

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 2 December, 1884.

Brands Act Amendment Bill.—Petition.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Adjournment.

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

BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Governor, conveying His Excellency's assent, on behalf of Her Majesty, to a Bill to amend the Brands Act of 1872.

PETITION.

Mr. ALAND presented a petition from 900 of the residents of Toowoomba and its vicinity, having reference to the depredations committed by flying-foxes and the smaller kinds of marsupial vermin, and praying for relief either by the extension of the Marsupials Destruction Act to the animals complained of, or by some other means. He moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On the motion of Mr. ALAND, the petition was received.

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee further to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) moved that the sum of £4,270 be granted for Distillation. Hon. members would observe that there was an increase of £270 on the vote of last year, arising from the fact that the full salary of the Chief Inspector of Distilleries was now placed on the Estimates. For the last three years the Chief Inspector had been drawing only £100, and the balance of the salary had been made up from the office of Curator of Intestacy, and, as had already been explained by the Attorney-General when his Estimates were passing through, the two offices were now made distinct; consequently the full salary of the Inspector of Distilleries for six months was placed on the Estimates. The reduction in a following vote was caused by the death of Mr. Douglas, another inspector, who was in receipt of £250 a year, and whose place had been filled by the appointment of an officer at £220. An inspector had also been appointed at Mackay at a salary of £25.

Mr. BLACK said he noted that two additional appointments had been made.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. BLACK said the Estimates showed that there were nine officers last year and eleven now. He took it that if nine were deducted from eleven, two were left. He thought it was worth referring to the fact that the decrease in distillation was being accompanied by an increase in the number of inspectors, and consequently by an increased cost to the country. The amount of rum distilled had been steadily decreasing since the year 1875-6. At that time there were 343,244 gallons distilled, and that had now come down to 144,073 gallons. The Colonial Treasurer could fairly be asked whether he could devise any scheme by which the waste products of the sugar plantations could be utilised to better advantage than at present. It was quite certain that a large quantity of material was going to waste, and that must result in a great loss to the country.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. gentleman would observe that the Chief

Inspector of Distilleries was not enumerated amongst the officers of the department last year on account of the larger portion of his salary being derived from the position of Curator in Intestacy. It was usual in the Estimates to place the list of officers in the columns against the largest salaries, so that the Estimates might not represent a larger number of officers than actually belonged to the service. There was therefore no increase in the number of officers. Although the hon. gentleman had referred to the circumstance of distillation having been reduced last year, yet there was nothing to justify them in imagining that that would be continuously the case. On the contrary, from information he had, there were likely to be more distilleries opened in the North in connection with the sugar industry; but he would point out that the Chief Inspector of Distilleries' duties were not simply connected with distillation. He had to protect the revenue of the colony in the matter of sly grog-selling and other things, and the department had been very active in that way during the past year. During the year ended 30th June, 1884, there were no less than 175 convictions for sly grog-selling, while only last week there had been a considerable number of convictions obtained in the North—at Charters Towers especially—for sly grog-selling, and also for supplying liquor to Polynesians. The vote therefore must not be taken simply in connection with distillation; but even with regard to that, though it was not a proper time to discuss the matter, he maintained that with the contemplated action of the Government a very large increase in distillation would undoubtedly ensue.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked from what fund the hon. gentleman took the expense of the sly-grog prosecutions? Would the expense of the Charters Towers prosecutions be taken out of that vote?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said that the expenses of the prosecutions were taken out of "Incidentals." He might mention that the fines received last year amounted to £1,517.

MR. BLACK asked whether the hon. gentleman had received any applications for new distilleries in the North? He himself did not know that there was any probability of any new distilleries.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said he had not received any applications up to the present; but he thought it was probable there would be new distilleries established.

MR. BLACK asked if the hon. gentleman could give the Committee any idea where they were likely to be established?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said the matter had not come before him officially, and therefore he did not think he should be justified in giving what information he had. The estimate had not been framed in consideration of any new establishments being started, but it was framed in order to provide for the requirements of the department at the present time.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought the hon. gentleman had not shown much care in preparing the estimate, or he would never have submitted it to the Committee; it was so utterly inconsistent with everything he said in his Financial Statement that it made one stare. At that time the hon. gentleman said that the distillation in the colony was dwindling, and had been dwindling for some time, and that the manufactured article was being still further depreciated. In order to get over the difficulty he proposed to decrease the excise duty, and promised to bring in a Bill for that purpose. Now they found that the Estimates anticipated that.

With the fact staring them in the face that the production of spirits in the colony—the supervision of which came under that department—had decreased by at least one-half, the hon. gentleman actually proposed to increase the expenditure. He did not seem to remember what had been done in the last few years. The expenditure now was more than in 1879, although there was a great deal more spirit manufactured then. He did not complain about the £1,500 for acting inspectors and incidentals, which was actually wanted for the purpose of putting down sly grog-selling; but he objected to the estimate being based on the assumption that the Spirits Duty Bill would be passed. Why, with the manufacture of spirits so much decreased, they should be asked to increase the expenditure he did not know. The Chief Inspector was a good man, but he did not know where he and other inspectors were to find employment unless new distilleries were established. If the hon. gentleman simply looked back a few years he would find the small amount that it then cost to supervise a larger quantity of spirits manufactured; yet he now actually proposed to increase the expense. It was absurd.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said the increase only arose from the fact that the Chief Inspector was now devoting the whole of his attention to the department. The hon. gentleman imagined that the inspectors had very little employment; but he (the Colonial Treasurer) would just enumerate the distilleries. There was one at Milton, one at the Logan, three at Mackay, and one at Warwick. There must be an inspector at each place. As he had already said, he was inclined to think that the reduction in distillation was but temporary, and that when the Bill now before the House was passed there would be an increase.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there was not the slightest doubt that under that Bill—which was not likely to come before the House during the present or any succeeding session, he hoped—distillation would be increased very much. What he wanted to know was, whether that estimate was prepared on the assumption that that Bill would pass? It was strange that it was necessary for the Chief Inspector to devote the whole of his time to the department, when previously, with more business to do, one-tenth of his time was quite sufficient.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said the estimate was not framed on account of the Bill, but on account of the changes which it was thought desirable to make in that department and in the office of the Curator of Intestacy. He had already pointed out that, besides looking after the distillation, the department had to protect the revenue from sly grog-selling; and it was satisfactory to know that, instead of the large number of complaints there used to be, there were now very few; and that the larger towns were more frequently visited than was done before.

MR. BLACK said he wanted to know what became of the rum which appeared to be distilled in the colony. From the returns he found that 144,000 gallons were distilled last year, of which 13,000 gallons were exported; but there were actually 46,000 gallons imported. He was quite certain that there was a large quantity of rum which did not go into consumption as rum, and he thought that, as they had now a chief inspector, who was supposed to look after distilleries and sly grog-selling, it would be very well worth his while to find out into what other spirits that rum was converted. He did not say that it was necessarily adulterated; but it was evident that there must be some

extensive factories in the southern portion of the colony that were receiving rum and turning it into some other spirit. It was a well-known fact that a large quantity of rum was distilled which was not exported, and was not consumed as rum; so that there was ample scope for the Chief Inspector of Distilleries, who possessed a good deal of energy, to look into the matter so as to lay before the House some statement as to what became of that spirit.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that he had frequently seen the Inspector of Distilleries on the subject of guarding against any spirit leaving the distilleries which might be converted into any other spirit. He could assure the hon. gentleman that no spirit left the distilleries unless it was coloured, and the Chief Inspector had told him that he was not aware of any process by which it could be re-converted into white spirit for the purpose of being manufactured into brandy or any other kind of spirit. There was one distillery in the colony where whisky was manufactured, and that was at Warwick.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Is that going now?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes; one of the inspectors is there.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: The inspector might be there, and the distillery might not be working. Half the distilleries where there were inspectors were not working.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that was so; but he was told six weeks ago by the owner of that distillery that it was working; and the hon. gentleman might relieve himself of any apprehension on that score.

Mr. BLACK said the inspector did not understand his business if he thought it was only white spirit that could be manufactured into other spirits. He had seen other spirits turned out besides rum, and had had an opportunity of tasting them. He had tasted rum put into square bottles and turned out as gin. Therefore, if the inspector flattered himself that because the spirit was once coloured it could not be turned into another spirit, he made a great mistake.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said that surely the hon. gentleman was not so green as to believe that the spirit could not be turned into what they were drinking every day as whisky! The hon. gentleman had sold hundreds of thousands of gallons of it himself. It was simply Mackay rum coloured. That was what became of the Mackay rum, and he did not see why they should try and demoralise the population of the colony, and prevent them from drinking good spirits—if they drank any. Could the Colonial Treasurer, as a business man, not see the absurdity of his own calculation? If they turned to page 6, they would find that the amount received for excise duty had decreased from £52,000 to £35,000, and the hon. gentleman did not see any way of increasing it again than by increasing the expenditure. Any sensible man would say that the expenditure ought to be decreased, as there was not so much supervision required through there not being so much spirit distilled. He was sorry for the Inspector of Distilleries, who was really an efficient officer, and he would like to see him better employed than in inspecting distilleries.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that £590 be voted for the Government Analyst, said that the only increase was £40 for a message boy, who was much required.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he amount seemed wonderfully small for such an important officer. A Food and Drugs Bill had been passed which threw a large amount of work upon that officer, and he wished to know if that Act was operating at all?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the amount had been found sufficient in the past. There was no doubt that he was a most useful officer and during the past year he had to make several important analyses; in fact, he (Mr. Dickson) considered the amount asked was very small. That officer was required continually by the Customs to make reports, and, so far, the reports had been very satisfactory.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Colonial Treasurer had told them of a number of prosecutions that had taken place last year in connection with the Excise; he would ask if any had taken place under the Food and Drugs Act? It was all very well for the public to be anxiously looking after sly grog-selling, but they should be quite as anxious to protect health.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said action had been taken by the Government in certain places in connection with the adulteration of spirits with sulphuric acid, etc., and convictions had been made. He might point out that the administration of the Food and Drugs Act came more immediately under the local authority—under the municipal council in Brisbane—who had an analyst of their own, who dealt with articles of food that were reported to be adulterated. The Government dealt with any article of food that came under the notice of the Customs Department. Of course, the Inspector of Distilleries had spirits more particularly under his observation. In any case where the Government Analyst was needed in the interior, he proceeded there at once.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked what action was taken with regard to tea, which was often very much adulterated?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that all the tea that came to the colony was sampled and tested, and if found to be mixed with exhausted leaves or deleterious matter of any kind the consignments were summarily dealt with. During the last year several parcels of tea were rejected, and the importers were allowed to re-export them to Melbourne, whence they came, while the Customs Department at Melbourne were informed of the circumstance. The tea in question had received certificates from the Government Analyst in Victoria, and so it was deemed desirable to allow it to be returned instead of confiscating it. Great care was exercised at all the ports in the colony, and whenever tea was found to contain any deleterious ingredients it was not allowed to enter into consumption.

Mr. NORTON asked whether the Government Analyst did any work in the way of analysing specimens sent to the Museum, or whether the Museum could get his services? There was a large collection of specimens in the Museum which it would be very advantageous to have analysed, and marked with their value.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not know that any application had been made by the Museum, but the Government Analyst was prepared to do work for any of the Government departments, on application being made for his services, provided, of course, that he had the appliances necessary for the work required.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that there be granted a sum of £1,200 for the Marine Board, said that there was an increase of

£150 in the item, caused by the increased amount of fees to members. The meetings of the board had been more frequent during the past year than at any time previously, and it was deemed desirable to make ample provision for the ensuing year.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there was no more justifiable increase in the Estimates than the one proposed. He thought the Government might have gone further, and considering the wonderful increase in the business done by the board, and the consequent increase in the work done by the chairman—and, he might add, the very efficient way in which he had performed his duties for a good many years—they might have increased the pittance of £100 a year, which that officer received. Had he been a lawyer, they would no doubt have been told that he should be treated as a professional man, and be given a salary equal to that of the Engineer Surveyor.

Mr. ARCHER asked if the Examiner in Navigation and Seamanship received any fees in addition to his salary?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he held a post in connection with the oyster fisheries, for which he received a salary of £100.

Mr. ARCHER said he was quite aware of that. That was a salary, not fees. He wished to know whether the officer did any work which brought him in fees.

Mr. BEATTIE said that while the Treasurer was obtaining the information he might say that he knew himself that there were no fees. The salaries of that officer and of the Engineer Surveyor were ridiculously small. The Engineer Surveyor had nearly three times as much work to do as the officer holding the corresponding post in Sydney, but he received only £300, while the salary in Sydney was, he believed, £500. The Engineer Surveyor and the Examiner in Navigation and Seamanship were both men of capacity and ability, and the Government would have to go a long way to get men like them; yet they gave them only £300 a year, while mere boys were getting £300 or £400.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said they had given a Supreme Court clerk £700 a year, and they should recognise the ability of those officers, who were both capital men, and pay them a fair remuneration. As for the chairman of the board, £100 a year was a ridiculous salary, considering the responsibility of the post, and the great increase in the amount of work he had had to do lately.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the Examiner in Navigation and Seamanship received one or two small fees when he performed work for the other departments; but they did not amount to more than £5 in the year, and were therefore hardly worth noticing. No fees were paid him by the outside public. He (the Colonial Treasurer) was aware that both those officers earned their salaries well, but at the same time there was a desire not to increase the Estimates at the present time. He only hoped that when a future increase was proposed to be accorded to them it would receive the unanimous approbation of the other side of the Committee.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: These officers are not lawyers.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was surprised that the hon. gentleman was astonished that increases had been given to the lawyers whilst the working men had been left out. Did he not know that there were three lawyers in the Ministry; that half the Ministry were lawyers:—that was leaving out of account the

non-portfolio Ministers. Reckoning the Agent-General, there were four lawyers members of the Ministry.

Mr. BEATTIE said he did not wish to detain the Committee, but he hoped the hon. Treasurer would take the matter into consideration. He knew very well that the fees charged by the Marine Board afforded a very large revenue to the colony. The actual amount of fees received by the Engineer Surveyor alone gave a large sum to the consolidated revenue. The Treasurer should look at the fact that the engineer of the "Kate" received £240 a year, while the Engineer Surveyor, who had to survey all the vessels that came into Brisbane, from a boat 15 feet long to the large steamship 400 feet in length, only received £300. He (Mr. Beattie) had seen the Engineer Surveyor at 5 o'clock in the morning coming home from examining the boilers of a vessel, and afterwards at his office at the ordinary time. Both men were capital officers.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he confessed that they worked very hard, and that their work was increasing. If the work continued to increase at the same rate as it had done last year they would be entitled to consideration in the next Estimates. But it was to be borne in mind that those officers were not old in the service—only four or five years at the outside. He would promise the Committee that their case should receive consideration in framing the next Estimates.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be voted for the service of the year 1884-5, a sum not exceeding £965 to defray the expenses of the Shipping Office. That vote showed an increase of £115. The shipping master at Brisbane, Mr. Manson, was put down for an increase of £25. He was a very old officer, and had had no increase of salary for eight or ten years. The shipping masters at Rockhampton and Thursday Island were each put down for £25 additional on account of the increased duties of their office.

