supervision could they exercise over her? The only thing they could do would be to prevent her taking her money out of the Savings Bank. They could not keep the girl shut up, and he did not see how any other actual supervision could be exercised. The question was full of difficulties.

Mr. BEATTIE said he should like to know whether the boarding-out system had been carried out as satisfactorily as the Minister could wish. A case which seemed to involve some hardship had lately been brought under his notice, and it seemed to reflect upon the officer in charge of the institution, who no doubt had a great deal to do, and a great deal to put up with. A respectable tradesman came out to the colony, and he had the misfortune to lose his wife soon after his arrival. As he could not afford to engage anyone to look after his young children, he applied to have them admitted into the orphanage, he, of course, agreeing to pay for their keep. One or two of the children were hired out, and the father, anxious that their affections should not be altogether alienated from him, applied to the inspector for permission to visit them occasionally. According to the man's story the inspector treated him very curtly, and would not even tell him where the children were, saying that it was against the regulations to do so. No doubt in some cases that was very desirable, but there might happen other cases—and that to which he referred was one of them—where so hard-and-fast a rule should be relaxed. He advised the man to make a second application to the inspector, and his reply was that he would not risk receiving similar treatment a second time. The man had nothing to say against the department; he was grateful to the country for assisting him by looking after his young children, but he was annoyed and hurt at the manner in which he had been spoken to and treated by the inspector, and would have taken his children away had he been able to do so. What he (Mr. Beattie) wanted to know was, if it was not possible, in cases like the one he had mentioned, to relax that hard-and-fast rule, so that a parent might visit his children periodically, and that their affections might not become altogether alienated from him?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said there was no hard-and-fast rule observed in those matters. There were many cases, as hon. members would admit, where it was not desirable that parents should know the whereabouts of their children. In other cases there could be no objection, and the information was given. Discretion was exercised in every case. The officer referred to might sometimes be

brusque in his manner—and that was all that the complaint amounted to—but he was a very kind-hearted man after all.

Mr. BLACK said the Inspector of Orphanages, who was also Health Officer at Brisbane, could, of course, only inspect the orphanages in the South—

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have explained that that arrangement is altered.

Mr. BLACK said he asked the hon. gentleman's pardon for not understanding the nature of the new arrangements, and simply wished to know whether those arrangements would enable the officer to inspect the orphanages in the northern portion of the colony.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said it was intended that the officer should inspect all orphanages. They were inspected last year by another officer in the department, but under the new arrangements the present inspector would inspect them all.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £455 be granted for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Institution. It had been the practice for many years to make a grant of £375 to the institution in New South Wales on account of the children sent thither from Queensland; and there was an additional sum of £80 for a blind instructor. There were a great number of blind people in the colony—a much larger number than was generally supposed; and it was thought that the Government might contribute something towards their instruction. What form that instruction should take had not yet been fixed upon, but no separate institution would be required, as in New South Wales, and it was not proposed to confine it to one place.

Mr. BEATTIE said he thought the vote would receive a great deal of sympathy, and would have the cordial consent of the Committee. There was one item he would refer to, and that was the vote for the blind instructor. He was sure the majority of hon. members must have read the report of Mr. Tighe and been pleased to hear of the kind of work he had been doing in travelling from place to place. He was glad to say that the public generally had taken some interest in the matter, and had been very ready to give assistance to that gentleman to carry out the objects he had in view, in giving instruction to those who were suffering from the great affliction of blindness. It struck him that £80 a year was a very small salary to give.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is not a salary; it is assistance.

Mr. BEATTIE said Mr. Tighe received contributions from the public also; and, seeing that they were contributing to the New South Wales institution, it would not be much of an increase if they gave Mr. Tighe £100. He trusted the Minister would take the matter into consideration. £100 a year was not very much to enable Mr. Tighe to make excursions to the inland towns. He had been almost all over the colony, and had rendered good service.

Mr. SMYTH said he had come in contact with Mr. Tighe a great deal, and knew the work he had been doing. At present he was visiting all the blind people he could find in Brisbane and the suburbs. It was well known that blind people as a rule were not able to pay for their own instruction, and Mr. Tighe had had to depend upon the charity of the public. It would be far better if the Government would pay him a salary of about £120 a year, as then he would not be dependent upon subscriptions. When contribu-

tions were made the tax generally fell upon a few charitable people, whereas if the money were paid by the State it would fall upon all people alike. He met Mr. Tighe last Saturday, as he was on his way to the Diamantina Orphanage to instruct a blind child there. He thought his services deserved £120 a year, and he thought the State could well afford it.

Mr. ALAND said no one could doubt that Mr. Tighe was worth £120 a year; but he thought the question was this: should they find that money for Mr. Tighe, or should the public do so? The Government had acted very liberally in meeting the public in the matter and in placing a sum upon the Estimates; but it was a mistake to encourage the public to believe that all those charities were to be paid out of the public funds. He had contributed to Mr. Tighe's mission, and was sure that every hon. member would do the same. It would be a great mistake to make his full support a charge upon the country.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought they ought to know a little more about the matter from the Minister for Public Instruction. What place had Mr. Tighe for teaching the blind, and what was his mode of procedure, so far as teaching was concerned? How were the blind brought into contact with him?

Mr. SMYTH: He visits them.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had a great amount of doubt as regarded the value of itinerant teachers. It would be far better to increase the vote for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Asylum at Sydney. Although that looked as if it were the full amount contributed to the institution by Queensland, he thought hon. gentlemen would bear him out when he said that a considerable sum was contributed here by private individuals. Therefore that sum was only a grant in aid of what was given by the public generally. He did not wish people to think he objected to the vote; if it were five times as much he would offer no opposition. He merely wished to know in what way Mr. Tighe came into contact with the people he taught. He had known blind men who had been the greatest rogues and impostors he had ever seen, and he would like to know upon what recommendation Mr. Tighe had received that appointment. So far as the amount of money voted was concerned, he would not object if it were double or treble or quadruple what it was, and he would be quite willing to give a contribution himself to such a benevolent cause.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he understood that the teacher visited the blind in the different parts of the colony as an itinerant teacher. The only other way would be to bring the blind to him, which would involve the establishment of a blind institution, which they did not propose to do at present, certainly. A blind institution was good for children, a great many of whom were sent to the institution at Sydney. There were several adults who were here who could be, nevertheless, made much more useful to the colony, and a great deal of good might be done in that way by Mr. Tighe. Mr. Tighe came to him with recommendations which were satisfactory, and he had no doubt as to his ability or character.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not think the hon. gentleman had altogether touched upon the point he had raised, which was that he did not think any perceptible good could be done by an itinerant teacher, especially to the blind who were not children. He had some knowledge of the blind himself, and knew that it took a considerable time to teach even children; but it took a great deal more to teach a grown person, who had

either lost his sight at a comparatively advanced age or had been blind from childhood to the time the teacher had to deal with him. Teaching the blind was a matter that necessitated the spending of a great amount of time with each individual; therefore, if Mr. Tighe had to go from house to house, his teaching would have no appreciable effect, and it would be much better to augment the vote for the New South Wales institution than to pursue such a useless mode of dealing with those afflicted people.

Mr. SMYTH said there were a great many blind people in Queensland living with their parents, and others who were not, and upon whom it would be very hard to have to go to New South Wales. Mr. Tighe taught those people to be very useful in making halters, baskets, cane chairs, and other things, and many of them were able to earn their own living. It would be a great hardship if Mr. Tighe had to depend on the charity of the public for support.

Mr. FOOTE said he wished to ask a question, which should have been put last night, but he left the House before 11 o'clock. He wished to know from the Minister for Public Instruction whether it was usual that a sum of money should be granted from the amount voted by the House to chairmen of grammar schools. Was it usual that the committee of a grammar school should vote a sum of money to the chairman for his services?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Out of public funds?

Mr. FOOTE: Yes. It had been done, and that was the reason why he asked if it was a proper thing. He could rely on the source of his information, and he had been told that £100 was voted by trustees of a certain grammar school to a certain gentleman who was the chairman of the committee. Had the Government ever heard of such a thing taking place?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the hon. gentleman asked if such a thing was usual. He trusted it was not. If the hon. member asked if it was legal, he should tell him certainly not. It was a misappropriation of funds on the part of trustees to take trust moneys for themselves, and they would be individually liable to repay the money. He had never had such a case brought under his notice.

Mr. FOOTE said he would not mention the name of the party, but he could tell the hon. gentleman that such things had taken place.

Mr. MOREHEAD said when such a charge was made the name ought to be made public. The gentleman who committed such an illegal and dishonest act should be made known.

Mr. FOOTE said he brought the matter forward with a view that it might not occur again. The recipient of the money had since died.

Mr. MOREHEAD: In consequence of receiving it?

Mr. ALAND said he would like to know whether the Government undertook to send the blind children of parents who could not afford the expense, down to Sydney?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he did not know of any case in which the passage to Sydney had been paid. As to the maintenance of children, the contribution made was £14 a year for maintenance, and £6 a year for clothing. That was the amount paid by the Government. In a good many instances the amount was repaid by the parents.

Mr. MACFARLANE asked what number of children were sent down to the Deaf and Dumb

Institution in Sydney. He thought the time had almost come when they could look after their own blind people in Queensland without sending them away at all. It struck him that that £455, with the amount raised in the colony, would go a long way towards providing an institution in Queensland to teach their own blind. He was quite aware that the New South Wales Deaf and Dumb Institution published the amount received from Queensland every year; and he thought an institution could be erected here by connecting it with the Diamantina Orphanage. It would necessitate no new buildings, and no additional medical attendance, and Mr. Tighe could teach the boys and girls who required educating. An hon. member referred to the fact that Mr. Tighe taught various handicrafts, and that could be easily undertaken in the Diamantina Orphanage. It would have this advantage: that people who had their children or friends would be much nearer to them and would be in a position to see them now and again, and the children could go home occasionally. Altogether it was worth consideration, and he threw out the suggestion in order that the Minister for Public Instruction might consider it.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he did not think the time had arrived for such a thing, and he thought they might for the present take advantage of the Sydney institution. The total number in the institution from Queensland at the end of last year was eighteen, and he thought there was no justification for starting an asylum here for that number of children. Out of those eighteen the parents of three contributed to the support of their children. An institution of the sort mentioned involved a great amount of expense, as special and competent trained teachers were required.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he quite agreed with what had fallen from the hon. gentleman. They had in Sydney one of the finest institutions of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, which was quite sufficient for all requirements for some time to come. New South Wales behaved very well to them in the matter, and they might still continue to use that institution at a comparatively small cost.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he ought to have mentioned that, out of the number in the Sydney institution from Queensland, sixteen were deaf and dumb, and only two blind.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I wish some of the members of this House were deaf and dumb.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £2,598 be granted for salaries and contingencies for the Museum, which, he said, was now under the Education Department. The increases were £150 for an assistant curator, and £200 for a geological collector, who was an extremely competent man, and doing very good work. The salary of the assistant was put down as recommended, but since then the trustees had recommended an increased salary. Had it been recommended before the Estimates were framed, he would have acceded to it. There was also an increase of £300 in contingencies.

Mr. ARCHER said he was glad to hear that the hon. gentleman proposed to raise the salary of the assistant, who was probably as competent a man as there was in the country for that work. Had it ever struck the hon. gentleman that the Museum building was most unfit for that purpose? The internal arrangements were quite

painful to look at, although he admitted that the manner in which the exhibits were displayed had been improved.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he was quite aware that the building was not suitable; but the hon. member seemed to have forgotten that there was a sum of £40,000 on the Loan Estimates to provide a public library and museum.

Mr. ARCHER said he thought a museum building should be on such a plan that it could be conveniently extended every ten or twelve years.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was perfectly certain that the hon. member was aware that there was a sum on the Loan Estimates for a library and museum. What he (Mr. Morehead) expected to hear from the Minister for Public Instruction when he moved the vote was where the museum was to be situated, and what style of a building it was to be. He agreed with every word that fell from the hon. member for Blackall with regard to the unfitness of the present Museum building. A more wretched abortion of a building was never evolved, even from the brain of a Stanley. It was almost as bad as the Port Office, about which the hon. member for Fortitude Valley knew something. He was glad to hear that something was to be done towards getting a new museum building, and he certainly hoped some hon. members of that Committee would be preserved in it.

Mr. NORTON said he would ask the Minister for Public Instruction whether it had been suggested to him that, in the event of a new museum being built, the present building might be used for a public library. The suggestion had been made outside.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he knew that such a suggestion had been made, but the Government had not considered it. He did not know anything about it himself, and could not express an opinion on it; but he would endeavour to make himself acquainted with it.

