

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 5 DECEMBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 5 December, 1884.

Supplementary Estimates for 1883-4.—Bundaberg Gas and Coke Company Bill—second reading.—Jury Bill—consideration of Legislative Council's amendments.—Additions to the Parliamentary Buildings.—Deep Mining on Goldfields.—Pharmacy Bill.—The New Ireland Boys.—Southern and Western Railway Returns.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES FOR 1883-4.

The SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor, forwarding the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1883-4.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), it was ordered that the Estimates be printed and referred to the Committee of Supply.

BUNDABERG GAS AND COKE COMPANY BILL—SECOND READING.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said: Mr. Speaker,—In moving the second reading of this Bill, I do not think it is necessary for me to take up the time of the House by saying very much on the subject, because it is a Bill similar to those that have preceded it in this House on the same subject. It is, I may say, almost word for word in all respects similar to the Gympie Gas Company Bill, the Townsville Gas Company Bill, the Rockhampton Gas Company Bill, and the provisions of the Brisbane Gas Company Bill. It is proper that I should say a few words in regard to the measure. First, then, this Bill is founded particularly on an agreement between Mr. Robert Fleming and the municipality of Bundaberg under which the former agrees to supply the inhabitants of Bundaberg with gas for a period of ten years, and there are numerous provisions in the agreement, which hon. members will notice is attached to the report of the Select Committee. The Bill is to enable the provisions of that agreement to be carried out, and if it had not been found by Mr. Fleming that he had considerable difficulties to contend with in the way of opening up streets and other matters, it is very likely this Bill would not have been brought before the House: but in order to give efficiency to the operations, and to enable Mr. Fleming to carry out his contract, it was thought desirable to form the projectors into a company; and power is now asked

to enable them to go on with the work without any interruption whatsoever. The Bill contains the ordinary provisions to enable this to be done. I would draw the attention of the House to one or two matters in the agreement, on page 12. There are a number of provisions there, naming the quality of the gas to be supplied; and clause 5 says:—

"That the said gas so made and provided by the said Robert Fleming shall be of that quality known as seventeen-candle gas."

A price is also fixed by clause 6, which says:—

"That the price charged by the said Robert Fleming for the said gas shall be, for the first four years of this agreement, twelve shillings and sixpence per one thousand cubic feet, and shall be then decreased yearly by the sum of five pence per one thousand cubic feet for a period of six years."

There is also a provision that the corporation of Bundaberg shall have the sole right of purchasing the gasworks at the end of ten years. That is a very important condition, but I hope that in ten years the town of Bundaberg will be in such a prosperous condition that there will be no need to enforce that clause unless the agreement as to quality of gas, and so forth, is not carried out, or unless the residents of Bundaberg should think it desirable to accept the responsibility of becoming the proprietors of the local works. The lines of the Bill are the same as those of other Bills of a similar nature, and I do not think it necessary, therefore, to enter into any further details. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

The PREMIER said: No objection will be offered by the Government to the passage of this Bill; but when it is in committee it will be worthy of consideration whether a similar clause to that which was inserted in other Gas Bills lately should not be inserted in this one. It would be more satisfactory that the Bill should include the agreement, so that it may be a statutory agreement with Parliament, than to allow it to rest simply as a contract made between Mr. Fleming and the corporation of Bundaberg.

Question put and passed; and the committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Friday next.

JURY BILL — CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On this Order of the Day being read,

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member in charge of this Bill is not here, and neither is my hon. colleague the Attorney-General. Under the circumstances, I think, I had better take charge of it; and I therefore move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, a verbal amendment made in clause 2 was agreed to.

The PREMIER said that there was an amendment in clause 3 to leave out the words, "no jury *de ventre inspicendo* shall be empannelled or sworn." The clause provided that there should be no such jury in cases where a female, upon a capital conviction, alleged, or the court had reason to suppose, that she was pregnant. The existing law was that a jury of matrons should be sworn to make inquiries. The clause, as amended by the Legislative Council, substituted something else; but there was nothing to take away the existing law. He thought it would be far better if that were done, and that it should state that the

jury of matrons was done away with. He should move, therefore, that the amendment be disagreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, a verbal amendment made in clause 4 was agreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported that the Committee had disagreed to one amendment, and agreed to the others.

The report was adopted, and the Bill was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message, stating that the House—

“Disagree to the amendment in clause 3, because by the existing law a jury *de ventre inspiciente* is required to be empanelled in the cases mentioned in the said clause, and it is desirable that this law should be repealed expressly and not by uncertain implication; and agree to the other amendments.”

ADDITIONS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Mr. FERGUSON, in moving—

1. That the report and the accompanying plans of the Joint Parliamentary Buildings Committee, laid on the table of the House on the 21st November, be now adopted by the House.

2. That an Address be presented to the Governor praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause provision to be made for giving effect to the foregoing resolution.

—said: I do not intend to take up the time of the House long, as I think that hon. members have considered the matter pretty fully; at all events, they have had every opportunity of considering the report of the committee and of studying the plans of the additions which it is intended shall be carried out, so that there is no excuse on the part of hon. members of the want of information. The report is full, and all the various matters are gone into pretty well. It is a question that the Parliamentary Buildings Committee have had under consideration for a long time. Each session the different committees have reported something to the House, and have shown the necessity for such additions as these; but the necessity has become more apparent every year, and the present committee therefore have reported fully to the House, and shown in the sketch plan what they think should be carried out. The principal part of the new building, hon. members will see, is on a level with the present Chamber floor—that is, the library, the dining-room, the smoking-room, and other rooms connected with the refreshment room. We have had several plans before us, and we could have recommended some that would not have cost so much as this one—not, perhaps, much less, but still the amount would have been less. They, however, provided for the new buildings being on the ground floor, and that would have necessitated hon. members going down a staircase of forty steps to get to the refreshment room, which would be very inconvenient. The committee, therefore, recommended that a building, such as is shown on the plan, be constructed at a cost of £13,000. There were then more plans placed before us for other additions to cost about £30,000. So that the total cost we estimate at £43,000. The Colonial Architect has assured me that the work can be done for that amount. As I said before, it would be an unwise policy to construct a building which would not be in character with the present building. The committee have decided to carry out the character of the present building; so that one part will not make the whole look shabby. The new library will be a very extensive one, and the necessity or it is becoming more apparent every year, as