Mr. ARCHER said that as the Shipping Office in Brisbane was under the control of the Portmaster, he would ask why the duties of shipping master were performed at different ports by officers of the Customs? Why should they jump about from one department to another? He would like to ask if the second officer of the Customs at Rockhampton mentioned in that vote was the gentleman to whom there was some reference the other evening when passing the Customs votes.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the second officers of the Customs performed the duties of shipping masters at certain ports, for the reason that it was cheaper to employ those officers than to have special officers detailed to perform the duties. It was for the same reason that the sub-collectors of customs at several ports discharged the duties of harbour masters. The exceptions to that rule were Brisbane, Maryborough, and Rockhampton. When the shipping increased it became necessary to appoint harbour masters.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: We all know that. You are addressing an ex-Treasurer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. gentleman would know from his own experience, of course, why that practice had been carried out, but he (the Colonial Treasurer) supposed he was giving information to the members of the Committee who did not know.

Mr. ARCHER said there were several additional places now where harbour masters might be appointed, and more would crop up. At all the ports named in the Estimates the work

could be performed as cheaply by the harbour masters as by the Customs officers, and the work might be given to them, particularly considering the low rate of wages they were receiving.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the present system was found the more convenient, because the harbour master might not be on the spot, while the second officer of Customs was always there, attending to the work of the department.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was nothing in the vote for a shipping master at Cairns. The trade of Cairns was rapidly increasing, and paid a large amount into the revenue; yet the hon. gentleman seemed to have quite overlooked that fact.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the trade of Cairns was no doubt increasing very rapidly; but as no seamen were shipped there, there was no necessity for a shipping master.

Mr. BLACK asked whether the shipping masters at Rockhampton and Thursday Island had had their salaries increased this year?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that they had, and that the shipping master at Rockhampton was the second officer of Customs.

Mr. BLACK said the Committee the other night expressed a very serious sense of displeasure in connection with that particular officer, and also with another officer, Mr. Kilner, to the latter of whom they refused any increase, on the ground of gross irregularities which the Colonial Treasurer admitted they had been guilty of. It would be unfair to let Mr. Connolly off scot-free while the increase to Mr. Kilner's salary was refused on the motion of the hon. gentleman himself. He would move as an amendment that the item for the shipping master at Rockhampton be reduced by £25.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that to some extent he recognised the justice of the remarks of the hon. member, and he would promise the Committee that as long as Mr. Connolly remained there the increased salary should not be paid to him. But there might be changes during the year. During the past year 1,500 seamen had been shipped at Rockhampton, and the duties of the shipping master there were such that he should receive an emolument equivalent to that given to the same officer at the other large ports.

Mr. ARCHER: Does the hon. gentleman ask us to vote the increase, and then refuse to pay it to the present occupant?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. ARCHER: Would not the better plan be to vote the same sum as last year, and increase the salary on a new occupant being appointed to the office?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it often occurred that salaries were voted which were not paid, and he would point out cases in point when he came to the Harbours and Rivers Department. It was only due to the shipping master at Rockhampton that he should receive similar emoluments to those given at Townsville and Maryborough.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said there had never been a case, in his experience, where the Committee had passed an amount which was not intended to be given to the officer against whose name it stood. Why should they vote money knowing that it was not going to be spent? The increase should be refused in exactly the same way as the proposed increase to Mr Kilner was refused.

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Mr. ALAND said he noticed that the shipping master's salary had been increased from £400 to £425. Would that officer still continue to receive the fees mentioned in the schedule?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that it was intended that the shipping master should receive the fees, and the increase of £25 as well, which the Committee were asked to vote.

Mr. ALAND said the question of fees still remained to him a mystery. They had been told over and over again that all fees were to be abolished, and that a sufficient sum would be placed on the Estimates so that each officer might get a fair salary for the work he had to do. Now they found that an officer who was receiving a fair salary and fees was to have his salary increased by £25 and was still to continue to receive the fees. He did not understand the Colonial Treasurer's way of putting things. In one breath the hon. gentleman told them the Estimates were framed with a due regard to economy; and that principle was applied to unfortunate individuals who were not at best overpaid. But in the matter of officers who were getting what he presumed to be a fair salary, that principle was reversed, and no attention was paid to economy. He knew nothing of the two gentlemen, the Engineer Surveyor and the Examiner in Navigation and Seamanship, but he believed in their cases an increase to the salaries might have been considered. They had got a promise that they would be considered between now and next year, but he thought the best thing to be done was to move that the £25 be reduced, and then the Treasurer, in framing the Estimates again, would not fail to remember the two officers who had been mentioned.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member misconceived the nature of the duties of the shipping master. He got the fees as a surveyor, and his work was a speciality. He had to perform certain duties, and in consideration of special knowledge he received a certain fee. That did not in any way interfere with his duties to the public, and was placed in the schedule for the purpose of showing the amount actually received. Besides, the fees fluctuated considerably, and while they might amount to £25 this year, next year they might be £5, or even nothing at all. It was a great convenience to the department to have the officer attached for special duty, and he did not think the fees received came in the same category as the fees received by clerks of petty sessions, who performed all their duties in connection with their office.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Colonial Treasurer had given a very long answer to the question of the hon. member for Toowoomba, surrounding his reply with a multitude of words. For the information of the hon. member he would read him a section of an Act recently passed by them:—

"All fees which shall hereafter be received by any officer in the Public Service under the authority of any Act of Parliament for the performance of any duty as such officer, shall hereafter be accounted for by such officer and paid into the consolidated revenue, and every such officer shall be deemed to be a public accountant in respect thereof."

Now, what was the meaning of that? Could the meaning of that be the same as the answer given by the Colonial Treasurer? He thought the member for Toowoomba could do nothing better than move the amendment he intended to move, and throw the onus of defying an Act of Parliament on the Ministers who passed it.

Mr. ALAND said he understood the Colonial Treasurer to say that the work was performed altogether outside the Government Service. If that were the case, why was it not put down in

the schedule the same way as the Government Analyst and Master of Titles? A salary was paid to them with the right of private practice, and why should that item not be treated in the same way? Evidently those were fees collected by authority of an Act of Parliament, and he maintained that under the Act they had passed those fees should go into the consolidated revenue.

Mr. BEATTIE said if the shipping master was not also shipping surveyor it would be necessary for the Government to have someone outside the office altogether to perform the duties, which would be a much more expensive way of arranging the matter. The amount of the fees was so small that it was hardly worth while speaking about it. He saw that the shipping master was also a Savings Bank officer. His duties in connection with that had nothing to do with shipping, although it was necessary he should be an authorised individual under the Savings Bank Act to receive the money. If hon. gentlemen only knew the amount of labour connected with the office of shipping master they would not object to the officer in question receiving such a small amount in fees. He doubted, too, whether it would be possible to get anyone to perform the special duties for the same amount of fees; and if the officer were not connected with the office a serious loss might result to the owners of the vessel requiring examination. He did not believe in giving fees to officers in the Public Service as a rule; but that was one of those exceptional cases in which it would be an advantage to the Government to continue the present arrangement.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, at the time the Public Officers Fees Bill was before the House, it was distinctly stated that fees for special services should belong to the officers performing the same, and amongst those officers were enumerated some of the officers of the Customs, such as landing-waiters, lockers, and so forth, who were distinctly entitled to fees for performing work outside of their regular office hours. On the second reading of the Bill he had specially exempted those officers from its operation. Engineer surveyors, shipwright surveyors, and boatmen pilots were also exempted, and that was the reason why no attempt had been made to compromise their fees by a fixed salary. There was a list laid on the table of the House of the various officers, and the fees attached to the offices, and that was the list the Government had been guided by. He certainly thought that surveyors and officers of the Customs who performed special duties should receive fees for such special performance.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the schedule of fees from which the hon. gentleman had quoted was contrary to the Act of Parliament they had passed during the session. The Minister who had introduced the Bill was responsible for the way in which it was framed, and if he intended to exempt the officers mentioned in the schedule, why was the schedule not attached to the Bill, and passed with it? No distinctions were made in the Bill, and the schedule referred to by the hon. gentleman was a schedule of fees paid to public officers under statutory authority and otherwise. It was not a schedule of the Bill. He, for one, did not object to that gentleman being paid for doing work outside; but he should be paid according to law, not in defiance of law.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would be glad if some legal gentleman would enable them to construe the Act, because at present they were at a disadvantage in having to interpret it themselves. He took it that "the fees

hereafter received by the officers of the Public Service, under the authority of any Act of Parliament"—that was, the fees that were received under any Act of Parliament—were to be paid out of the revenue. But the fees now under consideration were not received under an Act of Parliament. The fees of shipwright surveyors were not defined by any Act; it was a matter of departmental regulation. They were not fees fixed by statutory enactment, and therefore they did not come under the 1st clause of the Act, which simply dealt with fees collected under authority of an Act of Parliament, or rule or regulation made in pursuance of an Act of Parliament. Those fees were fixed by the department.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Where did the department get the authority?

Mr. BEATTIE said that under the Navigation Act the Marine Board had power to make regulations. Regulations were made by the board, and the fees were fixed by them.

Mr. ARCHER: Then these fees come under an Act of Parliament?

Mr. BEATTIE said he knew that under some regulations fees were paid. As he had stated, that work was generally outside office-hours altogether, and it should be looked upon more like overtime than anything else.

Mr. ARCHER said there appeared to be some misunderstanding as to the object of hon. members in objecting to the fees. They were not trying to decrease the salary of the shipping master; they only wished him to be paid according to law, and not against it. The fees ought to be paid into the Treasury, and the salary increased accordingly. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley said that the Marine Board had the power to make regulations under the Navigation Act, and that under those regulations the fees were paid. In that case the fees were paid under the authority of an Act of Parliament.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that under the Navigation Act there was power given to the Marine Board to charge certain fees; but he was distinctly informed that the fees were paid by the public, and that there had been no regulation whatever passed by the board to enable officers to claim them. Hon. members would bear in mind that those services were paid for by the public, who received value for what they paid.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think that made much difference. Clerks of petty sessions received fees from the public, and yet they had to be handed over to the Treasury.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is under a special Act.

Mr. NORTON said it seemed to him that the shipping master was just in the same position as those officers. If it were overtime for which they were paid, it would be quite a different thing; but it was understood when the Act with respect to fees was passed that all fees would be taken off.

Question—That the item £425, salary of Shipping Master, be reduced by £25—put. The Committee divided:—

AYES, 14.

Messrs. Norton, Macrossan, Archer, Black, Alund, Mellor, White, Lissner, Jessop, Foote, Macfarlan, Midgley, Ferguson, and Palmer.

NOES, 9.

Messrs. Miles, Dickson, Sheridan, Beattie, Dutton, Scott, Bailey, Jordan, and Brookes.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. ARCHER said he would move that the sum of £50 down for the shipping master at Rockhampton be reduced by £25. From the facts which had come to the knowledge of the Committee he did not see how the whole amount could be granted.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the Treasurer should have moved the reduction himself. The other night he withdrew £25 from the salary of Mr. Kilner, and now he proposed to increase the salary of the officer who was guilty of the same offence. The Treasurer had thrown the onus upon that side of the Committee of moving the reduction, which was unjust. He hoped hon. gentlemen understood the question thoroughly: it referred to the action of a Custom-house officer at Rockhampton, which was generally condemned, and the Treasurer himself condemned it so far as to withdraw his increase; yet there was now proposed an increase for an officer who was equally guilty, and no action was taken by the hon. gentleman.

Mr. NORTON asked the Colonial Treasurer if it was a rule in the department that those gentlemen were not allowed to occupy positions as directors of public companies?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was supposed to be the rule; and whenever it had come to his knowledge that an officer was acting in that capacity he had decided that he should not occupy such a position. With regard to the remark made by the hon. member for Townsville, he did not observe that that increase was down. He would promise the Committee that if the whole of the estimate were voted the present occupant of the office should not draw it. If any hon. member chose to move the reduction he would agree to it.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the sum of £915 only be granted for "Shipping Officer"—put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that £33,175 be voted for Harbours, Lighthouses, and Pilots, said that the increases to salaries amounted only to £135, and there were new appointments which amounted to £1,298. The total amount of the increase was £5,900, of which a considerable portion was represented by contingencies—namely, £4,509. The salary of the junior clerk in the Brisbane office had been increased from £100 to £125, and the pilots, concerning whom there had been very grave representations made when the Estimates were going through, had also had their salaries raised. The salary of the Moreton Bay senior pilot had been raised from £250 to £265, of the second from £230 to £240, and of the third from £220 to £230. That of the senior river pilot had been increased from £250 to £265, of the second from £240 to £250, and of the third from £220 to £230. There was a new appointment of a fireman for the "Laura," at £120 a year; the engine-driver of the launch was put down for £180 last year, and £168 this year; but although £180 was voted last year, only £168 was paid, so that that was one of the cases he referred to, where larger salaries had been voted than paid. At Maryborough, there was six months' additional provision for the harbour master; and there was an engineer at £180, and a fireman at £120. At Rockhampton, one pilot received an increase from £200 to £220, and an engineer from £210 to £220. At Mackay, an assistant pilot had been appointed with a salary of £175. At Townsville, there were five boatmen in place of four, and an additional coxswain with £120 a year. At Thursday Island, the office of signalman had been placed under the lighthouses, and was removed from the present estimate. At Normanton, there was an

assistant pilot with £175, an engineer with £180, and a fireman with £120. It would be observed that there was an increase of £1,000 in the provisions for buoys, beacons, moorings, etc.; repair to cottages, pilot station, Moreton Island, £250; roadway to magazine and small jetty, Cooktown, £150; lighthouse, Double Island Point, additional, £1,600; lighthouse, Pine Islets, additional, £500; lights, North Head, Mary River, £1,200; and pilot vessel for Cairns, £250.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH asked whether an increase was proposed in the salary of the pilot who ran a ship ashore the other day in the channel?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was so, but that occurred after the Estimates were framed. The pilot was one of the best in the department, and during the twenty years he had been in the service it was the only accident he had had. The best men were liable to misfortunes sometimes. The increase proposed was only £10, and he was not at all disposed to accept a reduction.

Mr. BEATTIE said there was one officer whose claims he had brought under the notice of the Committee three or four times—one of the oldest officers in the service, and one whose services ought to be recognised. He meant the harbour master, who was down for a paltry salary of £360. He had been twenty years in the service of the colony; he had to be a professional man and a man of education, and he (Mr. Beattie) must say it riled his blood to see bits of boys who had only been in the service five years getting £400 a year, whilst that old officer only received £360. They knew very well that during the absence of the Portmaster in England on a well-deserved holiday the harbour master had to attend to the whole of the business. He did a great deal of engineer's work; they had a great deal more confidence in the ordinary common sense of sailors to do many kinds of work, and they did it cheaper than engineers. The leading lights in the channel supplied an instance of his having saved the country several hundreds of pounds in professional work. It was a shame that his salary should remain the same. They would be told, perhaps, that if he did not like the place he could leave it, but that was not the way to treat old servants of the country. He had always maintained that the pilots' salaries should be increased. If they only gave £240 a year to men to go and live on Moreton Island, what first-class master of a ship would accept the position? The pilots were well adapted for the service, because they had been brought up to it, and it would be difficult to replace them. He hoped the hon. member would take into consideration the case of Captain Wyborn, with a salary of only £360. A man of his ability and long service should have some acknowledgment; he ought to get at least £450 a year.