Mr. PALMER said he was quite sure the time had arrived when Brisbane should make a start with a free public library. It was a disgrace to such a city not to have made even the smallest attempt to get such a library. They had set the example in Sydney, where there was not only a free public library, but a free public lending library. He used to attend both, and he knew, from the attendance, and from the fact that a vote was placed on the Estimates for their extension, that they were very well patronised—so much so that the premises had to be extended year by year in order to provide for additional books. At Toronto, also, with a population of between 80,000 and 85,000, the Canadian Parliament voted £3,200 a year for three years, and then afterwards gave an annual sum of £6,000 towards a free public library. He was sure the want of such an institution was very much felt in Brisbane.

Mr. NORTON said it ought to be remembered that there was a good library in connection with the School of Arts. The effect of starting a free public library in Sydney had been to greatly injure the School of Arts there; and the same result would be seen in Brisbane; in fact, he believed the effect of starting a free public library here would be to shut up the School of Arts altogether.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought the salary of £200 for the Geological Collector was inadequate for a good man, and he believed the officer at present holding the appointment was a good man.

Mr. NORTON said he had intended to say something about that matter, but was waiting till they came to the item of School of Mines in the Works Department. He understood that the people of Gympie were very anxious to get the present Geological Collector to stay and take charge of the School of Mines there.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) moved that a sum of £8,288 be granted for the Treasury, Stamp Office, and printing and engraving maps and securities. There was an increase in the total sum of £230, of which £145 had been distributed amongst five junior officers in the Treasury. There were four increases of £25 each to junior officers in the revenue and pay branches, and in the Stamp Office an increase of £25 was proposed to the officer in charge. Hon. members would bear in mind that the revenue from the Stamp Office now exceeded £100,000 per annum.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What has that to do with it?

Mr. NORTON: Are the hours longer?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the duties had correspondingly increased. The hours were continuous. The officer was one of the oldest in the Public Service, and had been in the department since 1866. There was a £10 increase to the junior clerk, and three increases, amounting to £50, to the lithographic printers; one increase from £170 to £180, one from £130 to £150, and one from £100 to £120.

Mr. NORTON asked the Colonial Treasurer whether it had been brought under his notice that clerks employed in his department took private work after their very short office-hours, and competed with private accountants?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that he thought he could give a distinct denial to the statement that any clerk in the Treasury undertook private work, such as the hon. member referred to, outside office-hours. The hon. gentleman's remarks arose out of what was well known to many hon. members, that a gentleman in the Audit Office who had been trained as an average stater, undertook, at the request of the mercantile community, the adjustment of some average and insurance accounts. Since the last Estimates were passed he had been instructed to cease that work, but he was allowed to complete work upon which he was engaged at the time the matter last came under the notice of the House. Hon. members would be aware that business of that kind was not concluded in a summary manner, but extended over a considerable period until all claims had been rendered; so the Government, at the request of several agents of ships interested in the salvage, allowed the officer to complete the work on the distinct understanding that the practice was not to be continued. He thought he might remove a false impression that prevailed as to the hours of work of officers in the Treasury. Very few officers got away until between 5 and 6, and it was no uncommon circumstance for many of them to work late at night. There was no increase in the staff, although the amount of work was increasing considerably.

Mr. NORTON said that he had been induced to speak by letters and notices which had appeared in the papers complaining of Government officers performing the work of private accountants. With regard to the hours, he thought what had fallen from the hon. member was a condemnation of the action taken by the Government not very long since in curtailing the hours from 5 to 4. It was unfair to the clerks who stopped, as the hon. member said, till 5 or 6; for he supposed some got away at 4.

Mr. SMYTH said he noticed there was £655 down for expenses of the Stamp Office. No doubt there was a very large revenue derived from the office, but the miners suffered very heavily from the stamp duties. Every scrip, no matter how small, had to bear a half-crown stamp. He knew that the miners at Charters Towers and Gympie strongly objected to the obnoxious tax. There was another tax, which, though very small, amounted to a great sum in the long run—the receipt stamps. Although the shareholders of a mine might only pay calls in to their own secretary, they had to put a penny stamp on every receipt for every call. That was taxing men for being in a poor mine. He hoped when the Colonial Treasurer revised the tariff in any way he would abolish that tax, which was very obnoxious.

Mr. FOOTE said he looked upon the operation of the Stamp Act as one of the best systems of collecting revenue which any Government had adopted. The tax was almost self-collecting, and operated in the most even-handed way throughout the whole colony. He only wished the Government could collect all the revenue in the same easy and inexpensive way. The cost of collection of the Customs was, for instance, enormous. The penny stamp bore equally on all those who had business to do, and he certainly hoped the Colonial Treasurer would continue it.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be voted for the service of the year 1884-5 the sum of £12,700 to defray the expenses of Miscellaneous Services. Hon. members would observe that that sum showed a considerable reduction compared with the previous year, especially in the vote for "Refundments." Money was sometimes paid into the Custom House or the Lands Office pending the completion of a transaction. If that transaction was not completed, the money was refunded. Formerly the money was added to the ordinary receipts, and its repayment credited to "Refundments." The result was to swell the receipts, without showing the actual revenue of the colony. The practice now introduced was that the money so paid in was put into a suspense account until the termination of the transaction, and at the end of the month—he spoke particularly of the Custom House—the repayments were made before the net receipts were entered into the Treasurer's books. The only sum in the vote for refundments was £2,000, which was due before the alteration in the system was made. On the item of commission and exchange there was an increase of £1,500 to £5,000, which arose from the increased charge made by the Bank of England for selling their stock and paying the semi-annual interest. The charge was at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. upon the annual interest of £40,000. The premium on the general guarantee policy was increased from £750 to £1,000 on account of the amount placed in the last schedule not being sufficient. Provision was made for resuming the Admiralty survey from Bowen northwards as soon as the "Palumah" arrived in Queensland waters.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman had not told the Committee quite enough about the Admiralty survey, although he might not know much about it. When and how was the survey to be made?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that representations had been made to the Admiralty by the late Government for the resumption of the survey of the coast, which, to his mind, had been very unwisely discontinued in 1879, on account of the alleged impecuniosity of the colony. At that time the survey had been completed up to a short distance from Bowen. When the

colony was recovering its prosperity, the late Government urged on the Admiralty the desirability of completing the survey; and the present Government also made representations in the same direction. The result was that the Admiralty proposed that a vessel should be either purchased or chartered for a term; that the expense of the survey should be jointly borne by the Admiralty and the colony; and that at the end of the survey the vessel, if purchased, should be sold and the loss on her also jointly allocated. In the meantime the defence gunboats were being constructed, and the Government thought it well that one of them should be employed in the work, thus saving the joint contributions to the expense of purchasing a vessel for the purpose, though her maintenance during her use for surveying purposes was to be jointly contributed by the colony and the Admiralty. The Admiralty had stipulated that their share should not exceed £2,500 per annum, and arrangements had, he believed, been completed for their contributing that amount. They were, however, fitting the vessel up with the latest scientific apparatus; and the principal portion of her outfit would also be borne by the Admiralty. That was all the information he could give hon. members. The portion of the coast to be surveyed was from near Bowen northwards, and the time the survey was estimated to occupy was from two to three years.

Mr. BEATTIE said the amount of information they had received was not very large even now. The item of £2,500 for six months simply meant that the colony was to contribute £5,000 a year towards surveying the coast; and not only were they to do that, but they were to find the vessel as well. The cost of that vessel was something like £35,000, which at 5 per cent. amounted to a very considerable sum. He did not complain about the amount to be spent in surveying the coast; it would be money well spent. But it was money spent for the benefit, not of Queensland alone, but of the mercantile community generally. A passage was being opened up and lighted through Torres Straits, and inside the Barrier Reef, at the sole expense of Queensland. While opening up that short route to India and the East, by which the southern colonies benefited most largely, the Government might fairly ask them to contribute something towards the cost of it. It was universally admitted by mercantile men that the Queensland coast was better lighted than that of any other part of Australia, and those lights were maintained at the expense of this small colony; the other colonies did not contribute one farthing towards it. The abolition of light dues had caused a heavy annual deficit. The amount received from the shipping that used those lights was very small indeed, while the Portmaster's time was fully occupied in introducing advantages for the mercantile and shipping community generally. He did not complain about that, but when they were asked to make a correct survey of the northern route, it was a little too much—seeing that nearly all the benefits were reaped outside free of charge—to expect a small colony like Queensland to pay £5,000 a year towards it and to find a vessel as well; and he would suggest that the other colonies should be asked to join Queensland in sharing the cost with the British Government.

Mr. ARCHER said that even after the explanation of the Colonial Treasurer he did not fully understand why the item was down in its present form. According to the hon. gentleman, the British Government expected the colony to pay one-half the cost of the survey,

the total not to amount to more than £5,000 a year. If that were the case, the £2,500 ought to be for twelve months and not for six months, as stated. The vote ought really to be for only one half of that amount, or £1,250, if it was only for a period of six months. He did not agree with the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that they should solicit assistance in the work from the southern colonies, although they derived a greater benefit from the work than Queensland did; and he believed also that the colony had done a just and right thing in making its coast lights free to those who used them.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the amount was placed on the Estimates before final arrangements were made with the Admiralty. He had sent for the papers, and would be able, in a short time, to give hon. members more information on the matter than he possessed at present. He had before understated the amount which the colony was to pay, but that would be cleared up when the papers arrived. Of course, if the whole of the money was not required, it would not be spent. It would be admitted by everyone that the work was a much-needed one, and that it was desired that that missing link in the chain of the coast surveys should be supplied. They were not in a position to complete the survey themselves, either as economically or expeditiously as the Admiralty; and although some hon. members might think that the Admiralty should have borne the whole expense, he was of opinion that it was wise to take the opportunity of getting that portion of the survey completed. The Government had, to a certain extent, to accept the offer of the Admiralty to complete it upon the basis which had been decided in former years. With reference to contributions from the other colonies, he was certain that an appeal to any of them would have been ineffectual. Even the decision of the late Commodore Goodenough, with reference to the establishment of lights in Torres Straits, had no practical effect, except that they received a very small subscription from South Australia for a year or two. The southern colonies would not have acceded to the request. He had sent for the papers, and before the estimate passed he would be able to give the latest information there was upon the subject. The whole amount of £2,500 would not be required.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. gentleman had no right to say he was not in favour of that missing link in, or, rather, the whole survey being completed. It was due to the late Premier that the matter had been brought before the Admiralty; but he was not prepared for such a large sum being put on the Estimates, seeing that they were to provide the boat. The boat should be allowed for in the contribution they were asked for. In former times they used to hire a steamer at a much higher rate.

The PREMIER: The cost of the boat will be taken out of that £2,500.

Mr. ARCHER said that was another thing. Then the sum put down was excessive for six months. However, as the hon. Treasurer could give them no information, they could not discuss the matter, and the best thing would be for the Chairman to leave the chair and adjourn for a few minutes.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked what was the basis of the arrangement made with the English Government? There had been a great deal of talk, but not a single word had been said about the basis of the arrangement. What proportion did the English Government bear of the expenditure incurred by the survey of the coast.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the arrangement originally entered into was that the Imperial and Queensland Governments should be joint contributors to the continuance of the survey, and a boat was to be purchased or chartered for the purpose, there being an understanding that the Imperial Government should not be liable beyond the sum of £5,000. That agreement had been changed, and one of the Queensland gunboats, the "Palumah," had been offered by the Queensland Government to the Imperial authorities for the purpose, and a certain amount was to be allowed by the latter in consideration of her services. The vessel was being fitted out with the latest appliances for surveying, and on her arrival she would proceed with the work. Later on he should be able to inform the Committee of the nature of the arrangement.

Mr. BLACK said that, in order to give the hon. Treasurer time to get information on that subject, he would ask for some further information with respect to another item. The Government were doing all they could to obstruct the passing of the Estimates. If the Treasurer would, when moving the votes he wanted, give a short and concise explanation, it would save the time of the Committee very much. He was as bad as the Attorney-General; when he once got up there was no stopping him; he was sure that the remarks he made during the last few minutes were simply repetitions of what he had said before, without giving any additional information. He noticed that the Gayndah Municipality was to receive £200 as compensation for fencing rendered valueless. He would ask the Colonial Treasurer, if he had the information handy, to tell them all about it.

The PREMIER said the matter came through his department. There was a town reserve at Gayndah, for fencing which the Government lent them, a great many years ago, a sum of money which was charged against them still as a debt due to the Treasury, and for which they paid interest in the ordinary manner. Subsequently, a great part of the reserve, and some adjoining lands, were proclaimed open for selection by the Lands Department, and the result was that a portion of the fencing was entirely useless. Under those circumstances they had made application that they should be relieved of part of the debt—the total amount of which was some £500 or £600. As the Government had destroyed their fence—lent them money to build it and then made it useless—he asked the police magistrate to report as to the value of the portion that remained. He did so, and, having taken the matter into consideration, the Government decided that as they had deprived them of the use of £250 worth of fencing, it was right to remit that amount; and the proper way was to put it on the Estimates.

Mr. BLACK asked how many years ago that was? He also wished to know, if the Government deprived the Gayndah Municipality of £250 worth of fencing, why they did not refund them the full amount?

