

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 4 December, 1884.

Formal Motion.—Supply—resumption of committee.—
Printing Committee Report.—Adjournment.

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

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to :—

By Mr. NORTON—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a Return showing all fines which have been stopped from Government contractors since 1st January, 1884: also all fines which have been remitted during the same period.

Name of contractor, amount stopped, and amount remitted, to be stated in each case,

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) moved that the sum of £11,452 be granted for the salaries and contingencies of the Public Works Department. There was an increase of £2,600 on the vote of last year. An additional clerk had been appointed at £250, and there was an increase of £50 to the chief draftsman. There was also an item of £700 for the Engineer of Bridges, and £300 for a draftsman. In the Colonial Architect's Department an addition had been put down for temporary assistance; and if hon. members would look at the amount put down for public buildings they would see the necessity for that vote. There was also an addition of £500 to the contingencies.

Mr. NORTON said he would ask the hon. gentleman how long the works he proposed to construct would take in constructing? If the hon. gentleman would say that, the Committee would then have an idea what extra clerical assistance would be required.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said some of the works mentioned in the Estimates were constructed, others were under construction, and tenders had been called for others. Tenders would be called for the whole of the buildings as soon as the plans were ready, but the Parliamentary Buildings' plans had taken up so much of the Colonial Architect's time that he had been unable to proceed with the other work of the department. He had been monopolised almost entirely by the Parliamentary Buildings Committee. However, plans were in course of preparation, and the works would be undertaken as soon as possible.

Mr. NORTON said he did not understand how tenders could be called for works until the plans were prepared.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had already explained that a number of buildings were completed, others were under construction, and as soon as plans could be prepared, more works would be proceeded with. The buildings

were chiefly connected with the Colonial Secretary's Department, the Postmaster-General's, and the Customs; and the Works Department had to carry out all buildings connected with the public departments.

Mr. FERGUSON said he was astonished to hear the remark of the hon. gentleman, when he told the Committee that the preparation of plans for the Parliamentary Buildings had taken up so much of the Colonial Architect's time. Anyone could judge by the sketch plan that had been prepared that it would not take up much of the time of the Colonial Architect. That gentleman had not been before the Parliamentary Buildings Committee more than two or three times, for an hour at a time, and yet the Minister for Works said his time was fully occupied in that work. He wished to call the attention to the item for temporary assistance, and he wondered if the Colonial Architect had got that. As far as he (Mr. Ferguson) could see, the work in hand was beyond the department, and he would like to know if the assistance had been procured. If not, it was time the Colonial Architect had the assistance, because there was a great deal of work to be done, and money which had been voted for certain works had in many cases remained unexpended.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said all that he could state was that members who were interested in works being completed were constantly asking him when the plans would be prepared; and when he had sent for the Colonial Architect he was always told that he was at the Parliamentary Buildings. He (the Minister for Works) presumed he did not go down there for nothing. With reference to the delay in the preparation of plans, that was caused chiefly through want of accommodation. They had been putting up shanties here and there in which to make out the plans, and they had now employed two additional draftsmen, and in a short time numbers of the plans would be ready.

Mr. FERGUSON said he must refer to a matter connected with Rockhampton. Some time ago £5,000 was voted for immigration barracks at that place, and a great many members knew that no work was more urgent. The present barracks were a disgrace to the country and the town, and he was sure the Attorney-General and the junior member for North Brisbane, if they were present, would bear him out in saying that. When they were on a political tour up north, just previous to the general election, they came to Rockhampton, and, of course, were shown the public buildings. One of the buildings they visited was the immigration barracks. Shortly afterwards, a dinner was given to those two gentlemen, and the burden of their song was the neglect of the Government of that time. They referred to the way in which Rockhampton had been neglected, and specially referred to the immigration barracks, saying that when another Government came into power all that would be altered. Well, the barracks were exactly in the same state now. He regretted that the two gentlemen he referred to were not present, for they would endorse all that he had said with reference to the disgraceful condition of the building he had mentioned.

Mr. BLACK said he thought the country would be rather astonished to find that, because the Parliamentary Buildings Committee in Brisbane required the attendance of the Colonial Architect, works of far greater importance had had to be deferred. The additions to the Parliamentary Buildings was, he thought, a matter of secondary consideration. They had done very well with the present buildings for years, and he thought the additions could wait until other

works of far greater importance were carried out. He was not aware either that that House had sanctioned the expense of those additions. When it had, then there would be plenty of time to procure plans. The sketch plan hanging in the Refreshment Room seemed to be quite sufficient at present. It was quite possible that that House might not sanction the elaborate plans now being drawn up, and, if so, then so much time and money would have been wasted. He was astonished that the Minister for Works, with his energy, should have allowed the Colonial Architect to waste so much time that might very well have been devoted to much more important buildings.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could assure the hon. member that the Parliamentary Buildings Committee were very impatient. If they sent down an order one day, and did not get an answer the next, they immediately wanted to know why it had not been attended to. For the future, however, he would take good care that the buildings named in those Estimates were attended to first. He quite agreed with the hon. member that additions to the Parliamentary Buildings could very well wait; and there would be no further delay in other buildings, as far as he was concerned. Of course, it should be remembered that there had been great difficulty to find room for the draftsmen of the Works Department, and that it was only recently they had been able to put on additional men.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman was quite right about the want of accommodation in the Colonial Architect's office; and he knew that great inconvenience had been felt. He thought, however, that the hon. gentleman had made rather too much of the time occupied by the Colonial Architect with the Parliamentary Buildings Committee. He quite agreed with what had been said about the additions. He believed the sketch plan was quite enough; and that they could well wait for the billiard-room and such things until buildings that were required much more were carried out. He thought that some of the proposals for the additions to the Parliamentary Buildings seemed to go further than was necessary. As to the item of £800 for temporary assistance, he would like to know for what it was required.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was needed for extra draftsmen, and two had been recently put on.

Mr. ALAND said he thought too much had been made by the Minister for Works out of the desire of the Parliamentary Buildings Committee to have the assistance of the Colonial Architect; and he was somewhat disposed to think that it was a good excuse on the part of the hon. gentleman, as well as a sly dig at the committee, because he and they did not exactly hit it in their ideas. Year after year, since he (Mr. Aland) had been in the House, something had been said about additions to the Parliamentary Buildings; and great fault would have been found with the committee if they had come down to the House and asked for a vote without being prepared to say what they proposed to do. On the Loan Estimates there was a sum of £20,000 put down for additions to the Parliamentary Buildings, and he was quite sure the House would not sanction the expenditure of that money unless they knew what extra accommodation was to be provided by it. The Buildings Committee therefore obtained the assistance of the Colonial Architect to assist them in devising what was required. Having looked at the plans, he (Mr. Aland) hoped to live to see the day when they would be carried

out. He was not so anxious to see the billiard-room and one or two accessories of that kind, but he should like to see a room where they could eat their meals without any fear of being made unwell. The dining-room was the most wretched accommodation for fifty or sixty people he ever knew; and he thought they ought to have rooms where they could eat their meals and smoke their pipes with comfort. There was one other matter which he would refer to. He was equally modest with his hon. friend, the hon. member for Rockhampton, and did not like to be always talking about Toowoomba, as he was quite sure the hon. gentleman did not like to mention Rockhampton. Some five, six, or seven years ago there was a sum voted by that Committee for a lunatic asylum outside Toowoomba. The land was bought, and another sum was afterwards added to the original vote, yet they had heard nothing about the asylum. The late Ministry did not make any promise in the matter; but when the Colonial Treasurer used to sit on the Opposition side of the House he occasionally asked a few questions in reference to that asylum, although he seemed to take it quietly now. He trusted that the Government would not overlook the matter. It was time that the work was commenced; they did not ask much from the Government, but the little they did ask should be attended to.

Mr. FERGUSON said there would be plenty of time to discuss the matter of the Parliamentary Buildings to-morrow, when a motion on the subject would come before the House. The hon. Minister for Works had simply made an excuse; he did not believe that the time of the Colonial Architect had been so much occupied as he tried to make out. They had only had a pencil sketch plan of what they intended to lay before the House. If hon. members would look over the report they would find that during the last three years, instead of the Committee being in a hurry, they had been deliberating over the matter, and had sent in a report; but no practical steps had been taken as yet. He wished to know from the Minister for Works whether he intended to take any steps to get on with the plans and specifications of the immigration barracks at Rockhampton. The hon. gentleman would admit himself that the work was very necessary. He (Mr. Ferguson) had neglected the matter himself, and he ought to have asked the Minister for Works to have got the plans and specifications ready some time ago. An amount for the purpose had already appeared on the Estimates, and he hoped that the plans and specifications would be got ready as soon as possible.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he might mention, as another cause of the delay that had taken place, that the Colonial Architect had been employed in preparing the plans for the public offices; but he would endeavour to have the plans asked for got ready with as little delay as possible. There had been a difficulty in obtaining a site for the immigration barracks at Rockhampton.

Mr. NORTON said he had noticed that there was some difficulty about the tenders for the new public offices, and the Minister might explain to the Committee what it was. A deputation with regard to the matter had waited upon the hon. gentleman, and it had appeared that there were some of the clauses in the specification which tenderers objected to, and they were not disposed to send in tenders so long as those clauses remained.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that tenders had been called for the foundations of

those buildings. The Colonial Architect thought that, as the contract would be a very extensive one, they should call for two tenders; so he had called for tenders for the foundations, and had put some very stringent clauses into the contract. He had had a conversation with that gentleman that day, after the deputation, and the Colonial Architect assured him that it was absolutely necessary to have strict precautions as to the foundations. They intended to call for fresh tenders.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped that the hon. gentleman would lay the specifications upon the table of the House. He had intended to have asked for them before.

Mr. BEATTIE said that the hon. member for Port Curtis had just drawn the attention of the Minister for Works to a matter that he had intended to have spoken in reference to. The hon. gentleman had spoken of the necessity of having more draftsmen. He saw there were no more draftsmen down this year than there were last year, and there were no more foremen of works. He wished to know from what vote that new importation of a foreman of works was to be paid from, or whether some of the old ones had been discharged to make room? Last year there were five foremen of works, and this year there were five. It was not necessary that he should say any more in reference to those tenders. It was a well-known fact that there was not a contractor who would tender for the public buildings. If they were to send in tenders at the scheduled prices it would be simply ridiculous, because all work could not be taken at scheduled prices. Would the Minister for Works kindly inform them whether the foremen of works employed by the Government last year in the buildings branch were still employed, or had some of them been discharged to make room for the imported one?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there were none of the foremen of works discharged. The Colonial Architect had represented to him that Mr. Ferguson, who was chiefly employed in looking after buildings in the outside districts, could not attend to all the work, and an additional one was required. An additional foreman had been appointed since the Estimates had been framed, and would appear upon the Supplementary Estimates, at a salary of £225. Two additional draftsmen had been employed since the Estimates had been framed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he wished to direct the attention of the Minister to the wonderful way in which the vote was mounting up. In the year 1879—when all the works of the colony fell upon the Works Department, and there was no local authority, all the works being carried out by the central authority—the total expenditure of that branch was £10,030. In 1879 they passed the Local Government Act, which had the effect of putting on to the different local authorities the expenditure for all works; consequently the department was almost wiped out. From £10,030 in 1879, it dropped to £4,555 in 1880. They did not get rid of all the employés that year; but the next year the vote dropped to £3,312. As soon as the present Ministry came in, the amount went up, in 1883, to £3,832, and now they were asked for £11,432—actually £1,000 more than before there was local self-government; and yet there was not a single word of explanation. The Government seemed to think their liberality was shown by the expenditure of money, especially in the Brisbane department. It showed great extravagance and a tendency towards the old state of things.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he thought the explanation of that was that the late

Government abolished the Colonial Architect's Department, and it had now been re-established. The cost of that was £4,450, which accounted, he supposed, for the additional expenditure.

Mr. FERGUSON said he would like to know whether it was the intention of the Government to erect the whole of the public offices at once, or to have the work done in sections. He hoped they would erect them all at one time; the saving in expense would be more than the interest on the money saved by doing it in sections. There was £180,000 on the Loan Estimates, and last session they had passed £20,000; that made £200,000, which he understood was the estimate for the whole building. It would be an economy to the country to erect a building like that at once. The policy of the Public Works Department in buildings had been hitherto altogether wrong. Nearly all the buildings were unfit for the purposes for which they were intended, and would have to be pulled down. The colony was now far enough advanced to justify the Government in building with a view ahead of the present time. He knew that all the public buildings in Rockhampton would have to come down directly; the Supreme Court building was condemned by the judges, the Post Office was condemned by the Postmaster-General, and every building would have to be pulled down.

The PREMIER said he agreed that in the past they had not looked far enough ahead in their public buildings, but he did not think that complaint could be made with regard to the new public offices. The building now proposed would certainly be ample to accommodate the requirements of the different departments for the lifetime of anyone present—or, at any rate, as long as they were justified in looking ahead. He did not think it would be desirable to build the whole of them at once. What they proposed was to build the frontage to William street first, and carry the building half-way down each side. That could be done, as the land was vacant, without interfering with the Treasury or the Registrar-General's Office, which could not well be moved to temporary buildings, as they had to provide for the custody of very valuable documents. The part intended to be constructed would contain, at the corner of Queen street and William street, accommodation for the Colonial Secretary's Department and the Public Works Department; in front would be the offices of the Executive Council, and at the other end there would be room to accommodate the Secretary for Public Instruction, or any other department it might be advisable to put there, and the Registrar-General. He thought there would be room to spare then. It was considered more advisable to divide the work into two contracts, and this had been arranged so that no inconvenience would arise from the junction. It was not desirable to clear the whole space at once and provide a temporary Treasury and a temporary Registrar-General's office. It would be spending money unnecessarily.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the Minister for Works had made a mistake in saying the increase in the vote was due to the appointment of the Colonial Architect. A number of the draftsmen now employed were employed before the Colonial Architect came, only they were put under a different head. Of course the Government could hardly undertake such work as the public offices without a Colonial Architect. He thought the appointment was a wise one and that the man selected was as good a man as could be got; but it was absurd to say that the additional cost of the Works Department was occasioned by his appointment. He could point out some increases. There was £800 for temporary

assistance, and then there was the appointment of an engineer of bridges and a draftsman; that was another £1,000. That accounted for £1,800 of the increase.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he thought the appointment of the Colonial Architect was a very wise step, and the appointment of the Engineer for Bridges also. The House last year had voted £30,000 for the purpose of bridging the Pioneer River, Ross's Creek, and the Endeavour River, and of course it was necessary to get a competent man to do the work, so that the bridges would not be washed away by the floods. He did not find fault with the appointment of the Colonial Architect. He thought it was a very good appointment indeed.