Mr. FERGUSON said he saw that no change whatever was made in the wages of the boatmen, who only got £96 a year as far north as Townsville. He did not think it was possible for a man properly to keep his family on those wages. Nearly all the highly paid officers received increases, but the boatmen got the same, year after year. He saw that north of Townsville they were paid £108; he could not understand why, although it might be a little more expensive to live there. The wages of the boatmen throughout the colony were too small. It was impossible to bring up families on them. He knew of his own knowledge that in the central districts the boatmen could not live on those wages, and they had quite as much right to an increase in proportion to their salaries as other officers had.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that he was aware that Captain Wyborn was a very old and most excellent officer. But he received a special remuneration last year for some work in connection with the erection of the Pile Lighthouse; and under the circumstances the Government did not deem it necessary to make any increase this year. The question of the boatmen was a very large one, and one that should be fully considered, not only in regard to the services rendered by the boatmen, but also in regard to the general conditions of the labour market. The question was further complicated by some of the boatmen having comfortable quarters; so that they were better off than men who appeared to be receiving £10 or £12 a year more salary. The matter had been fully discussed in the Committee on the Customs Estimates; and after the expression of opinion by hon. members, he was prepared to inform the Committee that he should go into the whole question of the boatmen and their remuneration—especially at the Northern ports, where the conditions of living might be different—in view of next year's Estimates. But he was not prepared to admit that any very large increase was necessary, or one that would have the effect of creating a disturbance of the labour market. Those men were in a good secure position with comfortable quarters, and as long as they conducted themselves well they had employment for life. He should address himself to the question—considering the feeling of the Committee—of putting them all on a uniform footing.

Mr. STEVENSON said he quite agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, that a man who had been so long in the service, and kept at the same salary, deserved an increase. But there were worse cases than that mentioned. He quite agreed that all the pilots had very low salaries, although some were paid lower salaries than others. He wished to bring up the case of the pilot at Broadsound, who received £175 a year. The hon. member had said that Captain Wyborn had been twenty years in the service, but that man had been twenty-five years in the service, and only received £175 a year. As he was stationed seven or eight miles from the town of St. Lawrence, he had to pay £40 per annum for his children to be educated, and it was very hard lines that a man who had been twenty-five years in the service of Queensland, and who paid £40 a year for the education of his children, should only receive £175 a year. He (Mr. Stevenson) confessed he did not see how he could live. He knew that that man had also been doing extra work at St. Lawrence and Port Mackay, but did not notice that the Treasurer was going to pay extra for it. That pilot used to get £200 a year, but because of some change having been made in the rules of the Customs Department he had to submit to a reduction of £25, which was too bad after twenty-five years' service.

Mr. NORTON said that he noticed some half-a-dozen pilots were only paid £175; and, considering the responsibilities that attached to their work, that was too small a salary. There was not one who ought to hold the position of pilot who could not take full charge of the steamers on the coast, and he knew that the lowest income paid by the A.S.N. Company to such men was £20 a month and found. He believed that in some places there was comparatively little work to do in piloting, but they might employ their time when no vessels were coming in, in making soundings—a work which ought to be continuously carried on. He knew that the pilot at Gladstone employed all his

time, when not engaged in looking after vessels in taking soundings of the Channel. Those were the sort of men who ought to be encouraged.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he might point out to the hon. member for Normanby that the pilot at Broadsound virtually received £200 a year—£175 as salary, £10 as allowance paid to boatmen and pilots who had served more than three years, and quarters valued at £15. He (the Treasurer) believed that he had some other work from the Customs Department when Broadsound was a flourishing port. But it was in the knowledge of hon. members that the trade there had suffered such a collapse that it had been a matter for consideration whether it should be kept open as a port. The pilot's duties were much less arduous than formerly; and, seeing that he had good comfortable quarters and a long-service allowance in addition to his salary, he was not to be commiserated. Pilots generally, he (the Treasurer) thought, were fairly well paid. No complaints had been made to him by the men, and he had conversed with men who had retired from the service and who assured him that the remuneration was fair. He could not, therefore, give a general promise concerning the pilots. It must be borne in mind that all pilots and boatmen, after three years' service, secured a long-service allowance of £10 a year. That sum was given in addition to the amount voted on the Estimates.

Mr. STEVENSON said the long-service allowance was only £10, and pilots must of necessity have quarters; but that did not explain why the man should have been deprived of the £25 which he had formerly. It was not a matter of the trade having left the port; the man could not help that, as it was owing to the opening of the railway direct to the Peak Downs. A man of that kind ought to be placed where there was plenty of work to be done, for which he could get paid, instead of being left there to starve with his wife and family. If the port was not worth keeping open, by all means let it be shut up. The fact of the man paying £40 a year for a person to teach his children spoke a good deal for him. When the case was brought under his notice, he wrote to Mr. Macartney, of Waverley, to find out what kind of a man the pilot was, and the reply was that he was a really good man, and that none better could be found for the billet. He should like to know what the man had been paid during the year for his extra services in surveying the creeks between St. Lawrence and Port Mackay?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that as yet nothing had been paid, but when the claim was sent in it would not be overlooked. With regard to the £25, that was a sum paid for performing Customs work, which was not now required. Surely the hon. member did not expect that salaries would be paid when there was no work to be done!

Mr. STEVENSON said that, all the same, it seemed very hard that the man should be deprived of so large a portion of his salary after having been in receipt of it so many years, and just when he stood in greatest need of it. No one, he felt sure, would blame the Colonial Treasurer for restoring the amount to the Estimates, and to do so would be an act of grace. What did the hon. gentleman propose to pay McEwen for his extra work in surveying? Was there any particular rate fixed for it?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that he was unable to say what the amount would be, but he could assure the hon. member that extra remuneration would be paid by the department for the work the pilot had done outside his duties.

Mr. STEVENSON: Is there any special rate laid down?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the remuneration would be determined by the number of days on which the pilot was engaged in the duty, and that was not yet known to the department.

Mr. STEVENSON: I am asking if there is any fixed allowance per day for work of that kind?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there was no fixed rule. Pilots were not generally employed in surveying. It was outside work, and would be paid for according to the number of days employed.

Mr. STEVENSON said he asked the question because he had been informed that there was a special rate fixed at 2s. a day for that work. If so, it was a most miserable allowance.

Mr. BEATTIE said he had known the pilot referred to by the hon. member over thirty years, McEwen being at that time the master of a vessel out of Sydney; and a very good fellow he was. At the time the £25 was taken off all the pilots, he protested against it on the ground that it was injudicious, they being capital protectors of the revenue. As there was not much trade at Broadsound, the pilot's duties were not very onerous. Although that might be special work in which McEwen was employed, yet it was part of the duty of the pilots at Moreton Island and Keppel Bay to note any alteration that took place in the channels, and report it at once to the head of the department, when precautions were at once taken to enable mariners to avoid the danger. The work in question was no doubt outside work, and would be paid for accordingly; but surely the 2s. a day referred to by the hon. member was merely an allowance for food. It was certainly not remuneration for an officer put on special duty. He had no doubt that McEwen would receive every justice at the hands of the head of the department.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Colonial Treasurer had told them a short time ago that there was an engine-driver who last year received £180, and who was down on the Estimates this year for only £168; but he did not give any reason why the amount was so reduced. He observed that £180 was asked in several other cases for men doing the same work. Did the hon. gentleman intend that those men should only be paid £168? He observed there was an item of £180 for the engineer of the steam launch at Townsville. Was he to be his own fireman? All other steam launches had their firemen.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said at the time the salary was voted last year there was some difficulty in obtaining engineers. The appointment had not been made when the salary was asked for, but subsequently an engineer was obtained at £14 a month instead of £15. The steam launches did not require firemen. In the case of ordinary steamboats, of course, firemen were employed.

In answer to Mr. NORTON,

The COLONIAL TREASURER said instructions were given to proceed with the buoying of the Calliope River in September last, but owing to some change in the pilot department the work was delayed. He thought it had been completed by this time; but he would make inquiries. Instructions were also given to proceed with same work at the Boyne River, and the earliest opportunity would be taken to finish the work.

Mr. ARCHER said he would ask whether the sum down for the harbour master and pilot in

the Broadsound River was the whole of the salary, or did the officer receive fees as examiner?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the total emolument of the harbour master was £510. His salary as harbour master and pilot was £250. He had quarters valued at £50, and he received £10 a year as caretaker of the magazine.

Mr. ARCHER: Did he not get fees as nautical surveyor previously?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did formerly, but it was considered that, those duties being performed by him within office-hours, they fairly went into the revenue, and consequently they were disallowed. The officer's salary, therefore, stood at £260 and quarters.

Mr. ARCHER said they had now before them a most extraordinary state of affairs. Some officers appeared to retain their fees while others lost them. He had mentioned the case because he knew the gentleman as one whom he had appointed, and he was not only a master but an excellent pilot. He had made special inquiries about the man and found he bore an excellent character, and had a high certificate from the Board of Trade. He was a man of energy and enterprise, and had commanded steamers all over the world. He was just the man fit for the position of harbour master in Queensland, and if there was a vacancy he (Mr. Archer) was sure the Portmaster in Brisbane would be only too glad to fill it with such a man. The man was certainly able to live upon what he got, but it seemed a miserable income. It seemed a most astonishing thing that they had passed an Act quite recently abolishing all fees to public officers, and that distinctions should now be made between one man and another. The harbour master at Cooktown received fees for special duties; yet without any apparent reason they were taken from him, while other officers almost in the same position were allowed to retain their fees. He should like the Colonial Treasurer to give some very good reason why that should be so.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there was rather too much being said about the miserable salaries received by some officers in the Public Service, when there were thousands of men outside who would be only too glad to fill the positions if they became vacant. It would relieve Ministers of a great many applications for employment if some of those gentlemen who were so disgusted with their appointments would retire from the service and allow the thousands of applicants who were asking for employment in the Government Service to step into their places. With regard to the officer mentioned by the hon. member for Blackall, he did not say one word against his ability, but there was a marked distinction between him and those gentlemen who had been before mentioned as being in receipt of fees for performing such work as that appertaining to a shipwright surveyor or assessor. Those officers performed special duties and possessed professional knowledge of which there was a distinct value, but in the case under consideration fees were charged for merely performing a judicial function. Why should not a magistrate just as well charge a fee for holding an inquiry? The whole system was wrong.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Explain the difference.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said an officer in the Public Service holding an inquiry during office-hours had no right to charge special fees; but, apart from that, he thought the officer's remuneration was very ample.

Mr. ARCHER said he knew there were a great many people who would be glad of Government positions; but he would point out that if there was any office that required a first-rate man it was that of harbour master and pilot. The explanation given by the hon. gentleman was a distinction without a difference. It had been said by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that sometimes shipping masters did work after hours; he did not say it was always done, but generally it was done after hours. There was no doubt, however, that most of the work was done in office-hours. If a gentleman was qualified to give a professional opinion as a nautical assessor, he was just as much entitled to fees as a shipwright's surveyor.

Mr. BEATTIE said the Committee had reduced the salary of the shipping master in Brisbane by £25. If that was to be carried out, there were a great many officers in the same position, and the Treasurer would be compelled to make them all alike. There was the harbour master at Rockhampton, who, he knew, was a great convenience to the department; if he were deprived of the fees for doing work, of course he would not do it. He (Mr. Beattie) would consider him a fool to do work as a shipwright's surveyor if he was not paid for it. It was not always easy to get men to do that kind of work; and as an instance of that he would mention a case that had come to his knowledge. They wanted an engineer and surveyor for Rockhampton; there was one small man, but they would not accept him, and there was another man whom they would have accepted, but he was too big; he could not get into the manhole of a boiler. What were they to do in such cases? If those reductions were going to be made, they would be put in the same difficulty in many cases. When they asked a man to take a position, they must have a thorough knowledge that he was qualified to do the work; but the number of competent men was limited. The harbour master at Cooktown was a clever man, but if they took those paltry fees away from him he would not perform the extra duties. What, then, were they going to do? He thought it was unfair to take the fees from such men, because the work for which they received fees was altogether outside their regular duties. He disagreed with the Treasurer when he said there were hundreds of people outside who would be glad to get into those offices. No doubt there were a number of men who would be willing to accept Government positions, and if they took them they would make a frightful mess of them. When they had got good men they ought to keep them. It was well known that there were departments in the service into which men had been pitched wholesale, simply because of their political influence, or because they were persistent and refused to take "No" for an answer. He did not want to see the Treasurer get his department in a mess, because it would be very uncomfortable for him. He hoped the hon. gentleman and the Committee would consider how inconvenient it would be if harbour masters and shipping masters, who were shipwrights' surveyors, were prevented from taking those paltry fees.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: They are allowed to retain their fees.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was aware of that; but when it was used as an argument in favour of reducing the salaries he thought it was unfair. What was fish for one ought not to be flesh for another.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. member seemed to have misunderstood the matter in one respect. He (Mr. Archer) did not vote against increasing the salary of the shipping master in Brisbane for the purpose of decreasing that salary. All

that he wanted was that the Act regarding fees should be carried out, and that the Estimates should show the actual amount that the man was receiving for his work. The hon. member said that the work done by the harbour masters was done out of office-hours. So was the work done by many other officers for which fees were paid. The fact was that some officers were to be paid fees for professional knowledge, and some were not. It was quite evident that Ministers were showing their unwillingness to carry out the full force of the Act passed during the present session. Why the harbour master at Cooktown was not to get fees the same as other officers, he did not understand. He thought the Treasurer had shown exceeding little judgment in the way he had dealt with that case. The whole thing would never be clear until the Act was fully enforced, and the Committee enabled to see on the Estimates what remuneration officers received.

Mr. STEVENSON said that the point of the discussion was whether the same treatment was to be meted out to all alike. They had passed an Act to do away with fees, and give compensation in lieu thereof; and the question was whether harbour masters were to get that compensation or not. Why were they not to be treated the same as clerks of petty sessions? Those officers earned their fees in office-hours. Why, therefore, should not harbour masters receive compensation as they did? It seemed to be making fish of one and flesh of the other.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH asked if the Treasurer had taken any steps with regard to a telegraph cable between Woody Island and Sandy Cape?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: There is a sum of £4,000 down on the Loan Estimates for the extension of the telegraph from Woody Island to Sandy Cape.

Mr. ARCHER asked why the Colonial Treasurer was going to cut down the salary of the harbour master at Cooktown? He was taking away the fees although that officer was still performing the duties.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member did not discriminate between the fees. The harbour masters and pilots were still allowed to retain fees for special services rendered to the public, such as ship-surveying; just as officers in the Customs received fees for overtime. The only deprivation of fees was where the harbour masters acted as assessors—in short, performed the duties of a marine board. The former practice of allowing them to send down vouchers for two guineas a sitting had been discontinued; because the Government considered that when a public servant discharged public duties during office-hours he had no right to extra remuneration. Police magistrates holding inquiries might just as well make an additional charge. For any work done by them in the way of overtime, the harbour masters could still retain their fees.

Mr. ARCHER said the question resolved itself into this: that the officer at Cooktown, who had always given perfect satisfaction to the Portmaster—at least so long as he (Mr. Archer) was connected with the office—was to lose part of his pay. Why should that be? He always did the work well.