The PREMIER said he had mentioned £250, and had thought that was the amount quoted.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could give the amount of indebtedness of the Gayndah Municipality, which included the amount of the loan; but he could not give the date of the loan. £514 was the total indebtedness, but he could not say when the payment was made. The fencing was paid for within the last six months.

The PREMIER said, in considering what would be a fair amount to take off the loan, inquiries had been made of the police magis-

trate as to the value of the fencing rendered useless, and upon that gentleman's report he had decided that £200 was a fair amount. Perhaps someone else might have thought £190 or £210 was fair compensation, but he had acted on the report of the police magistrate.

The Hon. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if the hon. member was quite sure that the amount of £200 was not a sum that would actually be given to the Gayndah Municipality, and that it would simply go to diminish the debt.

The PREMIER: Yes.

The Hon. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought the hon. member made a mistake. He remembered that the cost of the fencing was about £600, and he believed the amount had been actually knocked off the debt, and that this £200 was a different thing altogether.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had now in his hand the papers which referred to the survey of the coast, and he would read the following letter, from the Admiralty to the Agent-General for Queensland:—

"Admiralty, 13th August, 1884.

"SIR,

"Referring to your letter of the 25th June and to previous correspondence relative to the survey of the coast of Queensland, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to state that, on reconsideration of the question, it appears to my Lords that it would be a preferable arrangement that the colonial gunboat which it is intended to employ in the service should be treated as a tender to Her Majesty's ship 'Nelson,' and officered and manned by the Royal Navy.

"On this basis some modification of the former proposals would be necessary, and I am commanded to formulate them, as thus amended, for your consideration, observing that if the Government of Queensland should accept them, my Lords would still have to obtain the concurrence of Her Majesty's Treasury on all financial points.

"It is proposed—

"1. That the colony shall lend a gunboat, as on hire, for the survey, the Admiralty treating it as one of the ships of the Royal Navy, and providing such complement of officers and men as they may consider requisite, with the usual naval rates of pay, surveying pay, and allowances.

"2. The gunboat, when completed to terms of the present contract with the builders, shall be further completed with all special fittings and alterations for surveying service by and at the expense of the colony—including the substitution of two suitable whaleboats for the present small gigs.

"3. If any of the alterations cannot be carried out until after arrival in the colony and the removal of the guns, they shall still be effected wholly at the expense of the colony.

"4. Any permanent stores or fittings requisite for the completion of or for the alterations in the ships that it may be convenient to obtain thence will be supplied by the Royal Dockyards on payment by the colony.

"5. The Admiralty will lend, free of charge, instruments and special appliances (not including ordinary leads or lines), which are to be returned to one of Her Majesty's ships or dockyards at the close of the survey.

"6. The gunboat to be delivered to one of Her Majesty's dockyards in England, and taken charge of by the Admiralty, from which time the division of expenses between the Imperial and Colonial Governments shall commence, excepting always as regards the cost of the alterations to be done in the colony, as specified in article 3, and subject to the special provision as regards the voyage to the colony as hereinafter arranged.

"7. The Admiralty will complete the vessel for sea, with all necessary victualling, carpenters, and boat-swain's stores, the cost whereof will be brought into the joint account.

"8. The Admiralty will navigate the vessel to Queensland, but the whole extra expense to the Admiralty, estimated at £920, is to be paid by the colony—i.e., the colony after paying her share on the joint account is to pay an extra £160 in respect of the voyage out.

"9. The sum of £2,500 per annum is to be brought into the joint account, as representing the hire to be paid to the colony for the gunboat.

"10. The colony is to pay for all repairs to hull and engines that may be necessary, but all the usual expenses of maintenance of the vessel are to be brought into the joint account.

"11. The joint account which will thus include, with the hire of the ship, all the working expenses of the survey, cost of provisions, coals, and other consumable stores, wages, pilotage, etc., and the passage money to the colony of any necessary replacements of officers or men, will be made up annually by the Admiralty, and the total divided equally between the Imperial and Colonial Governments, provided always that the contribution of the Admiralty shall in no one year exceed £1,000, nor £12,000 in the whole.

"12. Any insurance on the vessel is to be at the sole charge of the colony.

"13. It is to be observed that £2,500 per annum has been fixed as the hire, not with reference to the cost of the gun-vessel, built as she was for a totally different service, but with reference to what would be a fair sum for the hire of a vessel suitable for surveying service, and with some regard to the fact that, if the gun-vessel were not utilised for this service, she would, during time of peace, be probably laid up in the colony, and be a source of comparatively unremunerative expense.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"(Signed) EVAN MACGREGOR.

"The Agent-General for Queensland.

"1, Westminster Chambers, Victoria street."

That explained fully the position of the agreement between the Government and the Admiralty.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that the Treasurer had read a letter from the Admiralty, dated 13th August, embodying certain conditions on which they were agreeable to accept the responsibility of surveying the coast, and completing it. Were the Committee to understand that those terms had been agreed to by the Queensland Government; and would the hon. gentleman explain shortly what those terms were; in what position the colony would be, and how much was it responsible for? He would like to know the Treasurer's opinion with regard to the fairness of the arrangement, and on what basis it was carried out. The hon. gentleman knew well how the arrangement had been conducted before, and to that he would refer later on; but just now he would like to know what were the actual terms of the arrangement between the English and the Queensland Governments.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the letter from the Admiralty was enclosed in a communication from the Agent-General:—

"I have the honour to hand you enclosed copy of a letter received from the Admiralty with reference to using one of the gunboats now under construction for the survey of the coast of Queensland, and to inform you that the proposal contained in the said letter has been accepted by the Agent-General.

"The Admiralty have also been asked to navigate out the second boat on the cost estimated by them in the enclosed letter."

Hegathered from the letter that the assumed cost of the survey would be £8,000 a year, one-half of which would be charged to the Colonial Government, while £2,500 would be credited to the colony for the service of the gunboats; so that the expenditure on the part of the colony was kept down to £2,000 or £3,000 a year. He did not think they had any cause to complain. It would be a more economical arrangement than chartering a vessel for the performance of the work; as they got employment for the gunboat and were allowed £2,500 for her services. If the Admiralty had not been so generous, and they had been compelled to rely on their own resources, the survey could not be completed for anything like the same expenditure. Those were the latest papers the Government had in connection with the matter. He could not give the Committee any information as to the little details of the actual expense of navigating the vessel to Queensland, and other matters; but the £2,500 put down on the Estimates was supposed to be sufficient to cover the

six months' expenditure of the colony in respect of the survey, and also the expense of bringing out the vessel.

Mr. BLACK said that if there were any constitutional means by which members could be requested to attend in their seats on occasions such as the present, when they were passing Estimates to the aggregate amount of two and three-quarter millions, he would request that it should be put in force. There were eight members on the Government side, representing a powerful Government; and he thought it was very unseemly that they could not keep their supporters together and get on with the work. He objected to discussing such important Estimates in such a poor House. If there were no other means, he would have to move the Chairman out of the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: It is open to the hon. member to draw attention to the state of the House.

Mr. BLACK: Then I beg to draw attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he saw by the papers which the Treasurer had laid on the table that an agreement had actually been come to with the English Government with reference to the survey of the coast. He thought the attention of the Committee should be specially directed to that, because the treatment they had previously received from the English Government had forced them to be very cautious in criticising any arrangement they might propose. He had to refer to what took place when the survey of the coast was stopped by the Queensland Government. An arrangement was made many years ago with the Admiralty by which the joint expense was to be borne equally of the survey of the coast of Queensland. That went on very well in the old-fashioned way, and £2,500 a year was paid by the English Government, and this colony voted a similar amount. The gentlemen who conducted the joint operations, and who were all officers of the English Government, recommended that a much more efficient and economical system of survey should be pursued; that instead of working the survey by means of sailing boats as before, steamers should be employed, thereby doing a great deal more work, and at a less cost. Well, that system was adopted by Queensland; and they understood, of course, that the English Government would fall in with an arrangement of that sort by which the survey could be done at a less cost per mile. The survey proceeded, not with sailing vessels but with steamers. The English Government never receded from their position and they would only grant £2,500 a year. It did not matter whether they employed efficient means, and did twice the amount of work, the English Government said, "We will stick by the old system of paying £2,500 a year." The consequence was—he was speaking from memory, and could not be sure of the dates—that, in 1882, they found that in order to make the survey better and less costly to both the English Government and themselves they had drifted away from the original arrangement, and the colony was saddled with three-fourths of the expense. They represented that constantly to the English Government, and the only answer received was that they would not go beyond the £2,500 a year. He assumed that it was a fair arrangement to ask the English Government to pay half the cost of the survey. He did not believe any thinking man would deny that. In other parts of the world they had borne the whole expense, but in Queensland they had, simply by their system of red tape, kept

back action so as to force the colony to go on with the survey, and had thus evaded the proper payment of the half. He assumed that it was fair that each country should bear half the expense; though he would go further, and say that the English Government ought to bear a greater proportion, considering the amount of shipping they had on the Queensland coast and the interest which it was to the British Government to have the survey completed, and the liberal way in which Queensland had treated British shipping on their coast. But the old, fair arrangement of each paying half broke down, because a more efficient system of survey by steamers cost £10,000, and the British Government would only pay £2,500, leaving Queensland saddled with £7,500. Any man would see at once that that was not a proper arrangement, and it was stopped. What had been done now? He did not think they had made a much better arrangement. An agreement of that important kind ought to have had the sanction of the Government, and not have been left to the Agent-General at home. The arrangement that had been come to was that the English Government were to pay Queensland £2,500 a year for the use of their gunboat. That vessel cost them £30,000; but they had to be at the additional expense of fitting it up as a survey vessel, which would come, with joint expense of bringing the vessel out from England and working it, to the amount stated, £2,500; at least, so said the English Government, according to the letter from the Agent-General, of date 13th August. That was reached, however, not by a fair process of calculating what a vessel for the purpose could be got for, but on the supposition that they had got a vessel which was like a "white elephant," and which could not be made a better use of. That was not a sound basis at all. A sound basis would have been—what they as commercial people could have chartered a steamer for to do the work. The English Government had taken advantage of them on that point. In fact, it was like all the dealings that he had ever had with the Admiralty at home, which had been exceedingly mean in their financial arrangements with the colony. They had no right to fix the amount at £2,500, nor were the Queensland Government justified in accepting that amount as the cost of services to the Admiralty for a whole year. In addition to that £2,500 the colony had to be at the expense of fitting the boat up as a survey vessel, and considering what the whole expense would be the Admiralty had got out of it by paying a-quarter, instead of a-half, of the cost. The Admiralty said they were agreeable to pay half the expense, but that it was quite understood that it was not to be more than £4,000 per annum; or, to make it safer, £12,000 for the whole survey. Now, the Government of Queensland should not be made to undertake the survey for £12,000. He did not believe that it would be done for any such sum if it was to be done efficiently. The conditions stipulated were that the expense was not to exceed £4,000, which sum was also to be borne by Queensland. The English Government undertook to pay £4,000 a year—that was £1,250 for the use of the survey steamer, leaving £2,750 actually contributed for the survey. Now, they had always found that they could spend £7,000 a year on the survey. The English Government, while stating that the cost was not to exceed £4,000, knew that it would exceed that amount, and yet represented that they were bearing half the expense. He thought the agreement was most unjust, and one in which the Admiralty had got the better of the Queensland office at home. They had embodied that in the agreement. They were bound simply to contribute £2,750 per annum, besides the expense of the steamer to

Queensland, which expense was not nearly what the actual cost would be to Queensland itself. Hon. members did not seem to know what the colony was going to do. He attached a great deal of value to the maps issued by the Admiralty; they were without doubt the finest works of the kind ever issued by any nation; and it would be a great advantage to get the Admiralty to perform the work on fair conditions—which would be by their bearing one-half of the cost. But under the arrangement entered into the colony had to put the gunboat as a tender to the "Nelson," and to pay the expense of fitting her up as a surveying vessel. All that the Imperial Government found were ordinary leads and lines, which were to be returned to Her Majesty's ships or dockyards at the close of the survey. £10 would represent the whole cost of that, while the expensive and perishable part of the equipment was to be borne by Queensland. For the hire of a gunboat which cost £30,000, and the fitting up of which would cost £2,000 or £3,000 more, a sum of £2,500 had been fixed. But that was by no means a fair amount for the hire of a vessel suitable for surveying, if they had not been able to utilise the gunboat; and the Agent-General ought to have set the Admiralty right on that point. The hire of the "Llewellyn" cost the late Government £3,500 for six months, and she was a small vessel that had been previously employed on the same service. That was more than double the amount the English Government now offered. The reason they gave for offering the smaller sum was a slur on their patriotic feeling as colonists. They had gone to the expense of building a small navy, and the English Government took advantage of that, and said, "Now that you have got a navy it is of no possible use to you; hire it cheaply to us for surveying purposes." There was a meanness in the proposition that had characterised all the Admiralty correspondence that had ever come under his notice. The point he wished to direct attention to was, that they had been taken advantage of by the British Government, who were not going to pay anything like a fair contribution towards the survey of the coast. The colony would indeed do much better to employ its own surveyors. The work could be done as well, it would be entirely under their control, and it could be done without any more expense. It was a stipulation in the arrangement that the control was to be vested in the Admiralty, although Queensland would have to pay three-fourths of the cost. Even the maps might be done as well. He would much rather the colony undertook the work than accept the aid of the Admiralty on the terms offered. It would be better for the colony, and would enable them to show their independence of the English Government in transactions of that kind. All through the arrangement the Admiralty had treated them badly. For the last three years they had prevented the colony from completing the survey of the coast, and now the cost to the colony would be as great as if they had undertaken the entire work themselves. From an official letter of the 12th May, 1883, he found that the cost of the survey during 1878-1879 was £10,274 to the colony as against £5,000 to the Imperial Government. At that time the expenditure was considered too large for the crippled condition of the colony's finances, and the Imperial authorities recommended a better system; and when the new arrangement came into force they would not contribute more per annum than they had done before, whilst the colony had to pay two-thirds of the expense. The present arrangement was based on the same principle. The colony would have to pay the greater part of the cost for two reasons:

the survey could not possibly be completed for £12,000, and it was stipulated in the agreement that all the expense beyond £12,000 should be borne by the Queensland Government. The work could not be done efficiently for £4,000 per annum.