at present there are a large number of books upon the floor. However, we can do without the library for a year or two. The proposal is to build first a dining-room, which is at the furthest part, with a kitchen below, and all the other rooms connected with it; and when they are finished they will be reached by a suspended bridge or gallery, closed in, so that they can be used while the library is in course of construction. They will not interfere with the present buildings, which can be used until the new ones are completed. When they are finished the library can be gone on with without interfering with the convenience of members of the House. There is one thing which is particularly alluded to, and that is ventilation. There will be an air-space of about a foot or eighteen inches between the dining-room and the library; so that there will be a free circulation of air. There is another matter which I will point out. The public stairs at the present time are in the main building, and often some of the public are seen knocking about the passage. This alteration will give the public a stair with the entrance from outside, so that they will not enter the main building at all, which will be a great convenience. There will also be accommodation for hon. members, particularly country members, who may wish to offer their friends a little refreshment. It is very awkward at the present time, as according to the rules hon. members cannot ask their friends into the Refreshment Rooms. There is no doubt that all hon. members will acknowledge that additions to the Refreshment Rooms and to the Parliamentary Buildings are much required; but whether this is a proper scheme or not is for hon. members to say. Anything else will destroy the character of the present buildings. The elevation to the river will be of the same character as that to the gardens in the front when the present rookery at the back is cleared away. I think the work should be done as soon as possible, because of the danger from fire. The buildings at the back are of wood, and as dry as a chip, and if there was a fire at any time, with a westerly wind blowing, there would be no saving the main building; and no one can tell when a fire may take place; buildings like those are not safe for a day, and there is not a sixpence of insurance upon any part of the Parliamentary Buildings. The cost of the alterations would be nothing compared with the loss which would ensue if a fire took place in those back premises; and if there be no other reason than that, I think that the House should decide upon making these improvements. Another matter is that we know very well that the accommodation provided by the Refreshment Rooms at present is very unsatisfactory. We may be told that this vote is for Brisbane; but people in all parts of the colony are represented in the House, and every representative has to spend a great part of his time here. I myself am two-thirds of my time here and half the time I am in Brisbane I spend in these buildings. It is for the comfort of members from all parts of the colony, as well as Brisbane; and I do not think the House should hesitate over a few paltry thousands in such a matter. The heat has been 96° in the dining-room for several days past. I have looked at the glass myself, and have found that it ranges from 90° to 96°, and for anyone in delicate health it is very severe; in fact, I have seen many hon. members walk out of the room before they have half finished their meals. I believe, therefore, that the House will see the necessity of carrying out these improvements; and, as I said before, the proper policy is to build beyond the present requirements, and to erect the additions in character with the present buildings. I know that the Minister for Works will oppose this motion, especially after what he

said last night; still I think he will admit that there is a very good reason for having these improvements carried out. I do not think the hon. gentleman has treated the committee fairly. The committee is a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament, and whoever they choose to ask to attend it has to do so. The constitution of the committee is such that if they asked the Minister for Works to attend, and he declined, they could compel him to come. That is the power of the committee.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You would have some trouble to compel me to come.

Mr. FERGUSON: If the hon. gentleman did not he would be committed for contempt. I am only telling him that this is the constitution of the committee, and I think we have been very moderate in our requests. We asked the Government to give us permission to allow the Colonial Architect to assist the committee in bringing this matter before the House, and that permission was accorded. The Colonial Architect attended two meetings for about three-quarters of an hour at each, and that is all the time of that officer that has been taken up; but, as I have said, we had a right to ask anybody. However, I leave the matter in the hands of the House. For myself, I am quite satisfied that the plans we have laid before the House should be adopted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I see by the report laid before the House that the estimate of the Colonial Architect for carrying out the plans recommended by the Committee is £43,000. I am really at a loss to understand how people with any common sense can make a proposition like this. It has been pointed out before that the buildings constructed of wood are a source of danger; and the Government have put on the Loan Estimates £20,000 for the purpose of erecting new refreshment rooms. The plans prepared by the Committee provide for billiard-rooms; and I see there is a bar for the Opposition members to liquor at, and a bar for the Government members to liquor at. I cannot see the necessity for that. I think that the sum of £20,000 put down on the Loan Estimates is quite sufficient to erect buildings that will provide accommodation for members of this House for the next twenty-five years at least; and by that time further extensions may be made if required. I do hope that hon. members will see the necessity of exercising economy. I think I can fairly expect the support of the hon. member for Blackall, and the hon. member for Townsville, after the remarks they made last night on the estimates for Public Buildings. If they accuse us of extravagance over the paltry little buildings put up for the accommodation of public business, I can fairly expect their support in protesting against this proposal for committing the country to the expenditure of another £100,000. I am quite sure that the hon. member for Mackay will agree with me that it is a gross waste of public money. I think that £20,000 expended on refreshment rooms will be ample for years to come. If hon. members will look at the Loan Estimates they will see a sum of money down for a public library. I think that if the public get that accommodation we can very well dispense with any extension of the Library here. I was surprised at the remarks of the hon. member for Rockhampton, complaining about the accommodation for members. I know that the dining-room is much better than the dining-room I have, and I am inclined to think it is almost as good as the dining-room any hon. member of this House has. The £20,000 was put on the Loan Estimates very much against my will; and

I did my best to get it reduced to £10,000; but if hon. members are willing to expend that sum, there it is. I hope that, considering all the circumstances, the House will not adopt the resolution moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. MELLOR said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very sorry to hear the remarks of the Minister for Works. I think that the proposals of the Building Committee should be adopted by this House. The main expense of the proposals is the library, and it is not only present requirements that have to be looked to, as we must make provision for the future. It is well known to all hon. members that the present Library is far too small; the books are accumulating and there is no place to put them. Making provision for a good library for the benefit of this House and of the country is the main object of these buildings; it is not so much for the Refreshment Rooms. I believe that £20,000 or £25,000 would be sufficient for the Refreshment Rooms, but the main point is the construction of a library, which, if not gone on with now, will have to be done at a future time. The Committee thought it would be better to have the whole done at once, and make the building a credit to the House and to the colony. I was very sorry to hear the hon. Minister for Works make reference to two bars—one for the Opposition and one for the Ministry. I do not think that is the case; and I think if he had looked at the plans more closely he would have found that one was a bar for the Upper House and one for the Lower House. The Minister for Works also referred to the billiard-room. I do not know for myself, but I think some of the older members of the Building Committee were opposed to it at first. But they have come to the conclusion after consideration that a billiard-room would be very useful to the members of this House. It would have a tendency to keep them together here instead of their straying away at times, and perhaps in that way assist the business of the country. I certainly should like to see the accommodation for members increased a little more than is proposed by the committee. The hon. member for Rockhampton said the accommodation was not so much for the members for Brisbane as for the members that came from all parts of the colony. I should have liked to have seen some accommodation made for members who come long distances—some sort of accommodation that when they are here in the House—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They might have bedrooms!