Mr. NORTON said that the hon. member had misunderstood him. He did not disagree with the appointment. He was simply pointing out that the Minister for Works had explained that the increase in the Estimates was caused by the appointment of the Colonial Architect. But he (Mr. Norton) said that the increase was not caused by that appointment. As to the Engineer of Bridges, a different plan had been followed in his appointment from that adopted in appointing the Colonial Architect. When the late Government agreed to the appointment of an architect they advertised so that they might receive applications from all the colonies. Nothing of the kind had been done when the Engineer of Bridges had been appointed. He (Mr. Norton) did not know whether there were any bridge engineers in the colony; he had no doubt that there were, but they had no chance.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was inclined to say that the explanation given by the Minister for Works of the great increase from 1881 to the present time was certainly not the correct one. He believed it was more owing to the Works Department having taken possession of the Minister for Works and running away with him. That was seen in the Estimates from the beginning of the first page to the last. The hon. gentleman had not sufficient force of character to resist the department; in fact, he had lost all control of the department, which was now controlling him. It was ridiculous to say that the Colonial Architect's appointment had increased the Estimates from £3,312 to £11,432, when at the time the £3,312 was expended they had a Colonial Architect, although he cost just £100 a year less than the present architect. The former had £700 and the present received £800, and the difference of £100 a year in salary could not make up the difference between £3,000 and £11,000. He wanted to know from the Minister for Works how the Inspector of Works to the Divisional Boards was working? Were there any of the hitches that were predicted would occur when the appointment was made, or was he working in harmony with the divisional boards?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that if the hon. member referred to Mr. Clinton, Inspector of Works, he could say that he heard no complaints regarding him. Mr. Clinton was up north inspecting several works which appeared all right, and he had not come into collision with any divisional board. With reference to the engineers controlling him, he was not aware that that was so. He did his best, though he did not profess to have the engineering capacity of the hon. member for Townsville. That hon. member had complained the previous evening that he (the Minister for Works) did not instruct the Chief Engineer to cut down the estimates of the Railways. He would do nothing of the sort. He thought he knew himself better than to interfere and give instructions to a professional man. He

knew what the hon. member for Townsville had done in the building of the Brisbane Valley and other railways, and he could tell him that they had been compelled to cut out curves which that hon. gentleman had caused to be put in. He (the Minister for Works) hoped he never would be guilty of such conduct.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that they would talk about the railways when they came to them, and the Minister for Works would hear quite enough to satisfy him then. Perhaps he could tell the Committee why the contingencies had increased from £2,500 to £3,000. £500 was a considerable increase, when the contingencies consisted chiefly of postage and travelling expenses.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the sum voted last year had not been sufficient, and had had to be supplemented. It was better that the full sum should be put down in the Estimates-in-Chief.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that no doubt it was better to have the whole sum required voted in the Estimates-in-Chief. But he would like to know why £3,000 was spent in contingencies. It seemed to him a very large item for the Works Department when there were so few to travel. He did not think the Minister for Works himself had incurred a great amount of travelling expenses. Perhaps the Minister for Works would inform the Committee whether Mr. Clinton sent in reports to the Minister for Works?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He does.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that in that morning's *Courier* he saw a report that the Government water-boring plant had been employed at the site of a proposed bridge at Bulimba. What was that proposed bridge?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the loaning of the water-boring plant did not belong to his department. He knew nothing about it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What Minister does know?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said that the gentlemen interested in the scheme of constructing a bridge over the river at Bulimba had applied to his department for assistance in order to ascertain the character of the strata there, and whether a suitable foundation for the bridge could be obtained. They merely wanted to sink two or three bores. The officers of the department were instructed to give them that information on the understanding that if they wanted anything like an elaborate survey they would have to pay for the work performed. He (the Colonial Treasurer) understood that the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers had applied to Mr. Henderson, the Hydraulic Engineer, who had a hand boring machine in his yard which could not be used for any purpose at the present time, and was useless for boring for water. It was accordingly lent to the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers, who had been using it for the purpose mentioned. He believed two or three borings had been put down. He wished to disabuse the Committee of any idea that the water-boring machinery or any plant used for water-boring had been in any way withdrawn from legitimate use in proceeding with that work at Bulimba.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if he was to understand that the Government were at the expense of the borings at Bulimba in the meantime, and that if an elaborate survey was required, the parties would be at the expense themselves? Was the work at the present time being done at the expense of the Government?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the whole expense incurred had been £30; but the parties who had applied for it were willing to recoup the Government when the survey was finished. In the meantime, the borings were there for the information of the department.

Mr. ALAND said he had been particularly struck with the increase in the amount of the Estimates from £8,000 to £11,000, and more so after hearing what the hon. member for Mulgrave had stated in regard to the large increase over previous years. But, looking back, he found that if the increase in the vote was large, the amount of public works being carried out year by year was much larger still, so that that accounted to a very great extent for the largeness of the vote. In 1881-2 the amount of the vote was £2,312, and the expenditure on that department of public works £29,600; in 1882-3 the vote was £5,982, and the expenditure £39,000; in 1883-4 the vote was £8,832, and the expenditure £68,000; and in the current year the amount asked for was £11,000, and the proposed expenditure £81,000. If, therefore, the Government were liberal in their expenditure they were liberal in the matter of public buildings.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood, then, that the Government were at present carrying on boring operations as a preliminary survey for the proposed bridge across the river at Bulimba. But if any private individuals wished to carry out a scheme of that kind, it was most inadvisable that the Government should be identified with it; and that they were identified with it there was not the slightest doubt. Anyone looking at things as they were at present in Brisbane must regret that every possible inducement was being given to people to buy land; and the price of land in Brisbane and the neighbourhood was so far beyond its natural value that he feared it would result in a crash. The idea of a bridge at Bulimba was simply a part of a big scheme to enhance the value of land in that neighbourhood, and the action of the Government in identifying themselves with it was discreditable to them. Anyone with any business knowledge whatever must know that there was no chance of such a wild scheme ever being carried out. It was simply a sort of bait held out by people interested in the sale of land there, and the public were induced to believe that steps were being taken at the Government expense to have the survey made. People were being induced to buy land there in the faith that the bridge would actually be built. It was one of the wildest schemes that had ever been broached in the colony, and that the Government should have identified themselves with it in any way was a reproach to them. But it was merely one of a series of acts on the part of the Government to run up the price of land in every possible way, and it must result in great disaster to that part of the colony.

The PREMIER said that perhaps the hon. gentleman would favour the Committee with the other instances to which he referred, and it would, no doubt, be found that there was just as little foundation for them as for the one he had cited. The Government had simply lent a disused boring machine to people who wanted to make bores in the river bed, and he failed to see how that could identify the Government with the proposal to build a bridge.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it was perfectly well known that the Government were carrying on the survey, for people could see that their own officers were employed in the work. The only conclusion they could come to was that the Government were identified with the erection of the proposed bridge, and the effect

was to enhance the value of land and to increase the number of land sales in the immediate neighbourhood. There was no need to give other instances, although he could mention plenty of them. He had given one, because it was mentioned in the papers as a fact that the Government were making a survey across the river. They were lending themselves to what must result in disaster, by raising the price of land and inducing people to buy it at far more than its proper value. The Colonial Treasurer knew as well as he did that the scheme was impracticable, and it was one with which the Government should never in the slightest degree have identified itself.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was amused at the vehemence displayed by the hon. member, whose utterances generally were so full of common sense as to meet with the approbation of hon. members. He need only inform him that both his statements and his inference were entirely without foundation. The Government were in no way identified with the survey. It was as much their duty to afford information as to the bed of the river as to give information with respect to the extension of wharves on its banks. Application was simply made to ascertain the character of the bed of the river, and the Government were in no way obliged to continue it. They were in no way identified with it. It was unnecessary for him to express his opinion as to the feasibility or otherwise of the scheme; and to say that the Government by their action were encouraging wild land speculations was one of those bold statements which the hon. gentleman occasionally made—as when, some years ago, he said the country was on the brink of a volcano; statements which he received with almost something like contempt. The Government had done nothing to encourage land speculation in any way, and not one member of the Government was concerned either directly or indirectly in the possession or sale of land anywhere near the locality of the proposed bridge. What they had done was to afford information which had been asked for by certain capitalists in order to supply them with data for the further consideration of their undertaking—and that work would be paid for by the applicants.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that what the Committee objected to was not the loan of a disused boring machine, as the Premier had described it, but the loan of their own officers, who were certainly not disused; and which led the public to believe that the Government were in some way identified with the work. The Colonial Treasurer first told them that the work would be paid for in case any elaborate survey was made; and now he told them that the promoters were willing to pay for the work already done. He did not doubt that, but he objected to Government officers being lent for such a purpose. If those men were capitalists they would have found little difficulty in getting men to do the work. People passing by could see the Government officers at work there, and they were willing to give a greatly enhanced price for land in the vicinity in the belief that the Government were in some way or other identified with the scheme. He did not think from the information he had heard that it was ever likely to be carried out, and he was inclined to think that the cost would be rather too great for the capitalists whom the hon. gentleman alluded to. It would certainly be far too great for the Government to attempt, besides which the House would never consent to such a proposition.

Mr. ARCHER: It sells land.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said, as the hon. member for Blackall remarked, it sold land, and that was the very objection to the Government encouraging the scheme.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was certainly very much surprised when he saw the first notification in the paper that the bridge was to be constructed. It was rather a wild scheme, he thought, but at the same time he did not think anything of the application for the loan of a boring machine and punt. The Government had of course to give permission to disturb the bed of the river, and no one had a right to do so without application to the Government; that was one of the harbour regulations. He made inquiries about the bridge, because a great many people were rushing to him to know when it was to be constructed; and it was a fact that a piece of land, which he could have bought at £10 an allotment some little time ago, was sold the other day for £85. When people came to him in his official capacity as chairman of the Booroodabin Divisional Board for information, he said he knew nothing about it. But he had at first wanted to know where the bridge was to come out on the other side, if it was taken from the top of Teneriffe Hill. It struck him that viaducts would have to be constructed out near the road, and the expenditure would be such that the bridge would never be constructed. Another thing he wanted to know was the proposed height of the bridge, and when he was told it was to be 120 feet, he saw at once that that would never do, because an ordinary vessel something like the "Scottish Prince," which was here a few days ago, could not get underneath; her height from the deck to the truck being 121 feet, and additional height would have to be allowed for the distance between the ship's deck and the water. As every additional foot in height increased the cost of the bridge, it would take a Baron Rothschild to find the money. However, he did not think it was necessary to say anything further on the subject, for he believed it would be a very long time before the bridge was built—if it was ever built.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. Colonial Treasurer had informed them that a boring machine and Government officers had been let to a bridge syndicate, but apparently he did not think in his innocence of the use such a syndicate would make of that fact in their representations to people in inducing them to buy land. He (Mr. Norton) thought it was possible the syndicate would take advantage of that, but he wanted to ask another question. The hon. member said a charge was to be made if the Government thought it desirable, and he (Mr. Norton) would now ask him whether that was the way he treated private people who made applications for boring machines to find water? There was a notice in the paper that certain charges were to be made to divisional boards, or others, who got the use of boring machines; they had to pay £5 a week, and take all the responsibility of keeping the machine in order. So that it seemed to him that an unfair advantage was allowed to the bridge syndicate in giving them the use of the Government property and officers for nothing, while divisional boards were charged for the same thing. If anyone was to be charged let all be charged alike. He would like to know if the paragraph in the paper was correct, and whether charges had been made for the use of boring machines?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there had been regulations prepared, under which boring machines, when they arrived in the colony, would be lent out to local authorities under certain conditions. It had been found from experience that when they were lent out

without conditions, and without the supervision of a Government officer, they came back in such imperfect order that they were useless until overhauled and repaired. Consequently, certain rules had been laid down under which the machines would be lent to local bodies, and accompanied by a Government officer, who would see that they were properly cared for. The paragraph was not inserted with his authority, and he did not know whence the knowledge was arrived at, but so far as it related to the regulations having been prepared, it was substantially correct; it was, however, misleading in the earlier part as regarded the water-boring plant having been lent free of charge to the syndicate interested in the construction of the bridge.

Mr. NORTON said he presumed the information was obtained from the Government offices, where it was usual to supply information to the Press. He thought the hon. member was quite right in making regulations, without which no plant should be lent out at all, but if when the boring machines arrived they happened to be lying idle, would they be lent to syndicates? Of course they would not, and there was no reason why the syndicate that had been mentioned should not be charged for the use of the plant they had been using. He hoped the hon. gentleman would charge them. He would now ask the Minister for Works if the Government intended to carry out the whole of the works mentioned in the estimates of the Works Department? He asked the question because many of the works belonging to the Ports and Harbours had been carried on by that department. It was found that they, having the necessary appliances in the way of vessels for carrying timber, etc., could do the work much more cheaply than the Works Department in many instances.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the usual course was to call for tenders, but sometimes the tenders were so ridiculously high that the works had to be re-tendered for. It was the intention of the Government to carry out the works in the Estimates in the usual way—that was, by contract.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like the hon. gentleman to say whether he had fixed the amount that was to be charged per week or per day for the boring machines. He recollected when the hon. gentleman was in office before he bought a diamond drill for boring for water on the western plains, but it was allowed to be in the Works stores for a long time and was never used. At last he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) got rid of it by lending it to the Cooktown people to bore for coal, on the express condition that the Government were not to bear any of the expense. When it came back, however, he found that the Government had to pay a great portion of the expense. It was afterwards lent to Charters Towers; but he was not quite certain whether the same thing occurred there. He thought a fixed sum should be charged; it should not be excessive, but quite enough to cover the interest on the cost of the machine and the expense of supervision. That was what was done in Victoria with the diamond drills; there was a Government officer in charge who was paid by the people who borrowed the drill, and at the same time they were charged £10 a week for the use of it; besides which the Government had the power to withdraw the machine at any time on giving a week's notice.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the charges were based on the Victorian scale, but he thought the amount was £5, not £10, a week. The diamond drill, as far as experience showed,

was rather an elaborate and expensive machine. The Government proposed to introduce one of Wright and Edwards's Australian water-augers, which were an adaptation of the Tiffin borer and the diamond drill, with all the latest improvements; and he believed it would be found in many respects to be better than the diamond drill. The cost was about £1,100, including tubing and everything—in fact, the machine would be complete for that. However, when the loan vote for water supply came on he would be in a position to give full information on the matter. In the meantime, he noticed that one of the divisional boards—Gogango—objected to the conditions on which the borer was lent. He thought, however, the charges were very fair, and such that any board ought to accept.

Mr. PALMER asked when the loan vote for water supply would come on?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that would altogether depend on the speed with which they got on with the ordinary Estimates. As soon as they were through he would be prepared to go on with the Loan votes.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £81,150 be granted for Buildings. He did not know whether hon. members expected him to give all the information about those buildings. The greater portion of them were for the Customs, the Postmaster-General's, and Colonial Secretary's Departments—police quarters, court-houses, lunatic asylums, and such like buildings. He could give no further information than what appeared on the Estimates. All he had to do was simply to carry out the works when the money was voted.

Mr. BLACK said he was sorry to find that the hon. gentleman was unable to give any information about those items; but he supposed some of the hon. gentleman's colleagues would be able to see him out of his difficulty, which was rather an unusual one for a Minister to admit. There was one item which he hoped he would have the assistance of hon. members on both sides in striking out, and that was "Brisbane Botanic Gardens dwarf wall, Alice street." That was an item which they could really very well dispense with. There was a reasonably good fence round the gardens; and although he was not prepared to say that a better one could not be erected for that money, he thought it could be dispensed with in favour of other more important works. They had to cut their coats according to their cloth. No doubt they all liked to have new suits of clothes; but they had to do with the old ones until they could afford the new ones. He hoped, therefore, the hon. gentleman would dispense with the vote for another year at least.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member seemed surprised that he could not give all the information about the items put down there, but the hon. member should remember that in connection with all those works requisitions had to be sent in by the various departments requiring them. All those buildings were absolutely necessary. Some came in the Customs Department, some in the Post and Telegraph Department, and some in the Colonial Secretary's Department. As to the particular vote for the Botanic Gardens dwarf wall, so far as he was concerned he did not care what became of it. He was not impressed with it, to commence with. If the hon. member for Mackay would take a vote and decide upon it at once it would save time.