The PREMIER said that on one point he quite agreed with the hon. member, and that was that he considered it extremely ungracious on the part of the Admiralty to give, as a reason for paying only £2,500 for the hire of the "Paluma," that otherwise she would possibly be laid up when she reached the colony, and be a source of comparatively unremunerative expense. That was an observation that might very properly have been left out, and he read it with great surprise when he received the letter. But the hon. gentleman had not quite stated the nature of the bargain in other respects. This colony had certainly to pay the cost of fitting up the vessel, which was estimated at £200, but the Admiralty were to pay the expense of navigating her out, which was estimated at £900; and one item might fairly be set off against the other.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Only half.

The PREMIER said the proposal originally was that they should buy a steamer in England at joint expense and send her out here, the expenses while she was at work being divided between the Imperial Government and the Government of Queensland. Then she was to be sold, and the proceeds divided. That proposition was fair and reasonable. The hon. gentleman then complained that she was to be used as a tender to the "Nelson"; but that was purely a formal matter; she was to be commissioned. He did not think the pecuniary arrangement was unsatisfactory. The original proposition was that the survey should be estimated at £6,000 a year; but the Colonial Government requested the Agent-General to suggest to the Admiralty that one of the Queensland gunboats should be used for the purpose. The Agent-General, Mr. Hemmant, in doing so, also suggested that, in consideration of the Queensland Government providing the vessel, the contributions should be divided in this way: the Admiralty should give £4,000, and Queensland £1,500, or altogether £5,500; and that was the proposition that the Admiralty endeavoured to meet, only they accompanied it with a sneer. They were willing that the expense of the survey should be £8,000 a year, and the proposition now was that they should spend that amount between them, of which £2,500 was for the steamer. The result would be that the total expenditure of Queensland would be £4,000 a year, and a like sum would be expended by the Imperial Government. Out of that, £1,250 would be their share of the hire of the steamer. The only objection to the letter was the ungracious sneer that had been referred to. As to their surveying the coast themselves, it might be that they could find officers who would do it as well as the Admiralty officers; but the advantages of having the survey stamped by the Admiralty Surveyor would be great. There was no doubt that the fact of their being issued from the Admiralty Office would be a guarantee of accuracy which was worth having. In effect, the Admiralty agreed to the proposition they made. They had to pay £4,000 a year out of £8,000, of which £2,500 would be repaid to the Queensland Government.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there appeared to be a paper that had not been read. The only information they had was that letter of the 15th August; they had heard nothing of the arrangement of Mr. Hemmant with the Admiralty.

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Mr. ARCHER said that in some respects he agreed with what the Premier had said, that there was an advantage in having the survey made by the Admiralty. That would be an advantage if they had to pay no more than if they did the work themselves on the authority of the colony alone. Still he thought the hon. gentleman was making a mistake when he talked about the £2,500 a year, because the Queensland Government would have to pay £1,250 out of that. The information contained in Mr. Hemmant's letter threw a new light upon the matter. They were, of course, under the impression that any survey carried out by steamer would probably cost as much as the previous survey—£7,500 a year.

The PREMIER: That included the hire of the steamer.

Mr. ARCHER said that if the English Government allowed them £1,250 for the hire of the steamer they must debit themselves for exactly the same amount of cost. So that they ought to be very careful to see that the sum mentioned was sufficient to carry it out by steamer.

Mr. BEATTIE said that the letter last read by the Premier was totally different from that read by the Treasurer. He took it that the letter read by the Treasurer was the agreement entered into with the Admiralty for carrying out the survey. The whole agreement was simply this—that the whole survey must not exceed £12,000.

The PREMIER: That is the contribution for three years—£4,000 a year.

Mr. BEATTIE said the colony was to get credit for £2,500 as the hire of the steamer. He did not know how many that vessel would carry for a crew; but it would cost about £260 per month, and, of course, the officers would receive extra pay whilst surveying, added to their pay as officers in Her Majesty's Navy; consequently the amount of wages alone, not taking into consideration the keep of the men, and working expenses, would come to over £3,000 a year, which would leave very little for other things. Judging from the letter which the Treasurer read, he certainly thought the Admiralty were looking after "number one." He never saw thirteen clauses of an agreement that seemed so pettifoggish; the last clause in it capped everything. They were to find all the surveying instruments, and the lead-lines and leads were to be returned to some of Her Majesty's ships. The thing was so paltry that one would think it was drawn up by some clerk in the Admiralty Office, without having been submitted to a gentleman who would have some idea of how to deal with one of the Governments of Australia. A person would imagine that the Admiralty did not see that they were receiving as much advantage in carrying out the survey of the Queensland coast as the colony was. Why, they derived great advantage in having a clear coast for their mercantile marine, and one would think that they were under the impression they were conferring a favour on Queensland. He was very much dissatisfied indeed with the terms of the letter, and he believed the Admiralty had shown a spirit of meanness that was deserving of very strong censure at the hands of hon. members.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the letter showed a most penurious spirit. The point that the Premier failed to see in the argument was this: The English Government said "We will go on with this survey, and we stipulate you shall get £2,500 a year for your vessel, and you will find £1,500 a year additional, and we will find £4,000 a year." It was absolutely certain

that the survey would cost far more than that; but they clearly stipulated that all the expenses beyond that were to be paid by the Queensland Government. They also stipulated that all the expense was not to exceed £12,000 for the three years, and if the survey was not completed, then any additional expense was to be borne on the shoulders of the colony. Now, that was not a fair agreement at all; but that was exactly as matters stood. They wanted nothing more than that each country should bear a fair proportion of the expense. The Admiralty's proportion was £2,500, and the colony's was to be the same, and that was sufficient—based on the expense that had to be incurred in former years. But whenever the colony suggested that better appliances, and more expensive appliances, should be used, by which the work could be done a great deal quicker and cheaper, the Admiralty showed no willingness to bear a fair portion of the expense, and actually left the colony to pay £2 to their £1. That was exactly what they were doing now, in stipulating that the survey was not to cost more than £8,000 a year. Why should that stipulation be made when it was known the survey would cost more than that? He had not mentioned that the gunboat was to be attached to the Australian fleet as a thing derogatory to the colony, but to show that the whole control would be in the hands of the Imperial Government. What control had they over the Admiralty? They had none, and yet the English Government at the same time stipulated that the cost was not to exceed £8,000. A more one-sided agreement was never placed before the Committee. The Treasurer had not told them how such an amount as £2,500 had come to be placed on the Estimates. According to the explanation of the Premier, and the reading he had given of the agreement, and which the Government did not seem to understand, the cost was not to exceed £3,000 a year. How was it, then, that £2,500 was asked for?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought the hon. gentleman had misunderstood what had been said, and did not now see what the colonial contribution was to be. The cost of the survey during the last year of its progress, loaded as it was with the hire of steamer, cost of insurance and other matters, as far as he could ascertain, amounted to £4,900, and not £7,000 as the hon. gentleman stated. £4,954 15s. 4d. was the actual colonial expenditure in connection with the Admiralty survey for the year ended 1879-80.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the amount for 1878 was £10,294; and for 1879 £5,000; and the half of that was £7,000.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: £10,000 colonial contribution?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The total expenditure.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the present was a new arrangement. It was impossible at the present time to say what the exact amount would be that would have to be paid for the six months ensuing. The amount of £2,500 was put down with a view to cover the actual expenditure, and to cover any contingencies that might arise in connection with the final fitting up of the vessel when she arrived in Queensland waters, before proceeding to the scene of the survey.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said what he stated was that, according to the agreement, the annual expenditure was to be £1,500; but on the Estimates there was an amount of £2,500.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said they arranged their contribution on the former basis.

Assuming the survey to be carried on at £8,000, the colonial moiety was £4,000, and they had allowed a small sum for contingencies. The consolidated revenue was credited with the hire of the steamer, and they had to submit an appropriation for the cost of the survey.

Mr. ARCHER said he did not exactly understand the Colonial Treasurer; as far as he could understand, the cost would be £2,750 a year under the agreement. The Colonial Treasurer had misunderstood the position of affairs when he said that the Admiralty would have to pay the cost of bringing the vessel to Queensland. He (Mr. Archer) did not understand so from the agreement.

The PREMIER: I understood so.

Mr. ARCHER said the Premier had also misunderstood the agreement, which said that the colony was to pay the whole of the expense of bringing the vessel out. The Admiralty would navigate the vessel to Queensland, but the whole extra cost was to be paid by the colony. The colony had to pay her share of the joint account—that was, half of £900—as the cost of bringing the vessel out.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that, whether the agreement was right or not, the explanation of the Treasurer was not a good one. The hon. gentleman asked £2,500 for six months to carry out an agreement which he himself said would cost the colony £1,500. He evaded the question for a long time, and when he did give an explanation, what was it? That he wanted to pay the Admiralty for the use of a steamer, and that that would cover the additional amount. What an absurdity that was! If that was the case, then the amount put on the Estimates for six months ought to be £2,000, and not £2,500. The fact of the matter was that the Government had made an abominably bad bargain for the colony. He believed that the English Government should bear one-half the expense of the survey. Instead of that, they had saddled the colony with a great deal more than one-half; in fact, they would find that it would have to bear three-fourths of the expense. What an absurd agreement that was! The steamer was to be employed at an absurdly low figure, considering her value to the colony, and the colony was to hand over to the English Government the whole management of the survey—that was, that they would appoint all the officers and men and pay them; and that they were to have the whole expense in their own hands, and were to be guaranteed that the whole expense to them was not more than £4,000. Did ever mortal man ever hear of such an agreement? Why, it was ridiculous! The survey would cost a great deal more than if the colony undertook it. He repeated what he had said before: He thought the English Government might have pursued a more magnanimous course, as it had done before, and undertaken the whole survey, without pressing Queensland to contribute at all. That the colony could perform the survey as well as they could he had not the slightest doubt, and he was inclined to think from past experience that they could perform it better. At all events, if the colony did do it they would be spending their own money and paying their own officers; they would know whether the officers did their work, and if they did not, something could be said about it when the Estimates came on. But all that power was taken completely away by the arrangement that had been made. He thought that, seeing the arrangement was such an extravagant one, the Treasurer himself ought to move that the amount of £2,500 be reduced, because, according to his own showing, he only wanted £750 for six months.

The PREMIER said he had made an error previously in saying that the Admiralty would pay the cost of navigating the steamer out. He understood it was so till he looked at the correspondence again; but, at all events, he thought it was only reasonable that the colony should pay the cost, considering that it was their own steamer. The colony would have to pay it under any circumstances. It struck him that the hon. gentleman was doing just what he was accusing the Admiralty of—he was dealing with the subject in a pettifogging spirit. If they blamed the Admiralty for quarrelling over a shilling, they ought not to insist on doing the same thing. It did not occur to him that the colony ought to be so pettifogging. As the hon. gentleman knew, negotiations had passed between the Governments; and the Admiralty were asked to contribute £4,000, and the colony £1,500. That was clear enough. Now the Government asked for £2,500, and the reason why they did so had been explained several times. The letter from the Admiralty was received on the 6th October, but the Estimates were completed a considerable time before that. The Government did not know what arrangements would be made, and so they put down £2,500. Between £400 and £500 would be the expense of navigating the vessel out. The total cost was put down at £8,000, of which £4,000 was contributed by the colony, and £4,000 by the Imperial Government, and thus £2,000 was required for six months. But the colony would get £2,500 back, just in the same way as with regard to school buildings: if an expense of £20,000 was authorised, they would get £4,000 as contributions from the local residents. The appropriation of the whole of the money had to be authorised by Parliament, no matter from what source it came; the money still had to be spent by the colony. The amount on the Estimates, therefore, was perfectly correct as it happened, though it was only by accident that it was so, as the Government did not know at the time on what basis to calculate it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not think he owed any apology for defending the interests of Queensland. But the hon. gentleman was very pertinacious in defending the interests of the mother-country. Why, if he had been one of the Lords of the Admiralty defending a very lame agreement that they had been forced into by the Queensland Government, he could not have been more pertinacious. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) spoke from long correspondence on the subject, and he said that the Queensland Government had been visibly defrauded. There was an honourable understanding between the Queensland and English Governments that they were jointly to bear the expense of the survey, and the English Government recommended a better way of doing it, by which the expense could be reduced, and the cost of the survey be a great deal less. The Government followed their recommendations and put on a steamer, and then the Imperial Government put forth an arrangement by which they were to pay only so much a year. They had embodied their ideas exactly in the arrangement Mr. Hemmant had made.