Mr. MELLOR: Yes; I should like some accommodation like that. I know that members have sometimes to camp here in this building, as there is no place to go to after the House is closed if it is very late. And I think it would be a very good thing to have a few bedrooms, so that members so situated should be made comfortable for the night. But the rest of the committee did not see it in the light I saw it, and they did not recommend it. I trust that the resolution will be carried. I think, myself, that the members of Parliament who are here in attendance know well that the accommodation in the present dining-room is not sufficient; in fact it might be called a dining oven. In hot weather it is almost impossible to sit down in it, much less eat. The main object of the new erections, however, is to do away with the present building, which is a source of great danger to Parliament House. No doubt if a fire were to occur it would lead to a great disaster to the Parliamentary Buildings. The outhouses are and will ever remain a source of danger as long as they remain

as they are. As the hon. member for Rockhampton mentioned, this building is not insured, and if a fire occurred and any wind at all were blowing it would be impossible to save it. I am surprised that action has not been taken before for doing away with these buildings.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : Mr. Speaker,—The hon. Minister for Works has claimed the votes of the member for Blackall and myself, because when he submitted his Estimates the other evening I wanted to cut them down. That is a strange demand to make, that because I consider that a certain work should not be done at a certain time, therefore I should vote against this proposal. The argument is rather illogical. However, I am inclined to go with the Minister for Works rather than with the hon. member for Rockhampton. I do not believe in such a large expenditure as £43,000, especially when we are asked to provide for billiard-rooms and bar-rooms for the Opposition and the Government, and for the Council. I think such accommodation as that might very well be dispensed with. I believe in having fair accommodation for members, but I do not think that members of Parliament, generally speaking, are so luxurious that they require the extreme accommodation proposed by the Buildings Committee. As to the liability of fire occurring in the Refreshment Room, that is certainly a source of danger. But it is lessened by the strong iron door at the head of the staircase; and if the night watchman does his duty regularly every night, I do not think any fire that takes place in the Refreshment Room could have much effect on this building before the fire brigade was there on the spot with everything to put it out. The only reason that I can see for voting for this proposal would be the addition to the Library. But even that can be deferred for a few years longer. I do not approve of even the £20,000 which the Minister for Works has placed on the Loan Estimates for a refreshment room. I do not see why it should cost £20,000 to build a refreshment room for fifty members. When both Houses were sitting there were seldom more than fifty or sixty present at one time. If the whole £20,000 were spent on a refreshment room people would say we were getting luxurious; that men who used only a few years ago to breakfast, dine, and sup in an *al fresco* manner now require £20,000 to be spent on a refreshment room. I think a much less sum than £20,000 should be required. Very likely I shall oppose that vote also if it is for a refreshment room only. But if it is for something else, the Minister for Works will require to give some other explanation than he has now offered, and if he does I may not go against it; but, in all reason, it is quite enough to put down for present expenditure on the Parliamentary Building. If the Minister for Works has any need of my vote on this question I certainly shall give it to him, although not for the reasons he urged.

Mr. BLACK : I am glad that on this occasion I can vote with the hon. Minister for Works, and endorse the economic notions which induced him to oppose this vote. At the same time, I think it is only fair to those hon. gentlemen who, at a considerable amount of trouble, have investigated the whole matter, that the report laid before the House should receive that consideration to which it is entitled. I believe those gentlemen went into the whole question of the additions to this House in a very thorough manner, under the belief and impression that this House contemplated adding very considerably to the Parliamentary Buildings. They have entered into the thing thoroughly in accordance with that idea,

and have brought a scheme before the House which is entitled to every consideration. But, apart from that, I consider that the proposal to spend £42,000 or £43,000 in adding to this building, is, to say the least of it, very premature. The colony, I consider, is not in a position or in a condition to justify any unnecessary expenditure on public buildings. I would much rather see the money, which it is proposed to expend upon what I consider these unnecessary improvements, spent all over the colony. In addition to the £43,000 which it is contemplated to expend, hon. members will bear in mind that the Minister for Works, although actuated by economical motives in this instance, proposes to ask the House for no less than £100,000 out of the Loan Estimates of £10,000,000 for various public buildings, and that there is on the same Estimates a further sum of £20,000 for additions to the Parliamentary Buildings. If it was necessary to improve these buildings to the extent suggested by the committee, that money could very well be taken out of the £100,000 vote. The arguments that have been brought forward in favour of this very extravagant and expensive addition are, I think, rather of a weak nature. One of them—I am sorry I have to differ from my friend the hon. member for Rockhampton—was that members ought to have some refreshment room here to which they could take their friends. I think that is a very weak argument in favour of this expenditure. It would be a bad precedent to establish to allow members to take their friends into the Refreshment Rooms attached to the Parliamentary Buildings; and it would lead to very serious embarrassments in the future if members, after debating in the House, were to be possibly subjected to the criticisms of strangers in the Refreshment Rooms. The proposal to add bed-rooms, suggested by the hon. member for Wide Bay, is, I think, of an equally frivolous nature. This House was never intended as a place of abode for members. If we are going to add bed-rooms, bath-rooms, and billiard-rooms to the House, we might go a little further, and start it as an hotel, open to the wives and families of members. These Parliamentary Buildings were never intended for such a purpose, and I trust the House will never sanction any additions of that kind. No doubt, as the hon. member for Rockhampton has pointed out, the inconvenience experienced, especially by Northern members in attending so long in Brisbane, is very great indeed, but that is not to be remedied by putting additional accommodation of that sort to the House. The most serious argument in favour of this vote is, in my opinion, the extreme risk which the building is subjected to from fire. There is no doubt that if a fire were unfortunately to break out in the Refreshment Rooms it would require the greatest activity to prevent the whole of these buildings being destroyed. To that extent I go with the committee, that I think some immediate steps should be taken for the erection of refreshment rooms of an incombustible nature. Not that I wish to deprecate the existing Refreshment Rooms, for they are quite sufficient for the ordinary requirements of the members of the House, but as a protection from the risk of fire, which I look upon as a very serious one indeed. On that ground I am also quite in accord with the Minister for Works when he suggests that new and proper refreshment rooms should be erected without delay. It would be a very great calamity to Brisbane, and indeed to the entire colony, if this very handsome pile of buildings were destroyed from want of proper precautions against fire, especially as the danger has been pointed out by the committee which has brought up this report. The plans