Mr. CHUBB asked why a distinction was made between boatmen north of Bowen and those south? Commencing at Townsville going north they got £108; commencing at Port Denison going south they got £96. He thought the North was generally supposed to begin somewhere about Mackay. He saw no reason why a distinction should be made. The men had the same work to do, and living was just as expensive

at Bowen as at Townsville, if not more so. At Bowen the men had to put out in a boat for several miles, whilst at Townsville they were supplied with a steam launch. There was another matter with reference to boatmen at Bowen. They had to pay periodical visits—about once a month—to the lighthouse at Whitsunday Passage, and on those occasions they had to pay for their rations. The trips sometimes occupied ten days, and sometimes a fortnight, and when the men came back they were from 15s. to £1 out of pocket. On an average it cost them £6 per annum.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said if the hon. member for Bowen had been in his place earlier in the evening, or on the last evening when the Customs Estimates were under discussion, he would have heard the explanation about the boatmen. The boatmen had hitherto been paid at the rates asked for the present year. At one time it was thought desirable to increase the pay of boatmen in the North on account of the extra cost of living. Some of the boatmen, it had to be remembered, were provided with quarters, so that the amount on the Estimates did not in every case represent the actual remuneration. However, as he had said before, while not wishing to disturb the labour market for seamen, he should like to assimilate the rates and make up the Estimates on a uniform basis. Meanwhile, he would point out that several of the boatmen down for £96 or £108 were receiving £10 or £12 more for long-service allowance, to which those men were entitled who had been more than three years in the department. With regard to the question of boatmen having to find themselves when they proceeded from Bowen to Whitsunday Passage, it was customary for boatmen when in harbour to find themselves; but if they were detained any length of time away from the port their claim for compensation was always recognised. He would see that the men at Bowen were not placed at a disadvantage in that respect.

Mr. BLACK said he would point out to the Colonial Treasurer that the supposed bonus of £10 for boatmen who had been more than three years in the service was paid indiscriminately to those who received £108 as well as those who received £96. His objection was that £96 a year was insufficient for a man with a family. The house accommodation amounted to little or nothing, as the men had to be in attendance at all hours of the night and day. They were engaged in a dangerous occupation, and did not have the same leisure enjoyed by the ordinary sailors on the coast. He would like to know why a man employed at Townsville was better than one at Mackay—that the one should receive £108 and the other £96. He was perfectly prepared to accept the promise of the hon. gentleman, that in framing the next Estimates he would take the matter into consideration. That was the third occasion on which the Estimates had been before the Committee that he (Mr. Black) had referred to the matter—without result so far, and he was glad to hear that it would be attended to in future.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted, for the service of the year 1884-5, a sum not exceeding £16,586 to defray the expenses of Lighthouses and Lightships. The increase in salaries in that vote amounted to £30; in new appointments to £895; and in contingencies £500—representing a total increase of £1,425. Last year the vote was £15,157, and this year, as stated, £16,586. The increase to salaries were as followed:—In consequence of the Pile Lighthouse at the bar being erected, the lightship had been discontinued, and one of the lightkeepers had been advanced from £96 to £108. The appropriation of £379 for Double Island

Point was new. At the Burnett River one of the keepers, who was a boatman last year, received £10 additional. There was a new establishment at the Pine Islets, for which nine months' provision was asked—£336. At Cleveland Bay the lightkeeper and signalman received an increase from £108 to £120. And to Goode Island, Torres Straits, the lightkeeper and signalman formerly at Thursday Island had been transferred, with a salary of £108.

Mr. ARCHER asked the name of the place to which the old lightship at the bar was to be sent?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that it was sent to Normanton.

Mr. ARCHER asked if there was any intention of placing a lightship at the fairway buoy at Wide Bay? He knew that very often the buoy there could not be seen.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was informed that there was a floating beacon; and at night the approach was fully marked by a leading light.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted, for the service of the year 1884-5, a sum not exceeding £846 to defray the expenses of Powder Magazines. That vote was increased by £110 over that of last year, on account of a keeper being appointed to the new magazine at Rockhampton at a salary of £120. The number of the keepers at the Northern ports had been reduced in consequence from six last year to five at present, which was a saving of £10; so that the actual increase was only £110.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be voted, for the service of the year 1884-5, a sum not exceeding £250 to defray the expenses on Oyster Fisheries. The vote was the same as last year; and members were aware that the Inspector was also Examiner in Navigation.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be voted, for the service of the year 1884-5, a sum not exceeding £5,355 to defray the expenses of Harbours and Rivers. That vote exhibited an increase of £275, apportioned amongst the professional officers of the department. Hon. members might imagine that some of the increases were large, but he could assure them that that was not the case compared with similar increases that had been given as they had proceeded with the Estimates. The Government had found it difficult to secure competent professional skill for that work—particularly draftsmen—during the last two or three years. It was only right that men who had earned the confidence of the heads of departments, and whose places could not be filled, if they were vacated, at the same salaries, should receive some increase. The assistant engineer, Mr. J. B. Stanley, was increased from £400 to £450. Hon. members who knew the work Mr. Stanley had performed in connection with harbours and rivers would know that the proposed increase was well deserved. Mr. Stanley had been a long time in the service; he was a professional gentleman of very considerable attainments, and his work had been most satisfactorily accomplished at all times. When last year's Estimates were under consideration he (Mr. Dickson) was called to account for not having provided an increase for that officer. Then came the assistant engineer at Mackay, Mr. Baynes, a gentleman who had risen from a cadet in the office, and who was a thoroughly practical engineer and a superior draftsman. It was proposed to

increase his salary from £300 to £350. If that gentleman were to leave the office his place could not be filled by a professional gentleman equally competent to discharge his onerous duties under £400 or £500 a year. Then there was Mr. Hutchinson, the chief draftsman; his salary was proposed to be increased from £350 to £400. Two draftsmen were put down for an increase of £25 each; the younger of the two had risen from a cadet in the office, and had become not only a draftsman but a very fair surveyor. Those were the increases in the department, which amounted, as he had before stated, to £275.

Mr. STEVENS said that when the Estimates were passing through committee last session the Colonial Treasurer stated his intention of procuring some small dredges to be used on some of the rivers flowing into Moreton Bay. At present there was one clam-shell dredge on the Coomera, and it was doing remarkably good work; but the work done was necessarily not very rapid on account of its size. Those rivers drained a large extent of first-class country; the population on their banks was considerable, and would, no doubt, before very long become much greater. The great drawback under which the inhabitants suffered was the difficulty of getting their produce down the rivers, which could only be entered by small steamers and vessels at the top of high water. One or two additional dredges would be of the greatest benefit. He wished to know whether the Treasurer had carried out his expressed intention in that respect?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that provision had been made on the Loan Estimates for the construction of two clam-shell dredges. The one now at work was giving great satisfaction, but there was plenty of work for two others of the same type. He should be able to give more information on the matter when those Estimates came on for discussion.

Mr. BEATTIE asked what revenue had been received from the Dry Dock during last year?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that during the year 1883-4 the number of vessels using the dock was 53. The actual receipts were—on private account, £2,374 19s. 8d.; on Government account, £660 8s. 4d.; total, £3,035 8s. The working expenses amounted to £798 14s. 7d., leaving a surplus of over £2,200.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was, of course, glad to learn that the dock was successful, but it would be well that hon. members should know exactly the system under which it was worked. Seeing that the dock belonged to the Government, the charges should not be excessive on the one hand, or, on the other, so low as to interfere with private enterprise. It ought to be just such as would bring in a fair return for the service performed. His information was that the charges were a great deal less than in New South Wales, thereby interfering with the enterprise of people who had built slips, etc., for the convenience for the general public. The charges for private slips were also lower here than in New South Wales. But this was the point on which he wanted enlightenment: There was a regulation in the "book of management" that the dock should not be opened under a certain price; and he was informed that on small vessels wanting to make use of the dock differential charges were made. If that were the case it was not only a breach of the printed regulations, but it interfered with the enterprise of private people who owned slips and carried on the business of providing ship accommodation for repairs. He hoped the Colonial Treasurer would tell him whether his information was correct or not. If differential charges were allowed to be made there was something very wrong in the management of the dock.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he agreed with the hon. member that a Government ought not to interfere with private enterprise, and if what the hon. member complained of had really been done he should long ago have expressed his disapproval of it. But he was informed that such was not the case. The minimum charge was on vessels of 200 tons, and vessels under that tonnage had to pay the same. He could not say the exact rate, but he could disabuse the hon. member's mind of the idea that differential charges were made, thus placing owners of private slips at a disadvantage. He was informed that the rates charged were higher than those charged by the owners of private slips.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was very glad to hear that. All he could say was, that some time ago a deputation of gentlemen waited on him, and asked him to introduce the matter to the attention of the Colonial Treasurer. He made the excuse that the Treasurer was too busy at the time, but promised to bring it under his notice. The information just given was certainly at variance with what he had been told, but he would draw the Treasurer's attention to the subject again after getting further information.

Mr. BLACK said he should like some information from the Minister in reference to the Mackay harbour improvement vote. The total vote amounted to £36,266, and it was reduced in 1882 to £32,507, and there now remained £21,000. He understood that that sum was nearly expended, and would like to know how it had been expended, and what work was now going on?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the works which had been going on at Mackay embraced the construction of the railway wharf, the bonded store wharf, the bonded store, and the continuation of the embankment. A sum of £20,000 was the balance on the 30th June, and it was supposed that sum would nearly suffice to continue the embankment. A large amount had been set down on the Loan Estimates, and although the Engineer had not decided what the cost of the further improvements would be, it was the intention of the Government to see that the permanent improvements at Mackay were carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers. The hon. gentleman need not be under any misapprehension that there was not sufficient money to proceed with the works at Mackay.

Mr. BLACK asked if he was to understand that the railway wharf, the bonded store, and the bonded store wharf were paid for out of the vote?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, in the meantime they were, but the vote would be entirely replenished by transfer when it was decided what was to be carried out.

Mr. BLACK asked how the transfer was to be effected. There was certainly £60,000 on the Loan Estimates for the improvement of the river at Mackay, but he did not see any vote down for replenishing the money, which appeared to have been taken from the improvement of the harbour for the benefit of the Railway Department. He did not know whether it was usual to spend money voted for one purpose on entirely different works.

Mr. BEATTIE said there was another matter with reference to Mackay that he should be glad to get some information about. He might say that he was not positive whether it was a Government wharf or a private wharf, but he would give the Committee what information he had. A vessel went to Mackay some little time ago to

load at one of the wharves. The wharf had been constructed some time previously, and there had been in the meantime a little fresh in the river, or, perhaps, a high spring tide. It disturbed the bottom and washed away some of the sand contiguous to the wharf. The vessel hauled in, and at low water she sat down on the ends of some piles that were simply sawn off and lying alongside, and which put a hole through her. In the morning, when she was nearly loaded with sugar, the accident was fortunately discovered in time. The sugar had to be taken out of the vessel, and she was now coming down to Brisbane in consequence of the neglect of someone in the construction of the wharf. If the wharf was Government property a serious blunder had been made on the part of the constructor in allowing the piles to drop down alongside. The owner of the vessel, who was also captain of her, told the insurance company that unless they would take the risk of her being brought down from Mackay he would have to abandon her. That was the information he received, and the accident had evidently been caused by the most gross carelessness on the part of those who constructed the wharf. He did not know whether the Treasurer had heard of the affair, but, at any rate, a cargo of sugar was nearly being destroyed; the insurance company would have lost a large sum of money, and the captain of the vessel lost all his time in coming down to Brisbane to get the vessel repaired. If it was true that the wharf was constructed under Government supervision, it showed an amount of gross carelessness that deserved the most severe censure.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the accident referred to by the hon. member did not occur at a Government wharf at all; something of the sort did occur further up the river, but nothing of the kind happened at a Government wharf. Regarding the transfer the hon. member for Mackay spoke of, the railway wharf was being constructed out of the Harbours and Rivers vote temporarily, but when the wharf was completed a transfer would be made from the Railway Loan vote.

Mr. BLACK asked if a plan had at last been matured for improving the harbour at Mackay?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers had had his attention directed to it, and he (the Colonial Treasurer) was not without hope that in referring to the matter in connection with the Loan Estimates he would be able to make some further announcement.

Mr. BLACK said the Engineer had had his attention directed for the last five years towards maturing the scheme. He hoped it would not take as long to carry it out.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he would like to call the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to the condition of the Brisbane River. In many places, especially at the Hamilton reach, the bank had been washed away at least thirty feet. He hoped some provision would be made in the Loan Estimates to prevent that washing away in the future.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there was ample provision for making loans to local bodies, under which category such a work as that would come.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was not satisfied with the vote. It was not the first time he had complained of the large salary given to the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers. He thought a salary of £1,200 was too much. He would not like to see commerce interfered with by having an inferior man; but he thought the salary was too high, and if he could get any hon. member

to assist him he would move that it be reduced by £200. He had tried that before; but he had found whenever he tried to reduce high salaries that he might as well have saved himself the trouble. In that House—and in fact in every House in the colonies—any attempt made to reduce large salaries always met with defeat. He did not object to the increase to the assistant engineer and draftsmen, and by taking off £200 from the Chief Engineer it would help to meet those increases. He believed the assistant officers could do the work without the Chief Engineer at all. Unless, however, there was some expression of opinion in favour of the reduction of the salary he would not be prepared to move it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he hoped the hon. member would not meet with any support. That officer was one who had given great satisfaction in all the public works which he had carried out. If it was remembered that the Chief Railway Engineer received a very much higher salary, it could not be said that Mr. Nisbet was overpaid. Mr. Nisbet laboured under this disadvantage, that all his salary was in one item. If it was scattered over different departments it would escape comment.

Mr. FERGUSON said he should not support the hon. member for Ipswich. He considered that department one of the most important in the colony. Its value had been shown by the way in which work had been carried out. Let them look at the Brisbane River. Large ships and steamers now came up to the wharves which had to stop in the roadway a few years ago; and the hon. member for Maryborough had stated that ships drawing seventeen and eighteen feet of water now went up to the Maryborough wharf. He (Mr. Ferguson) also knew that the works in the Fitzroy River were going on very satisfactorily. If the Treasurer had not increased the salaries of some of the officers, he (Mr. Ferguson) should have found great fault with the Estimates, because he knew that those officers deserved increases. There were clerks in other departments receiving quite as high salaries as the professional men and mechanics in that department; and therefore he considered that the Estimates were not at all too high.

Mr. BLACK said the Treasurer need not flatter himself that hon. members would not be able to find out what salaries officials got, as they were getting into the way of analysing the Estimates, and they would soon know what every officer got. He had not intended to reflect in any way on the Chief Engineer in what he had previously said. That officer, he considered, did his duty in a thoroughly efficient manner. When he (Mr. Black) referred to the tardiness regarding the Mackay harbour, it was the Government he meant. He was confident that if they were sincere, and instructed the Engineer to go on with the plans of improving that harbour, it would be done at once.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he did not agree with the hon. member for Ipswich as to the salary of the Chief Engineer. That officer, as they knew, left a lucrative position in the old country to come to Queensland; and instead of being overpaid he was rather underpaid. He remembered that not long since the salary of the Engineer to the Liverpool Dock was increased by about £2,500. He was receiving £5,000 and the salary was raised to £8,000, or about that. He (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) felt humiliated to think that he was a member of a House in which there was to be found one member to cavil at a salary of £1,200 a year for a gentleman whose brains were devoted to the development of the commercial

waterways of this great colony. He was sorry that the hon. member had made those observations. He thought the salary was a very moderate one, and he was in hopes that in two or three years Mr. Nisbet would deserve a substantial increase.