Mr. ARCHER said that the Minister for Works could easily have got the information from the different officers who required the buildings. It would have been the simplest thing in

the world when those officers made a requisition to have afforded that information to the Minister for Works, so that he might supply it to the Committee. The hon. gentleman must have known that the Committee would not swallow a vote like that without any information at all. He would ask the Colonial Secretary, who, he must say, generally knew something about what he put before the Committee, what the vote of £7,000 to the Brisbane Hospital was for? He was not going to say that the Brisbane Hospital ought not to be improved, or that there was any reason why the money should not be expended; but the Committee would like to know what alterations were to be made and what were the reasons for them. It was a large vote; but the Brisbane Hospital was the hospital of the capital, and was taken advantage of by many people from the country. If a vote of £1,000 were asked for any hospital in the country, probably there would have to be very good reasons given for it; but in the present case they were asked to swallow a vote of such magnitude without a single word of explanation from the Minister. He had no doubt the Colonial Secretary would be able to state what alterations were wanted and what was the necessity for them—whether the hospital was overcrowded and required extra accommodation. Those were things that should be explained.

The PREMIER said he would be very glad to give information concerning buildings that were required in connection with his department. Almost immediately after he went into office his attention was called to the condition of the Brisbane Hospital, about a year ago. He went out to see it, and found it in a very bad condition. The fever wards were crowded so that patients had to be, not exactly laid upon the floor, but between the beds of other patients, and on one occasion they had to be accommodated in tents in the yard. It was no use denying that additional accommodation was urgently required, and the Government certainly did not feel themselves justified in allowing sick people to die through want of hospital accommodation; therefore he followed the practice that had been followed in the Colonial Secretary's Office before in cases of urgency, and sanctioned the expenditure of the money. The Colonial Architect prepared, as soon as time allowed, a scheme for additions sufficient to meet the present requirements, and the additions were designed so that they could be further extended when that unfortunately became necessary. Those were the circumstances under which the vote was asked.

Mr. FERGUSON said that last session, about eight months ago, a sum of £7,000 was voted for the Brisbane Hospital: was that £7,000 all expended? That was another £7,000, which made £14,000 this year specially voted for additions to the Brisbane Hospital.

The PREMIER said that last year the Government simply had to ask the Committee to sanction the expenditure. The money had already been expended before the present Government came into power.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, with regard to the Botanic Gardens dwarf wall, he might mention that £400 was voted last year for repairs to the railing; but that amount had been found to be altogether inadequate for the work, which, he understood, was of such a character that it could not be patched up any longer, and a new wall was necessary from George street down to the ferry along Alice street, for the purpose of carrying the iron railing which would be reinstated on the new wall. That was the reason why £1,650 appeared in the Estimates. It must

be borne in mind that the £400 was approved, but not found adequate. He would also refer to the buildings which came under his department. There was £2,500 for additions to the Harbours and Rivers Office. That was rendered necessary on account of accommodation being required for the Hydraulic Engineer, who really had not sufficient accommodation at the present time. Therefore it was considered that the Harbours and Rivers Office should be enlarged so as to give him office-room, which could not be spared either by the Engineer for Harbours or by the Portmaster. Then there were to be new quarters for the Sub-collector of Customs at Bowen. Hon. members would be aware that during the late hurricane at Bowen that building was almost demolished. It was an old place and was rendered quite uninhabitable, and the money was asked for the purpose of erecting new quarters. At Townsville there was £1,000 for additions to the bond store. Unfortunately there were no private bonds at Townsville, and the Government had to make provision for the increasing trade.

Mr. FERGUSON said the Colonial Treasurer had told them the dwarf wall was to be constructed between George street and the river. From where he was standing he could see a stone wall there already.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER : It is not stone.

Mr. FERGUSON said there was a substantial iron railing from one end of the gardens to the other, and he could not see anything the matter with it. It might not be pretty enough, but that was all.

Mr. BLACK said he had taken the opportunity of going to see the wall that morning, and he found the fence in fairly good order. The iron railing was perfectly sound, and he failed to see the number of places where it was said to be propped up. He was sure that hon. members might walk up and down that path without suspecting there was anything wrong with the wall unless their attention was called to it. It was not a work of urgent necessity, and it might very well stand over. He was glad the Minister for Works had expressed his indifference to the matter, and he hoped that, considering the amount they had last night voted for the gardens, the Government would consent to the item being excised.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that, if the hon. member for Townsville had examined the wall before he said it was a substantial one, his idea of a substantial wall was different from anyone else's. He (the Minister for Lands) examined it eight or nine months ago when the amount was on the Estimates before, and the greater portion of the foundation on which the iron railings rested was riddled with white ants. In some places the railing had dropped through the wood and had to be fastened up with wire, while the last hundred yards could be shaken backwards and forwards with the hand, and was propped up with sticks. It must be attended to some time or other, and it was a question whether it would last another year. It was not a stone wall at all—it was simply painted wood. There might be some rough stone supporting the earthwork of the street, but the supports of the iron railing were all wood.

Mr. BEATTIE said he thought that if the hon. member for Mackay had given the railing a shake when he was examining it near the lower end he would have shaken it down. It was in a very bad state indeed. They had spent a lot of money on the gardens, and they must protect them by an efficient fence to keep out the cows

that were travelling all over the country. He would like to know what the additions were that were to be made to the Harbours and Rivers Office. It struck him that that particular branch of the service would exceed all the other offices put together in three or four years more at the rate they were going, and they would need larger buildings to hold all the officers.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the alterations would be at the rear of the present buildings, at the corner of Margaret and Edward streets. It was intended to remove the staircase from the porch, which would leave space for a large room; and the building would be extended towards the river along Margaret street. The additional accommodation was required for the Hydraulic Engineer, who now required three rooms instead of one to provide for the clerks and draftsmen, rendered necessary by the increase in the work of the department.

Mr. BEATTIE said that was all very well for the Engineer, who would get the north-easter in the new building; but the main portion of the building would become like an oven. The new structure would shut out all the air from the present buildings, and they would not get a breath of wind. He thought it was a very selfish proposition indeed. Why should not the Harbour Master and all his clerks get a breath of air in their office? He thought it would be far better to remove the Engineer to another building altogether. The rent would be very little more than the interest on the £2,500 needed to build the new wing.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could assure the hon. member that both the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers and the Portmaster were consulted as to the most convenient form the additions should take, and they had concurred in the suggestion of the Colonial Architect. The proposed plans had not emanated from the Hydraulic Engineer, but were prepared by the Colonial Architect. He thought if the hon. member would take the trouble to inspect the plans his opinion would be very considerably altered.

Mr. NORTON said he noticed a sum down in the vote for a staircase to the reporters' gallery. Was that the cost of the square staircase that was put up in the corner of the Assembly building? Did they pay £450 for that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that that was the sum put down for the staircase, but he believed the contract price was £400.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped the next time a staircase was wanted for the Parliamentary Buildings the consent of Parliament would be asked, because that staircase was not a bit more useful than the old round one. He did not believe that one man who used it would be a bit more satisfied with that square abomination than with the old round one.

Mr. ARCHER said that they should leave that staircase as a specimen of the taste of the architects of Queensland. They should wall up the entrance and allow the reporters to come up by the other stairs.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the Parliamentary Buildings Committee had applied for the staircase, as they complained very much about the reporters going up the other stairs. It was the committee and the member for Rockhampton who were responsible for it.

Mr. FERGUSON said the Minister for Works must be aware that he had only been a month ago elected a member of that committee. He

was not responsible for the staircase. He believed himself that the reason why it had been built as it was, was that the Colonial Architect had not been consulted, as had also been too frequently the case in regard to other buildings that had been erected. If the Minister for Works had not been so particular in regard to allowing officers to do those little duties, very likely matters would have been different. The present Parliamentary Buildings Committee had taken a different course, and had consulted a professional man before attempting to do anything.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that the Minister for Works had tried to clear himself of any responsibility for the staircase by throwing it on the Parliamentary Buildings Committee, in the person of Mr. Ferguson, and that gentleman also denied responsibility. He should like to know who was responsible for that laughable absurdity. Everybody connected with it ought to be ashamed of it. He thought the suggestion of the hon. member for Blackall was reasonable. Let them wall it up and allow the reporters to get up by the other staircase.

The PREMIER: So they do.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said they did at present, but what was the intention when the staircase was finished? He should like the Minister for Works to set a bricklayer to work to wall it up.

The PREMIER said it was used by the "printer's devils."

Mr. MELLOR said that, as a member of the Parliamentary Buildings Committee, he must disclaim any connection whatever with the staircase. The committee knew nothing about it until it was in progress. He did not know who was responsible for it.

Mr. BLACK said the Committee appeared to be getting into a very happy state. It seemed to him that the Works Department of the colony had been conducted on a "do-as-you-please" system. He was sorry to see the hon. Minister for Works placed in a very embarrassing position that afternoon, but he had a happy way of getting out of a difficulty. He (Mr. Black) would suggest that in future, when any item of the sort, for which the Parliamentary Buildings Committee was responsible, came on, that committee should take their seats on the Treasury bench, so that hon. members might get proper replies to questions put. At present they hardly knew whom they had to address in endeavouring to acquire information. He was glad the Premier himself had admitted the absurdity of that gallery staircase. When members of the Committee were able to see what was contemplated, before it was twenty feet high remonstrances were made in the House regarding it. And now that they found that members were unanimous in declaring that it was a perfect waste of money, no one was responsible. The difficulty now was to know what to do with it. He would suggest to the hon. Minister for Works, or whoever had that department under control, that he should convert the staircase into a dungeon. He believed that an occurrence had taken place two sessions ago, when an hon. member had to be put under arrest, and that it was then found that they had no dungeon. He thought that would be the best possible use to which the staircase could be put. Let it be divided into two chambers, an upper and a lower, and it would serve the purposes of a dungeon admirably in the future.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could assure hon. members that no more staircases would be built. He had been pressed to erect

an additional gallery for the accommodation of the ladies, but there was no money voted for that. He would take care for the future to look to the position which the Parliamentary Buildings Committee held. It was all very well for that committee to shield themselves in the way they now did, but he could say that it had been with the greatest reluctance that he had given instructions to spend money on that staircase. He did not wish to come to loggerheads with the Parliamentary Buildings Committee, and therefore he had sanctioned the expenditure; but from the expression of opinion now given he would take good care they would get no more money. He would take up the position of being able to say "No" to them.

Mr. BEATTIE said that was all very well, but the money was spent, and what were they going to do with the staircase? He should also like to know exactly who was the architect, and how the staircase had got there. Who gave the authority? It seemed that the Minister for Works really did give the authority. The staircase looked like a square barrel stuck up in a corner with no apparent means of getting either in or out of it. He had no idea that stairs would be found inside it. But as the staircase was very severe on the reporters, the Minister for Works had better spend a little more money and buy a gas-engine and a lift for their use.

Mr. ISAMBERT said that in the neighbourhood of Brisbane there was a tower known as "Bartley's Folly." He would suggest that the name of the designer of the staircase should be discovered and attached to it as a monument of folly.

Mr. SCOTT said that if the design was that of the Colonial Architect his name ought to be engraved on it in very large letters.

Mr. ARCHER said it was unfair to blame the Colonial Architect for doing what he was ordered to do by the Minister for Works.

Mr. SCOTT said the structure must have been designed either by the Colonial Architect or the Minister for Works.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had nothing to do with it. The Colonial Architect was instructed to prepare a plan for a staircase to the reporters' gallery and he did so. Surely hon. members did not suppose for a moment that he was going to check the Colonial Architect's work! The request for the plan came from the Parliamentary Buildings Committee, who had made a great mistake. In future he would take care to satisfy himself as to the designs.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Minister for Works deserved their sympathy. Up to the present he had been Minister for Works in name only, and now he intended to be so in reality. What was the explanation of the vote under discussion? It was simply that the Minister for Works, instead of doing the work of the department himself, had allowed others to interfere in it. No doubt the Colonial Architect would be only too glad to have one master instead of half-a-dozen, according to the description just given of the management of the office. Perhaps the hon. gentleman would tell the Committee a little more about the staircase outside, because they did not yet understand how it got there. Before John Petrie's bill was paid they ought to know all about it.

Mr. JESSOP said he noticed that provision was made for about six-and-twenty police stations and police quarters. He wished to call the attention of the Minister for Works to the fact that at Dalby the sergeant's quarters were in a shocking state of dilapidation. He hoped

money would be provided for the erection of a suitable building. As to the staircase, the best use to which it could be put would be to turn it into a receptacle for reports called for by hon. members, laid on the table, and never read.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that no application for new police quarters had been made from Dalby.

Mr. JESSOP said it was the duty of the Government to ascertain what public buildings were required, and where.

The PREMIER said the duty of the Government was not to go about inquiring where they could spend money, but they had to see rather where they could avoid spending money. As to the want of new police quarters at Dalby, that was the first he had heard of it.

Mr. JESSOP said he hoped the Minister for Works would make a note of the fact that he had called attention to it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that if the Minister for Works had done his duty, as laid down by the Premier, and seen where he could have avoided spending money, they would not have had such a large estimate to deal with. The hon. gentleman had allowed the Works to take possession of him instead of his holding possession of them. It had always been the case that the other Ministers sent in requisitions for buildings to the Minister for Works, but it did not necessarily follow that the Minister for Works acceded to those requisitions. He should have found out the why and wherefore of those buildings.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What nonsense! You never did so.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the other Ministers did not care a straw how the Minister for Works got through his Estimates. They had their own Estimates to look after. It seemed that the Minister for Works had carefully done what he was told to do. He was now beginning to awake to his position, and look after his colleague, and the Parliamentary Buildings Committee as well. He hoped the hon. gentleman would look after the Colonial Secretary and the Treasurer, and see that they were more economical. There were twenty-five police stations mentioned, and he did not know how many Customs buildings, and very likely not more than one-third were wanted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he thought it was time to get back to serious business.

Mr. ARCHER: Oh, indeed!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was all very well to say that he should look after his colleagues. The hon. member for Townsville said that if applications were sent in for buildings they must be complied with, and he knew also that he (the Minister for Works) could do no more than the hon. member did when he was in office.

Mr. ARCHER said he remembered, when he was in office, being very much disgusted with the then Minister for Works, for cutting down his Estimates. He (Mr. Archer) wanted decent quarters for Customs officers and others, but the Estimates were usually cut down at least one-third. If the hon. gentleman fancied that previous Ministers had not cut down Estimates he was mistaken.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the members of the present Ministry were all economical, and there was no necessity for cutting down Estimates.

Mr. NORTON said he was sure £450 for a staircase such as had been spoken of was proof of the economy of the Minister for Works!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he wanted to hear from the Colonial Secretary—as the Minister for Works did not know anything about it—why so much was required for the Brisbane Hospital? £7,000 was voted last year; £7,000 was now asked for it; and £1,260 was in the revenue vote for 1882-3; making in all £15,000 in three years. That was enough to build a new hospital.

The PREMIER said he had explained the vote before, and surely he was not to be expected to make the same speech twice. When he came into office he was called on to go and see the Brisbane Hospital and the condition it was in. The fever wards were in a frightfully crowded state, and there was not room enough for the great number of patients seeking admission. Great numbers of people were dying of fever; and it was absolutely necessary that provision should be made for the proper additional accommodation. The matter was so urgent that he had given instructions at once and authorised the necessary additions, which were now going on. That was all the information he could give.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Does your explanation refer to the present vote, or the one passed last year?