we have had laid before us this afternoon are, I think, in excess of the requirements of the colony for some time to come. I am glad the Colonial Treasurer coincides with me in that view; because I am going to point out that it is quite possible that the accommodation now provided here may be considered sufficient for a longer period of the time than the Ministry calculate just now. At present the House consists of fifty-five members, and we have sufficient accommodation for five or ten members more. But the time is not in the very far distant future when the accommodation required in this House is not likely to be of necessity increased, but possibly reduced. The question of separation, which is just now agitating the northern portion of the colony—

The PREMIER: Not a bit of it.

Mr. BLACK: The question of separation, which is now agitating the more northern portion of the colony, is, I am perfectly convinced, certain to result in the separation of Queensland into two colonies—North and South—and consequently the representation of the colony which will concentrate in Brisbane will be reduced. On those grounds alone, therefore, I consider the accommodation provided here at the present time will be quite sufficient for some years to come. Had the Premier brought in that Redistribution Bill, which I believed he promised—or Additional Members Bill, which is the same thing in the opinion of the outside public—

The PREMIER: Nonsense!

Mr. BLACK: The northern portion of the colony especially were led to believe that an Additional Members Bill would be brought forward this session. However, that is somewhat apart from the question we are now discussing. On the whole I am prepared to support the Minister for Works in the view he has taken of this question, which is, that a sufficient sum of money should be provided on the Loan Estimates for an adequate refreshment room, not, as I said before, because of the inadequacy of the existing accommodation, but to secure these Parliamentary Buildings from the very great risk of fire that they are at present subjected to.

Mr. ALAND said: I think that when the time does come that Queensland is divided into two colonies, the amount of representation concentrated in Brisbane will be quite as large as it is now. That time is so very far distant that this portion of the colony will certainly be much larger than it is now. I hardly know what to say about the matter before the House. I cannot but think that in the past we have acted not altogether wisely. We have been going on from time to time erecting structures contiguous to this building, and then we find that they do not suit our purpose; so that I think that in the extension of these buildings we ought to look a long way ahead, and not build for the present requirements only, but anticipate what our requirements will ultimately be. Now, I should have liked if, in considering this question, we had had from the Minister for Works some sort of an idea or plan of what he himself proposes to do in the matter, because it may be that with the sum which he intends to place at the disposal of the committee, some sort of structure will be built which, while well suited to our present requirements, will in a few years require to be enlarged, and then the question will arise whether the building then erected is capable of being enlarged. The plans which have been presented to the Buildings Committee are, of course, quite in keeping, and are in accord with the present building. We have all along hitherto, in our buildings, taken no

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account of the river frontage of the buildings. We have allowed them to present a sort of back-yard appearance. Take the Harbours and Rivers building as an example. It is a disgraceful-looking thing; and even in the present Parliamentary Buildings there is nothing very handsome on the river side. Take the Museum again, which is equally ugly, or even a great deal more so. The plans which the Colonial Architect has prepared certainly present to the inner front a thing of beauty which we are told is a joy for ever. Anyone coming to this colony never fails to express satisfaction with our Parliamentary Buildings when looked at from the Gardens, and I hope that visitors from the other colonies will in the future be able to admire it from the river side also. The proposed building is estimated to cost £43,000. I know it has been said, I think by the Minister for Works, that a building such as the plans indicate cannot be constructed for anything like that amount. Well, it is of course very easy to make a statement of that kind, but when a gentleman with a professional reputation gives an estimate—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I never said so. I said the completed plan would cost £100,000.

Mr. ALAND: If we look at the front elevation we see what it is proposed to build now, which will come to £43,000; and what it is proposed to build, in twenty-five years perhaps, will cost £100,000. What is proposed now will cost £43,000, and we have the professional opinion of the Colonial Architect on that point; and I should like to know what is the use of having one if he is not able to fully assure the Minister what a building is really going to cost. I say this: that in the absence of the Minister for Works bringing down to the House a proper plan of what he has purposed to do with the £20,000 on the Loan Estimates, we cannot do better than accept the plans on the faith of the Colonial Architect. The accommodation which will be provided will be in advance of our requirements, but it is always better to look ahead. A mistake has always been made in making no provision for the future, and the consequence is that nearly the whole of our public buildings all over the colony require additions to them. I hope we shall adopt a better course now in making provision for future requirements, and put up a respectable building which will last almost for all time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: In explanation, I wish to say that I did not dispute the amount put down by the Colonial Architect. I said the complete plan would cost £100,000 to carry out.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The report of the Buildings Committee, which we are asked to adopt, recommends that a particular plan should be adopted for the future extension of these buildings. Now, I think we all know, first of all, that the present Refreshment Rooms are inadequate and are also dangerous, and that some action ought to be taken in that matter immediately. We agree also that the present Library may not always be sufficient. But it does not by any means follow that the proposal made is the best one. Now, so far as the Refreshment Rooms are concerned, it may be taken for granted that those buildings are in the right place—the middle of the building—and that any new buildings should be somewhere about the same position. That, I think, we are agreed upon. Well, now comes the question, where is the proper place to put the library? The recommendation of the committee is that the library shall be put away in the yard at the back of the building, enclosed by