Mr. STEVENSON said that Mr. Nisbet was in the gallery, and he would not be able to stand much more of that sort of talk.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was not going to fall into the same fault as the hon. member for Moreton had done; but all he could say was, that if ever the hon. gentleman led a Government it would be an expensive one. He compared Liverpool with Queensland: there was not the slightest analogy between them. The Chief Engineer received a very good salary, and it put him in mind of an anecdote which was *apropos*, of a sailor meeting the Port Admiral of Plymouth and not paying proper respect to him. The Admiral asked him if he knew who he was. The sailor replied that he did not. "I am the Port Admiral." "Well," replied the sailor, "all I can say is that you have a very good billet, and had better take care of it." He always liked to give credit where credit was due. There had been a great deal of "high-falutin'" about what had been done to the Brisbane River. But what had they done before Mr. Nisbet came? Did not they, under the authority of the Portmaster, to whom an increase was given, work their dredges and enable vessels drawing 16½ feet to come up, while now there was water enough for vessels drawing 18½ feet? They had cut Francis Channel, and it was only within the last two and a-half or three years that they had cut the straight cutting. Captain Heath wanted that cutting made twenty years ago. When Mr. Nisbet came out the Government said, "There is money at your hand—make a port of this;" and he had done so. He gave credit to Mr. Nisbet; but they should also give credit to those who preceded him. Had not they had Captain Rose, who drew the plans of the dry dock? None of those works had been completed yet; but of course the Engineer required time, and when they were completed there was no doubt they would reflect great credit upon him. He was very glad to hear from the hon. member for Rockhampton that the Fitzroy was so much better than it used to be: when he was at Rockhampton in 1858, vessels drawing ten feet could go up the river; when there was not a house in the place; and he had been told by some old captains that they did not see much of an improvement there now. However, he was glad that the hon. member for Rockhampton was satisfied with the progress that had been made, and he trusted that it would become a great port. There had been a good deal said about the Mary River, which he looked upon as one of the best rivers in Queensland. They ought to be proud of the Brisbane River. He was talking to a gentleman who had lately returned from England, who told him that when he reached Brisbane his heart felt rejoiced when he looked upon their beautiful river; he had not seen anything in England to compare with it. They all knew what those dry harbours were along the coasts of England and Scotland. They had reason to be proud of the Brisbane River, and the Mary River, and he hoped, also, of the Fitzroy; but it would cost a lot of money. He was not going to support the hon. member in reducing the salary of the Chief Engineer; but he would say to that gentleman what the sailor said to the port admiral.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH asked why they had not had the report from the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers? It was one of the most interesting reports they had,

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he hoped the report would be laid on the table in about ten days—some time next week.

Mr. MIDDLEY said he for one did not feel disposed to let the remarks of the hon. member for Moreton pass without protest. It reminded him of the proverb, "Lightly come by, lightly go." Outsiders were apt to think that professional men earned their money more easily than non-professional men, and perhaps parted with it much more easily and liberally. He did not rise to say anything against the salary of the Chief Engineer; but, at the same time, he considered it a good salary for the position. There seemed to be too much disposition to make that office unduly costly for the number of men who were engaged in it and the work they did. If they looked over the Estimates, he did not think they would find another string of increases such as they found in that office. Every officer, excepting the first and last, on the list, received considerable and substantial increases. The Estimates did not fulfil the requirements and promises made last year, and he trusted that, when Parliament met again, all the information that was required would be supplied in one book and be available and readable at a glance. There ought to be a column showing when the last increases were given; and when there was an increase given, as in the fifth item in that department, it ought to be shown on which salary the increase was given. The probabilities were that in the item he referred to the increase was given to the man who received £300, while the lesser paid man received nothing. All that information should be given to the Committee, and he thought that as those men received good salaries for the services given, the Committee might very fairly and justly knock off those increases. It would not do always to take professional men at their own valuation. He was a professional man himself—a professional buyer of corn and chaff—and he could not get that valuation on his services. He was sure hon. members who did not belong to the professions of engineering or law could not get anything like the estimate of their merits that was put on the services of those who were engaged in those favoured professions. He had already been taken to task by some of his constituents for not doing his duty in that respect as faithfully as he promised, and had also been upbraided by gentlemen of very high position in the Committee for a similar dereliction of duty, so he would propose that the vote be reduced by £275.

In answer to Mr. ALAND,

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the two assistant engineers and the chief draftsman were each down for an increase of £50, and, of the two draftsmen at £300 and £200, the latter was down for an increase of £50. He had risen from being a cadet in the office, and had also become a surveyor. The £175 and £100 for two clerks in the office were in each case an increase of £25. He had already explained that the increases proposed were for professional gentlemen, because the Government had always great difficulty in finding professional men, such as draftsmen and surveyors. If those gentlemen were to leave the service, their places could not be filled by equally competent men at the same salaries. He thought the hon. member's motion was extremely unfair, and arose from insufficient knowledge of the circumstances. Some of the officers had been placed in positions of increased responsibility. The assistant engineer at Mackay was superintending some very heavy bridgework, and the improvement of the harbour generally—the extension of the embankment, the construction of wharves, and all that sort of thing. Others had also been removed to positions of

increased responsibility, and surely that should be recognised. He could assure the hon. member that he had considered well the propriety of giving the increases before submitting them to Parliament.

Mr. MIDGLEY said that throughout the debates on the Estimates they had been almost powerless to touch the increases. The representatives of the people were supposed to have an unmistakable control of those matters, but they were allowing them to be taken entirely in hand by the Government. There was always some reason urged for the increases—a man had been a long time in the service, or he was a professional man, or his place could not be filled, or something or other. Some of the salaries were above what the duties and the nature of the work justified. They should ask themselves what was a fair thing to give a man, and give it to him. With regard to assistant engineers, he knew a little of that class of men, and their places could easily be filled at far less cost to the country. The colony and the old country were simply overrun with engineers and professional men.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said he hoped the hon. member would not persist in his amendment. It was certainly the duty of representatives to criticise estimates; but they should do it fairly, and with discrimination. The hon. member's proposition showed no discrimination at all. A gentleman had been promoted from the post of draftsman in the head office to the responsible post of engineer in charge of important harbour works, and the hon. member proposed to strike off the increase of salary. A young man had completed a deserving apprenticeship, and was appointed as clerk in the office, and the hon. member proposed to strike off his increase. If the hon. member wished to use any discrimination, he would propose to strike off the increases from the officers separately. If he wished to diminish the salary of the boy from £100 to £75, let him propose it separately. With respect to the other officers, it was simply a matter of opinion whether it was more advantageous to retain the services of a good officer, who had proved his worth by many years of loyal service, or to get one who would simply do his work in a perfunctory manner.

Mr. BEATTIE said he did not agree with the motion of the hon. member for Fassifern to reduce those particular salaries; but the hon. member had been led up to it by the hon. Colonial Treasurer, who had declared earlier in the evening that there were hundreds of men who would accept office under the Government.

The PREMIER: Not professional men.

Mr. BEATTIE said they had been speaking of seafaring men who had passed their examination and got certificates.

The PREMIER: They are not engineers.

Mr. BEATTIE: If they were, they would be better looked after. The hon. Treasurer had said that there were plenty of men who would be glad to come in and get the salaries they were condemning as very low. He would ask the hon. member for Fassifern to withdraw his amendment; because where a young man had served his time in the office, and had been promoted through efficiency and so forth, it would be a great pity to prevent him getting a proper increase of salary, and so rising gradually from one position in his office to another. He (Mr. Beattie) had always thought that the assistant engineer was paid too low a salary. The difference between the salary of the first and the second engineer was so great that he could

not think for one moment of touching the salary of the second. He hoped the hon. member would not press his amendment.

Mr. SALKELD said he hoped the hon. member would not persevere with his amendment, although if he did he should think it his duty to vote with him. His reason was that there had been increases all through the Estimates, and that the present was not the best case to single out for a reduction. He would have been more satisfied had there been a reduction in some others. He believed they had been gradually saddled with a very expensive Government staff all over the colony. Whilst the colony was progressive and prosperous they might not feel it so much, but he was persuaded that if a great depression were to occur there would be a loud outcry in regard to the high salaries of Government officials and the increased number of them. He could see that in the present mood of the Committee the principle of economy was not sufficiently represented, and the only thing was to wait till there was a better opinion on that point before an attempt was made to prevent the Civil Service being overmanned with too expensive servants. He had spoken on the same question last session, and he felt quite as strongly as ever that the Government had taken a wrong step when they decreased the hours of the Civil servants. It was, he thought, pampering one class of the community at the expense of the great mass of the people. The hon. member for Rockhampton had spoken of the Fitzroy River, and said that there had been a great increase in traffic there in consequence of the money that had been spent on retaining walls, etc. He (Mr. Salkeld) had been at Rockhampton several times, and had to wait an hour and a-half in coming down the river in a coasting steamer before they could get off the Flats. Now, sixteen years ago, when he visited Rockhampton in an A.S.N. Company's steamer, they went up and down the river with ease. He was informed that there was not an appreciable difference in the river during the last dozen years, and the master of the steamer in which he came down last said that there was no improvement in the river. It might be that the improvements commenced had not been fully completed, and that the benefit of the improvements would not be realised until they had been completed. But he gave the opinion of the people as he got it as to the actual state of the river.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he would plead guilty to the implied charge of a degree of indiscretion in the amendment he had moved. He had no wish to keep down small salaries, and he would withdraw the amendment he had moved, with the intention of moving another.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. MIDGLEY moved that the vote be reduced by £150—£50 each on the salaries of the assistant engineer, the assistant engineer at Mackay, and the chief clerk.

Mr. FERGUSON said he would point out that in some of the Estimates that had been passed there were clerks and second clerks who received as much salary as was now put down for professional men. He believed that if those gentlemen were to leave the service of Queensland and go to New South Wales or Victoria they would receive larger salaries. For that class of men Queensland especially had always paid a lower scale of salaries, and if they continued to do that they would never get a high class of engineers. He hoped the reduction would not be insisted on.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that the hon. member for Rockhampton had used as an argument for giving the advance to those three

officers that they had passed Estimates for larger salaries to clerks and others. That argument meant that as they had done wrong they should continue to do wrong; that as they had voted large salaries they should continue to vote large salaries. They must not be led to make a stand like that. Personally he did not like to reduce salaries such as those under discussion; he was always in favour of raising small salaries. But they had failed in reducing the salary of the engineer-in-chief, and as a protest against the desire to increase salaries all round he should vote for the amendment.

The PREMIER said he must again remind the hon. gentleman that he was showing a great want of discrimination in his amendments. He was not anxious to insist upon maintaining increases to any particular officers; but in the amendment now made, singling out individuals, he saw a very great injustice. In the case of the assistant engineer, the officer who held that post was paid at the rate of £500 a year until 1882, when the present officer was appointed to it at a reduced salary of £400. It was now proposed to increase the salary to £450, which was still £50 less than the previous occupant received. The second officer had been promoted from draftsman to take charge of the important harbour works at Mackay; he had been placed in a new and responsible position, with the usual accompaniment of an increase of pay.

Mr. STEVENSON said he could not understand the hon. member for Fassifern always coming in at the end of a vote, and pretending to make a show of economy by moving the reduction of two or three votes after all the others had passed. The hon. member did the same thing the other night, when, after a lot of increases had been voted in the Colonial Secretary's department, he wanted to reduce the salary of some subordinate officer at Mackay. The hon. member had been away all the evening, had taken no interest in the estimate, and now, at the very last vote, he came in with a pretended show of economy, and expected hon. members to support him. He did not believe the hon. member would secure much support, and he would strongly advise him to withdraw his amendment. If the hon. member would come at the beginning of the sitting, and retain his seat all through the evening, he would be in a better position to say what increases ought and what ought not to be given.

Mr. BLACK said he had only one word to add to what had fallen from the hon. member for Normanby, and that was that the hon. member for Fassifern seemed to have a special predilection to try to reduce Mackay votes. It was a most extraordinary coincidence that the other night the hon. member turned up after they had been at work for three or four hours, and made a rush at the first vote he heard put. No one had more persistently advocated a decrease in the higher salaries than himself, but he was certainly not going to vote with the hon. member on the present occasion. If the hon. member would attend and assist them to pass the votes through the Committee economically, they would be glad to assist him; but it was not fair that an hon. member, who did not take a very active part in carrying out those principles of economy which he advocated outside the House, should waste the time of hon. members as he had now done on two occasions.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he had been present nearly the whole of the sitting, and had certainly spent a great deal more time in the House during the session than the hon. member for Normanby. It was rather hard to be accused of not having done more, when one had done something. He imagined that it would not altogether become

him—and the hon. member for Mackay would be the first to say so—to be always taking the lead in the attacks on the Estimates. At the same time he was willing to bear his share in the duties and responsibilities attaching to his position there, and should persist in putting his amendment to a division as a vindication of his right, and as a protest against those all-round increases in that department.

Mr. STEVENSON said that if the hon. member had explained before that it was owing to his extreme modesty that he had not done his duty before, hon. members would have had more sympathy with him.

Amendment put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 6.

Messrs. Midgley, Macfarlane, Bailey, Salkeld, White, and Aland.

NOES, 28.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Sheridan, Dutton, Griffith, Miles, Dickson, Chubb, Rutledge, Archer, Norton, Black, Macdonald-Paterson, Foxton, Macrossan, Stevenson, Nelson, Jordan, Isambert, Foote, Smyth, Buckland, Mellor, Jessop, Lissner, Palmer, Beattie, Ferguson, and Stevens.

Question resolved in the negative.

Question as originally moved put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) moved that the sum of £9,240 be granted for salaries, Lands Department. The total increase was £50, made up by two increases, one to the accountant and one to the clerk, of £25 each. The accountant was a very old officer in the service, having been appointed in 1865, and he was a very competent and efficient officer. As far as the salary was concerned, he did not think £450 was an excessive salary for a position of such importance, and the clerk (Mr. Byrne), who entered the service in 1873, also deserved his increase. He was in charge of the occupancy and sales branch, and was still engaged in that department; but as occupancy had fallen off a great deal, he had to assist in the selection branch.

Mr. ALAND said the reason given for the increases was that those gentlemen had been a long time in the service of the Government; but he presumed it had answered their purpose to remain in the service of the Government, and their employers had considered them properly paid for their services. He noticed in that, as well as in the other estimates, that the increase were all in favour of those who were receiving the higher salaries. The clerks at £100 a year were very likely married men with large families, the same as a boatman they had been discussing that afternoon, and why should they not get increases of £25 each? He should oppose all increases where the salary was over £300 per annum; not that he thought £300 was enough or too much to give to a good officer, but he could not see why the highly paid men should be increased and the lower paid men left out in the cold. He believed it was the men who received the lower salaries who were really doing the work of the departments. The lower down a man was the more he had to work, and the more work he really did. The men who left their offices between 1 and 2 were men with the high salaries. Who were the men they saw "doing the block" in their "lah-di-dah" style in Queen street, but those who were receiving the highest remuneration? He moved that the vote be reduced by the sum of £50.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not think the two officers in question could be charged with having shirked their duties or having put the work on the shoulders of the younger men. The argument of the hon. member

that a man getting £100 a year ought to receive an increase was of very little account. Did he mean to say that because a man got £100 a year he ought to have an advance whether he deserved it or not? A man receiving £400 a year might be very cheap at the price, and the man with only £100 very dear at the price. A man who had been twenty years in the service was not very highly paid at £450. He was a thoroughly efficient and competent accountant, he (the Minister for Lands) believed, for although he was not much of a judge of a good accountant, he took the word of those who knew. To a man who had the reputation of being such an efficient accountant, and who had been twenty years in the service, £450 was not a very great deal to attain to.