The PREMIER said he had not authorised any further expenditure.

Mr. BEATTIE said the former £7,000 was for the fever wards and the necessary appliances. They had been erected some time ago. He was glad to see the present application made and complied with, and that the Government were doing something to alleviate the misery which existed at the hospital not long ago. The hospital committee took a very warm interest in the institution, but were put to their wits' end to make provision for the fever patients. A number of the patients had to be put in tents, the wards being so full at one time. He knew that of his own knowledge from a case that came under his notice. A young man was taken ill with typhoid fever, and after remaining seven days in hospital he was removed to a tent to make room for another fever patient, and all that time many people were lying ill with fever on the floors. At that time fever was so prevalent in the city that it was thought desirous to construct temporary accommodation in the Victoria Park, and on that occasion representations were made to the Colonial Secretary, who gave the necessary authority for additional buildings.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was no desire to prevent proper accommodation being provided at the hospital, but he thought the hon. member was wrong in saying that £7,000 had been spent on the fever wards. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) found that £4,000 had been provided out of Loan for those buildings. Surely it did not take £11,000 for one ward; £4,000 ought to have paid for it.

Mr. BEATTIE: I think I am wrong.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said in three years they were asked to vote £15,000 from revenue, and £4,000 odd from Loan. It seemed to him that £20,000 ought to put up a good hospital. He did not know whether the money had been economically expended. Of course he knew that the Brisbane Hospital was a receptacle for people from all parts of the colony; but all hospitals at seaports, such as those at Rockhampton, Townsville, and Maryborough, were much in the same position, and the same rule applied to them.

The PREMIER said he found he was mistaken in the information he had given, and he was glad the hon. member had asked for further information. He found that £7,000 was on the last Estimates, and had been carried forward that

year. He had only asked for one sum of £7,000. Contracts were let for wards to cost £8,000; but that did not include all the additional work required; and the outhouses and quarters were in a very unsatisfactory state. A sum of £8,000 would be sufficient to do the work; and he would therefore ask his colleague to reduce the item by £4,000.

Mr. ARCHER said he would like to call attention to the unsatisfactory amount that was subscribed towards the hospital by the people of Brisbane. He could safely say that there was no place in the colony where the public subscriptions for that purpose were so small in proportion to the population. In smaller towns it was found that the people gave liberally; but in Brisbane the amount given was really a disgrace to the people. He believed that if more canvassing was done a great deal more money would be raised.

Mr. STEVENS said the fault lay in the want of activity on the part of the collectors. He had been living in the neighbourhood of Brisbane for six or seven years, and he had only twice been asked for a subscription to the hospital. A good deal more might be got if the hospital committee would adopt a suggestion he made some time ago; that was, that life members who had subscribed ten guineas should be allowed to send two free patients instead of one. If that were done it would encourage a great many people to become life members. A sum of ten guineas represented payment for ten years, which was a considerable part of a man's life time; and if he actually gave ten years' payment he ought to be allowed a greater privilege than those who simply paid for one year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £7,000 for additions to the Brisbane Hospital be reduced by £4,000.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. LISSNER said he wished to say something about a post and telegraph office that the Minister for Works promised the people of Ravenswood some time ago. The hon. gentleman had got out of a good many difficulties that evening, but he did not know how he would get out of that one. When the hon. gentleman went to Charters Towers to inspect the Haughton Gap Railway, a deputation from Ravenswood waited on him and asked him to grant them a telegraph and post office—and not sooner than it was required either, for the present office had been in use fifteen or sixteen years, and it was hardly safe enough now to hold a registered letter; so that there was no question that the request was a *bona fide* one. Well, the hon. gentleman granted it cheerfully. He put it in his memo. book, and the deputation went home joyfully, informing their friends that they had got everything they asked for. He (Mr. Lissner) came down to Brisbane in the full expectation that the vote would be in the Estimates. Furthermore, he saw the hon. gentleman at his head office and reminded him of it, and the hon. gentleman told him that it would be all right; that he would place himself in communication with the Postmaster-General, and that everything would be "O.K." There was a reporter present at the time, and the result of the interview duly appeared in the *Observer*. But after all there was no vote on the Estimates for the building. He was very sorry for it; and he just wished to remind the hon. gentleman of his promise, and ask him to put a sum on the Supplementary Estimates, so that the people of Ravenswood would not be able to say they had been slighted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the promise he made was that he would bring the

matter under the notice of the Postmaster-General, and he did so. He would like to know what the hon. member had been doing since he came down? Why did he not interview the Postmaster-General about it? Did the hon. member suppose that he (the Minister for Works) was going from office to office to look after the interest of Ravenswood?

Mr. LISSNER said the hon. gentleman told him he would see the Postmaster-General on his (Mr. Lissner's) account as a particular favour, and that it would be all right.

Question—That £77,250 only be granted for Buildings—put.

Mr. LISSNER said that, although the hon. Minister for Works had frowned at him before tea, he had the satisfaction of seeing him smile at the latter end of the conversation, and "his bright smile haunted him still." He hoped that during the time the hon. gentleman was at tea he had considered the justice of his (Mr. Lissner's) claim with regard to the telegraph office at Ravenswood, and that he would gracefully come to the conclusion to put a sum on the Supplementary Estimates. He trusted to have the pleasure of seeing the hon. gentleman rise in his place and say it was all right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he remembered promising the Ravenswood people to bring the matter under the notice of the Postmaster-General. He had done so, but probably Mr. Garrick, who was Postmaster-General at the time, had allowed it to escape his memory. He had no objection to requesting the Postmaster-General to put it on the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. LISSNER: I am quite satisfied.

Mr. ARCHER: You are easily satisfied.

Mr. BLACK said he wished the hon. member for Kennedy could impart to him some of his fascinating ways of getting round Ministers, so that they would smile when he wanted anything from them. That was the second time during the week that the hon. member's persuasive powers had succeeded in surmounting the usual difficulty that stood in the way of members getting any reasonable consideration for their districts.

Mr. LISSNER: I only take up a good case.

Mr. BLACK said he did not envy the hon. gentleman his success. The hon. gentleman's district deserved to be as ably represented as it was, especially as the results were so satisfactory. He was glad to hear from the Minister for Works that the plans for the Pioneer River Bridge were completed, and that tenders would be called in next Saturday's *Gazette*. He would like to know when the plans for the court-house at Mackay were likely to be ready. He understood, about a month ago, that the difficulty about the site had been overcome, and that plans would be prepared almost immediately. He had noticed a paragraph in the papers that there was a hitch in the title, and though he did not attach much importance to the statement, he would like to be assured that no delay had occurred from that cause.

The PREMIER said that so far as he knew there was no difficulty about the matter now. He knew that about a week or ten days before he had been asked by the Works Department to fix a site, and he did so. There could be no further delay except calling for tenders.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the Colonial Architect had received instructions to prepare plans for the court-house. He did not think the hon. member had much cause to complain, because ever since the Engineer for Bridges arrived the whole of his time had been

devoted to plans for the bridge over the Pioneer River, for which tenders were to be called in Saturday's *Gazette*. Other parts of the colony required plans, and he could only promise hon. members that there should be no delay.

Mr. BLACK said he was not making any serious complaint against the Minister for Works; but the existing court-house was very inconvenient, and the Northern Circuit Court Judge had remarked the other day on the very bad and inefficient accommodation. He did not think the Minister for Works could conscientiously charge the people or him with want of patience, considering that twelve months had elapsed since the money was first put on the Estimates.

Mr. McWHANNELL said he saw that there was an item, "Quarters for Sub-inspector of Police, Muttaborra." He would point out to the hon. Minister for Works that there was £1,700 voted for sub-inspector's quarters at Winton in the Estimates of 1882, and before the present vote was passed he should like some explanation on the matter.

The PREMIER said that the question had been under consideration for some time, whether Winton or Muttaborra was the best place to station the sub-inspector of police, who had charge of the district extending from Muttaborra to the north-west. He had come to the conclusion at last that Winton was the best place, but he was not quite sure that it would not be necessary to have a sub-inspector stationed at Muttaborra also. That was why the item had not been withdrawn from the Estimates.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was a sum of £500 on the Estimates for a police station at Lutwyche. He would like to know whether that was to serve both the Lutwyche and Albion districts. They were very nearly connected.

The PREMIER said that after a long resistance he had at last been compelled to admit the necessity of a police station there. The place was becoming thickly populated, and required police protection. The station would serve both districts.

Mr. BLACK said there were a large number of items for hospitals, and he would like to know whether the claims of Mackay to an additional hospital building had been considered. He was given to understand by the Colonial Secretary last week that any communication he had received from the Secretary of the Mackay Hospital was received long after the Estimates were framed. If the hon. gentleman admitted the necessity for extra accommodation, there was no reason why an amount should not be put on the Supplementary Estimates. The hon. gentleman was quite in error, he thought, as to the date on which the communication was received. He thought he would admit that it had been received before the Estimates were framed.

The PREMIER said he did not think so. He had a communication from the hon. member for Mackay.

Mr. BLACK said he had also a communication from the secretary of the hospital, dated 2nd July, 1884. He (Mr. Black) thought it would be more satisfactory if some better arrangement were arrived at, so that districts requiring hospitals might know whether they were entitled to assistance or not. Districts must have hospitals; they were essential for the welfare of the people, and it was right that, when once erected, they should be self-supporting as far as possible. But in the majority of cases it was entirely beyond the means of the people to contribute the whole of the cost of the erection of the hospital. At all events where that had been done, and where,

from the increase of population, the hospital accommodation had become insufficient, they ought to have their claims favourably considered. He therefore asked the Colonial Secretary if he could hold out any reasonable expectation that that particular claim for the Mackay Hospital would be considered in the Supplementary Estimates.

The PREMIER said he believed the hon. member for Mackay was right in stating that the first communication had been addressed to him before the Estimates were framed. He had, however, spoken as if the grants were made at the caprice of the Minister. The Minister had an immense number of claims to determine upon, and could not find money for all of them. All that he could do was to make provision for the most urgent. His practice had been to make inquiries as to the population of the district, the number of patients in the hospital, and the amount of subscriptions that had been received, and then to provide for the most urgent cases. Whether he had done so on a consistent plan, or by mere caprice, he could not say. It had occurred to him, from the representations made in regard to Mackay Hospital, that it was not so urgent a case as most of the others dealt with. But if it was a really urgent case he would be prepared to recommend the necessary provision as far as the finances of the colony would permit.

Mr. ARCHER said that, seeing the enormous sum of £16,000 had been spent on the Brisbane Hospital within the last few years, the Colonial Secretary might give some consideration to Geraldton. That was a district where there was no hospital at all, and where they had been trying to get one for some time. He hoped it would receive some consideration.

The PREMIER said he had made a note of the matter in connection with the Supplementary Estimates, and waited to receive some further communication from Geraldton.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that he was depending on the promise given by the hon. gentleman the other night in regard to a vote for an hospital at Herberton. Like the Premier, he was awaiting a communication from the secretary of the hospital, whom he informed of the promise made by the hon. gentleman.

Mr. GRIMES said he would like to press the necessity of erecting accommodation for a constable at Rocky Waterholes. The town was growing very fast, and was made, and was sorry to say, a resort of bad characters from Brisbane. That caused the necessity for a resident constable.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the best plan was for the hon. member to make application to the Colonial Secretary. He had nothing to do with the police.

Mr. GRIMES said he had made application to the Colonial Secretary, but there was no accommodation for a constable. The Colonial Secretary might find a constable if accommodation was provided for him.

The PREMIER said that the difficulty of establishing police stations was increased by the necessity of building quarters for the constables. So many applications came in from all parts of the colony that they were obliged to deal with only the most urgent cases.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be voted for the service of the year 1884-5 a sum not exceeding £25,000 for Excepted Roads under the Divisional Boards Act Amendment Act and for Bridges on Main Roads. £15,000 had been put down for building bridges over main roads where the revenue of the divisional boards was so small as to make it utterly impossible for them to undertake such large works. He hoped

the money would be voted so as to enable them to proceed with the important work of building bridges on the main roads.

Mr. NORTON asked whether it was intended to spend the £15,000 for divisional board bridges in the same way as the similar vote last year was expended? That vote was simply divided equally among the divisions, and if the same system was to be continued the Committee would no doubt object to it. It would be interesting to know whether any division last year expended the money for the purpose for which it was voted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was free to admit that a mistake was made in the manner in which the vote was distributed last year. When the money was distributed equally among the boards it was found utterly inadequate for the purpose.

Mr. NORTON said that some of the boards which shared in the vote had actually had bridges built for them apart from that, and others could very well afford to keep their bridges in repair without extra assistance. Could the hon. gentleman give any idea as to what boards were likely to participate in the vote?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that would depend upon the funds placed to the credit of the several boards, but he could assure the hon. member that only those boards that were quite unable to keep their bridges in repair would participate in it.

Mr. BLACK said he did not see why only those boards that were in difficulties should share in the vote. There were boards carrying on their local works in a satisfactory manner that were not in difficulties, but which were still unable to spare the large sums that were frequently necessary for building the minor bridges; and he did not see why they should not share in it. If anything could have caused the people of the colony to cease to take an interest in divisional boards, it was the way in which the vote of last year was distributed. Instead of distributing the amount in proportion to the rates collected, it was divided equally amongst all the divisional boards. When the sum of £100,000 was voted for the establishment of the boards, those divisions which collected only a small amount of rates only received a small proportion of the grant, whilst those which derived a very large revenue from rates got a very much larger proportion. That was not an equitable way of distributing the amount. The way the £15,000 was divided last year was this:—Seventy-five boards got £170 each, quite irrespective of their requirements. Some of them very likely did not want bridges at all, while others had large sums laid out at interest. In districts where a considerable sum of money might well have been spent, the £170 was of next to no use. The consequence was that the money was never devoted to the purpose for which it was intended. The Minister for Works should give some assurance that the vote would this year be distributed in a more equitable way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had already assured the Committee that the present vote would not be dealt with in that way. An error was, no doubt, committed last year, and boards shared in the vote which ought not to have done. He could only promise that the money would be spent judiciously in assisting only those boards which were unable to build bridges for themselves. The hon. member for Mackay, above all others, had little cause to complain. There was to be a bridge built over the Pioneer River costing £20,000. Had that sum been apportioned on the principle laid down by the hon. member, between the Pioneer

River, the Endeavour River, and Ross's Creek, the Pioneer River would have only got half a bridge, or one that would have been carried away by the first flood.

Mr. BLACK said the Minister for Works seemed to think that a man should keep silence from motives of self-interest. That was a very unfair way of putting it. He was speaking not only for the division he represented, but for all the divisions of the colony. Wherever he saw a wrong principle carried out—as had been the case in the past—he was entitled to enter his protest against it. The Minister for Works seemed to think that, because a certain public work was being constructed at Mackay, therefore he should sit there quietly and let the hon. gentleman down softly. But that was not his disposition, and when he saw a wrong system carried on in any department he intended to point it out.