galleries on both sides—with absolutely no view, and practically no ventilation. Instead of being in the position in which it is now, in a place where people are encouraged to go, it is to be put in a most unsatisfactory place—no ventilation and no outlook. That is how it occurs to me. I think myself that the back of the building is not the place for a library—the library ought to be in the front of the building, and ought to be a place in which it is a pleasure to sit and read. That matter has not been considered. The scheme, I think, requires much more consideration than the Colonial Architect could possibly have given it between the time he consulted with the committee and the time the report was brought up. I have not given the question sufficient consideration to justify me in expressing a confident opinion; but I can see no reason why the Library should not be extended in its present position. With a covered way underneath, so as not to obstruct traffic, an addition might be made to the front of the building, and while the distinct features of the building might be preserved, we should still have the view in the front. We might have two floors or throw them into one if it was considered desirable; and we should then be able to accommodate all the books we are likely to have for a very long time to come. I wonder how our books would look in the magnificent structure proposed by the committee! They would not cover half of one side of the wall. I hope that our Library will increase rapidly; but we are not likely to be able to fill such a building as the one proposed for the next ten or twenty years. I want to refer to another matter. There certainly is a great want of accommodation for members—I do not mean accommodation in the shape of bedrooms, billiard-rooms, and bath-rooms, but rooms where members can meet and transact business in concert. There ought to be rooms where members could meet for the purpose of taking concerted action, and I think that is a great want. At present there are no rooms of the kind, except the committee-rooms downstairs. In New South Wales and Victoria there is a room available for the convenience of members on both sides of the House; but no provision of that kind has apparently been considered in preparing these plans. The absence of it is one of the greatest defects we have in this House; and such a provision is certainly wanted more than accommodation in the Library, and it could be met by devoting part of the space at the back of the building, and without interfering with the Refreshment Room. We ought to make this provision for the accommodation of members, and we ought to build a new refreshment room. I entirely agree with the proposal to connect the refreshment room with the present building by a light gallery; and that is what the Government think ought to be done; but I do not think the gallery ought to be replaced by a library. As to the cost, I have every confidence in the Colonial Architect; but he has made no formal report. All he has done is to inform the committee verbally that the expense will not be over £43,000. He could not have had time to make out a detailed report. Now, I ask anybody who has had any experience in these matters whether he thinks the work can be done for £43,000? I do not think it can be done for anything like that money. If we look at the plans for the library, the cost of such a building as that must be very great indeed. A building of the kind cannot be done in stucco. It is a building with pillars inside and a great deal of ornamentation, and it would be much larger than the room we are in now. I believe that if we adopt those plans we shall certainly be committed to an expense of not less than

£100,000; and besides that, the plan is by no means the best that could be devised. There is need for a new refreshment room, there can be no doubt, to do away with the serious danger that exists in connection with the present one. That ought to be done at once; and the Government have placed a sum of £20,000 on the Estimates for it. That is as much as we ought to spend at present. It is an outside amount, and with it ample provision is made for a refreshment room, and for the additional accommodation required by members. After they are provided for, I believe there will be something to spare. I give the Buildings Committee every credit for doing the best they could with the meagre information at their disposal, but their proposal is not, I think, one that ought to be adopted at the present time. I think hon. members should pause before they resolve, without further consideration, to place the library where it is now proposed, when it ought to be a building as well ventilated as possible.

Mr. PALMER said: Knowing the utilitarian character of the hon. gentleman who brought this motion forward, and believing that he favours the useful more than the ornamental, I am surprised that he should have advocated such expensive luxuries as billiard-rooms, bath-rooms, and other extraordinary additions. I am quite sure that if the hon. gentleman recollects what is required in other parts of the colony, he would scarcely have recommended such extraordinary luxuries. I am quite certain there are works that deserve far more attention than these proposed additions, especially when I compare this House with the Parliament Houses in colonies where the population is four or five times as great as ours. I have heard this building greatly commended not only for its beauty and its size, but for its luxurious appearance. I am sure it is far beyond the Parliament Houses in Sydney, the capital of a colony with a population of between 800,000 and 900,000. If the committee have so much latent energy, and wish to expend a lot of money, I am sure there are works wanted that will return more interest for the money than silent walls like these. I also remember that in most public buildings the estimate of cost has fallen far short of what was required in after years. If it is estimated that a work will cost £50,000, it generally takes £100,000 before it is finished. I entirely agree with the Premier when he says that the present Library should not be shifted. Its position, its view, and its style are such that none would wish to see it removed. There is no pleasanter room in Brisbane; and it would be a lasting disgrace to put the library in any other room. It is a more used room than any room, and should, I think, be kept where it is. As to the Refreshment Room, there is no doubt that it is at times inconvenient, especially when the thermometer registers 96°. That is not very pleasant, but I have no doubt on that evening every other dining-room in Brisbane was just as hot; and for the short time hon. members have to be in it I am sure they can stand that. I am sure some hon. members have had to live far harder lives in the bush. I think this is scarcely the time for the colony to enter upon such a large expenditure for such a luxuriant building. I believe the people of the colony would laugh at such a large expenditure. The fact that the committee have come to the conclusion they have done in their report is no warrant for us to come to the same conclusion. I have no doubt they devoted a great deal of time to the subject; but at the same time, with all deference to them, I do not think we are justified in agreeing to their conclusion. If, therefore, the Minister for Works requires my vote I shall be quite ready to assist him.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the reason why some hon. members have spoken against this proposal is that they have not fully considered the report. There is great stress laid upon the fact that the library will be shifted to a position in the rear of the building. Such is not the fact; it is an additional one, and the present Library will still be used as a library, and will contain special books of reference, and books that are required by hon. members at a moment's notice. The other room will be used for books which hon. members can use when they have more leisure. Reference has been made to a room for the use of hon. members and their friends, and I must say that if I thought that what I consider such an innovation as that were likely to be introduced I should vote against the motion. I think it is one of the very worst things that could be introduced into the Parliamentary Buildings; we have had some disagreeable experience of the way in which some hon. members go on in a certain condition, and it would be very much aggravated if there were a room at their disposal to bring friends to help them to carouse. When we consider the amount of inconvenience that hon. members suffered last session during the summer in the present Refreshment Room, and even since then—last evening and the evening before—I think that we are fully entitled to erect some buildings which will be more conducive to health and comfort than those we have at present. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that half the ill-health that was suffered by hon. members last session was through their being compelled to eat their food in such a room. Night after night the thermometer was at 90°. An hon. member said that he believed any other dining-room in Brisbane would have been quite as hot. I do not believe that any shilling eating-house in the city would have been so hot. It conduces neither to comfort nor health. With regard to those wooden buildings at present being a source of danger from fire, there can be very little doubt about that; and as to the iron door being a protection, I do not believe it would last three minutes after the fire got a fair start; especially if the wind were blowing in that direction; it would shrivel up like a piece of paper. I do not think there is much of a point to be made of the fact that because some of the hon. members have eaten their food in the open air, that they should be able to eat it in that room. I would much sooner go under a gum-tree and eat my food than eat it there. It would be a perfect pleasure to get under a gum-tree or even a smaller tree in preference to that room. It has been pointed out that a great fault in connection with our public buildings has been that we have put up temporary buildings and afterwards had to go to the expense of pulling them down and erecting others; and unless a large sum is expended in proper additions to the Parliamentary Buildings we shall be doing the same thing over again. It is better to enter into a comprehensive scheme and be done with it.