Mr. ALAND said they had heard a great deal about the length of time some of those men had been in the service, and that therefore they were entitled to some advance in salary. They had heard that so often that it induced one to inquire whether there should not be some definite basis of increase upon which they could go. How that could be managed without the aid of a proper Civil Service Act he did not know. He would be the last to underpay anyone, as he would be the last to overpay a man, but what he contended was, that if those increases must be, they should be decided upon a proper basis.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was not going to support the hon. member in voting for the reduction, because it was very hard indeed to say whose salary should be reduced and whose should not. The increases must be left a great deal in the hands of Ministers themselves, but there was a great deal in what the hon. member said: that the salaries ought to be arranged on a proper basis. The office, and not the officer, ought to get the salary, and then if a man was not fit for one position he could be given another. There ought to be some basis to go upon. As it was, some hon. members might object to increases, and perhaps be doing an injustice to men who deserved them.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. ALAND said he did not call for a division, because he could see his amendment would not be carried. That was the last reduction he should move on the Estimates.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not see the use of the hon. member making an amendment if he did not call for a division. He did not know what support he might have got.

Mr. ALAND: The "Ayes" were very feeble.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like to ask the Minister for Lands whether he could name the gentlemen who were to be appointed members of the land board. A promise was made that the names would be given by the time the Bill left that House. The Bill had left the House, and gone a considerable way through committee in the other House; and he should like to know whether the hon. gentleman had made up his mind on the subject, and would tell the Committee who the men were.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was not prepared to say whether he or the Government had made up their minds as to the men were who were to be appointed. He thought it was rather premature to do so at present.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked why the hon. gentleman thought it was rather premature? The Bill authorising a land board had passed that House; and the hon. gentleman having made a distinct promise that the men would be named, why was it now premature?

The PREMIER: The Bill has not become law yet.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it would be too late when it became law. Until it became law the House was master of the situation; but after that they had nothing to do with it. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had said that the names would be given when the Bill passed that House, and he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) was surprised that it was allowed to leave the House without the promise having been fulfilled by the names being inserted. It could not be difficult for the Government to make up their minds. He could see nothing premature at all about it.

The PREMIER said he did not remember making any distinct promise that the names would be given before the Bill left the House. What he said was that as soon as the Government had made up their minds they would tell the House; and that, until the functions of the board were known, it was no use offering the appointment to anybody. According to what he heard, the board would have no functions if the Bill remained in the shape some people desired it to be. Of course, he did not know; but he anticipated that the Bill would become law very much in the shape that it left that House. He would be very sorry to see it become law in the shape some people wished it.

Mr. SMYTH said it was to be hoped that the Government, in selecting the members of the board, would not choose any broken-down politicians without any principles whatever. It was common rumour about town that one individual, who was bringing a lot of influence from members of the Upper House, was trying to get a position in the Lands Office. He was a man who never paid his debts, and if he was put into a position he never would pay his debts wherever he went.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he supposed they must look upon the hon. member for Gympie as special adviser to the Government. It struck him that instead of appointing a broken-down politician—whatever that might mean—they would appoint a live politician in that House—perhaps the hon. member himself might be one member of the board.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £11,525 be granted for salaries and contingencies in connection with the Sale of Land. There was an increase of £885 in the vote made up in this way: There was £350 for the Blackall land agent; but £315 was the salary he received last year—£240 under pastoral occupation as recording officer at Blackall, and £75 as land commissioner under that vote. Then there was £25 for a boy as clerk employed in the office of the commissioner at Bowen; and £300 for a land commissioner at Cardwell and Ingham. The work there had been done by a land agent, but in a very lax manner; and now Mr. Warren had been appointed commissioner at £300 and £100 travelling allowance. Then there was a fresh district formed outside that, including portions of Cardwell, the head quarters of which would be Geraldton; and there would be two land agents each receiving £25. The next increase was to the land agent at Dalby, from £125 to £150, and there was an increase of £25 to the junior clerk in the office in Ipswich, Mr. Montgomery, who had been receiving £75 before. The land agent and assistant land commissioner at Toowoomba was to receive an increase of £50. The land commissioner there, Mr. Hume, was obliged to be absent a good deal, and there was no one left to represent him in his absence, so it was thought desirable to appoint an assistant land commissioner at £375. The next item was a lad who had been in the office there for some months for nothing, and it was proposed to give him a salary

of £25. There was another item of £300 for travelling and incidental expenses of Inspecting Commissioner, and a small additional sum for the preparation of leases.

Mr. CHUBB said he would ask the Minister for Lands whether the clerk in the Brisbane office, who received £60 a year, was a boy also?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; he is only a lad.

Mr. CHUBB asked why a boy in the Brisbane office should receive £60, when the boy in the office at Bowen only received £25? Where was the difference? If they were all boys they were all entitled to the same salaries. It appeared there was to be a distinction drawn in favour of Brisbane.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that in Brisbane the work of a clerk was continuous, and he had to remain during the whole of the office-hours, while at Bowen, and at Toowoomba he expected, they would not be required to be continuously in the office. There was no doubt but that the boy in the Brisbane office would have a great deal more to do; besides, he might be called a young man, while the others were merely lads who had been taken on and had served for some months without pay.

Mr. JESSOP said he would call the attention of the Minister for Lands to some peculiarities. He found that the land agent in Ipswich received a salary of £300 a year, the land agent at Mackay received £250, at Warwick £300, at Townsville £300, but at Nanango he received only £50; and at Dalby £150, including a rise of £25 per annum. If the Minister for Lands would take the trouble to look through the number of selections, he would find that Dalby was perhaps one of the largest selecting districts, and the land agent there had perhaps more work than any others, except those in Toowoomba, Ipswich, and Brisbane; and he questioned very much whether they had 25 per cent. more. He did not object to those officers receiving more salary, but it was hardly fair that a man with a family should have to keep himself respectably on £150 a year, when he had as much or more work than other officers getting double the salary. At the time that £125 was the salary, the office was filled by a young man without a family, and who did his work so well that it was considered advisable to promote him, and he was now land commissioner at Townsville, the duties appertaining to which office he ably fulfilled. He trusted that the Minister for Lands would take the matter into his consideration.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the work in the lands office at Dalby had fallen off within the last two or three years. He found that the duties there were being performed by an officer at £125, and very efficiently too, so he was promoted to Townsville. Mr. Goodfellow had performed the duties of land agent at Dalby for £125 a year, and the salary had since been advanced to £150, although the work had fallen off.

Mr. JESSOP said he questioned very much whether the work had fallen off. Since the new Land Bill had been introduced, everybody had been rushing to the lands office to secure every piece of land possible, in view of becoming freeholders; not only to the Dalby office, but to every other office. Mr. Goodfellow, the previous officer, was a young man who grew up in the office, and was simply waiting for promotion, and he was glad that he had deserved it and received it. But when a married man occupied the office, with equally as much work, it was hardly fair. The Dalby district was one of the largest in the colonies.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. member seemed to be in favour of not employing married men, and he agreed with him. If he (Mr. Archer) wanted a position on the board that was going to be formed, he considered he would be worth more than a married man, because he had no domestic ties to keep him away from work. With regard to the land agent at Dalby, he was to get an increase, and the Minister for Lands had, he thought, treated him very well. He would like to know from the Minister for Lands whether as a rule the land agents who received £50 a year were clerks of petty sessions.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said some were police magistrates, some clerks of petty sessions, and some in the northern districts sub-collectors of customs.

Mr. JESSOP said the hon. member for Blackall had misunderstood his reference to married men. His argument was that there were several men who received £300 per annum for doing certain work while another was only paid £150. He did not see why that should be so. It did not matter, so far as that was concerned, whether a man was married or single; but if he had a wife and family he wanted all the salary he could get. If the Minister for Lands would look at the statistics in his office, he would find that selection in the Dalby district was going on vigorously.

Mr. PALMER said he did not know how the Minister for Lands could reconcile his argument in two cases. He had said the salary of £150 was enough at Dalby, because the land was all sold in the neighbourhood; but the land must have been all sold in the neighbourhood of Toowoomba years before, and the land agent there was to have an increase of £50 on his salary, making it £375. He thought Toowoomba must stand very high in the opinion of the Minister for Lands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there was a great difference between the amount of work done at Toowoomba and Dalby. The greater portion of the selections in the Dalby district were grazing areas, and the examination to see that the conditions were performed was very much easier than in the case of agricultural areas. One man could get through five times as much work in the Dalby district as in the Toowoomba district. He did not mean to say that the Dalby land agent was well and thoroughly paid for the duties, but he maintained that, considering £125 was paid for the work for three or four years before, and considering also the decrease in the amount of work since, £25 was a fair rate of increase. He was a young man who had not undertaken duties of that kind before, and £150 was a fair salary.

Mr. NORTON said he understood that a large number of those officers were holding other appointments; he was quite sure many of them were in receipt of pay for other services, which were not put in the schedule. At Clermont, for instance, the land commissioner was down for £60 a year, and the land agent for £50. Surely they were getting more than that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the land commissioner at Clermont was the police magistrate, and the land agent the clerk of petty sessions.

Mr. ARCHER said he saw £300 down for the travelling expenses of the Inspecting Commissioner. He saw by the schedule that he was allowed 21s. a day when travelling on duty. Was he to receive the 21s. a day as well as the £300?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the £300 was a provision to meet the amount of the travelling allowance. The commissioner would continue to receive only 21s. a day. He might point out that for that 21s. the commissioner had to find himself horses and equipment.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Minister for Lands whether Mr. Golden had to provide horses, etc., out of the £300 for his flying trip through New South Wales, and his rabbit inspection?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. STEVENS said that in that case he was not at all surprised at the very meagre report that he had brought up; he did not think that any man ever sent on such an important mission ever took such a short time, or drew up such a miserable report on it. He trusted the Government would tell that gentleman to go back to New South Wales during the recess, and examine thoroughly into the progress of the rabbits.

Mr. BLACK said he found that Mr. Golden was Inspecting Commissioner for the Northern District. He would like to know how far he had succeeded in getting north, as inspector; and if he had that work to do, how he could get time to go down to New South Wales?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that his duties had not carried him far northward. He had been almost wholly employed in the neighbourhood of Dalby, except during the time he was sent down to New South Wales. However meagre Mr. Golden's report might have been as to length, there was sufficient in it to enable him (the Minister for Lands) to form a very fair conclusion as to the state of the rabbit pest in New South Wales, and a much clearer one than might have been given by some gentlemen had they been employed on such a mission. From beginning to end Mr. Golden had confined himself as a thoroughly practical man to the condition of things he found, and he had left on his (the Minister for Lands') mind a clear impression as to how the rabbit pest had extended, and how New South Wales was dealing with the rabbits. He had come to the conclusion that New South Wales was keeping the rabbits down, and that if they were doing that then Queensland was in no immediate danger from them.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was sorry to say that he believed the Minister for Lands had, through that report, come to a wrong conclusion as to the rabbits. It was a very extraordinary thing that any member who had gone south and consulted practical men there had come back with a different impression from that of Mr. Golden. He (Mr. Stevenson) had made it his business, when down south, to ask some practical men who knew what the ravages of the rabbits had been both in Victoria and New South Wales, and he could assure the Committee that the report Mr. Golden brought back was very different from what he had heard. He was sorry that the Minister for Lands had laid any stress on Mr. Golden's report at all. He did not believe Mr. Golden understood the subject, and his report was a very misleading one and calculated to do a great deal of harm to Queensland. He hoped the Minister for Lands would send someone more capable than Mr. Golden to find out what was going on in the other colonies, if he was going to make such a report a guide to his action in this colony. He also hoped the Minister for Lands would not treat the matter lightly and not wait till the rabbits got in, before devising measures to keep them down. He was perfectly satisfied if they once let the rabbits into this colony they would never keep them

down. He hoped Mr. Golden was much better at his other work than in getting up reports on rabbits.

Mr. NORTON said he had read Mr. Golden's report very carefully in regard to New South Wales, and he could not say that he found any fault with the report itself, though he did with the conclusions at which Mr. Golden had arrived. So far as the descriptions of what Mr. Golden had gone through and what he saw were concerned, they were all very reasonable, and put in such a way that anyone could understand it. But he (Mr. Norton) could not agree with his conclusions, nor those of the Minister for Lands—namely, that the rabbits were being kept down in New South Wales; because they had the fact brought out in the report of the New South Wales officer—Mr. Bruce—that although the rabbits were being kept down, still in his time they had advanced between 200 and 300 miles northwards. Hon. members must bear in mind that there had been a bad drought down there, and that that alone had interfered with the progress of the rabbits northwards; while, during the drought, farmers would be able to operate more largely in keeping them down. It was then the fact, that the rabbits had advanced a long stage during the last two or three years, from the southern parts of New South Wales towards Queensland. It was of no use to trifle with a matter like that; because when once rabbits got into a land they took possession of it, and if they got once to Queensland they would not be able to get rid of them. If they got on to the Downs, where the best farming was, they would do more harm than in any other part of the colony; and there would be such an outcry as to make people sensible of the great harm they were doing. The rabbits were advancing, but he (Mr. Norton) could not see what the Government of this colony could do in the meantime, as long as they were not in Queensland; they could not go into New South Wales. The question was what action the Government would take if the rabbits crossed the border. It appeared to him that their best course was to adopt some scheme which might be available when the rabbits came here; and so far as the evidence went they would soon be on the border.

Mr. STEVENS said he did not find fault with Mr. Golden's report because it was not long, but because it did not give sufficient information. It proved to his mind that either Mr. Golden did not obtain all the information he could have done, or was not able to impart it after he had obtained it. All through the report there was a sort of tone that there was nothing very much in the rabbit advance. He seemed to have gone down to New South Wales against the grain, and with the preconceived notion that there was not much in the business; and he seemed to wish to convey the impression to the readers of his report that there was not much in the alarm about the spread of the rabbits. They would find that in spite of all the measures taken by the other colonies the rabbits were increasing there steadily. As the member for Port Curtis had said, the drought had kept them down in Riverina, but in spite of drought they had increased and travelled at the rate of seventy or eighty miles. How much more rapidly they would travel in a good season it was hard to say. It was a question that ought to receive the most serious attention of hon. members, and he hoped the Government would send either Mr. Golden or some other gentleman, during the recess, to New South Wales to study the matter thoroughly.

Mr. NORTON asked where Mr. Golden was employed now?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied that he was at work now in the Burnett district.

Mr. STEVENSON said it was a very ingenious way of increasing an officer's salary—adding so much a year for travelling expenses. It could not cost Mr. Golden anything like £300 a year for the little travelling he had to do.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said Mr. Golden's salary was not £700 a year, but £400 a year, and a guinea a day when travelling, out of which he had to find himself in horses, forage, etc. How much could be made out of a guinea a day whilst travelling, any practical man could guess.

Mr. BLACK said that if Mr. Golden was the appraiser of runs, it was a delusion to put him down as Inspecting Commissioner for the Northern Districts, for he was not and had never been anything of the kind. It seemed as if the intention of the Government was to mislead the Committee.