The PREMIER: Mr. Garrick made the arrangement.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it did not matter who was the man who made it. The amount ought to be reduced for the reasons he had stated. There ought to be a distinct agreement limiting the liability of the colony. The Admiralty took care to limit their liability; and the amount on the Estimates was sure to be exceeded, and Queensland would have to pay the balance. The Admiralty had the control of the

expense, and that of itself was sufficient reason why they should be equally responsible. But he went on higher ground. The English Government were just as much entitled to pay for the survey of the coast as they were. If the Government hired their own surveyor, and made use of their own vessel, they could do just as good work, and have the satisfaction of spending their own money.

Mr. BEATTIE said that, as the Premier had characterised some remarks as being of a pettifogging character with reference to saving a small expenditure, he would point out that if anything was pettifogging it was the last of those thirteen terms of agreement in the celebrated letter which the Treasurer had read. It was a disgrace to the Admiralty. It began, as the Premier had said, with an insult to the colony, by saying that the gunboat would lie perfectly useless as a "white elephant." That was a gratuitous piece of impertinence. The agreement had been accepted, and the Admiralty might have told the Agent-General how many men they proposed to employ and what would be the probable expenditure. The Agent-General was not supposed to know anything about the matter, and took it for granted that they, as professional men, knew more about it than he did. The expenditure might reach £5,000 or £6,000 a year; and as the Admiralty only agreed to contribute £4,000, the colony would have to find the difference. The Admiralty might have been more liberal, because they would receive as much benefit from the survey as Queensland would. The coast required to be surveyed for the benefit of all the maritime powers of the world who made use of the Torres Straits or the northern road to the Eastern possessions of Great Britain. They might have taken that into consideration, and not have tried to saddle a little colony with two-thirds of the expenditure.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if the Colonial Treasurer had made up his mind to amend his Estimates if he did not want the £2,500?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, as had been explained by his colleague, the money would probably be required, and he thought the appropriation ought to be made.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he agreed with the Colonial Treasurer that they would want the whole of the money, and if they stuck to the agreement they would have to spend double that amount next year. They had the experience of the last seven years to go by.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would point out that, notwithstanding the repeated applications of the previous Government, they had not succeeded in bringing about any greater despatch in the completion of the work. The present Government had at any rate got something done. It was a disgrace to the colony that for five years the survey of the coast had been interrupted. It was unwise parsimony to allow several hundred miles of the coast to remain unsurveyed. The hon. member had not shown that anything he had done had tended to have the survey proceeded with, though it was a work of pressing necessity.

Mr. ARCHER said that was a new phase of the subject. The survey was stopped simply because Queensland was paying a little over double the amount the British Government were actually expending on the work. They paid over £10,000, and the British Government expended £5,000. The hon. member should remember that in the years 1878-79 and 1879-80 there was a deficiency of £277,000 in the Treasury. The moment that deficiency was changed into a

surplus it was at once proposed by the Premier that the survey should be resumed, as would be seen by the letters. Had the hon. member allowed matters to take their course, the vessel would probably now have been out here surveying. He found that on the 4th of last January the recommendation of the Premier had been laid before the Admiralty, and the Admiralty actually prepared an estimate of the cost:—Steamer, £15,000; maintenance for 1884-5, £5,500; for 1885-6, £5,500; for 1886-7, £5,500; total, £31,500; re-sale of the steamer, £7,000; leaving £24,000 of the cost to be divided between the English Government and the Queensland Government. The hon. member had altered the arrangements, and instead of expediting the matter he had retarded it considerably.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman had exaggerated the period during which the survey had been stopped. It was two and a-half years, for one of which the present Government were responsible. He did not know what the hon. gentleman's opinion was about the policy of getting the gunboats for the colony. Whatever that might be, he (Sir T. McIlwraith) believed in it, and, had he found that they were in any way an unusable article on their hands as gunboats, he would have said that there was no better use to which to apply them than in conducting the survey of the colony. But the colony ought to have done the survey itself. There was very little reason for handing over the survey to the English Government, except to secure uniformity in the Admiralty charts. Now that they had all the machinery within the colony for making a survey themselves, they could have made a survey without employing anyone connected with the English Government, at as little expense as they were doing it now for. It was undoubtedly a shame that the coast should not have been surveyed, but the disgrace did not lie with Queensland, but with England, as, rather than consent to carry out a bargain which she herself had made, she had insisted on recalling her own officers. He said that the proposed arrangement should not be carried out. He believed that they ought to undertake the survey of the coast themselves, and that the nucleus of their navy should find employment in the colony by the colony and not by the English Government. If they had done so they would not have had the stigma cast on their little bit of a navy, that they could make no use of it, and that therefore it should be lent to them cheap.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would repeat a former question he had put, and ask the Colonial Secretary what was the age of the fence at Gayndah?

The PREMIER said he really did not remember how old the fence was, but he knew that the age was taken into consideration in fixing the compensation at £200.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he was not quite sure that that was the ground on which the compensation was given. He knew that he had decided to remit the debt years ago, and the sum would be found in the Estimates. He thought it was right enough that the Gayndah people should receive the compensation. They got a certain common from the Government, which they fenced in. The Government changed their policy, and threw the land open to selection, thus resuming the ground which had been given as a common, and for fencing which £600 had been borrowed. The total debt of the municipality was £514.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: They have been paying their debts.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Paying their debts at Gayndah!

The PREMIER: You do not know your own Act.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he wanted a definite answer from the Premier as to whether that money was to reduce the debt, and was not to be paid by the Treasury again?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the £200 was the valuation arrived at by the police magistrate, and when the Gayndah vote was passed by the Committee, some time ago, their indebtedness was reduced. The Gayndah people paid their debts, as the interest was deducted from their endowment.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that was another thing.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that at present there was no claim against them by the Treasurer.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be voted for the service of the year 1884-5 a sum not exceeding £36,525 to defray the expense of Customs salaries and contingencies. Hon. members would observe that that amount in the aggregate was somewhat less than was asked for last year. The amount voted last year was £36,804. The increases of salaries, which were exceedingly numerous, represented £600, and new appointments, £1,275, making a total actual increase of expenditure of £1,875. Against that there were deductions from salaries, and decreases in the items of contingencies, of £2,154, reducing the whole vote to £36,525, as against £36,804 last year. The increase in the port of Brisbane in salaries was £210—one clerk, £25; two junior clerks, £15 each; two other clerks, £20 each; and four landing-waiters, £25 each, and a junior, £15; making a total of £210. There had been new appointments amounting to £500—one officer at £275 and another at £225. At Maryborough the salaries had been increased £45—two junior clerks, one from £65 to £100, and one from £180 to £200. At Bundaberg the increase was £50 on salaries and £150 on new appointments. The sub-collector was set down for an increase of £50 because he had, during the year, been removed from the office of registrar of births, deaths, and marriages, with its emoluments. The duties of the Customs necessitated his more constant attention, and on account of the loss of those emoluments the Government thought it only right to make the increase. At Port Curtis there was an increase of £20 to the clerk, and at Rockhampton an increase of £50 to the sub-collector, and £25 to a clerk. At Mackay it was proposed to increase the salary of Mr. MacCarthy, the sub-collector, from £350 to £400. The salary was a low one for the sub-collector of customs at one of the principal ports, and Mr. MacCarthy was a very efficient officer. At Cardwell there was a reduction of £100, on account of the death of the late sub-collector. There was an increase of £25 to the officer at Dungeness. At Cooktown the sub-collector was put down for an increase of £50. Mr. Fahey was a very old officer in the department, and it was only right that he should have a salary equal to that of the sub-collector at Rockhampton and Townsville. At Cairns there was an increase of £100, but that represented a new appointment rendered necessary by the increasing trade of the port. At Normanston, which was becoming a port of considerable importance, there was an increase of salary to one clerk of £25, and a new appointment at

£150; and at Burketown, the officer in charge was increased from £200 to £250. That was the total of the increases and new appointments.

Mr. FERGUSON asked whether there had been any irregularities in the Customs Department at Rockhampton. Rumours to that effect had reached him. If those rumours were true, it was only right the public should know what had occurred; if not it should be made known in justice to the officers of the Rockhampton Customs. He would not report what he had heard until he heard what the Colonial Treasurer had to say on the matter.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that recently one of the audit inspectors made a very close audit of the Rockhampton accounts, from which it was discovered that the department there was not in satisfactory working order; although nothing worse than inattention or negligence was disclosed. That state of things was not likely again to occur. It would be better for the hon. member to state exactly what he had heard. All he knew was the information he received from the audit report, which induced him to administer a very severe censure to the department. Mr. Kilner, the sub-collector, was a very old servant of the department, but he had placed himself in a false position by being interested in the salvage of the "Deutschland," a vessel wrecked in Keppel Bay, and, the ship's papers being lost, the amount of dutiable goods could only be ascertained from the boat-notes. That was a transaction from which Customs officers should always keep aloof; but he had no reason to believe, from the information that had reached him, that Mr. Kilner had behaved in that matter in any other than an honest and straightforward manner. He was inclined to think that the Rockhampton department would show an improvement in the future.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Does the hon. gentleman put that forward to the Committee as a reason why Mr. Kilner's salary should be increased from £475 to £500?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the increase was put down before that transaction came to his knowledge; otherwise he certainly would not have put it on the Estimates. At the same time, the matter was fully investigated, and there was nothing to justify anyone in imagining that Mr. Kilner took any advantage of his position to defraud the revenue.

Mr. FERGUSON said he might as well state what he had been told, and then the Colonial Treasurer could inform the Committee whether it was correct or not. What he heard was that Mr. Kilner had an interest in the wreck of the "Deutschland," and that the vouchers for the duty were destroyed, or did not go through the office. He did not know through whose office vouchers of that kind should go through. Mr. Connolly had, he was told, taken money for overtime when he was not there at all. He had known for some time that things had not been going on in a very satisfactory way in the office, and that was not the first charge against the same officer. He was almost certain he was stating what were facts, but he would like the Colonial Treasurer to say whether he was doing so or not.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood that the "Deutschland" was a vessel that was wrecked, and all the cargo that was saved came to Rockhampton; and, of course, it had to pay duty to a certain extent. He understood from the Colonial Treasurer that the ordinary invoices were rendered useless for the purpose of declaring the value of the cargo; and, therefore, it remained with some officer in the Government service to fix the value of those

goods on which there was duty to be paid. That duty naturally devolved upon the sub-collector, who actually had to fix the duty on his own goods, and paid accordingly.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is not it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he wished to know what it was? The fact of the ship being wrecked did not destroy the invoices of the goods. The invoices came out by the mail.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the vessel was wrecked and the cargo sold, he thought, at auction, and Mr. Kilner became interested in it. There was no assessment made upon such things as bottled beer and spirits that had a fixed duty; but, in the case of *ad valorem* goods, they were sold and the duty paid according to the account sales. That was the case at Rockhampton. Still it was undesirable that Mr. Kilner should have been in any way connected with the transaction. He was distinctly there as the representative of the Government in connection with the revenue, and, in that position, he ought to have held himself entirely aloof from being mixed up with a transaction of that sort. With regard to the boat-notes in the month of May, the Audit Inspector (Mr. Ham) visited Rockhampton, and was shown the whole transaction, and saw the boat-notes representing the bills of lading. They were produced, but were left in the custody of Mr. Connolly, the second officer. Mr. Connolly, in the month of June or July, obtained leave of absence, and during his absence Mr. Peterson, another audit inspector, paid a visit to Rockhampton. As hon. members were aware, an audit inspector visited Government departments without any notice whatever. Mr. Peterson wished to trace back the matter, and go over the work of Mr. Ham, but when he inquired for the boat-notes he found they had been destroyed. He obtained copies of the boat-notes from the ship's agents, not the ones that had come with the cargo; and Mr. Connolly had given it as his explanation that those boat-notes having been presented and done their duty they had been destroyed, they being of no further use in Rockhampton. That was a grave mistake to make. The other matter was that Mr. Connolly received payment for overtime to which he was not entitled. Hon. members would be aware that overtime was not paid by the Government, but by the agents of vessels which required the services of Custom-house officers. While Mr. Connolly was absent, a certain amount of overtime fees were collected at Rockhampton and entered in the books in Mr. Connolly's name, notwithstanding his absence; on his return he received that overtime, and his explanation was that he had received it from Mr. Lawson, the cashier, who was in the habit of making up the overtime accounts and handing the money over to the officer to whom it was due. Mr. Kilner was not in any way implicated in that matter, because he (Mr. Dickson) took particular pains to inquire into it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Is Mr. Connolly down for an increase?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was not. Mr. Kilner had nothing to do with the overtime matter. He had no complicity with it, and the charge against him was that he ought to have known all about it, and made himself thoroughly satisfied with the state of the office. Mr. Lawson handed over the amount of overtime without consulting anybody, and such action could not be too highly condemned. At the same time there was nothing in the matter that would justify any severer

measures being dealt out to Mr. Kilner than what had been already taken; but with regard to Mr. Connolly the Government had in contemplation a possible change in the department as soon as possible.