Mr. MELLOR said he was glad to hear the announcement that the vote would be better distributed than it was last year. But a better principle still might be adopted, in subsidising special rates for special works of that kind. Divisions where bridges and other necessary works were really required would be quite willing to tax themselves for the purpose, and the Government might subsidise them to a larger amount than was at present the case—say, three or four to one. The money would be better expended, and the special rate would give a guarantee that the work was really required, and that the inhabitants were willing to help to pay for it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it seemed to him that the hon. member did not quite understand the intention of the Government in voting the money. He did not think they intended to give it to divisional boards that were able to put up works for themselves, but, as far as his judgment went, he thought it was intended for divisional boards that were not in a position to construct bridges. What was the use of passing such a sum if it was to be given to boards in the position of the Gogango Board, for instance, that had money in the bank. Surely it would not be right to give money to those boards that were now well off. It was intended, he thought, to give the money to those divisions that had had very little expended upon them under the old system. Hon. members would recollect that in certain portions of the colony nearly all the rivers were bridged, but there were other parts of the colony that had had nothing done at all. It was not in the rich districts that the money should be spent, and where money had been lavishly spent before. He could mention several divisions that could not rate themselves, and although the last £15,000 was spent badly, he felt sure they could depend upon the Minister for Works acting with more discretion and spending the money in a way that could not be found fault with. He hoped the Government were not gradually falling into the old system of making roads and bridges, and going in for encouraging that general scrambling which the Minister for Works himself used to so much deprecate. He trusted that system would not be extended, but that the money would be dealt with in a proper manner.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he was a representative of a divisional board at present in difficulties, and he hoped the Minister for Works would give the Toombul Board a fair proportion of the money. He could only say that the Toombul Board expended on bridges last year double of what it received out of the last vote. Hon. members would recollect that under the Divisional Boards Act, on its becoming law, it was understood that the Government

would repair roads and bridges for a given time; but that had not been done, and the boards had been compelled in every instance to take over bridges in very bad condition indeed, and as a consequence they had fallen into debt. At the present moment the Toombul Board was in debt to the extent of £500; and he could only express the hope that when the money was expended it would get a fair share, because next year the board would have to undertake at least as much, or a great deal more, repairs to bridges than it did last year.

Mr. ARCHER said he hoped the Minister for Works would take the trouble to ascertain the wants of the boards who applied for money. The hon. gentleman who had last addressed the Committee was connected with a board near the capital, and people in such districts were naturally much richer than those in the country. The people in the Toombul Division had been selling land lately at high figures, and they were very well off; and it was very unlikely that the board would receive a share of the money voted. The hon. member for Townsville had mentioned that several boards had sums lying at interest in the bank, and he instanced the Gogango Division.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I spoke of rich boards.

Mr. ARCHER said that division spread over a large extent of country; it was 100 miles long and 100 broad. It might be rich in the amount of rates collected, but it was poor when the amount of work that had to be done was taken into consideration. Still, that board had never asked for any assistance, but had got money by itself. It was a mistake, he thought, to give facilities for dividing divisions into small sections, as it would double the number of officers and double the administration to keep the division going. Gogango was managed by one board with one executive officer and one clerk, and they had been able to keep out of debt. However, he hoped the Minister for Works, in apportioning the money, would inquire what special works were of urgent necessity, and give the money to those boards that most required assistance. Let those boards whose incomes were small and who were comparatively poor derive the greatest advantage from the vote.

Mr. MELLOR said he represented a board with a debt of £2,000, but he would repeat what he had said before, that it would be much the better system to pay the money for building bridges to the boards in proportion to the rateable property they possessed. He would like to draw the attention of the Government to the necessity of having maps made of the different divisions showing exactly their positions, and having the various selections marked upon them. That was felt to be a great necessity in the divisions, and if it was done it would be a very great concession to the boards.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he thought the vote most objectionable in principle, as it sapped the foundations of local self-government which had been established a few years ago. They voted a similar sum last year for a similar purpose. The greatest solicitude was shown on all sides that the different boards should retain a share, and the Minister for Works could come to no other conclusion, which he appeared then to think was the right one, of apportioning the money amongst all the divisions. That simply amounted to a subsidy to divisional boards, for which the law actually provided. Of course it was not a fair division, because all districts were not equal; but it was a fair representation of the difficulties the Minister had in apportioning the money. How then did the hon. gentleman propose to get over the difficulty? He said he would not spend it as had been done

before. He did not give the slightest information how it was to be spent; but he said he would give it to those boards that were in financial difficulties. Why should they encourage any board to get into financial difficulties by any such habit as that? Why should they give, for the patronage of any Minister, an amount of money, when he did not explain how it was to be apportioned? It was Parliament that ought to have the apportioning of the money. The principle of decentralisation had been thoroughly approved of by the Divisional Boards Act. At that time it was seen that certain public works could not be carried out by the boards. The Government saw the difficulty, and it was put into the Act of 1879 that the main roads should be charged to the general revenue. That was a failure, for the very natural reason that every road in the colony claimed to be a main road. It was then arranged that the boards should take the main roads, but there were a certain number left unprovided for, and the House agreed that all special cases of that sort should be brought before Parliament. There was the road from Tallebudgera to the border for instance, £2,500. That was a case of exception to the Local Government Act. The New South Wales Government had agreed to make a certain road to the Queensland border, and the Queensland Government would have been acting against the interests of the colony had they not agreed to carry on that road. The divisional board there was unable to do it. The Government stated the exceptional case to Parliament, and they agreed to spend the necessary money for the road. That, of course, was a special case. But the present vote was an insidious attempt to get back to the old centralisation system. The hon. gentleman said the principle acted as a failure; and he was now going to apportion the money among boards in financial difficulties. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) thought that was not a proper principle, and he objected to it. It was not carrying out the principle of local self-government. It would be found that the money would be spent by the Minister for Works as it always had been spent—he was not now alluding to any particular Minister for Works—the hon. gentleman would yield to the strongest pressure, and that always came from the localities about Brisbane. Not a single penny would go to districts outside Brisbane. The money was for local patronage, and that was not a right principle; it was a departure from the principle they affirmed in the Divisional Boards Act. The very fact that the Minister found such a difficulty in apportioning the £15,000 before, ought to have suggested to him the difficulty he would have again. He ought to have shirked the responsibility. He ought not to have accepted such a serious responsibility. He ought to have explained the matter to the Committee, and put a schedule before them of the way in which the money was to be apportioned.

The PREMIER said that no doubt it was a very shocking proposal—to do such a thing as ask that a Minister be entrusted with the expenditure of so large a sum. He wondered whether it ever occurred to the hon. gentleman that he proposed to do a similar thing when he was in office. Did he remember how he framed a proposal to spend a very much larger sum, and place it at the disposal of the Government, for precisely the same object. The hon. gentleman's objection reminded one of a certain person reproving sin. They knew very well that, although local government was a very good thing, there were many cases in which small local bodies were unable to carry out large works. That was a fact that they could not shut their eyes to; and they were bound to step in and give assistance,

The only question was whether each particular item should be investigated by the Committee. But the Government were following the example set them by their predecessors who proposed a similar vote last year, and they intended that the money should be appropriated in cases where there was an urgent necessity for some public works being constructed, and the local bodies could not do them.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he had no doubt that in the course of their administration the last Government committed mistakes; but he noticed that, whenever it suited the present Ministry to follow those mistakes and take them as a precedent, they always did so with alacrity. The hon. member was perfectly wrong, because he (Sir T. McIlwraith) always carried out thoroughly the principle of local self-government. But at the end of 1878 his Government were left with a large surplus, and they proposed to devote a portion of that for the purpose of getting out of the difficulties of the Local Government Act. He proposed—speaking from memory—to appropriate a sum of £50,000 for the purpose of making local government work more easily. He did not propose it as an annual vote in the first place; and in the second place he distinctly indicated the particular works on which they proposed to spend the money.

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Yes, in the speech in which he proposed the vote he indicated the works, and stated that in the schedule they would be found set forth exactly as the money was to be appropriated. It would have been accompanied by a schedule, as had always been done when a vote of that kind had been asked.

The PREMIER: It was not.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman took very good care, by moving that their Estimates should not be printed, that it should not be seen what the late Government had proposed; so that the hon. gentleman could not fall back upon an argument of that kind. It was proposed to appropriate out of the revenue a sum of £50,000, which was a very different thing from putting a sum of £15,000 at the patronage of the Minister for Works without the Committee having the slightest voice in saying how the money should be spent. The Minister for Works said he had spent it wrongly before; but he would spend it on a better system in future—amongst the neediest of the divisional boards. Those were the very boards which ought not to be encouraged. If there was any special reason why they were needy, the circumstances should be brought before Parliament. But the fact of their being needy was no reason why they should put at the disposal of the Minister for Works a certain sum to relieve them of their difficulties.

Mr. BEATTIE said there were many divisional boards which could not enter into contracts for large works. He took it that the sum under discussion was for bridges upon main roads; but he should have been very glad to have seen the particular main roads specified. The hon. Minister for Works had said that he intended seeing that boards which were well-off should not have any portion devoted to their wants, if they had any. Surely hon. members did not forget that those people who were successful in the management of their boards contributed to the revenue the same as those who were unsuccessful. There were boards which had certainly mismanaged their business, and had not conducted it in an economical manner; and were those boards to have an advantage over those which had

conducted their business in a proper manner? He objected to that; it would be very unfair. The reasoning of the Premier was much better—that where special cases were brought before the Minister for Works they would be assisted. Since the establishment of divisional boards there had been many cases where those which had not been able to carry on their works had been assisted. There was £100 spent over the Gattin Bridge by the Government, and also sums of money spent on the bridges at Doughboy Creek and at Norman's Creek. If the system as set forth by the Premier were adopted, that divisional boards which made out a good case should be assisted, it would be more fair, whether it was a rich board or a poor one; because if there happened to be a rich board on one side of a bridge and a poor one on the other, how would the money be allotted then? It would be unfair to assist only the poorer one. He had much pleasure in saying that he belonged to a board which did not owe anything, and did not intend to do so. There were two main roads through that division, one the Great Northern road, upon which there was a bridge which connected his board with the Ithaca Board. Supposing that anything occurred to the Bowen Bridge, although his division did not owe anything, yet they would be unable to tackle such a large job as rebuilding that bridge, and they would have to borrow money to do it. But because that board had a few pounds to its credit, it was proposed that they should not be entitled to any portion of that £15,000! The whole revenue from the locality where that bridge would have to be erected, was not £300 a year, and they would have to reconstruct it at a cost of £2,500. The Breakfast Creek Bridge connected his division with that represented by the hon. member, Mr. Buckland, and supposing that anything occurred to that bridge, Mr. Buckland would go to the Minister and ask for assistance while his board would get nothing, and would be placed in a very difficult position. Those boards which conducted their business properly had as much right in urgent cases to ask for assistance as boards which were not in so good a financial position. He hoped that instead of the hon. member carrying out what he said, that he would take care that none of those rich boards would get any of that £15,000, although they contributed to the revenue, he would alter that opinion. He hoped that the Government would take cases of urgency into consideration instead of laying down a hard-and-fast rule that boards in a flourishing position should not receive any of that money for the construction of bridges and main roads, which would be a very bad principle. He would have liked to have seen a schedule of the works that had been applied for to the Government.

Mr. GRIMES said that the hon. member for Mulgrave had objected to the vote because he considered that it interfered with the principle of local government. But he would point out to the hon. gentleman that when the Divisional Boards Bill passed it was understood that the Government still intended to maintain the main roads. That was the idea, and he was pretty sure that if the members of the House had understood that the main roads would have to be supported by the divisional boards, that Bill would never have passed through the House; and to repudiate now a portion of the expense towards the maintenance of these roads and bridges, would be very unfair. He was very glad that the amount had been placed upon the Estimates. There were many cases where it was not to the interest of one divisional board to bear the expense of a bridge, so much as to that of the board beyond. Their ratepayers were interested very little, and

unless they had assistance from the Government they would let the bridge fall into bad repair and remain so.

Mr. FOOTE said he did not understand the Minister for Works to lay down a hard-and-fast rule as to which boards were to receive money from the vote, and which were not to receive it. What he understood was that assistance was to be given in cases of emergency to boards which were in extreme necessity, and could not carry out any public works such as bridges and culverts. If bridges were washed away by floods in populous districts, it would be necessary for the Government to have something to fall back upon to meet the emergency. He did not represent any divisional board and thus had no personal interest in the matter, but he had been looking forward to a Bill to increase the size of divisions, so as to overcome many of the grievances under which they at present laboured. They had not been able to get the Bill that session, in consequence of the pressure of other work; but he hoped they would get it next session. If the divisions were larger their revenues would be proportionately larger. He thought the vote was a very necessary one, and he was sure the money was safe so long as the present Minister was at the head of the department. He had noticed in the papers that there was a regular rush for the last vote, the different boards all claiming their share. He hoped there would be no "share" business over the present vote. It was quite possible that impoverished boards, which stood in need of assistance, were the very ones which did not get anything. He hoped the Government would take care to check any rush of that sort upon the vote.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member who had just spoken had always been one of the most consistent opponents of local self-government; and now he acknowledged that if bridges were swept away by floods it would be a fine thing for the people to come down on the Government—exactly what the Act for local self-government was designed to prevent. The hon. member gloried in the fact that they were departing from the new principle of local self-government and returning to the old one, on which when a locality got into trouble it always went to the Minister. The hon. member for Oxley was very much the same. He was not so bad an opponent of the measure, but he had never been an ardent supporter of it. The support to that vote all through came from members who saw a chance of getting relief from the Government, instead of getting it legitimately by taxing the people and receiving a subsidy from the Government. They were giving £15,000 a year to the Minister for the purpose of breaking down the principle of local self-government. Instead of boards now, when they got into difficulties, applying their minds to relieving themselves by their own exertions, they had only to apply to the Minister, and if they were successful, their difficulties were over.

Mr. KELLETT said the only objection he had to the vote was that the amount was too small. He had always been a believer in the Divisional Boards Act, and was a thorough supporter of it when it was passing through the House; but that Bill would never have passed had not the present leader of the Opposition, who put it through, told the House distinctly that main roads were to be exempted and would be carried on under Government supervision and at Government expense. When the Bill came in the following session they were told that the only reason the main roads were not exempted was that the Government did not know where to begin, and only for the promise

of the Government the Bill would not have passed. He knew there were many boards that could not afford to replace a large bridge if it were swept away, and if they chose to levy a tax for the purpose the ratepayers could not pay it. Luckily in one sense, though unluckily in another, they had had no floods for some years; but floods might come, and the whole revenue of two or three large boards would not pay for some of the bridges. They must take it for granted that whoever the Minister for Works might be he must have some sense or he would not be in the position; and they ought to trust that he would apply the money judiciously in cases of emergency. Of course, he should not divide the money amongst the different boards, or anything of that kind; the longer he could keep it without spending it the better. He believed in boards being self-supporting if possible, but cases would arise when the Government must give assistance to prevent communication throughout the colony from being stopped. Now, that was one of those cases, and he thought the sum was very small and might very safely have been doubled. He hoped it never would be given to the poor people; for poor people had very often themselves to blame; but that it would be kept as a special fund and utilised only in cases of great necessity. He was sure the present Minister for Works had got so much common sense that, if the emergency had not arisen, he could send away impecunious people delighted though they had got nothing. And he had no doubt that when they got a Minister for Works on the other side he would be able to send them away with equal suavity.