Mr. MIDGLEY: Mr. Speaker,—I believe I ought to do something more than merely record my vote in order to defeat this proposition. While I have been listening to the debate I have been thinking of the accommodation which is provided in other places. The accommodation that they have in Sydney, to this day, in the Parliamentary Buildings, is in no way to be compared with what we have had in Queensland for the last fifteen years. So, to my mind, the amount of money is appalling which is being spent in buildings, and is totally unremunerative. I feel my mind perfectly at ease, after the speech of the Premier, that there will not be much likelihood of this proposal

being accepted in its present shape. It a new refreshment room be provided in harmony with the main building a great source of danger will be removed and the convenience and comfort of hon. members will be provided for, but I think it is really too bad that we ought to be called upon to spend all this money at the present time. As for the Parliamentary Library being too small, I consider that a great deal of the space there is wasted. There are lots of books in that library which are never handled, and I believe, without interfering with its efficiency at all, the Parliamentary Librarian might make use of the recent addition to the buildings, and take out of the Library some thousands of books, and put them into that dungeon keep, and nobody would ever miss them. There might be some provision made for books of reference, mere records of proceedings in other countries, and scores of other books which are of very little value. I trust that this proposal is doomed to be defeated. It is not the right thing that members should be so very exacting in regard to the comfort and luxury and elegance of their surroundings in a young country like this. I believe that when these present buildings were put up they anticipated by a long time the necessities and real ability of the country. I trust that the proposal will be negated.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—So many members have spoken in opposition to this proposal that I do not think there is the slightest chance of its being carried; and from what fell from the Premier it appears to me that the Government are likely to take the matter in hand themselves and build the refreshment rooms before very long. I trust that if they do this they will take care that such a building is erected as will be a credit to the colony and in consonance with the present building—a building that will have a front towards the river something like the front to the gardens, and elegant in its structure. There is plenty of room to build a place that will be very useful for all the purposes that are required for the time being. I do not doubt that before many years there will be such an outcry for additional room in the Library that hon. gentlemen will be forced to attend to it, and a large sum of money will have to be voted. In the meantime, I hope that the building proposed to be put up will be equal to a first-class building.

Mr. ARCHER said: I hope, sir, that the Minister for Works, who disapproves of the scheme now before the House and is going to propose a scheme of his own, will have a plan prepared to enable hon. members to judge whether it will be in accordance with the style of the present structure, or will be a blot on the building. The hon. the Colonial Secretary the other day twitted some hon. members on this side with want of æsthetic taste. I am not going to say anything against the æsthetic taste of the Minister for Works, but I hope that any buildings he proposes will be in unison with the design of the House. When that motion for the £20,000 vote comes before us, I hope that, if he cannot give us complete plans, he will at all events have an elevation prepared which will enable us to judge whether what he proposes is in accordance with the part already built.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will endeavour to comply with the hon. gentleman's request.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—After the long discussion which has taken place there is not a great deal to be said, except that, seeing the tone of the debate, the hon. member must see he has no chance of carrying his motion, and that his wiser plan would

be to withdraw it. I think it would be an unfortunate thing if the Parliament at the present time, approved of the report. It would be premature to proceed with the expenditure of so large a sum of money on work which might very well stand over for a few years, especially as the money is so much more urgently needed for the construction of other public works, many of which, I trust, will be of a reproductive character. Doubtless, more accommodation will be required for the future, but it will be wiser to leave it to those who are in the House then to deal with such a plan for extension as may be required. Undoubtedly there is, at the present time, a source of danger in case of fire, and I shall be glad to see the removal of those wooden buildings and the erection of a permanent structure in their place; and I trust the Minister for Works will see that the new buildings will form a suitable part of the whole of the permanent extension that is to be made in the future. The amount necessary for the completion of these buildings would, I am sure, extend to £100,000; and, considering that the colony is languishing for necessary public works, I think it would be an altogether unnecessary expenditure. The money might be much more beneficially expended for the convenience of the people at large. We are professing a desire for economy at the present time, and we should set the example in our legislative abode, especially as we really suffer no very great individual hardship. We occupy a very handsome Chamber, and the accommodation of the House is, I believe, quite adequate for the requirements of legislators for the next five or ten years; and it would be a pity for us to adopt a style of building now which might not be suitable for the requirements in the future. This debate has done good by affording hon. members an opportunity of expressing their opinion as to the report of the committee. It must not be inferred that, because hon. members are disinclined to put the country to unnecessary expense at the present time, the labours of the committee have been treated with disrespect; but I cannot think we are warranted in sanctioning a very large expenditure of public money which is not immediately necessary and would certainly be unproductive.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Speaker,—There can be no doubt that the Government and the committee have been in accord on this matter. When the committee brought up their report they were not aware that there was a sum of £20,000 on the Loan Estimates; and the fact that the Government have put down that sum is an acknowledgment that the building is necessary. Every speaker to-night has acknowledged that some additions are required immediately; and the speech of the hon. the Premier was stronger in favour of the resolution than that of any hon. member who spoke in favour of it. With regard to the Library, it is a mistake to suppose that the present Library is to be done away with. It is necessary to provide further accommodation for books, as at present there are many lying on the floor. The plans for the new library are on the newest principle. All the best libraries now are constructed on a different principle from what they used to be; they are lighted and ventilated from the roof, and there is no opening except two entrance doors, so that it would not matter whether the library was at the front of the building or the back. The new style is cooler, better lighted, and gives more room on the walls for books. What is the good of a library with a lot of doors and windows?—they only take up room that is required for books. However, I need not reply to all the arguments that have been used. The Minister