Mr. STEVENSON said there seemed to be a very happy family in the office at Rockhampton. Mr. Connolly took the blame for Mr. Kilner, and Mr. Lawson took the blame for Mr. Connolly. Mr. Kilner it appeared was to receive an increase of salary because he had neglected his duties, but he could not understand why that increase should be given, because from year to year when the Estimates had been going through something had come up against him. He brought a charge against him on two different occasions for employing Custom-house men in building a house and making a garden. That was a notorious fact in Rockhampton, and he had never gone there without everyone having something to say against Mr. Kilner. He knew it was not simply hearsay about employing the men, because he knew it himself. Mr. Kilner employed sometimes as many as two and three men to do his own private work. Last year that charge was made and the Colonial Treasurer promised to investigate it. He did not know whether that had been done, but at all events it was high time a change was made at Rockhampton, and he thought, notwithstanding what the Colonial Treasurer had said, that the head of the department should be removed. That would be a solution of the difficulty. It was time Mr. Kilner had a change, for he had been doing far too well in Rockhampton. It would not so much matter if he acted honestly, but it was dishonest in a man who got £400 a year from the Government using the labour for which the country paid.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said members of the Committee did not understand exactly the technical terms used by the Colonial Treasurer, and probably did not know what boat-notes were. They should understand that the boat-notes destroyed were the record from the ship that was to prove to the Government what were the actual dutiable goods landed, and those were destroyed by an officer of the department, thinking they were of no use after being audited. That was about the most extraordinary admission he had heard. Did the duplicates that were got from the agents bear the impress of being original, and not documents made in the colony?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: They were simply statements made up by a merchant or agent.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Yes; so were the original boat-notes. He thought it was time Mr. Kilner found some other field in which to practise his mercantile ability. If he could conduct a transaction of that kind and be forgiven, they might give up their control over the Customs Department altogether. No man in his senses would ever have dreamt of having connection with such a transaction, and if the Collector of Customs in Brisbane entered into such transactions he would be told to go, pretty quickly. He would not be allowed to say how much duty should be paid upon goods of his own importing.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No, no; that was not done.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that was the ordinary system by which *ad valorem* duties were assessed. If the duty could not be paid in any other manner, there was a certain duty on a certain number of articles; but in the present case it was no matter what the fixed duty was, because Mr. Kilner was the only judge of what a boat-note was. The fact of the

duty being fixed did not clear him, because he was the only judge whether that amount was correct or not. The audit officer going up, and seeing that those boat-notes agreed with the amount of duty, did not certify that the Government got the amount of duty that was actually due to them, because the officer who was connected with the landing of those goods was himself the judge whether 10 or 150 cases of beer had been landed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said when the vessel was wrecked an officer was sent down in charge, and on the cargo being delivered a boat-note was sent in duplicate to the agent and the consignee. The original boat-notes, on which duty was paid and entries passed, were destroyed after they had been submitted to Mr. Ham. When Mr. Petersen re-investigated the matter, the notes not being in existence, he applied to the agent for the duplicates, and on their being produced they corresponded entirely with the entries which had been made from the original boat-notes. With that check it was impossible that Mr. Kilner could have landed any goods beyond what were described in the duplicate boat-notes unless they were forgeries.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that was just the point. Mr. Kilner was the actual owner of the goods; and as the owner he fixed the duty to be paid on them.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the tide-waiter issued the boat-notes in duplicate—one copy to go to the Customs and the other to the agent of the wreck company. Those latter were the boat-notes which were counterparts of the original ones which had been destroyed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood that, but what he said was that the sub-collector of customs, by his own action, put himself in the position that he had to decide—subject to the honesty of the tide-waiter, a man who knew who was the owner of the goods—the duty he would have to pay. Actually he was the judge of whether he should pay duty to the Government on, say, three cases of beer, or upon six. So far from that being a venial dereliction of duty, for which he should be simply censured, a man who could so misconceive his duties should be instantly dismissed from the Government service. It was the most abominable piece of malpractice he had ever heard brought forward while the Estimates were going through.

Mr. FERGUSON said he had been asked to bring the matter forward by the people of Rockhampton. He did not bring it forward to harm anyone, but because he considered it his duty to do so. He had no personal animosity against either of the gentlemen, as they were both his friends; but he considered it his duty to bring the matter forward, because the public never heard of such things if they were not mentioned in the House. There were several towns in the colony—Townsville, Rockhampton, and Maryborough—which were about equal in importance; and he believed it would be far better if there was a change of officers every five or six years. Sometimes officers remained too long in a place; they formed connections which prevented them from doing their duty properly, and it would be better to remove them occasionally. The Customs officials at Rockhampton might be removed to Townsville or Maryborough, for instance.

Mr. LISSNER: We do not want them.

Mr. FERGUSON said he was speaking in the interests of the whole colony, and not of any particular place. Mr. Kilner had been too long in Rockhampton, and it would be better if he and other officers were removed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, after the expression of opinion in the Committee, he would move a reduction of the increase to the sub-collector at Rockhampton. It was put on the Estimates before that information came to his knowledge. With regard to Mr. Kilner employing Government men for private purposes, no representations to that effect had ever been made to him. He intended to move that his salary be reduced by £25.

Mr. ARCHER said that, of course, he did not at all intend that the salary should be reduced. He would call attention to another matter of rather a peculiar nature. The Collector of Customs in Brisbane, who had the management of a large department, received a salary of £700 a year, while the sub-collector at Maryborough had £550, and a house which was certainly worth £150 a year. There were other sub-collectors also with similar salaries, besides allowances, so that they received as much, or nearly as much, as the Collector of Customs in Brisbane.

Mr. ALAND said he did not think the Treasurer had given them a good reason why the salaries of the landing-waiters and sub-collectors in different parts of the colony should be increased. As he had said when the Estimates were first brought on, it appeared to him that those officers who were receiving salaries of over £300 were getting them increased, whilst no increases were given to officers with smaller salaries. It would be said, no doubt, that the gentlemen getting £374, £475, £350, and so on, were old servants of the Government; but he supposed they were not older servants than those who were getting £110 and £120, and yet their salaries were not to be increased. They ought to have more information from the Treasurer about those increases. With reference to the Rockhampton matter, he knew that every year since he had been in the House there had been some fault found with the sub-collector there. He thought that if year after year complaints were made in the House—complaints which took their rise in the towns where the official lived—the Government ought to give some consideration to them. He was quite sure that if removals were to take place now and again among the officials it would be a benefit to the colony. Some years ago a discussion took place in the House, in which a very general opinion was expressed that Government officers, especially those holding positions of responsibility, ought to be shifted occasionally. Police magistrates, for instance, ought not to hold their appointments in any town too long. He hoped the Treasurer would give them some good reasons for the proposed increases, because, if not, he (Mr. Aland) should feel it his duty to move that the vote be reduced by £275. Hon. members ought not to forget to look at the schedule. Most of the sub-collectors had something besides the actual salary; they each had a house, which was quite equal to £75 or £100 a year. There were the sub-collectors at Bundaberg, at Rockhampton, at Mackay, and at Cooktown. Their increases amounted to £275.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the first item objected to by the hon. member was that of landing-waiters. Now, those officers were real guardians of the revenue; and, considering the very large amount of revenue received from the Customs and the greatly increased duties they had to perform, he did not think the small increases were unmerited. The landing-waiters in this colony received very much lower pay than those in New South Wales or Victoria; and anyone conversant with the duties would know that they had the greatest responsibility of all the officers of the Government departments. He might also mention that the number of wharves they had to attend was also much increased.

Mr. ALAND: You have an extra man.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that a very large number of new wharves had been built and were in course of construction, and the landing-waiters had their time very fully employed. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that the Estimates had been extravagantly framed; but such was not the case. He had spoken of several sub-collectors getting £500 a year, but no sub-collector received so much, except the one at Townsville, who had enjoyed that salary for years. It was proposed to give the sub-collectors at the principal ports of the colony a salary of £500 a year to place them on the same footing as the officer at Townsville. The trade of Rockhampton was certainly equal to that of Townsville. With regard to Maryborough, the salary of £550 was attached to the office there in the time of the former Government, and when Mr. Taylor was appointed he had been receiving £500 in Brisbane. He thought the hon. member for Blackall made that appointment, and if there was any objection it should have been taken then.

Mr. ARCHER: I am not finding fault with it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: With regard to Bundaberg, where the salary was proposed to be increased to £450, he would remind hon. members that the trade of the port had increased very considerably. The revenue from Customs was £12,850, as against £9,000 in the preceding year. The shipping had increased by 30,000 tons; the tonnage of foreign and inter-colonial vessels being 39,000 tons, as against 8,000 tons the previous year; and the coasters were 317 vessels with a tonnage of 84,533, as against 249 vessels with an aggregate of 61,000 tons. That was unmistakable evidence of the increase of importance of the port, and justified the increase to the sub-collector. He would not weary the Committee with statistics of the other ports, but they all showed a great increase in the Customs Department. With regard to Cooktown, he might say that Mr. Fahey had performed duties of an exceptional character. He had gone on exploring expeditions, and was a most indefatigable man in endeavouring to help those who were in trouble, or rescue shipwrecked people along the coast. When it was proposed to remove an officer, it had to be remembered that it was not always easy to find a place he would suit. Perhaps he had exceptional abilities which fitted him for particular work. Mr. Fahey was an excellent, indeed an exemplary officer, as he saw by a report he had received from the Auditor-General last week; and at the present time no post could be found which would suit him so well as Cooktown. He should be sorry to remove an officer who carried out his duties in such a satisfactory manner. He had been in the service twenty years, and had always given satisfaction. The increase in the revenue at Mackay was £6,000, the collection being £29,000 for 1883-4 as against £23,000 in 1882-3. The increase proposed to be given to Mr. MacCarthy was £50. He had had no increase for five years, and when appointed to Mackay had expected to receive the same emoluments as his predecessor, who got £25 as shipping master, and £25 as local inspector of distilleries. Those emoluments had not been enjoyed by Mr. MacCarthy, and, from the manner in which he had discharged his duties, the Committee would consider the increase deserved.

Mr. BLACK said he noticed from the returns laid on the table that the revenue at Mackay in 1883-4 was £23,312, against £19,000 last year. There might possibly be some other source of revenue, but there was a serious discrepancy between these figures and those mentioned by the Colonial Treasurer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the £29,000 included the excise and pilotage dues, which formed part of the Customs receipts.