Mr. FOOTE said the hon. member for Mulgrave had misunderstood him. He had not spoken in depreciation of divisional boards, although he certainly considered the vote was much too small for the purpose intended. The difficulty would have to be faced some day, and that small sum would be found to be by no means adequate to meet it. The hon. member knew, from his experience in office, how very well able he was to apportion a fund of that sort; and how he could create a fund, although it had not been voted by the Committee, for distribution amongst his friends. He (Mr. Foote) had always given the hon. member the credit of being able to look after his friends well. The hon. gentleman had said that, because he (Mr. Foote) had opposed the Divisional Boards Act, he still continued opposed to it. Well, if he saw an opportunity of getting a better Act he would take advantage of it. He was quite prepared to say that the Act had worked better than he had anticipated, but it was far from being a perfect Act, and it was the duty of the Committee to make it as good an Act as it possibly could be made. Difficulties would have to be faced in reference to raising money for roads and bridges, and there must be heavy taxation some day in order to get the roads in an efficient state for traffic in closely settled districts. He did not see where the money was to come from except by heavy taxation, and therefore he was anxious to see as great an improvement in the Act as could be brought about. One of his ideas was that there should be a new Act constituting new boards, embracing a larger area and therefore worked at less expense.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he was very glad to hear that the hon. gentleman was a convert to the principle of local self-government, although nobody would have believed it from his action in regard to the vote under discussion. The hon. member was one of those happy individuals who believed that if they got a Government to favour them when they applied to it they were all right. The hon. member contemplated the time when there would

have to be heavy taxation to repair roads and bridges that had been washed away by floods. And how would he get over that heavy taxation? By approaching the Government who had a big money-bag and getting a share of the money out of that big bag. But how did he think the Government got the money to fill their big bag? By taxation, of course, of the whole people. When they enunciated the principle of local self-government they put the burden on the shoulders of the right people. The people themselves spent the money in the places where it was wanted, and the people interested in the spending of it had to raise it. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that the big Government money-bag cost nobody a farthing to fill it. The hon. member did not get out of the difficulty by shunting the payment on to the Government: the money had to be raised by the Government from the people. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) would have liked if the hon. member for Stanley had been in his (Sir T. McIlwraith's) place and had seen the smile on the face of the Minister for Works when he expressed the hope that the £15,000 would not be all spent. The Minister for Works knew that it would be seized within a week; and no doubt he had promised already a great deal more than £15,000, and was prepared to put down an additional sum in the Supplementary Estimates. And yet the hon. member for Stanley contemplated the Minister for Works leaving a part of it as a reserve for his successor! There was not the slightest chance of that. The member for Stanley was quite right in saying that when the Local Government Act passed in 1879 there was a general idea throughout the House—and it had been certainly favoured by himself (Sir T. McIlwraith)—that some arrangement would be made, by which the main roads of the colony would be made specially and supported by the central Government. That was considered practicable at the time, and he admitted, as he had done all through, that possibly the Local Government Act had on that ground received a certain amount of support. But that support was not received on false pretences, for the difficulty that arose in defining the main roads was a difficulty unforeseen, not only by himself, but by all the members of the House. How did that difficulty arise? Why, because every road leading out of Brisbane was claimed at once to be a mail or main road, and therefore to be exempt from the Local Government Act. Then they had to reconsider the position, with the result that several Acts were brought in amending the Local Government Act, all having the same tendency—that was, to saddle the responsibility for roads and bridges on localities as fairly as possible in proportion to their legitimate liability. If there was a big bridge which happened to be in a particular division, and was used by people passing through that division to reach other localities, special provision was made under the United Municipalities Act for taxing those people for that bridge. They got over the difficulty as well as they possibly could, and they did get over the difficulty except in some cases where the bridge was so large as to be regarded as a national work. But the £15,000 in the vote under discussion was not proposed for the purpose of getting over such a difficulty, but to enable the Minister for Works to subsidise divisions entirely at his discretion and according as he thought them worthy recipients of the money. The Minister for Works was not confined to any particular class of works; it might be a work that cost £10 or £10,000. It was simply to enable divisional boards to get out of their financial difficulties. That was a power which

should not be placed in the hands of any Minister for Works. It was not a right principle to go on. They ought not to anticipate the impecuniosity of any board, or to admit that the Local Government Act would not work in any particular division of the colony. The present vote implied that there were places where it would not work properly, and they were asked to place power in the hands of the Minister for Works to smooth it down by a special grant of money. The smoothing process should not be left in the hands of the Minister; because the way to make the Act work well was not by means of Government patronage, but by judicious help given by the House. If left to the uncontrolled discretion of the Minister for Works, it simply tended to the perpetuation of the old vicious system of central government.

Mr. KELLETT said he was pleased to hear the hon. member for Mulgrave admit that when the Divisional Boards Bill was passing through the House many hon. members were induced to support it under the belief that main roads would be maintained by the Government out of general revenue, and not out of local rates. The hon. member also said that provision was made in the United Municipalities Bill that where a main road ran through three or four divisions the cost of maintaining it should be paid equitably by them all. But that had never, to his knowledge, been done. The only cases of joint action he had met with was where a creek separated two divisions, and they had agreed to repair the bridge between them. In the division of which he was a member, there were forty miles of main road—it was the main road of the colony—and the traffic that went over it came from eight or nine divisions. When a bridge on that road was required, the late Government very properly decided that it should be built out of general taxation. When the other divisions were asked to help in the work they simply refused; if they had contributed their share there would have been no need to apply to the Government at all. He mentioned that to show that the United Municipalities Act had not had the beneficial effect which some hon. members seemed to imagine. With regard to the distribution of the present vote, they must rely upon the Minister for Works acting fairly and spending the money in a proper way. It was not a very excessive sum to give him the sole control over.

Mr. NORTON said he could bear out what had been said, that it was intended by the late Government that the main roads of the colony should be kept in repair out of general revenue. When the Act of 1882 was passing through the House, an attempt to define a main road was made by so accomplished a draftsman as the present Premier, and his definition was adopted and embodied in the 31st section of the Act; but when the Act came to be put into operation it was found that according to that definition there were no main roads in the colony. There had since been found one or two "excepted" roads, but the attempt to define a main road signally failed. With respect to the present vote, he believed the Minister for Works intended to distribute it fairly and properly amongst the boards that really required it. But "the proof of the pudding is in the eating." When a deputation once waited upon the Minister for Works he told them that as they had large sums at their disposal they should have no share in the £15,000 granted last year; but after a time the hon. gentleman got so bothered and pestered that he chopped up the vote into equal portions, and told every division in the colony, rich and poor, to take its share and be thankful. That was where the

hon. member admitted having made a mistake. No doubt the hon. gentleman intended to profit from past experience; but the pressure had not been put on yet, and when it was put on he might make another mistake. The hon. gentleman was not always so firm as he used to be, and in some weak moment he might allow boards to share in the money which were not entitled to do so. Some hon. members seemed to think that the object of the vote was to relieve boards that had fallen into financial difficulties; but that was not the way in which the money should be expended. The Minister for Works had told them that of the £10,000 voted for excepted roads only £5,000 had been expended. He assumed that the other £5,000 had not been allowed to lapse.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has lapsed.

Mr. NORTON said he did not see what was the use of allowing it to lapse. He would like to know where the roads were on which that £5,000 had been expended, and how much had been expended upon each?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he understood the hon. member to refer to the excepted roads. The Cooktown to Maytown road got £1,800; Port Douglas to Herberton, £1,500; Port Douglas road £500, and Johnstone River Division £525. The last was promised, he believed, by the hon. member for Blackall, or perhaps by the hon. member for Port Curtis himself. The hon. member knew that dry seasons were very good road-makers, and, therefore, the whole of the money had not been expended. With reference to the £15,000 vote, should the Committee think proper to grant it he would willingly do the best he could towards expending the money in a proper way, but if they did not choose to vote it he would be saved from a very troublesome and unpleasant job. There had been so many appeals made for assistance to build bridges that he was bound to promise to place £15,000 on the Estimates, and if the country voted it he should endeavour to assist the boards to the best of his ability, but if the vote was refused he had nothing whatever to say. He knew well that the moment the vote was passed applications would pour in from all directions; but he had learned some experience in distributing the last £15,000, and he thought he should be able to deal with the present sum in a much more beneficial way.

Mr. NORTON said he could quite sympathise with the hon. member, because he knew he had a great deal of trouble over the vote. But the hon. member had grown older and wiser, though not very much. With regard to the excepted roads, it was no use the hon. member trying to put the Johnstone River Board business on him (Mr. Norton), and say that he had promised the money. His hon. friend, the member for Blackall, might have promised to get the grant made; and a deputation had waited on him (Mr. Norton) with an application to include the Johnstone River road among the excepted roads under the Act. He thought at the time they were entitled to the request being granted, and he promised them, if it were, they should have the sum of money asked for to help them in the expenses they had incurred. In all of those applications, before they were replied to, they were sent to the Lands Office in order that it might be proved there whether the roads were really "excepted roads" under the Act, and when the report came at last it turned out that the Johnstone River road was not an excepted road. He had told the board plainly how matters stood, and that he could not undertake to get the money. That was how the matter stood

when he left office, so that whatever promise was made must have been previous to that time. It was not mentioned as a distinct promise, but simply that the hon. member for Blackall had undertaken to represent the matter to him, and on inquiry it was found that under the Act the money could not be granted. With regard to the Port Douglas road, he did not know whether it came under the heading of "excepted roads," but he knew the division had got a great deal of money out of the vote for roads for goldfields. If the hon. gentleman looked back to a return that was furnished the session before last, he would find that out of the different votes for roads to goldfields, Port Douglas got over £10,000. He could quite understand the hon. member falling into an error, but he thought Port Douglas was scarcely entitled to so much. The Port Douglas board had tried to get the Government to pay the cost of a road quite near the town; and it had been represented that Mr. Macrossan had promised that the Government would pay the necessary sum. There was some mistake about that, for he was sure the hon. member did not make such a promise. He would like to know now whether that was the money they had now got under the heading of "excepted roads"?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Johnstone River Board must have taken advantage of his simplicity, because they told him that a promise had been made that £525 should be granted as a matter of course. He was desirous of fulfilling the promises made by the late Government, but he had now come to the conclusion that his simplicity had been taken advantage of.

Mr. NORTON said he would remind the hon. gentleman of a promise he made that the next Loan Estimates should include a railway from Bundaberg to Gladstone. The hon. gentleman said that the promise of the late Government should be fulfilled to the very letter; and he led the people up there to believe that.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Never

Mr. ARCHER said that the hon. gentleman might very well withdraw the vote; whenever bridges were wanted, such as that over the Pioneer, the House would, he was sure, always be prepared to vote the necessary money. That was the way in which assistance should be given to divisional boards. Let the hon. gentleman become acquainted with the works that were necessary and bring down a schedule to the House, and there was little doubt they would be agreed to. That would relieve the Minister of an immense deal of trouble, and would be a far more legitimate way of assisting divisional boards than by voting a lump sum in that way.

Mr. STEVENS said that last session a sum of £2,500 was voted for making a road from Tallebudgera to the border. He had ascertained that the sum was not quite sufficient to complete the road. He would like to know the intentions of the Government with regard to it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was understood the money would complete the road. He was not in the habit of spending money without a cause, and he should make no promise that an additional vote would be put on the Supplementary Estimates. The man who was sent down there was told that he was to complete the work for the money voted; and he (the Minister for Works) did not feel disposed to give any more.

Mr. STEVENS said he had no doubt the man was told to complete the road for the money; but the completion of a road meant putting it in a serviceable condition. A road could be

made for a horseman to go over; but there was a track of that sort. The money was voted to make a good road that vehicles could go over. The New South Wales Government had spent £9,000 or £10,000 in making a road. They spent £6,000 or £7,000 in making a road from the Tweed to the top of the range. It was then discovered that it would strike the border in an unsuitable place for the Queensland road to meet it; and the Government made four miles more in a more suitable place, in the firm belief that the Queensland Government would construct a good road to meet it. The road was for the benefit of Queensland, and Brisbane more particularly; because a large proportion of the Tweed trade came to Brisbane. A sum of £500 was required to complete the road; and he thought the Government should grant it as a national work, apart from the fact of keeping faith with the Government of New South Wales.

The PREMIER said his attention had been called to that matter for the first time that day, when he had seen the papers for the first time. It appeared that in July, 1882, the Premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes, wrote to the Queensland Government on the subject, pointing out that they had already spent £5,000 on the road, and were making a bridge to cost £1,800. He also pointed out that they had gone a considerable distance further than might be called their half of the road, and asked the Queensland Government to complete it. On that there was a note by the hon. member for Townsville, then the Minister for Works, to the effect that such works were then carried out by local authority, and the general Government could not be chargeable for making the road. That was in October, 1882. A new Government came into office in New South Wales, and the application was renewed in a letter written by Mr. Stuart, who called attention to the previous correspondence, reminded the Government that the road was in progress, and requested that steps be taken to meet it. He (the Premier) had not got the formal reply to that; but there was a minute by Sir T. McIlwraith stating that it seemed to be quite an exceptional case. There was then a note by the Minister for Works (Mr. Norton), which was communicated to the Government of New South Wales, that £2,500 should be placed on the Estimates to meet the expense. He inferred from the correspondence that the Queensland Government were committed to the completion of the work. If that should turn out to be correct, then the additional money required could be taken out of the vote now before the Committee. If the credit of the country was concerned, then of course the work would have to be completed; and on that he would make further inquiry.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that he thought the hon. member for Logan had made out a very good case, supplemented as it was by the correspondence referred to by the Premier. Whatever amount of money the road cost, it should be completed, because if not completed the amount that was first expended would very likely be lost when the first flood took place. So that not only for the purpose of fulfilling an engagement with New South Wales, but in the interests of Queensland, the road ought to be completed. They looked upon the junction of the Queensland and New South Wales railways as a matter of national importance, and it was equally important that their main roads should be joined. He was glad to hear that the hon. Premier thought it should be done. He took exception to what had fallen from the hon. member for Port Curtis. The Port Douglas road was an excepted

road within the meaning of the Act, and was fully entitled to the aid it received; he was certain that the hon. Minister for Works would not give it a penny more than it was entitled to. He expected that the hon. member for Blackall was going to make a clean breast of all his sins of omission and commission with regard to the Johnstone River board, and he was rather amused to hear the Minister for Works and the hon. member for Port Curtis talking between them about the promise that was made. The promise was made a long time before the hon. member for Port Curtis was in office; it was made when he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) was in office. It was the hon. member for Blackall who made the promise, and under what conditions he made it he did not know.

Mr. ARCHER said he believed he brought it up; he knew his hon. friend too well to make any distinct promise, and all he could do was to promise that he would lay the matter before the Minister for Works. He knew nothing about where the road would go, and promised that he would recommend it for the favourable consideration of the hon. member for Townsville. He did not wish to prolong the discussion. If the hon. Minister for Works would consider the bridges that were required to be made during the recess, and bring up a schedule of them and ask for the money, and construct them in cases where the divisional boards could not do it, it would be an infinitely better plan, and much more satisfactory to the hon. gentleman, and to the country. He moved that the vote be reduced by the sum of £15,000.

Mr. STEVENS said that before the motion was put he wished to have an answer. Did the hon. Minister for Works intend to provide a sum of money to finish the Tallebudgera road?

Mr. NORTON said it was quite understood that the Government should provide the whole of the money for the completion of that road.

The PREMIER said that he had only seen the papers that afternoon, and his colleague had not seen them at all. He wished to see the letter written to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales. If, as he inferred, a promise was made the Government were bound to complete the road.

Question — That the item of £15,000 be omitted from the vote—put and negatived.