for Works says £20,000 will be available soon for the erection of additions, and I hope they will be in character with the present buildings, even if only two or three rooms are gone on with at once, so that they will not have to be pulled down in five or ten years. It is my intention to withdraw the motion, because I see that the feeling of the House is against it; and I will leave the matter to the Minister for Works to deal with. I hope he will not lose so much time over it as with other buildings he has had in hand for the last year or so. With the consent of the House, I withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

DEEP MINING ON GOLDFIELDS.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN moved—

That the House will, on Friday next, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the following resolution, namely:—

1. That for the purpose of encouraging deep mining on the goldfields of the colony, it shall be lawful for the Colonial Treasurer to pay the sums of £5,000 and £3,000 respectively as a reward, upon the following conditions, namely:—

£5,000 to the miner or miners who shall be the first to obtain and report the getting of fifty tons of payable quartz on either the Gympie, Charters Towers, or Ravenswood Gold Fields, at the depths herein mentioned, namely:—

Gympie, at a depth of 1,320 feet.
Charters Towers, at a depth of 1,090 feet.
Ravenswood, at a depth of 900 feet.

£3,000 to the miner or party of miners who shall be the first to obtain and report the getting of fifty tons of payable quartz on either the Hodgkinson, Palmer, or Etheridge Gold Fields, at the depths herein mentioned, namely:—

Hodgkinson, at a depth of 540 feet.
Palmer, at a depth of 570 feet.
Etheridge, at a depth of 517 feet.

The payableness of the quartz and the depth of the mine (which must be perpendicular from the surface) to be certified to by the warden of the goldfield from which the application for payment of the reward is made.

The rewards to be applied for before the 1st of January of 1888.

2. That an address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause the necessary measures to be taken for giving effect to the foregoing resolution.

He said: I assume that all hon. members are agreed as to the importance of the mining industry to the colony, and the encouragement which it ought to receive. I shall therefore say nothing as to the importance of the industry, believing that there is no necessity for doing so. The Government, I observe, have a sum of £5,000 on the Estimates passed last night, for prospecting purposes. I entirely agree with the intention of the Government so far as it goes. But I am inclined to think that they will have some difficulty in expending that £5,000 during next year, or even during the next two years. I say this for several reasons. One reason is because for every £1 which the Government find first, another £1 must be found by the party which is doing the prospecting. That is to some extent a deterrent to prospecting. There are many men who would go prospecting for gold if they were not called upon to bear the expense. Another reason is that there is a belief existing in the minds of many old miners in the northern part of the territory, where prospecting has been chiefly going on of late years, that we have discovered the best of our goldfields. Of course we all know that a goldfield such as Gympie, which is of small extent, may be passed over by very energetic prospectors without coming across it; but I think—taking into consideration the general nature of our goldfields, and the large area which each one occupies, and considering the amount of prospecting that has been done privately as well as by public money—that the period is not very

far distant when the last of the goldfields will have been discovered. I am sorry to think so; but I have a very good reason for that belief from my knowledge of the miners in the northern part of the country, and from the expressions of opinion current amongst them for several years past. Now, looking at it in that light, it struck me that as we cannot expect any very great success from surface prospecting, it would be an advantage to the colony if we could develop new goldfields at certain depths below the surface. As a general rule miners are not very confident as to the depth to which gold reefs extend; and it has been a question of doubt even with geologists. But still there is a fear in the minds of miners, that the reefs do not go down very deep. As a proof of that I may quote the depths which the deeper shafts have reached on several of the important goldfields of the colony. If we take Ravenswood, which has been worked for fourteen years, the deepest shaft for gold—not silver—is 400 feet. Then if you take Etheridge, which is nearly as old, the reef is worked at the greatest depth of 270 feet. At Palmer, the deepest shaft is 270 feet, and at Hodgkinson, 240 feet. Those figures bear out my contention, that as a general rule miners are afraid to risk the expenditure of money in sinking to any great depth, dreading as they do that the reef does not extend lower. I have adopted a principle in this resolution which is, I think, fair to all the goldfields enumerated. I have selected the fields with the three deepest shafts—that is, Gympie, Charters Towers, and Ravenswood; and I propose that in each of these fields the depth of 500 feet deeper than the deepest shaft shall be attained before the bonus of £5,000 can be obtained under the conditions imposed by the regulations. It has been stated that the Gympie Gold Field, by having to go down 1,320 feet as against only 1,090 feet by Charters Towers, is handicapped. But such is not the case, for each goldfield must sink exactly the same depth before obtaining the reward. I do not see any other means that could be devised by which the rewards could be apportioned equitably. It would not be fair to ask that the reward should be given when the claim had reached a depth of 1,200 feet, because in that case the deepest one now in existence would have an advantage over the others by 200 or 300 feet. Therefore I have taken 500 feet for each of the three goldfields as the depth which must be attained beyond their present depth before the reward can be obtained under my motion. Now, I consider that if we can induce miners—whether they are companies or individual parties—to go down that depth it will be an advantage to the colony. In fact, I think, as a rule, that the deep mines are mostly worked by companies, for we can scarcely expect parties of individual miners to go down such a depth as 1,000 feet. This is not a question of companies or individual miners. Neither is it a question with me whether the rich man or the poor man will reap the advantage of the reward. That never entered into my calculation. The advantage I wish beyond everything is the advantage of the colony. If we get shafts at Gympie down to 1,320 feet, and a gold reef is found there, every miner in that field will be satisfied that he has got a chance of finding gold by sinking to that depth. The same reasoning applies to Charters Towers and Ravenswood. On the other three goldfields which I have selected—the Hodgkinson, the Palmer, and the Etheridge—I have not asked the miners to sink 500 feet, but only 300 feet. And the bonus is apportioned in the same proportion; that is, exactly £1,000 to the 100 feet. The reason I have taken 300 feet for these fields is this: the very fact of