Mr. BLACK said he was quite willing to accept the explanation given about the necessity for the increase to the salaries; but he noticed that the same system prevailed all through the Estimates. There were invariably increases to the salaries of the officers of the higher branches of the Civil Service, and almost as persistently an ignoring of the claims of those in an inferior position, who seemed to have very few advocates when the Estimates came forward in committee. He would refer to a class of men—the boatmen—whose time was fully occupied in an arduous work—men, generally speaking, with large families, and the emoluments attached to whose office never seemed to receive any consideration. He found there were two scales of payment. There was one at Brisbane, one at Maryborough, and one at Rockhampton, all with the small salary of £96 each. At Townsville, the four boatmen got £120 each, but in the North, at Cooktown, Dungeness, Port Douglas, and Burketown, where the expense of living was very much higher than in the South, they only got £108. Considering that those men were engaged in a dangerous occupation, they should have some consideration shown them. On two previous occasions he had referred to that matter, and had been led to believe that it would be looked into in framing the next Estimates; and he should refer to it again when they came to the boatmen employed in harbours, who were still more underpaid than the Customs boatmen. When the revenue of the colony was increasing he assumed that the work was increasing, and when that was made the ground of increasing the salaries of the heads of departments, he thought those employed in an inferior capacity should receive some consideration also.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the question of the salaries of the boatmen had been considered. But it must be remembered that there were a large number of boatmen employed in the Customs and other departments, and if they commenced making exceptions in one department they should have to make them all uniform. The duties of the boatmen in the North were not so arduous. Some years ago the boatmen in Townsville had a very long distance to pull out to the mail steamers in the offing, and their salaries had been increased to £120, which was a very fair remuneration. Now they were conveyed by steam launch, and they had not the same amount of work as formerly. He did not think that a boatman with £120 a year was to be commiserated. Considering his scale in social life, he would live better on that salary than a gentleman who had to maintain the position of sub-collector on £350 a year. The question was a very large one, and he could not see his way to increasing wages. Every year the rate of living was becoming cheaper in the North, and £120 a year was a very fair remuneration.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. gentleman spoke of the large number of boatmen, and that to increase their salaries would be a heavy strain on the revenue. Did he know how many boatmen there were altogether? Why, at the whole ports there were only twenty-two. The hon. gentleman said they were reasonably well paid at £120. He would be perfectly satisfied if all were paid £120. Those in the Northern ports only got £108, which was a difference of £12 a year, or 5s. a week—a sum which, to those men, would be a consideration. There were five places where they only got £108, and where sustenance was not so very cheap, for it was from 10 to 15 per cent. higher than down south. In the Northern

ports they only got £108—one at Burketown, three at Port Douglas, two at Dungeness, two at Cairns, and two at Cooktown, or ten altogether. If the whole of those men were placed on a similar footing to those in the southern portion of the colony, it would only amount to £120 a year. That was the heavy burden which that generosity was likely to entail on the revenue of the colony.

Mr. STEVENSON said he thought the Colonial Treasurer, by his explanations, had made matters worse instead of better. As had been pointed out, the whole of the increases were given to the men who were getting the highest salaries. In some few cases the increases might be justifiable; but the present was a very inopportune time to increase salaries in that wholesale way. Things were not in a particularly prosperous state in the colony at the present time, and the burdens on the taxpayers ought not to be increased more than was absolutely necessary. During the present year a very large class had been totally deprived of their incomes, to say nothing of many of them having been entirely ruined; and other classes had not been doing particularly well. Nor had the increases been well considered. Take the case of the Rockhampton sub-collector—even if that charge had not turned up, what justification was there for the increase? None, that he could see. Then, with regard to the tide-waiters, it was argued that their salaries should be raised because more wharves had come into existence. That might be an argument in favour of more men, but certainly not of higher salaries; because a man could not be on two or three wharves at the same time. It would have been better if the Colonial Treasurer had framed his Estimates as nearly as possible on the lines of last year.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was an exaggeration to speak of the increases as "wholesale" increases, when the total amount of increases was only £575 out of a total vote for salaries of £36,000. And that amount would not have been nearly so large but for the amount given to officers in Northern ports, whose claims had been advocated by hon. members year after year.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman was misstating the case. There was an amount of £2,000 for refundments and drawbacks on last year's Estimates, which did not now appear.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that did not affect the estimate as to salaries.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that, with regard to the boatmen's salaries, he quite agreed with what had been urged by the hon. member for Mackay. The solemn way in which the Colonial Treasurer spoke of the position the colony would be placed in if it increased the salaries of those men was absurd when they considered how very few of them there were. It was rather remarkable that all the increases were to the big salaries, and not to the working men.

Mr. ALAND said he intended to show his dissatisfaction with the way in which the Estimates had been framed by moving that the vote be reduced by £275.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he hoped the Committee would not rest satisfied with the result of the vote on the salary of the sub-collector at Rockhampton. The facts brought out were sufficient to justify the Government in taking much stronger action with regard to that officer. It would be hardly fair to inflict discomfort on the rest of the officers of the department, by having a general shifting because one officer had shown that he was no longer fit for his position. When he was Colonial Treasurer

charges were repeatedly made against Mr. Kilner, some of them being to the effect that his butcher and baker and all his other tradesmen were paid by the Government. Witnesses could not be got to prove those charges. The same thing occurred in the time of his successor, who seemed satisfied that the charges, though not proved, were not groundless. At last a charge had been sheeted home to Mr. Kilner—a charge of a nature which rendered him incapable of occupying any position in the Government service. He hoped the Colonial Treasurer would give the Committee some information as to whether they intended to reconsider Mr. Kilner's position in the service with the view of getting rid of him altogether.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that if he had had the slightest suspicion that Mr. Kilner was dishonest he should have dismissed him immediately, but after a full investigation of all the circumstances of the case he had not been able to arrive at that conclusion. He did not consider it was desirable to place public officers in a position of uncertainty—liable to be changed simply through the want of judgment on the part of one person. It was a serious thing to change the sub-collectors at the different ports. It would do a serious injury to ports like Townsville and Cooktown, where the administration was excellent. As to the repeated charges that had been made against Mr. Kilner, the present was the only instance since he had been in office, and during the time he was in office previously not a single charge was brought against him, and he challenged the records of the Treasury to show any. He could not accept the position which the hon. leader of the Opposition wished him to. If he thought that anything dishonest had been done he should certainly have taken prompt steps; but he did not see that there was anything to justify the application of the term "dishonesty" in any way.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he had never heard of the case before, and he went entirely upon the admissions made by the Treasurer so far as the case was concerned. It appeared that Mr. Kilner was sub-collector of customs at Rockhampton, and that he bought, or was a partner with others who bought, the wreck of a ship. The goods from that ship were brought up, and the only record the Government had as to the amount of duty paid upon those goods was made by the officers under the charge of Mr. Kilner. They were made in duplicate, one copy being kept by the Government and the other one sent to the agents of the ship. Mr. Kilner and his officers had the power of fixing the amount of duty that they should pay on those goods. They could not alter the tariff, but they could state the quantity. When the audit inspector came up he found that duty had been paid on the goods, according to the boat-notes. Another officer came, and, finding that the matter was worthy of further investigation, he asked for those vouchers to be produced, and was told by the collector, and by his subordinate, that all those documents were destroyed, giving as a reason that having been once audited they were not required. The fact of any officer being so wanting in judgment as to not thoroughly understand that it was his duty to keep all records that were vouchers for money matters, would be a sufficient reason for removing such an officer, and the fact of the destruction was a proof of dishonesty. In the case of Mr. Connolly, he was down in the books for overtime that was actually paid to him when he was not in Rockhampton at all. That could not have been done without either the collusion of the sub-collector, or by his failing to perform his duties. No member in the Com-

mittee would doubt that the sub-collector must have known that there was a man in his office who was paid overtime when he was actually sporting himself down in Melbourne. With those facts proved against him, did the Treasurer consider it a thing that should be passed over? The Colonial Treasurer thought the cause of justice would be served by giving him a caution, and telling him not to do it again. It was a very bad example. Treatment like that could only induce laxity in the whole service, and the Committee should express its disapproval of the action of the Government. He would have gone entirely upon the facts as given by the sub-collector himself. That man acted dishonestly in allowing Mr. Connolly to accept overtime that he really did not perform, no matter from what source the money came from which he was paid. All those things ought to be taken into consideration by the Government, who ought at once to undertake that they would not allow an officer to escape by simply disapproving of what he had done; he had been guilty of dishonesty, and collusion with another man.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had inquired into the matter, and found that Mr. Kilner had no knowledge whatever of the overtime. He was deserving of censure for not having the whole of the transactions under his supervision; and he should have certified to the payments, and been responsible for the overtime. The custom in the department was that the cashier kept the overtime book, and Mr. Kilner had no knowledge of the amount, or which officers received it.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. Treasurer had told them that no writings could be found in the Treasury to show that any complaints had been made until the present one against Mr. Kilner.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: During the time I was in office previously.

Mr. STEVENSON said he knew that, when the hon. member for Mulgrave was Treasurer, representations were made to him with reference to Mr. Kilner's conduct; and again, when the hon. member for Blackall was Treasurer, the same thing was going on. He thought, if the hon. member took the trouble to look up the pages of *Hansard* any time within the last three years, he would find that something had been said in regard to those complaints each year. It was no new thing, and it seemed most strange that the Treasurer still persisted in saying that he could not remove Mr. Kilner. He knew there was the very greatest dissatisfaction in the Rockhampton district about that man, and when complaints were so constantly being made there must be some justification for them.

Mr. ARCHER said a complaint was made when he was in the Treasury by the hon. member for Normanby that Mr. Kilner had been employing Government servants to do his private work. He did what he could to find out the truth of the report; but it was most difficult to get people to come forward and substantiate the charges. He had, therefore, given up investigating cases of that kind, unless people were willing to prove the charges they made. He called upon Mr. Kilner for an explanation, and the result was he was severely censured for what he himself admitted. He could not now exactly recall the circumstances of the case, but he knew he did all he could to inquire into the charges, and the people who made them would not come forward.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would receive information on no such conditions

as the hon. member mentioned; but if he had a complaint made of any officer in his department he would at once endeavour to rectify it, and find a remedy for the abuse. He should inquire into the truth of any malpractices brought before him, and would take care that they were discontinued. He would look up the words referred to by the hon. member for Blackall, and would issue a direction that for the future no officer in his department should employ men receiving Government pay to do their private work.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he hoped the Colonial Treasurer would not insult all the other gentlemen in the service by issuing any direction of the sort. To issue a direction that they were not to employ Government labour would not in any way remedy the evil. Such a thing was not done by any man unless he was dishonest, and he thought it would be a positive insult to issue any such direction.

Mr. ARCHER said he agreed with the Colonial Treasurer that if a person could substantiate a charge it was his duty to inquire into it, but his (Mr. Archer's) experience was that people would not come forward, and it was almost hopeless to try and get them to do so. They certainly could not be compelled to prove a charge after they had made it.

Mr. STEVENSON said he would ask the Treasurer in regard to the overtime that had been mentioned. Did Mr. Connolly know that he was paid the money without having earned it? What was the amount, and did Mr. Connolly take steps to refund it, or did he stick to it?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it appeared that certain officers discharged the duties for Mr. Connolly, and the overtime not being entered in their names, but in the name of Mr. Connolly, attracted attention. Mr. Connolly said he received it in the ordinary way, believing it was due to him, and, when his attention was drawn to it he at once refunded the money. He accepted it from the cashier as what had accrued to him for services performed by other officers for him. Mr. Kilner had nothing whatever to do with that, except that he should be blamed for not knowing the various things that were going on, and not exercising proper supervision over the office. When he proposed the estimate, he mentioned that the sub-collector at Bundaberg had been set down for an increase on account of the loss of fees as registrar, but the Colonial Secretary had just informed him that he had been reinstated as registrar, and consequently the increase would not be required. He would, therefore, withdraw his motion with a view of substituting another.

Mr. ALAND asked how his amendment would stand. The Colonial Treasurer had told him that they could go back to the Brisbane estimate after the Rockhampton one was passed.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the Colonial Secretary, in going through his Estimates, put down such items as rent, etc., in the salaries, and took credit for a reform in that way. How did that principle apply to the Treasurer's Estimates? They had there an allowance in lieu of quarters in the item they had been discussing. Now, if there was any place where it was easier than another to rent a house it was Rockhampton—Brisbane excepted, of course. No such allowance was made in Brisbane, and he had thought that all those allowances had been done away with. Did he understand that the £70 for quarters was done away with as well as the £25? Why had the same course not been pursued with regard to the Treasurer's Estimates that was taken with the Colonial Secretary's?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that in the case of Rockhampton the house was required for Customs accommodation, and the officer received an allowance in lieu of quarters.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said they understood that a change had been made in the Estimates, and that the amounts for house allowance were taken away and put on the salaries. As a matter of fact, he believed Mr. Kilner had a house in the suburbs of Rockhampton.

The PREMIER said he had stated before that, in the case of police magistrates, it was thought better to take away the allowance for house-rent, and add it to the salary. But in the case of sub-collectors of customs the usual practice was to provide a house. It happened that at Rockhampton the house was now used as part of the Custom-house by the department.

Mr. STEVENSON said he would like to know whether the house formerly occupied by the sub-collector at Rockhampton was really required for offices, or whether the officer gave it up because he preferred to go where he could get his nice garden made at the expense of the State. He rather thought the latter was the case. He did not believe the house was required for offices at all.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the change took place to suit the department, he believed, and perhaps the hon. member for Blackall could explain it. As far as he knew, the house was required for additional Customs accommodation.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the reason why the question had been brought forward was not on account of Mr. Kilner, but because a certain reform had been attempted that year. It was said that police magistrates and sub-collectors of customs had allowances for rent, and that it was a proper thing that those should be taken away and the salaries increased. That had been carried out in the Colonial Secretary's Department, but not in the Colonial Treasurer's Department. The very reason why the police magistrates were allowed house-rent—that was, because they were sent to places where it was not easy to rent a house—applied to the Customs officers. It would be much better to add a certain amount to the salaries. As to all collectors of customs being allowed house-rent, that was not the case, because the collector in Brisbane was not allowed anything.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he would like to know at what rate the clerks in the Customs Department were paid overtime, and what it amounted to?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that clerks were not paid overtime; but landing waiters received 2s. 6d. an hour; lockers, 1s. 6d.; and tide-waiters, 1s.