Mr. BLACK said he thought the Minister for Works would have conceded to the motion, as he had said that he was indifferent as to whether it passed or not. He admitted that it was a source of considerable trouble and inconvenience to him. In addition to the vote, there was a sum of about £2,500 still unexpended from the previous £15,000, which was expended in such an extraordinary manner. Although the Minister for Works had promised to behave better in future, he hoped he would really see that the money was not expended in the reckless way it was before. If that vote was to give the hon. gentleman so much anxiety and trouble, how was he going to portion out the £100,000 which was on the Loan Estimates? Was that vote to be passed also without a schedule? He regretted that the hon. gentleman had not allowed the vote to be withdrawn. It was not a safe vote to entrust to any Minister, and after the weakness that the hon. gentleman had displayed in the expenditure of the £15,000 last year, it would have been far better to have excised the vote altogether.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he never promised to withdraw the vote.

Mr. NORTON: You said you wished the Committee would cut it out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would take good care that the hon. gentleman would not get on the weak side of him.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was certainly under the impression that the hon. gentleman said he would be very glad to be rid of it, and it was with that idea that the hon. member for Blackall moved its omission. Since the hon. gentleman had chosen to have the vote remain upon the Estimates, he would ask him how he was going to determine which of the bridges that would be applied for he would erect? He had only one officer, who was already well occupied with his ordinary work. He was afraid the hon. gentleman would require an additional staff.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member knew very well that some roads in the North had no bridges at all, and they had a right to some consideration.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he knew many roads in the South as well as the North on which he could spend the money very advantageously—in the North, especially, there were very few bridges of any importance. What he wanted to know was whether the Minister thought the one officer was capable of advising intelligently about the matter in addition to his divisional board work. If there were to be a great many small bridges in different parts of the colony, he very likely would not be able to do it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that officer would be available to inspect and advise; and he would be able to ascertain from him exactly how the divisional boards were situated.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. W. Miles), in moving that a sum of £25,288 be granted for salaries and contingencies in connection with Goldfields, said there was an increase in the vote of £4,860. There was an apparent increase of £100 for the warden at Gladstone; but that amount was down on the Supplementary Estimates last year. There was £50 down for the gold warden at Rockhampton, who had recently had a considerable increase of duty. There was also a sum amounting to £60 for the mining registrars at Maytown and Charters Towers in lieu of fees. £3,000 was down as an increase on the vote for prospecting for gold, and there was also £2,000 in aid of schools of mines. He did not know whether they would be beneficial or not, but, in his opinion, it was as well to give them a trial. A sum of £400 which had been on the Estimates year after year for the Northern goldfields, but had never been expended, was omitted, and also £150 for two black trackers.

Mr. NORTON said he thought, that while the hon. member was giving increases, he might have put another £50 down for the gold warden at Gladstone. He had a very low salary, and had to do his work under very difficult circumstances. He had occupied the same position in Victoria for a number of years, and was a very capable man. He hoped the hon. gentleman would take the case into consideration, and give that officer an increase the next time he was dealing with the salaries. He would like to know something about the mining surveyors. Could the hon. the Minister for Mines give any information as to the work they were doing? There was one at Gympie, and another at Charters Towers. He knew they began very well; but he had not heard anything about them for some time. He would be glad if the Minister for Mines could give some information to guide the Committee as to the work they had been carrying out.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said there was one mining surveyor at Maytown, one at Charters Towers, one at Gympie—

Mr. NORTON: Are there three now?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said there were four altogether.

Mr. FOXTON said he would like to call the attention of the Minister for Mines to the item "Prospecting for gold," which was increased from £2,000 to £5,000. He had understood from the hon. member that the extra £3,000 had been put down for the purpose of prospecting for minerals other than gold, and that it was proposed by him to reduce the estimate by £3,000 and place it on the Supplementary Estimates instead; that it was merely by a slip in the office that the £5,000 had been put under the head "Prospecting for gold."

Mr. NORTON: It is all the same.

Mr. FOXTON said that tin and gold were very different things, and if a reward was offered for prospecting for gold, and tin or copper were found the men would have a very poor show if they expected to be paid out of that sum. He hoped he had understood the Minister for Mines aright.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the hon. member was quite right. It was intended that £2,500 should be given for prospecting for gold, and an equal amount for other minerals.

Mr. NORTON said it came practically to the same thing; that was to say, if the Minister for Mines carried out the old plan of giving £1 subsidy for every £1 subscribed. The prospectors went out to look for gold, and in doing so they came across tin or copper or other minerals. It was known as "tiddle-winking."

Mr. FERGUSON asked if it was the intention of the Minister for Mines to appoint a gold warden for Rockhampton. He saw there was £60 for a gold-warden there. He believed that at the present time the duties were performed by the police magistrate; but surely in a town like Rockhampton he had quite enough to do on the bench, without acting as gold-warden. The goldfield at Rockhampton was very extensive, and the mining population was increasing very fast, and there was great dissatisfaction at the want of a warden. He hoped the matter would receive consideration.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that an experienced mining registrar had been sent up to assist the police magistrate at Rockhampton, and he was perfectly satisfied for the present. If the goldfield increased there a warden would be appointed.

Mr. FOXTON said he was glad to have the assurance of the Minister for Mines that a portion of the £5,000 would be available for prospecting for other minerals than gold. He wanted to have the matter fair and straight and none of the "tiddle-winking" referred to by the hon. member for Port Curtis. He was well aware that a great deal had been done by "tiddle-winking," but he did not want that sort of thing.

Mr. PALMER said that an amount of £1,500 had been put down for a survey of goldfields. Now, he had a letter from the Lands Department informing him that a survey of the Etheridge Gold Fields, which comprised 10,000 square miles, had been ordered. That was too large an area for goldfields, and part of it could be proclaimed for pastoral leases without interfering in the least with rights on the goldfields. In regard to the sum for prospecting for gold, he would like to know if £3,000 of that sum was to be given for the discovery of tin, silver, and copper, as well

as gold, and if local subscriptions would be required to show the *bona fides* of the parties who were sent out prospecting. He also wanted an assurance from the Minister for Mines as to what time the services of the Government Geologist, Mr. Jack, would be available, as promised, for the inspection of the Cloncurry and Etheridge district?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that since he had promised Mr. Jack's services for Etheridge and Cloncurry, that gentleman had been called away to inspect and report on the goldfield recently discovered at Rockhampton. He had only lately returned, and was completing some work he had on hand. As soon as that work was completed, he (the Minister for Mines) saw no objection to Mr. Jack going to report on the Etheridge and Cloncurry Gold Fields. As to the survey of the Cloncurry district for pastoral leases, he would promise to look into the matter, and do what he could.

Mr. SMYTH said he agreed with the hon. member for Carnarvon that other miners besides gold miners had a claim to a portion of the £5,000 vote. There was no deep sinking in Queensland, and it cost very little to prospect for alluvial. A new departure should be taken in the distribution of the £5,000. Some assistance should be given to miners to go deeper—whether for gold, tin, copper, or any other mineral. In Victoria, where sinking was subsidised, the custom was to give, not a lump sum, but 10s. for every £1 expended in miners' wages; nothing was allowed for the erection of machinery or office work. He was rather surprised to hear that they wanted a gold commissioner at Gladstone at a large salary. There was very little about the Gladstone goldfields in the newspapers, and he did not think they were so large as to require a commissioner at a high salary. When he asked the late Minister for Mines for a geological survey of the Gympie Gold Field, he was told to wait until the survey of the Gladstone Gold Field was completed. The gold taken from one retort at Gympie was more than all the gold produced at Gladstone, and it seemed absurd that Gympie was to play second fiddle to a place like Gladstone. With regard to Rockhampton, he could assure the hon. member for that town that the Mining Registrar there was as good as any commissioner in Queensland; he was a really practical man. There was on the Estimates an item of £50 for the powder magazine keeper at Gympie. Excepting Charters Towers, there was a greater quantity of explosives stored in the Gympie magazine, than at all the other goldfields in the colony. When he was there last, the quantity amounted to between twenty-five and thirty tons; the building was not fenced in, and it was surrounded by dead timber. Another small building was needed to keep the dynamite separate from the other explosives. Some experts from Great Britain and Germany had been at Gympie lately, and they had stated that dynamite should be kept at a regular temperature, and that certain rules and regulations regarding it should be insisted upon. A salary of £50 was not sufficient for any man; the last occupant of the office starved upon it, and had to eke out a livelihood by collecting debts and doing clerical work; the salary should be at least £100 a year. The salary of the powder magazine keepers at Brisbane were £200 and £96; at Maryborough, £110; at Rockhampton, £120; and at Townsville, £120. He hoped the Minister for Mines would see that the powder magazine keeper at Gympie was paid a proper salary for his work. If through carelessness an explosion of twenty or thirty tons of dynamite took place it would blow the town to atoms. There was another matter he would call

attention to, and that was the necessity for a lithographed plan of the Gympie Gold Field. Purchasers at a distance did not know what they were buying into, whereas, if plans could be bought for 2s. 6d. or 3s. at the Government Printing Office, they could always keep themselves well informed. Names were very misleading, and with a good plan people would not be "had" so often as was now the case. The Surveyor at Gympie was doing very good work, but his clerical work was frequently interrupted. At the courthouse there was a bit of a corner partitioned off for the Mining Surveyor, but whenever the court was held he had to clear out. Mr. Rosser was accommodated in a side room in the same building, but he had to vacate it whenever the judge went to Gympie, as it was wanted for the jury room. What was wanted was a proper survey office, especially as the work of the Mining Surveyor was very heavy. Those recommendations, he could assure the Minister for Mines, were all genuine, and if he only got half what he asked for now, he would be content to wait till next year for the other half.

Mr. NORTON said the Mining Surveyor at Gympie certainly ought to have an office, and he wondered the hon. member had not brought forward the matter before. Mr. Rosser was appointed on the recommendation of Mr. Jack, and that was a sufficient recommendation for an appointment of that kind. With regard to the Gladstone Goldfields Commissioner, that gentleman held two offices, both of which were badly paid. In addition to being goldfields commissioner, he was also Crown lands bailiff, both of which offices involved a great deal of travelling. The reason why the survey of the Gladstone Gold Field had priority over that of Gympie was easily explained. When the Assistant Geologist was appointed, he at once applied that that officer should be sent to report on the district he represented. The then Minister for Mines (Mr. Macrossan) promised that as soon as the Assistant Geologist arrived, he should be sent to the Port Curtis district. He did not arrive until after the present Government succeeded to office, when the Minister for Mines carried out the promise that had been made to him by his predecessor. Now, that was what happened as regarded the Assistant Geologist who was sent to that district. The promise was made by the present Minister, who intended it to be carried out. Gympie was, however, entitled to every consideration, because he did not think any town in the colony had rendered such service as it had. Gympie had been a sort of milch cow—not the only one, but a very useful one. With regard to the prospecting vote, he could not agree with the member for Carnarvon. The arrangement that he presumed was still carried on, was instituted by the Hon. Mr. Macrossan, that for every £1 subscribed the Government should give £1; but the reason for not making the reward applicable to all sorts of mining was, that if that was done men would be encouraged to look for minerals in places where it would not pay to work them. They might go out and look for minerals, but it would not pay to work them. What was the good of that? Of course where gold was found it generally paid to work it, but if copper was found, although the prospectors, perhaps thought it would pay, it was afterwards found to be a failure. Therefore to encourage that kind of thing was to encourage the expenditure of money which would prove unproductive. But when prospectors saw that they would get the reward they would go out nominally looking for gold, and all the time be looking for something else. He wanted to ask the Minister for Mines when he would be in a position to furnish the House with a report of the country which had been gone over by the Assistant

Geologist. He had been out for some months, and of course they always wanted to know what work he was doing; and it would be a great advantage if the Minister asked him to make a progress report, and he could furnish his annual report afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he had no objection to calling for a progress report to see what the Assistant Geologist was doing. He was very anxious to know himself. With reference to the increase of salary for the Surveyor at Gladstone, he thought as Gladstone was a perfect paradise, and there was so little to do, £350 was a very good salary. The hon. member for Gympie had referred to the vote of £50 for a magazine keeper. That appointment happened to be vacant just now, and he had had, he did not know how many applications for it, so that he saw no reason for paying an additional £100 when men could be got to undertake the work at the present salary. Gympie was no doubt a very important place, but he did not feel justified in wasting money. With reference to the surveyor spoken of, he no doubt would be sent upon the field as soon as practicable.

Mr. SMYTH said he was sorry to hear there were so many applicants at £50 a year for the position of magazine keeper. At present the place was in a very dangerous position, being unfenced and surrounded by a lot of dead wood. If a man was appointed at say £2 5s. a week, he could keep the place in order and fence in the ground. The Government derived a revenue from the magazine, and he thought they could now afford to spend a little more money upon it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he would see that the Warden's attention was called to the state of the magazine, for it would be a very serious matter if anything happened to it. He did think that £50 was rather a small salary to pay for looking after such an important place, and he would see that a competent man was appointed to take charge of it.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he felt constrained to say something in order to keep awake. He really thought it was a dangerous thing to entrust the position of magazine keeper to any man who was willing to look after it for £50 a year. It was not often he went on that tack, but he thought the member for Gympie had made out a very good case. There were sure to be, in a place like Gympie, a number of "swipers," and men who had failed in everything else and had shown very little regard for their own lives, who would be most ready to take care of the lives of other people. He would like to say that he was glad to have an opportunity of putting in a word for Gympie. He had no town in his electorate to push the claims of, and he had listened to what had been said about the rival claims and status of the different towns in the colony. A great deal of nonsense had been uttered, of course, but he spoke disinterestedly, and he said that there was no town which had been so shamefully neglected by all Governments, up to the present date, as the town of Gympie. The public buildings, reserves, and everything belonging to it that the Government had anything to do with were utterly discreditable. He believed if there had been more loafers and more hangers-on there to the Government it would have been far better treated; but because it was full of working bees—men who produced something, and did hard, honest, useful work—very little had been done for the place by any Government. There was no town in the colony that had not been more liberally treated.

Mr. FOXTON said he did not agree with the hon. member for Port Curtis when he stated that the inclusion of minerals, other than gold, in that vote was calculated to lead to a waste of

public money. The hon. member appeared to have forgotten that the persons who employed men to look for minerals would have to subscribe £1 for £1, and they were not likely to waste their own money for the purpose of wasting public money. The remarks which fell from the hon. member for Gympie were worthy of consideration—he alluded especially to that portion of the hon. member's speech in which he referred to the system adopted in Victoria not long ago of making advances for the purpose of helping people to sink to great depths. A sum of £20,000 was voted for that object; and the money was advanced on the system of £1 for £1, or 10s. to £1. It frequently happened that men sank to great depths without any results, and though they had very good prospects, they had not the means to go further; consequently they had to throw up their ground, and leave it to someone else to reap the benefit of their labour. It seemed a fair thing, therefore, for the Government to step in and say, "If you can prove your *bona fides*, we will help you to reap the benefit of your toil." Of course a condition was imposed that if the mine became payable the first proceeds should go towards recouping the money advanced by the Government. Out of the £20,000 advanced, in Victoria, a certain portion had been repaid, and how much indirect good had been done, it was, of course, impossible to say. It was really helping those who helped themselves.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member seemed to be greatly exercised over that amount of £5,000 for prospecting. He thought that what the hon. member for Port Curtis had said was correct. He knew that votes of a similar kind had been made for prospecting for tin; and it was extremely difficult to prevent it being done. It had been done in Queensland. He knew that three or four parties had been fitted out on that condition of £1 for £1; and he hoped that system was to be continued, and that the Minister for Mines would not give any money without a corresponding amount being found by the people who wanted to prospect, because if he did he would soon get rid of it. Three or four parties had gone out prospecting for gold, so they said, although he was morally certain they went prospecting for tin. Two of them found tin, and the finds were a great benefit to the colony. The hon. member for Gympie and the hon. member for Carnarvon had said something about the application of that money on similar conditions to those which existed in Victoria, but there was a great deal to be said on both sides.