Mr. STEVENSON said Mr. Golden signed himself "Appraiser of Runs," and had done so in the report about the rabbit question, which had been referred to. He might just as well be entered on the Estimates under his proper title.

Mr. FERGUSON asked if it was correct that the Inspecting Commissioner for the Northern Districts resided in the South? If that were so, no wonder his travelling expenses were so large. If the officer resided where his work was, much of that expense would be saved.

Mr. NORTON: He never goes to the North.

Mr. FERGUSON: Then to call him Inspecting Commissioner for the Northern Districts seems a sham.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was only a name. Mr. Golden was actually employed in appraising runs wherever those runs were situated, whether in the North or in the South. The furthest point north where he had been required to do work of that kind was Broad-sound. But he had also been employed in appraising runs in the southern part of the colony. Mr. Golden could not, therefore, be expected to reside in the North, for his journeys southward would cost just as much as his journeys northward, if he resided in Brisbane.

Mr. STEVENSON said the thing was then entirely misleading, and the officer ought not to be called Inspecting Commissioner for the Northern District. He was under the impression that Mr. McLean was the appraiser of runs for the southern part of the colony.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said Mr. McLean was not an appraiser of runs, nor did he profess to have any knowledge of that particular kind of work.

Mr. JESSOP asked for some explanation with respect to the item of £500 in lieu of travelling allowance and forage to land commissioners.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied that of that amount Mr. McLean, Land Commissioner for the Southern Districts, received £200; Mr. Warren, Land Commissioner at Cardwell and Ingham, £100; and the Land Commissioners at Gympie and Maryborough, £100 each.

Mr. JESSOP said he did not object to the last three items, but he did to the £200 to Mr. McLean. What did that officer do for it? What did he inspect, and how often had he inspected it? It was Mr. McLean's duty to go over the work of Mr. Hume, Mr. McDowall, and other land commissioners in the settled districts. Had he fulfilled that duty?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied that Mr. McLean's duties were confined to the two districts of East and West Moreton.

Mr. NORTON asked whether those allowances were paid at the rate of a guinea a day when the officers were actually travelling, or did they draw the full amount put down?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied that in those cases the amount was an addition to salary as allowance for travelling expenses.

Mr. NORTON said the system was an objectionable one. The Commissioner got £200 whether he went abroad or stayed at home. It would be far better to pay a fixed rate per diem when the commissioners were actually travelling. That was carried out in many of the offices, and it would be a decided advantage if it were made general.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that perhaps it would, but there would be a good many difficulties in the way of keeping accounts and checking charges. It had been ascertained, after careful investigation, that a commissioner who really did his work could not make very much out of his allowance of £200. He was continually on the move in the performance of his duties. There were some land agents who had not to travel so much, as, for instance, the one at Gympie; but there would not be much saved if he was allowed so much per day for travelling instead of a fixed sum.

Mr. STEVENSON said he did not see why it should be difficult to keep a check on the travelling account. Why should all the commissioners not get a guinea a day whilst travelling, instead of being allowed a lump sum? The hon. member for Port Curtis had very properly remarked that the fixed allowance did not make them more eager for work. If Mr. McLean was not fitted to appraise runs in the South, where his work was so closely allied with that, what was he fit for? They were told by the Minister for Lands that Mr. McLean was not fit to appraise runs; and it appeared to him (Mr. Stevenson) a most extraordinary state of affairs. Perhaps the gentleman had better be put in a billet that he was fitted for.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said Mr. McLean had quite enough to do with his regular duties without having the appraising of runs put upon his shoulders. He had all the duties of Inspecting Commissioner to perform. He (the Minister for Lands) had not said that Mr. McLean was unfitted to do the duty of appraiser, but he thought he was not so specially well fitted as Mr. Golden. Besides that, the duties of Inspecting Commissioner for East and West Moreton fully occupied his time.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped Mr. McLean performed his other duties better than he managed the experimental farm. The object of such a farm was to show the selector not merely what to grow but the best way to perform the work, and that could not be done if the farm was conducted on the same principles as an ordinary farmer managed his property. He hoped the Minister for Lands would see his way to put someone else in charge of the farm, and let it be worked in the best way, so that the farmers and selectors might be shown the best and most economical way to grow their produce.

Mr. ARCHER said, instead of preventing the manager of the farm from obtaining proper appliances, every advantage should be taken of all the newest and latest appliances. That would be the real way to help selectors, and show them how to go about their work.

Mr. BLACK said he always understood that if Mr. McLean had any special aptitude it was as an agriculturist. When he was in the House he was very frequently accepted

as an authority on farming. If he (Mr. Black) thought there was one thing Mr. McLean would be fitted for it was that he would be able to see that farmers carried on their operations properly, and that the experimental farm should be carried on with success. The hon. member for Port Curtis seemed to insinuate that Mr. McLean was so well adapted to the work that it should be taken away from him. According to the report, Mr. McLean seemed to think that a certain wooden roller would have suited an experimental farm better than any of the more modern appliances. Perhaps that was a matter of opinion, but he was astonished to find that Mr. McLean was declared to be incompetent to carry out the work. He hoped the Minister for Lands had not over-estimated Mr. McLean's abilities as a land commissioner.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £4,725 be granted for Bailiffs and Rangers of Crown Lands. There was an increase of £325 in the vote. An increase of £25 had been given to Bailiff Murphy at Maryborough, and £300 was required for two additional bailiffs.

Mr. PALMER said perhaps the Minister for Lands would define the functions and occupations of bailiffs and rangers. Why, if two of them were worth £225 a year, were three others worth only £150?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the difference between sums paid to the different rangers was in some instances accounted for in this way: One man received £150 a year, and had charge of only a small timber reserve, while the man with a larger salary had a large district to attend to, and was constantly travelling. The rangers might sometimes be instructed to inspect and report on the selections, and it was their duty to see that timber was not cut without a license; and, if it was, to seize it.

Mr. JESSOP said he thought the £75 allowed to bailiffs and rangers for travelling expenses was a very small sum indeed. That amounted to about 5s. a day, while the commissioners received a guinea a day. At Toowoomba, to his knowledge, the officer had to travel a distance of something like 100 miles, and he only got £75 allowance. There were other large districts where the same thing existed. He thought it was a matter which ought to receive the consideration of the Minister for Lands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that at present £75, as travelling allowance, was certainly not adequate for Toowoomba. The ranger who assisted there had been promoted, and the post had not been filled up. The consequence was that the ranger had a very much larger district to travel over than formerly. When Mr. Warren assisted there it was a comparatively small district. It was a question whether a new ranger would not have to be appointed.

Mr. BLACK said he hoped the hon. gentleman, in filling the vacancy, would promote some officer in the department. There was a certain amount of discrepancy in the salaries, but possibly that might be accounted for. He might refer to the bailiff at Mackay, where selection had taken place during the last two years to a greater extent than in any other part of the colony. His salary was very low—only £200—and the travelling allowance was £50. He believed that officer was most efficient, and did his work thoroughly well; and if the higher billets were to be filled up by promotion, that officer's claim ought to be taken into consideration; not necessarily in connection with that vacancy, but to receive some additional travelling expenses. Besides the work he did as bailiff he was a valuable draftsman in the depart-

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ment. He (Mr. Black) did not know whether he received any extra remuneration for that; but he was glad to draw the Minister's attention to the comparatively small salary that he received.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the post would certainly be filled by the promotion of the most deserving officer; Mr. Wilson had not been long in the service—only about a couple of years—and he had not heard any complaints about the way he had performed his duty. Perhaps £50 for travelling allowance for Mackay might not be looked upon as large, but the district was not a large one comparatively; three or four days' travelling would cover the whole area. The allowances to rangers were fixed according to the distances to be travelled, and the difficulties of travelling.

Mr. NORTON said he would like the hon. gentleman to say whether he had considered the question of timber license fees. He promised to consider it when the Land Bill was being discussed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the alteration in the license fees, or the method of dealing with timber, had better be dealt with when the Land Bill became law, so that there could be uniformity. The whole thing would have to be remodelled to make it effective.

Mr. NORTON said that in the meantime the people were labouring under the difficulties they had complained of. It appeared to him that the fees might be arranged now; because he knew that great hardship was being felt.

Mr. JESSOP asked where the ranger who was to be promoted would perform his duties?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: On the Darling Downs.

Mr. JESSOP said the bailiff there had to do the whole work of the land offices at Dalby, Warwick, and Toowoomba, and also the selections made at Allora.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £2,125 be granted as salaries and contingencies for Survey of Roads. There was an increase of £50 to the chief draftsman, who had been a long time in the service. He had performed valuable work in connection with the tenure and apportioning of land, and the increase was promised seven years ago.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the sum of £7,550 be granted for Reserves. He would point out that Bowen Reserve, £250, had been omitted. As printed, it was "Brisbane, Bowen Park," whereas it should have been "Bowen Reserve," and, in the attempt to correct it, the correction seemed to have been made by leaving out the sum of £250, instead of altering the title or designation of the reserve. The omission would be made good in the Supplementary Estimates. There was a decrease of £3,150 in the vote, including that £250. The £250 for the Aboriginal Reserve at Durundur had been struck off as being of no practical good. There was also a reduction of £1,300 in the vote for Mount Coottha.

Mr. LISSNER asked the Minister for Lands why he reduced the vote for Mount Coottha?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the vote for Mount Coottha, last year, was £1,550 for fencing, which required about £250 to complete it.

Mr. LISSNER said he was very glad to hear that that £1,300 had been saved, because he wanted some of it. Last year, when they went through the Estimates, he complained that there was a reserve at Charters Towers and nothing had been voted for it. There was another reserve at Ravenswood where there were a respectable number of people, and nothing had been voted

for that either. He had brought the matter under the notice of the Minister for Lands, and was told that the whole vote would probably be done away with; but if it was not, he would have the pleasure of finding Charters Towers upon the list. As the hon. gentleman had taken £1,300 away from Mount Coottha, he was in a good position to keep his word so far as Charters Towers was concerned, and place it on, at any rate, a similar level with Gympie. The amount had been promised, and he hoped the Minister for Lands really would put the money on the Estimates. The people of Ravenswood had a reserve also, and were fully entitled to some money. There was a great deal of talk about Separation in the North, and if he was asked when he got home, if there was any money voted for the recreation reserve, he would not be able to say "yes"; so the people would say, "The last Government neglected us and this one has treated us no better, in fact, we could do better without a Government at all." When the Minister for Lands came round next recess, if they had received the money, they would treat him accordingly.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS said that all the reserves in the list had been receiving sums of money, year after year, for a long time, and some of them considered they had a prescriptive right to it. If Charters Towers had a right, there were a dozen or twenty places which had a similar right, and if they were to give a sum of money to every small township, or big township, they would have to hand the whole revenue over to them. He never did approve of grants to reserves of that kind; he thought the people in the neighbourhood ought to maintain them. The £250 for Mount Coottha, or One-tree Hill, was to complete the fencing.

MR. LISSNER said the Minister for Lands would remember that he promised the money last session; he was not opening the argument afresh. He would not leave the matter to his colleague the Attorney-General, because he did not think he looked after the place. The amount had better go down now. If they did not do away with the whole of the reserves, Charters Towers ought to be amongst them.

MR. BLACK said he certainly thought that Charters Towers was entitled to a vote as much as some of the other places; he would not specify which. He would certainly point out to the Minister, when he talked about the propriety of doing away with those votes, that he should include Brisbane. Out of that £7,550 there was £1,600 for Brisbane. He was not objecting to the reserves, as he thought they were very necessary for the health of the people. Besides that £1,600 for reserves there was a vote of £3,632 for the gardens. That was where the hon. gentleman could economise if he were going to strike out any votes at all. Charters Towers was of quite as much importance as Cleveland, which had £150; or Cooktown, which had £200; or Gympie, which had £350; or Ipswich, which had £600. He had not noticed the omission before, and he wondered that the hon. gentleman had not been more persistent in regard to the vote.

MR. PALMER said that the hon. member for Kennedy was in a far better state than he was, because Charters Towers had a recreation ground, and so had Ravenswood; but had no money. His (Mr. Palmer's) complaint was that he had not got even so far as the reserve. He had applied for reserves in three rising cities, in what would be one of the most important districts in Queensland—Cloncurry, Normanton, and Hughenden—but there was not a shilling on the Estimates for them. He hoped there were

not many hon. members who agreed with the Minister for Lands in desiring to stop the votes for gardens and reserves; he did not think they could encourage a better taste, especially in tropical climates. Last year, out of a vote of £10,700, there was £3,000 for Brisbane; and this year there was £1,600 on the present vote, and £3,600 on another. It was quite out of proportion to the amounts expended in the North. Even Tiaro, which was a small heifer station when he knew it, was down for £50. He supported the hon. member for Kennedy in his application for a reserve; and he took the opportunity of informing the Minister that he should press his demands for reserves at Hughenden, Normanton, and Cloncurry.

MR. FERGUSON said he thought the estimate was made up this year even more unfairly than usual. Out of a total estimate of nearly £11,500 for parks and gardens only £3,000 was for places north of Brisbane. He saw that besides the large amount for the Brisbane Gardens there was a special sum of £1,000 for extra labour when required. It was the same with every estimate; places north of Brisbane did not get one-third of the amount they were entitled to. Ipswich and Toowoomba, which were towns with only themselves to supply, were down for £600 each; while for towns like Townsville and Rockhampton, with whole districts depending on them, there was only one item of £600. He did not agree with the views of the Minister for Lands; he thought a portion of the revenue could not be applied to a better purpose than for reserves and recreation grounds for the people. In North Rockhampton there was a splendid reserve called Queen's Park, which he had last year asked the Minister to make provision for, but he had neglected it, as he had neglected his promise to the hon. member for Kennedy; while Cleveland, for instance, in the Southern district, got £150. Nearly every place where there were a hundred people in the South had a vote for some garden or park. The Southern people thirsted for the whole revenue of the colony, and only gave dribbles to the North.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not know how the Minister for Lands could imagine that he could do away with the vote for reserves. He thought it would have been far better for the hon. member to make a promise outright to the hon. member for Kennedy, without any condition. The hon. member who had just sat down had pointed out the great difference between the amounts voted for Brisbane and for all the northern parts of the colony. He (Mr. Macrossan) should take the part of the colony north of Rockhampton, only. Rockhampton got £500, and the whole of the colony north of that received the extraordinary sum of £1,000—that was for Cooktown, Mackay, and Townsville. He thought that, upon the merest pretence of fair play, the portion of the colony that returned from one-third to one-fourth of the revenue should receive more than £1,000 out of £11,500 for reserves. He thought the hon. member for Kennedy was very reasonable in his request that not only Charters Towers should be put down for a reserve, but Ravenswood as well. There was a fair-sized population there; they were a long distance from the sea, and they had no place of recreation. He believed they were more entitled to a recreation reserve than Southport. The people of Southport had the sea before them; they had a splendid beach and other places as well. So that if £1,000 were put down for the two places referred to in the Supplementary Estimates, the Minister for Lands would only show fair play.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member for Townsville had anticipated his rising to make the announcement that some provision would be made for Charters Towers in the Supplementary Estimates.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Why not Ravenswood?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the claims increased too fast. The hon. member for Rockhampton had said that, compared with the southern part of the colony, Rockhampton had been very unfairly treated. He would remind him that the Gardens at Rockhampton had been laid out simply for the convenience of half-a-dozen people residing on Athelstane Range, and that they were not gardens for the enjoyment of the whole population of Rockhampton. It was a most unfortunate thing that the gardens had been made where they were, and he grudged nothing more than to see £600 of the State money spent to keep them up. As to the Gardens at Brisbane, it was to be remembered that they were in the centre of the capital, where a greater population resided and in every way derived more benefit and enjoyment from them, in proportion to expenditure, than from any other gardens in the colony. The Brisbane Gardens had not been attended to for many years. They were in a miserable condition a few months ago, but now they were beginning to assume more the appearance of gardens where people could go for a walk with some pleasure. A short time ago the south end had more the appearance of wattle scrub than of a garden. Members could see for themselves that there was now a very great difference; and though a considerable sum of money had been expended to get the place into order there was something to show for it. He thought that even members from the far North would not grudge the expenditure on the Brisbane Gardens.