Amendment withdrawn.

Question—That the item £450 for sub-collector at Bundaberg be reduced by £50—put.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the disclosures they had had with regard to the clerk at Rockhampton seemed to point to an evil which was more wide-spread than was supposed. It was stated that Mr. Connolly got paid overtime for work which was performed by subordinate clerks in the office. Had it been the custom for officials to get work done in overtime by deputy clerks, and then pocket the money? Mr. Connolly had not the slightest right to take the money; the man who did the work should have had it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had made inquiries and he did not know of any case

where anyone but the officer performed the work ; in fact, in every department except Rockhampton, the sub-collector was responsible for seeing that the overtime moneys were properly disbursed.

Mr. STEVENSON asked why the sub-collector at Rockhampton was an exception ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member could not have listened very carefully to the debate if he did not know that. The sub-collector there appeared not to have had the overtime book under his supervision at all. No rule applied to Rockhampton that did not apply to other places.

Mr. BLACK said he understood that the reduction was proposed on the ground that the sub-collector received fees as registrar of births, deaths, and marriages ; but it seemed to him that they had already voted those fees to the clerk of petty sessions at Bundaberg. It was in the schedule—

" J. Nicholson, clerk of petty sessions, £190; district registrar, fees paid in 1883-4, £117."

The PREMIER said that since that schedule had been drawn up he had come to the conclusion that the fees should be retained by Mr. Burkitt, and not by Mr. Nicholson, and it had been so ordered.

Mr. BLACK said it seemed to him that Mr. Burkitt would apparently get a reduction of £50, and really get an increase of £117.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He had that before.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Do let us understand it !

The PREMIER said that Mr. Burkitt had for many years held the office of registrar of births, deaths, and marriages. When the question first came before the Government, it was held to be desirable that that office should be held in all cases by the clerk of petty sessions, and when the schedule was prepared that was intended to be the rule. An increase was therefore proposed to Mr. Burkitt's salary to compensate him for the loss of the fees. Since then it had been determined that he should retain the position of registrar of births, deaths, and marriages, and the justification for the increase of £50 ceased to exist.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER the item "Sub-collector, Rockhampton, £500," was reduced by £25.

Mr. ALAND proposed to further reduce the estimate by £200—first landing-waiter, Brisbane, £25; second, £25; third, £25; fourth, £25; sub-collector, Mackay, £50; sub-collector, Cooktown, £50.

The CHAIRMAN said he was afraid the hon. member's amendment could not be put in that form. By Standing Order 281—

"Where it has been proposed to omit or reduce items in a vote, the question shall be afterwards put upon the original vote, or upon the reduced vote, as the case may be, without amendment."

The hon. member could move the reduction of any item subsequent to the last amendment that had been made, but no reduction could be made before it.

Mr. ALAND said he had been led into that mistake, and would take care he was never led into another of the same sort. The Colonial Treasurer had knowingly and wilfully led him into it, and it was the worst thing the hon. member had done. He had asked the hon. member whether he could move those items, and the hon. member said "Yes." The hon. member had no right to mislead him in that way. He should be

glad to know if he could move a reduction of the general vote, and leave the Government to do what they liked with it.

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member could move a reduction in any item subsequent to the last amendment carried.

Mr. ALAND said he should certainly not move it in any subsequent item. He did not wish to see one reduced while the others were not, simply because he had been led into an error.

Mr. STEVENSON said he did not know whether the hon. member was sincere ; but he appeared to be a very good actor. He heard the Premier tell the hon. member that he could not move the reduction when the Treasurer said he could. The hon. member knew perfectly well he was winking and smiling when he (Mr. Stevenson) called out over the floor that if they let the Rockhampton one go he could not put his amendment. The hon. member was only pretending to be indignant ; he was not so green as he tried to make out.

Mr. ALAND said he might not be very green, but he confessed he was green in that matter. The hon. member for Normanby certainly did call out to him across the floor, but he (Mr. Aland) went on the assurance of the Colonial Treasurer, and the more fool he was for doing it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he really must disclaim the charge of having attempted to mislead the hon. member. He did not want to deceive the hon. member. He understood that the hon. gentleman desired to know if he could move a reduction of £200 on a subsequent vote, and had not the slightest intention of misleading him. The votes were now open if any gentleman wished to challenge them.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the Treasurer was getting quite muddled about those items. They had knocked £25 off the salary of the man at Rockhampton, and £50 off the salary of the man at Bundaberg, for two different reasons. The man at Bundaberg was a good honest man, and though they had knocked £50 off his salary, that was to enable him to get £117 that was due to him. Indignant as the Colonial Treasurer was with the hon. member for Toowoomba, he must not get muddled too much. That man at Bundaberg was a good man, had a big family and a good family, and he did his work well for the Government ; and he must be given to understand that the £117 was due in place of the £50 knocked off.

Mr. MIDGLEY said that, as the business had been in very good hands, he had said nothing in the matter of the reduction just discussed. He knew what it was to be caught in the trap in which his hon. friend the member for Toowoomba had been caught. He (Mr. Midgley) was quite convinced in his own mind that every member of the Ministry wanted watching.

Mr. BLACK : You are beginning to find them out.

Mr. MIDGLEY said that, had he known what he did now, when he congratulated the House on the Speaker not having been made Treasurer he would have spared his congratulations. He begged to move the reduction of the salary of the sub-collector at Pioneer River (Mackay) by £50. He found, on reference to the schedule, that that gentleman had quarters, or payment in lieu of quarters to the amount of £75. He thought that because they had failed to prevent all the evil they might have prevented or aimed at preventing, that was no reason why they should throw up the sponge,

And for that reason he hoped the hon. member for Toowoomba would vote with him for this reduction.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he really did not see how he merited the strictures of the hon. member for Fassifern. He thought those were the most economical Estimates submitted to the Committee for many years. On a total vote of £36,000 there was only £525 for increase of salaries. In regard to Mackay, he should be very sorry if the Committee assented to the reduction of the salary there, because it would be discouraging a very good officer, who worked well and had a great deal of work to attend to. When Mr. Macarthy was appointed in 1881 he was to have received the same emoluments as his predecessor, who got £25 as local inspector of distilleries, and £25 as shipping master. That £50 he never received, for the £25 for inspecting distilleries had been paid to an officer of the Excise Department, and the £25 as shipping master had been paid to a second clerk. He (the Colonial Treasurer) mentioned that, not only because the duties of Mr. Macarthy's office had been increased during the past four years, but because he had been working in the expectation that his emoluments would be increased.

Mr. BLACK: What was his salary?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: £350; and it was proposed to give him £50 additional. The Committee should not confound gentlemen who deserved promotion with those who did not. In no sense was the reduction of the gentleman's salary at Bundaberg to be construed as an expression of want of confidence.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he thought the remarks of the Treasurer were misleading. There was certainly a very considerable increase in the votes they were now asked to pass, over those of the previous year, in the matter of salaries. The total amount of the vote was less by nearly £300; but that was accounted for by an item of £2,000, under the heading of "Contingencies" in 1883-4, disappearing in 1884-5. There was never an increase asked for in the Estimates for which Ministers had not good reasons to urge; but if members listened to those reasons and did not act on their own judgment they would very likely have cause for regret, as he had had in connection with some increased votes during the present session. So much so that he had hardly the heart to continue the attack. There was an increase of £1,000 in the item of "Salaries."

Mr. BLACK said he should have been very glad to have had the assistance of the member for Fassifern somewhat earlier to show his consistency.

Mr. ALAND: This is a Mackay vote.

Mr. BLACK said he would have been quite prepared to strike at all the increases to heads of departments in order to increase all those in lower grades; and he should have been glad of the assistance of the hon. member for Fassifern, who earlier in the session had intimated that he intended to criticise the votes with a view to economy, but had not fulfilled the expectations formed in regard to him on that point. As to that particular Mackay vote, he said nothing in favour of it; but he thought the motion for its reduction came with bad grace from the member for Fassifern who had allowed all the Southern votes to pass, after being entrapped by the oiled feather of the Colonial Treasurer, but who now came forward and wanted to make an example of the Northern votes. He (Mr. Black) was not going to make fish of one and flesh of another, but was quite prepared to

reduce all the heads of departments with the view of getting the lower grades advanced. As a justification for that particular increase—if increases were to be given at all—he might state that the Customs revenue at Mackay in 1879 was £7,412, while last year it was £25,312—a larger proportionate increase than any other long-established port in Queensland.

Mr. STEVENSON said that if the amendment went to a division he should not feel justified in voting for it after all the Southern increases had been allowed to pass unchallenged. Had the hon. member (Mr. Aland) proposed his amendment, he should have given it his warmest support.

Mr. ALAND said the hon. member for Fassifern had better withdraw his amendment. He could not see his way to support it after what had been said by the hon. member for Mackay.

Mr. MIDGLEY said the reasons urged by hon. members for doing things were very strange; sometimes they were amusing, and at others melancholy. He did not oppose that particular increase, because the recipient of it was connected with a Northern port. He considered they had been let into a trap by the Colonial Treasurer. At the same time he would stick to his amendment if anybody would stick to him.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. ANNEAR said he noticed an item of £550 for Customs at Ipswich. Was that required?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Too late!

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Customs revenue at Ipswich last year was £28,446, as against £25,610 the previous year—an increase which fully justified the continuance of the service there.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £3,923 be granted for Border Customs Patrol. The only alteration was a proposed increase of £25 to the officer in charge at Stanthorpe, in consequence of the increased duties he had to perform.

Mr. PALMER asked what was the amount of customs duties collected on the border?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that the amount collected last year was £21,777.

Mr. PALMER said the cost of collecting that sum, when the items in the schedule were added, was £4,500. Had not the time arrived when some arrangement could be entered into with the adjoining colonies by which those duties could be collected without having to keep up that unnecessary patrol? It was the cause of much inconvenience along the border, and yet, in spite of it, he believed a good deal of smuggling was carried on. For hundreds of miles the only boundary line between the two colonies was a wire fence, and even that was not always discernible. The question arose whether the time had not come when an average could be struck, so as to save the cost of the patrol to the country.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that although the cost of the Border Patrol was only a few pounds over that of last year, yet the collection had increased from £13,980 in 1883 to £21,777 in the year ending June 30 1884. It was evident, therefore, that an average could not yet be struck with the other colonies without a considerable loss of revenue. When the Queensland railways were further extended, and they

could counteract the importation of goods from Bourke, in New South Wales, and Herbert Springs in South Australia, this colony would be in a better position to deal with the subject. In the meantime, he contended that as the revenue was largely increasing he was not justified in submitting any proposal of the kind to the other colonies.

Mr. BLACK said the Government statistics were very unreliable. The Colonial Treasurer told them that in 1882-3 the Border Customs revenue was £13,980, and in 1883-4 it was £21,739. The report which the hon. gentleman laid on the table on the 11th November said the revenue collected in 1882-3 was £17,210—nearly £4,000 more; and in 1883-4, £24,349. He wished to know if there was any reason for that extraordinary discrepancy in reports from the same office?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he quoted from the Customs report, which differed from the Treasury reports; the Customs report only dealing with the amounts actually received, and the Treasury reports dealing with the amounts that were advised by wire as having been collected.

Mr. BLACK said it cost £4,000 a year to collect that revenue, which, he thought, was money well spent. He wished to know whether that included the northern patrol, between the northern portion of Queensland and the northern part of South Australia, to prevent Chinese coming across?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it only included the patrol so far as Birdsville, which was the furthest station out; it did not include any patrol along the western boundary to the Gulf.

Mr. BLACK asked if the Government were taking any steps to prevent the influx of Chinese across the border? He was credibly informed that they were coming across from the Northern Territory in large numbers in order to evade the £30 poll-tax. It was a well-known fact that they were entering into sugar cultivation very largely in the northern parts of the colony.

The PREMIER said it was a strange thing that he had never heard of a rumour or suggestion of anything of the kind. It might be so; but he had never heard of it. He did not think it was likely that the Chinese would walk 1,000 miles to save £30.

Mr. PALMER said that when the Electoral Act was being passed he drew attention to the possibility of Chinamen, who were being employed in large numbers in the Northern Territory, coming through by Burketown with the spare horses of the drovers. He was sure that no Chinaman starting from Port Darwin for Burketown would ever survive the trip, or the natives on the road, unless with such assistance, which was not likely to be given by white men.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The report was adopted, and the Chairman obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said that, with the consent of the House, he would move the adjournment until Tuesday, as there did not appear to be a general desire to sit to-morrow. He proposed to go on with the Estimates on Tuesday, and expressed a hope that they would nearly dispose of them next week.

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