Mr. FOXTON: Hear, hear!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said so small an amount had been repaid in Victoria that it had become the same as loans in Queensland. Before such a system was adopted here they would have to alter their own policy. If they assisted miners they would have to assist people in other industries. Assistance would have to be given all round, and of course, if that was done, it would become a system of protection. The Minister for Mines, he understood, stated that one of the registrars was about to leave.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: One of the mining surveyors.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was one at Charters Towers, one at Maytown, and one at Gympie; where was the fourth stationed?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There are four mining surveyors—one at the Etheridge, one at Maytown, one at Charters Towers, and one at Gympie.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he wished to know if any attempt had yet been made to carry out the survey of the goldfields, for which a vote of £1,500 had been upon the Estimates for some time? It was a very important matter, and one which had been referred to by the hon. member for Gympie. They could not have lithographed plans to distribute amongst people unless they had a proper survey made, and the ordinary mining surveyors had no time to do that kind of work. Their time was fully occupied in surveying claims, either upon the surface or underneath. A mining surveyor would survey the whole field, and people who wished to buy would have a thorough knowledge of what they were doing.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said a deputation waited upon him some time ago for the purpose of getting maps prepared of the various goldfields, and the mining surveyors had been requested to prepare them. They had not yet been able to complete them, because they had not had time. It was very necessary, if there was to be a map, that it should be a good one.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if the hon. gentleman alluded to the ordinary mining surveyor? There was a sum voted for a special survey, and it had been on the Estimates for the last two or three years. It was put on when he was in office.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said there were two mining surveyors told off to do the work.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was glad something had been done to carry out the object of the vote. He would point out that the work, if done quickly, would be more valuable than if it were delayed for a long time, as then people would not reap much benefit from it. A few days ago the hon. gentleman was asked by the hon. member for Balonne, if he intended to have any inquiry made into some statements made by Warden Lukin at Gympie. He had been told that there had been about a dozen petitions sent down to the Minister, asking for an inquiry; was that the case? He did not wish to know whether there was to be an inquiry, because the hon. gentleman had already said there was not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that all the petitions that had been sent in had been laid upon the table of the House. Mr. Lukin had acted very injudiciously, and had drawn comparisons between one mine and another, as to their productiveness. He had requested him not to interfere in matters concerning the value of a mine. He also made some remarks regarding mining brokers, but no names were mentioned, and there was nothing to inquire into.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he quite agreed that Mr. Lukin had acted injudiciously; but nothing more than that. He did not see what could come of an inquiry; but he had been told that there were fourteen petitions. He saw that in the Mineral Lands Department there was a mining surveyor at Herberton, a mining registrar, and an assistant clerk. What was that assistant clerk to do? He also saw that it was a new appointment. Why was that appointment made, and what possible work could there be for that clerk to do?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said it had been represented to him that an assistant clerk was required as there was a considerable amount of work to be done at Gympie.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: This is Herberton.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that Mr. Carrington was clerk of petty sessions as well.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the mining registrar and the clerk of petty sessions were one individual before. Now they had an extra clerk, which was really an additional appointment.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought the claims of the hon. member for Gympie were very moderate, and should be conceded. They all knew that Gympie had done a great deal for the colony. Since its commencement he supposed it had turned out considerably over 1,000,000 ounces of gold, and it had given employment to a considerable amount of labour. There was something in what the hon. member for Townsville said, that the wants of Gympie had not been properly attended to by either the present or the past Governments. What had been given had been doled out with a very slack hand. With reference to the plan of the goldfield which was being prepared, he might say that he had seen it about a fortnight ago, and when finished it would be of great service to the whole colony. It contained a great deal of information that would be useful, not only to the people of Gympie, but to all who dealt in Gympie stock. They would know exactly the depths of the different shafts, the strata, and the breaks, which often interfered considerably with the lodes. When completed and lithographed, it would be of very great service.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL said the hon. member who spoke last seemed to base the importance of the Gympie Gold Field on the fact of 1,000,000 ounces of gold having been taken out of it. From the district he had the honour of representing, there had been over 2,000,000 ounces of gold taken, and very little attention had been paid to it by the Government on the whole. He would like to know how the money put down for schools of mines was to be distributed. He did not know that at the present moment there was a school of mines, or even the nucleus of one, in the colony. There was an attempt made once to start one at Gympie, but the Government threw cold water on the scheme. The hon. member for Townsville, he thought, was in office at the time, and his assistance was confidently looked for; but he gave very little assistance. He (Mr. Campbell) was slightly connected with the school; and he had no doubt that, if it had received the slightest encouragement from the Government, it would have been of great benefit to the whole colony, and perhaps the whole of Australia. They did not even get the ordinary concession granted to schools of arts, which was then 10s. for every £1 subscribed, and had since been raised to £1 for £1. It was afterwards amalgamated with the school of arts, and had now, he thought, ceased to exist. Some time ago he brought the matter under the notice of the present Minister for Mines. Watsonville and Herberton in his district had, he thought, put in claims for a money grant to start a school of mines, or something that would perhaps come to be a school of mines. He would like to know whether the money was to be given to Gympie, to Charters Towers, the Palmer, the Hodgkinson, or Herberton. He knew the Watsonville people had made a very liberal proposition—that they were willing to subscribe and start a school of mines if the Government would support them with £1 for £1. The Government said the matter was under consideration, but would make no definite promise. He thought the establishment of schools of mines in the mining districts all over the colony, would be a great boon; and he should have been glad if the vote had been £5,000 instead of £2,000. It would be the best investment possible in the mining districts.

Mr. SMYTH said that one reason why the school of mines had ceased to exist at Gympie

was that the committee acted foolishly in the first place. They built the school on another man's ground under a five years' lease, and when the term was up the building became the property of the owner of the land. All the specimens were removed to the school of arts; and if ever a school of mines were started they would have a good collection as a nucleus. With reference to the district represented by the hon. member for Cook, it had been a good district, and might be so again; but at present it was nothing like Charters Towers and Gympie, which this year would turn out about 120,000 ounces each. He was very sorry the other morning, when he saw in the summary for Europe published in the leading newspaper of the colony, that though the agricultural, pastoral, and shipping industries were mentioned, as well as nearly every other industry of any importance, not one word was said about the mining industry. The mining industry was forgotten. The miners did not wish to make much noise. They had fought along in a quiet way; but he thought, when a return was being given of the enterprises of Queensland, the mining industry deserved recognition at all hands.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL said that the member for Gympie seemed to doubt his statistics; but there was not the slightest doubt about them at all. He knew from the Customs returns that there had been drawn from the district which he represented—the Palmer and Endeavour fields—sixty-five tons of gold. He did not think the hon. member had in his criticism acted fairly towards the Gympie School of Mines. He had had the honour to be connected with the committee of that school shortly after it was started, and they did the very best that possibly could be done to establish it on a firm basis. They took one of the most prominent positions in the town as a school. Certainly they could not get it on very good terms, but they took it for five years, and looked forward to the time when they should receive Government assistance to enable them to obtain a better site. At the time when their lease was up, the Government left them in the lurch, and the consequence was that the building had to be given up and the specimens handed over to the school of arts. He thought the hon. member for Wide Bay could bear him out in what he had said—that the committee had acted admirably at that time, and that if they had received the assistance they ought to have had, that school of mines would have been in a flourishing position at the present time, and would have been a credit and a boon to the whole colony.

Mr. ISAMBERT said there was a considerable amount of curiosity as to what the school of mines should be. They should not be placed on such a loose arrangement as the school of arts. A school of mines should be established in every large centre of mining, and the geological and mining surveyors of the district should be attached to it. The Government would not, he thought, overstep liberality if they kept up such institutions as purely Government institutions, where the miners could get real information. The geological and mining surveyors could easily conduct the schools without interfering with their other professional duties. He believed very few members really comprehended the value of their mining industries. What an amount of consideration was given, not only in Queensland but in the other Australian colonies, to the raising of public loans, and how anxious they seemed to be to obtain the good opinion of the British money-lender! And what did they do for them? They sent out shoddy goods for the money borrowed. What had mining done for Queensland? Down to the end of the present

month, the gross yield of gold would be about 5,471,480 ozs., representing a value of twenty and a-half millions sterling. The whole of it was real sovereigns, not borrowed sovereigns; real sovereigns, for which they did not want to pay blackmail to British money-mongers. And what was more—it was known that every ounce of gold cost as much to raise as it was worth.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Where is the profit then?

Mr. ISAMBERT said that that was one of the problems which statesmen should be able to solve. And the sooner they solved that problem the sooner would they comprehend the policy of borrowing money. Let them think of it: twenty millions of actual value raised out of the soil, and at a cost of other twenty millions, or a total value of forty millions. Hon. members might laugh, but the time would come when they would have to study this problem more fully. When he had last the pleasure of being at the goldfields he had been truly astonished at the miserable condition of the court-house at Gympie. Gympie had yielded a million ounces of gold, equal to four millions of money. They should remember what Gympie had done for the colony in 1866-7, when the crisis came on. It was not by borrowing money that the colony had been saved. The rising mining industry had been their salvation. It was only fortunate for the indolent Government of the past that the mining population did not understand the value of the services they had rendered to the colony. The goldfields really deserved more consideration than they had received, and he was pleased that the present Government had recognised its duty in proposing £2,000 for schools of mines. They should make those schools regular Government institutions. The success of agriculture in the southern part of the colony was solely dependent on the goldfields of the North. Twenty years hence they would know much more about mining, and also about agriculture, which likewise raised value from the ground. But if it was necessary twenty years hence that they wanted colleges which would teach them how to employ their skill and industry to the best advantage, how much more so at present! It was not when they were grown men that they wanted schools, but when they were children. And just now they were children as agriculturists and as miners, comparatively speaking. He hoped, therefore, that when the next Estimates were brought forward they should have a vote not only for schools of mines but for agricultural colleges.

Mr. NORTON said he had no recollection of having appointed the assistant clerk, as stated by the Minister for Mines, although if the hon. gentleman said so no doubt he was right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he was wrong. The assistant clerk was previously paid from Contingencies, and he was now put on the Estimates. He presumed the appointment must have been made before the present Government came into office.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman had told them that the assistant clerk was clerk of petty sessions. Was that the case?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not the case. I find the appointment was made on the 29th November, 1883.

Mr. NORTON: What was he appointed to do?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I suppose there was some reason for it at the time; but hon. members can hardly expect me to bear it in mind for over twelve months.

Mr. STEVENSON : Ask the Under Secretary.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that Mr. Mowbray, the warden, made application for an assistant, as the clerk of petty sessions was unable to do the work.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he knew the appointment was made at the instance of Mr. Mowbray; and no doubt if that gentleman had asked for three clerks at that time he would have got them. He was confident that that clerk had no work to do. The work of mining registrar and clerk of petty sessions was only one man's work; however he would say no more about it. Under the same heading he noticed an item of £450, allowance to commissioners and mining registrars. How many commissioners were there?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied that there was only one commissioner pure and simple; the remainder were police magistrates as well.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he agreed with the hon. member for Rosewood that there were a great many loose ideas abroad as to what a school of mines meant; and those same loose ideas were evidently held by the Minister for Mines, if he thought that a school of mines could be established for £2,000; especially if it was intended to establish those schools throughout the colony. In Victoria, where there were more miners on one goldfield than in the whole of Queensland, there was only one school of mines at Ballarat; but that school of mines required a large staff, the same as a big college. It was subsidised by the Government to the extent of £4,000 a year, and additional funds were obtained from students. There was a regular staff of lecturers on different subjects, the same as at a university. What did the Minister for Mines expect to do with £2,000? It would be simply money thrown away. If the hon. gentleman wanted to establish a real school of mines, he should put a respectable sum on the Estimates and get a proper staff. It would be utterly useless to spend the money in the way proposed. He would not advise the hon. gentleman to attempt to establish a school of mines on every goldfield in the colony. Even if only three goldfields were selected, the amount available for each would be under £700, and they would be only a superior kind of schools of art. It had been stated to him that the Minister for Mines had allowed the miners on the Cloncurry Gold Field to be deprived of the reserve which they had for running their horses and cattle upon. The miners in the north and north-west, who had not the good fortune to live in towns, were obliged to keep horses, and reserves had been set apart for that purpose. He was informed that the reserve on the Cloncurry had been taken away from the goldfield and let to two men for agistment purposes. Was that the case?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : If the reserve has been taken away, it has not been taken away by me.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : It could not have been taken away without your knowledge.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : I can assure the hon. gentleman that it has not been taken away with my knowledge.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : If it has been taken away at all, it must have been done through the Mines Department.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the hon. member was entirely wrong, wherever he got his information.

Mr. NORTON said it was reported that Mr. Uhr and someone else had got a lease of the

reserve for goldfield purposes at Cloncurry, and that they were making use of it for travelling sheep which came there. They took the sheep and charged agistment, making a very good thing out of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the Cloncurry Gold Field Reserve was a very large one, and a portion of it had been leased from year to year for grazing purposes. He forgot now what the area was.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not see how the Lands Department could lease an inch of the land without the consent of the Mines Department. Application had been made to him when Minister for Mines, and he was foolish enough to allow a block to be leased by the Lands Department. Devonport was the name of the block, he thought, but it was taken away again when he had found out what had been done. If the Lands Department had leased the reserve without the consent of the Mines Department it was certainly not legal, and was a very high-handed proceeding.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said if the Lands Department had taken away the goldfields reserve at Cloncurry he would take care that the lease was cancelled. He would take the land back again.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL said he had not had an explanation from the Minister, and insisted upon having an answer to his question as to how the £2,000 was to be spent in establishing schools of mines. The member for Townsville made a good argument when he said there was only occasion for one central school of mines, but he drew his example, which was not a good one, from Victoria. There were two schools of mines there : a large one at Ballarat and a smaller one at Sandhurst. Now he wanted to know how that £2,000 was to be spent? He made application to the Minister on behalf of his constituents to see if he would subsidise an institution of the kind on the principle of £1 from the Government for every £1 subscribed. The inhabitants would erect the building and would find a man who was able to assay and take charge of the collection of minerals. The institution would not be very pretensions, but it would be a nucleus; and he asked the hon. member for Townsville to recollect that the beginning of the Ballarat school was not very pretensions. £500 was the grant made by the Government for the first four years, and it had since been increased to £4,000.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : £8,000 altogether, but £4,000 was what was called a non-recurring vote.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL asked, if a proposition for the establishment of a school of mines was submitted, would the Minister subsidise the institution on the £1 for £1 system?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the hon. member complained that he did not get an answer to his question, but he (the Minister for Mines) had not had an opportunity of speaking. They had had a long address from the hon. member for Rosewood on the value of mining deposits, and other hon. members had spoken afterwards, so that he had not had an opportunity to give an answer. It was proposed to commence on a small scale; and whoever was desirous of establishing a school of mines, the Government would encourage him by subsidising the institution, but it must be someone who would take an interest in the matter. He hoped that would satisfy the hon. member.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL : That is quite satisfactory.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

PRINTING COMMITTEE REPORT.

Mr. FRASER, on behalf of the Speaker as Chairman, brought up the Ninth report of the Printing Committee, and moved that it be printed.
Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that this House do now adjourn.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What business will be taken on Monday?

The PREMIER: We propose to proceed with Supply.

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