Mr. FERGUSON said he thought the hon. Minister for Lands was not the best judge as to whether the gardens at Rockhampton were for the benefit of a few or the whole of the inhabitants. The people of Rockhampton had selected 100 acres on what they believed to be the best site with the finest views; and the hon. member had no right to speak as he had done. The people of Rockhampton knew their own affairs better than the Minister for Lands. But if he considered the gardens were not in a proper place there were several other reserves; and he ought to put a sum of money down in the Estimates in order to lay them out as new gardens. He (Mr. Ferguson) would refer to those hon. members of the Committee who had visited the Rockhampton Gardens to say whether they did not compare favourably with any others in the colony except the Brisbane Gardens, which were much older. The Brisbane Gardens, he admitted, ought to have a great preference over others; but the Rockhampton Gardens were superior to any in the south he had inspected, except those at Brisbane. A large number of people visited them regularly; the corporation had opened a direct road to them, and had gone to large expense in opening them up properly. He said still that Rockhampton was not getting anything like what it should get. There was the Queen's Park on the north side, which had as much right to get £500 a year as South Brisbane, and they had far superior reserves at Rockhampton to those at South Brisbane and other places, and had quite as much right, if not more, to a vote as many towns he knew of in the South.

Mr. STEVENSON said he quite agreed with what had been said by the hon. member for Rockhampton. It was a pity that the Minister for Lands should not stick more closely to facts

He (Mr. Stevenson) had been in the Rockhampton Gardens on a Sunday afternoon, and had met scores of people in them. The gardens were not too far for the people to go out of the town to. Besides Rockhampton lay low, and the gardens were on a range in a very healthy situation, where it was good for the people to go and have a walk. Anyone who had seen them would agree that they were kept in first-rate order, and were in a first-rate situation.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the Minister for Lands had not been very reasonable in his criticism on the Gardens at Rockhampton. They had been placed some little distance out of the town, with the object of securing a healthy site, away from the low lying ground. The growth of the trees had been marvellous, and they were now something really worth looking at. He was glad that the Minister for Lands had seen his way to promise to put some more money on the Estimates for the parks. He believed, as all hon. members would see, that the present votes were most unevenly distributed. Some places received very large sums; other places very small sums: and others none at all. The Minister for Lands had promised the member for Bowen £250, which was to be continued. Bowen was a park in itself, although he did not grudge the money to it. But he did not see why Bowen should get a grant and Gladstone should get none at all. When the Minister for Lands was preparing his Supplementary Estimates for Bowen and Charters Towers, he hoped he would also put in Gladstone. There were two reserves there,—one an island, and another near to the town. Not a shilling had been spent on them; and something should be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for them. He noticed that £500 was down in the Estimates for the Queen's Park at Townsville. He believed that the people there were applying to get another reserve there, and that £500 would be thrown away on the old reserve, because the soil was so bad, that they would not be able to get anything to grow on it.

Mr. MACFARLANE said some of the Northern members had just cause of complaint in that matter, and he should be glad to see sums placed on the Estimates for such places as Charters Towers, and other flourishing towns. But as far as Rockhampton was concerned there certainly was no cause of complaint. Rockhampton was the most pampered town in the whole colony. In the matter of reserves alone it had a grant of £600, in addition to a special grant of £700 last year for curator's residence and irrigation works. The same favouritism was shown to that town in every other respect. He had been highly amused with the hon. member (Mr. Ferguson) comparing Rockhampton with Ipswich. The two places could not be compared, and it was evident that the hon. member had never been to Ipswich. There was a greater population round the park at Ipswich than in any other town in the colony with the exception of Brisbane, and there was no town which—also with the exception of Brisbane—contributed more towards the revenue. No doubt the hon. member loved Rockhampton, but when he came to compare that place with Ipswich it made him laugh. The little town on the Fitzroy River could not be compared for a moment with such a town as the "head of the navigation."

Mr. ARCHER said it was quite refreshing to hear one of the Ipswich "blowers" talking. Ipswich lived on Government subsidies, and had been entirely built upon Government money. In addition to what had already been spent there, there was an item down of £60,000 for new workshops—a town where there was nothing made but a little cloth, which was sold in lengths to suit

purchasers. It was absurd to compare such a town with Rockhampton—a town which the people themselves had built without the aid of Government money. As to revenue returns, even in the one item of Customs alone, Ipswich could not compare with it for one moment. With respect to reserves, he had not the slightest objection to the grants made to Brisbane; the public money could not be put to a better use, and he hoped the Government would, without delay, provide reserves for every town in the colony; otherwise, in consequence of the present rage for land speculation, it would be shortly impossible, except at an enormous expense. The first duty of a Government in laying out a township was to see that large reserves were made all round it. Unless that were done soon the land would become of such a value that the Government could not possibly be asked to purchase it. He hoped the Minister for Lands would take that into consideration, and secure large reserves for every growing town in the colony. If Rockhampton got a quarter as much as Ipswich, the people there would be very well pleased.

Mr. PALMER said he trusted he had not got his final answer when the Minister for Lands said he declined to grant reserves on the ground that people should subscribe money towards them. But if land were not given what was the use of people subscribing for keeping it in order? The hon. gentleman had refused him a reserve of forty acres at Hughenden, and that land, which was the only available spot for the people of that rising township for show-grounds and recreation grounds, was now to be cut up into allotments. No one would begrudge the amount put down for reserves in Brisbane, but there were other places in Queensland besides Brisbane. He was afraid that people would not entertain the same feelings towards the Minister for Lands as the people of Sydney entertained towards the memory of Captain Phillips, the first Governor, who reserved Hyde Park for the people, and whose forethought was worthy of the highest praise. He believed that if certain Brisbane people had their way they would cut up the reserves, but he hoped that was not the feeling of the majority. Perhaps the best public gardens in the colony were those at Maryborough. They were situated in the heart of the town, on the bank of the river, and available at all hours of the day. With regard to the district he had the honour to represent, he asked for reserves to be proclaimed before all the best sites were cut up. In a year or two it would be too late, as the land would not be available. Now was the time to proclaim reserves, as in a very short time it would be too late.

Mr. JESSOP asked why the vote for Experimental Farms had been reduced to £1,000? The amount was far from sufficient to show the farmers and selectors what was the best use to which they could put their land. With regard to reserves, he would remind hon. members that Toowoomba was down for £600, Roma for £300, and Warwick for £350. He should like to know why Dalby had been neglected. He did not object to money being granted for other places, but he thought justice should, as far as possible, be done to all parts of the colony.

Mr. SMYTH said the city of Brisbane, compared with Sydney and Melbourne, was badly off for recreation grounds. He thought the Government ought, before land became too valuable to secure a good site for a suitable reserve, as the present one—the Queen's Park—was most unsuitable. He had seen as many as 25,000 persons on one of the recreation grounds of Sydney, which only showed to what extent the people took

advantage of such places. It was not only for the benefit of people in the city, but for the visitors who came to Brisbane, that a suitable ground should be obtained.

Mr. FOOTE said he was not going to impress on the Committee the importance of securing a valuable and suitable recreation ground for Brisbane. He had lived long enough to know that the Brisbane members looked after the interests of the city well enough. The Brisbane Botanical Gardens were certainly most unsuitable, and he thought a great deal too much money was spent upon them. In reference to the votes for various places he had no objection to them; but he thought the hon. members for Dalby and Port Curtis had both made out good cases in favour of their districts. Neither Gladstone nor Dalby should be overlooked when more money was available for reserves.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he hoped the Minister for Lands, in submitting the Supplementary Estimates, would not forget Ravenswood.

The PREMIER: This is a regular scramble!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the people of Charters Towers had hitherto made the banks of the Burdekin River a recreation reserve, and he would recommend the Minister for Lands to proclaim that land as a permanent reserve, so that in the future it might be assured to the people of Charters Towers.

Mr. FERGUSON said when he found fault with the estimate, he did not find fault with any particular vote, but he thought the North fared badly. He was surprised at the hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. Macfarlane) attempting to compare Ipswich with Rockhampton. The best proof of which was the more flourishing was the municipal revenue of each. The Rockhampton revenue was about £20,000, while the revenue of Ipswich was under £4,000. The revenue of Rockhampton and Brisbane amounted to more than all the other towns of the colony put together. As was well known, a municipal conference was held not long ago, and it was used as an argument that such small and poor towns as Ipswich should get more concessions than they did from the Government. When the hon. member got up and compared Ipswich with Rockhampton he ought to be prepared a little better than he was. He (Mr. Ferguson) was in Ipswich once, and he hoped he should never go there again. He never saw such a dead-and-alive town, and he did not believe the hon. member had ever been in Rockhampton, or possibly he might change his opinion.

Mr. STEVENSON said he hoped when the Minister for Lands decided to create more reserves and brought down his Supplementary Estimates, he would not forget several other places, which, although their claims had not been advocated, were quite as much entitled to consideration as Brisbane and Ipswich and all the other towns that had been mentioned. In the absence of the hon. member for Clermont, who was a supporter of the Government, he hoped the claims of that place to a reserve would be recognised. The town was pretty large and growing in importance, and it had the additional claim that it was a railway terminus. He was sure the junior member for Rockhampton, Mr. Higson, who was largely interested in Clermont, and who was in the confidence of the Minister for Lands, would bear him out in what he said. St. Lawrence was also a place which deserved a recreation ground, and he hoped it would not be forgotten.

Mr. ALAND said he only wished to say that year after year they had the same sort of discussion when the vote for recreation grounds came

on. It really produced no effect, and they only wasted their time and breath in asking the present or any previous Minister to increase the number or amounts of the votes for that purpose. Every year he had been in the House the same talk had gone on; they brought out their little grievances, and, as a matter of course, they were not paid any attention to, and they did not expect that they would be.

Mr. ISAMBERT said he should like to know from the Minister for Lands what practical benefit could be derived from the experimental farms? He could go and see what could be seen to far better advantage on an ordinary well conducted farm. If any benefit was to be derived at all from such things it would be from the establishment of an agricultural college. The Maryborough people were anxious for such an institution, and when the wine-growers presented a petition to the Treasurer protesting against the reduction of the duty upon colonial wine, they pointed out that by the establishment of an agricultural college the object of the Government would be far better attained than by the reduction of duty of colonial wine. If it was necessary in the old country, where the people knew so much, to have agricultural colleges, how much more necessary in this colony?

Mr. JESSOP said he should like an answer from the hon. gentleman as to why the Dalby reserve was left out?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it would be impossible to give votes to every small township in the colony.

Mr. JESSOP : Why not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because the revenue would not stand it. He was quite prepared to make reserves for them if they would carry out the work themselves; but the Treasurer certainly would not respond if large sums were voted. He thought the reserves ought to be managed on a different system altogether; the people ought to contribute a certain sum annually to keep them in order; but for the State to devote large sums for that purpose seemed a monstrously unfair thing unless it was done all round, and he did not see how that could be done.

Mr. JESSOP said he objected to Dalby being called a small town. It might not be as large as Ipswich; but it was the centre of a large district. He took it that gardens were very necessary for a large district. There was a reserve at Dalby granted and surveyed over twenty years ago, and he did not see why it should be left out of that estimate while other towns had been receiving an annual vote for years. He maintained that Dalby had a right to a vote, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would see his way to meet the claim.

Mr. BLACK said he was sorry the hour was so late, that they had not enough time to devote to the vote before them. He entirely agreed with the hon. member for Rosewood as to the £1,000 for experimental farms. A more gross waste of money, judging from the report, no Government could be accused of making. In looking over that report he failed to see that any advantage had been derived, or ever would be derived, from the expenditure of the money. Originally the vote was £2,000, there being one farm in the Central district, and one in the Southern district, but the former had been discontinued. If the Minister for Lands had read the report, he (Mr. Black) did not see how he could conscientiously ask the Committee to vote that extravagant waste of money—an expense which was not likely to lead to any practical result.

The farm at Yuelba had been mismanaged from the beginning; the soil was unsuitable, and, in fact, no advantage had ever been got from the vote. Just to give the Committee, and also the public through *Hansard*, an idea of the wasteful extravagance that had been going on and the foolish manner in which the farm had been conducted, he would quote one short paragraph from a letter written by the inspecting land commissioner to the overseer:—

“With reference to the Cambridge serrated roller that you have several times written about, I have to state that £16 10s. appears to me to be a large sum to invest in such an article, especially when I understood you to say, during my last visit to the farm, that you would get a round log from the bush, and prepare it so as to answer the purpose of a roller. I am of opinion that it would be great folly to spend a large amount of money in the purchase of expensive implements until we find whether or not the land will produce anything like a crop, or in any way recoup the Government for the amount expended.”

That paragraph was characteristic of the whole report. They had a commissioner, who knew as much about agriculture as he did about the moon, interfering with a man who was supposed to know all about farming. He would ask the Minister for Lands whether he could put a more favourable interpretation on the report than he (Mr. Black) was doing. If hon. members would give him any support he would divide the Committee on the item. The Minister for Lands might safely ask the Committee to reject the vote, because if he did so he would meet with little or no opposition.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was not guilty of having anything to do with starting the experimental farms, and he was glad of it. A great deal of money had been spent on them, and he supposed it was right that the experiments should be continued; therefore he had endeavoured to have the money spent as well as he possibly could. But, to his mind, not much good was likely to come from it. It was a question whether the farms could be conducted in a practical manner or not. He did not think it could; but as the House had twice voted money for the purpose, he had thought it was desirable to continue the vote this year, and endeavour to carry out the work, though he believed the money might be better used.

Mr. STEVENSON said he fully agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Mackay, and he was certain the Minister for Lands did not believe in the farm at all. He (Mr. Stevenson) was quite satisfied it was a waste of money; and if there was not time to discuss the question then it would be better to postpone it until next day. He thought the vote ought to be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he would remind hon. members that the year was half gone, and most of the money had been already expended.

Mr. JORDAN said that, now that they had disposed of one matter, he had a question to ask the Minister for Lands, and that was in reference to the Aboriginal Reserve at Durundur, for which £250 was voted last year. He thought they ought to have aboriginal reserves in various parts of the colony. He would ask what amount of land was reserved in that locality, and why the item was omitted from the vote for the present year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the area set aside for the aboriginal reserve was 2,000 acres. He did not know on whose recommendation the selection was made; but it had been of no practical value whatever, and such reserves never were, that he knew of. There

was a sum of about £60 paid to the trustees by the police, who used the reserve as a grazing paddock for horses, which amount the trustees dispensed amongst the blacks in the neighbourhood.

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, in moving the adjournment, said that after the notice of motion upon the paper had been disposed of to-morrow they would proceed with the Estimates.

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