the shafts in these fields being of so shallow a depth at the present time is a proof that the miners there have greater difficulties to contend with than on the other fields at a greater depth. Etheridge is an older field than Charters Towers. It is about as old as Ravenswood, and very little younger than Gympie, and yet on the Etheridge the deepest shaft is only 270 feet; the reason for that is mainly the distance of the field from the sea coast; everything there costs more than at Gympie or at Charters Towers, especially now that Charters Towers is in communication with the railway; miners' wages are much higher, and mining material and machinery are extremely expensive and hard to obtain. The same thing applies exactly to the other two fields, the Palmer and the Hodgkinson; neither of these fields has the advantage of railway communication; and although the Palmer has one being made to it, I believe it will be at least two or probably three years before the railway is completed into Maytown; and according to the terms of this resolution the bonuses must be obtained within three years from the 1st January next. The other three fields which I have selected for the 500 feet depth and £5,000 bonus are in communication with the sea by railway. Gympie has a railway, Charters Towers has a railway, and now Ravenswood has one from the first of this month—so that any disadvantages those fields have laboured under before as to communication have now been removed, and they are all on an equal footing as far as that is concerned. It may be contended that a better system of assisting mining might be adopted. For instance, I saw a criticism a couple of days ago in one of the journals of this town, contending that it would be much better to adopt the system in existence in Victoria at the present time—that is, to assist miners in sinking shafts, the Government giving a certain percentage in the expenditure for wages incurred in so doing. That, no doubt, is a very good plan; but in a colony where we have what may be called a free-trade tariff it would be inconsistent. There is no more reason why the Government should assist miners in sinking shafts, than there is why they should assist farmers in ploughing fields, or planters in growing cane, or the workers in any other industry. Hitherto we have assisted and encouraged industries by bonuses or rewards of different kinds. For instance, we have at present in our Mining Act of 1874 a clause which I got introduced empowering the Government to grant a reward of £1,000 for the discovery of a payable goldfield. Sometimes those rewards have been obtained without the slightest amount of labour. As a general rule they have been obtained by chance, as most of our goldfields have been discovered by accident, and not by the labour of prospecting. Then we gave a bonus of land for the encouragement of the sugar industry; and I could mention numerous other instances in which bonuses have been given for the starting of industries. But this particular system which has been advocated as existing in Victoria is the result of the protectionist tariff which exists there. It was found that the miners were receiving so little benefit from the system of protection that they were very likely to go against it and advocate free trade. Therefore the benefit of protection was given to them, as it had been given to many other industries, and it was decided to encourage deep sinking by the expenditure of public money. There is a provision that the money is to be returned, but, as I stated last night, that provision is "more honoured in the breach than in the observance." It is like our system of granting loans to cemeteries, the trustees are supposed to refund the money; but that is very rarely done, as the Colonial Secretary knows. The Victorian system is not at all in accord with

our present fiscal system, and I can see no reason why we should adopt it here. If we did, there are twenty other industries which would make a similar claim, and which would have an equal right to make it. I do not think I need say much more on the subject. I have explained how the system will work, and I hope the Minister for Mines will see his way to accept the resolution, or, if not, to modify it in some way so as to make it equally useful to the miners. I am thoroughly convinced from my own experience in mining, strengthened by the experience of scores of other older and better miners than I am, that we have very little to hope for from new surface goldfields, and that the proof that gold-bearing reefs exist at these particular depths will be more than equal to the finding of an alluvial goldfield. As there must be a large expenditure of money in reaching these depths, I have given a bonus larger than the ordinary reward that is given for finding an alluvial goldfield. I may mention that last night I unexpectedly received a telegram from Maytown on this subject. Hon. members who read the criticism the other day in the *Courier* may have remarked that the foundation of that criticism was the objection of the miners of Maytown to the system of giving bonuses, and their advocacy of the Victorian system. By the signature of the sender of the telegram I presume that he is a journalist. He signs himself "W. Crozier Wehr, *Chronicle* office"; and he telegraphs, "Petition being signed support motion bonus deep sinking and subsidy field." I will now conclude by moving the motion standing in my name.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Every member in the House, I am sure, recognises the necessity for encouraging the development of the goldfields of the colony, and for the Government giving assistance in raising all minerals. The question is, which is the best way to go about it. It would be presumption on my part if I undertook to set up my opinion against the hon. member for Townsville, because he thoroughly understands the subject. I myself know nothing at all about the practice of mining; but it strikes me that the proposal put forward by the hon. member can only be availed of by wealthy capitalists. It appears to me that the proposition will shut out entirely the working miners, because they have no means of sinking very deep shafts. I rather approve of the system adopted in Victoria, where the Government subsidises those people who sink below a certain depth. I mention that, because I should like some practical miners to give their opinion upon it. All that I can say is, that the Government are very desirous of encouraging and assisting the mining industry all over the colony, whether it is gold or any other mineral that is being sought for. But, does the hon. member's motion indicate the proper way to go about that. I am free to confess that although we have voted sums of money year after year for prospecting for gold no real benefit has been derived. The fact of the matter is that the Government hitherto have simply found the money for equipping parties for prospecting purposes, but, notwithstanding that, no good results have been obtained. The Government are, however, bound to do all they can to encourage the mining industry, and they are quite willing, if any proper scheme can be proposed, to carry out the ideas of the hon. member. I am inclined to think that if anyone struck gold at a good depth he would be amply rewarded for his trouble, but I would much rather that this scheme should be made to apply to everyone alike, so that the working miner may have a chance against the capitalist. The quantity of stone to be raised, as mentioned by the

hon. member for Townsville—namely, 50 tons—appears to me to be rather small, and I would prefer, at all events, that that should be altered to 100 tons. However, as I said, it is presumption on my part to set up my opinion against the member for Townsville, because I know he has a thoroughly practical knowledge of mining; a much better knowledge of that than of railway contracting. I would take the hon. member's opinion upon mining matters as soon as that of anyone I know; and if, as I say, any reasonable means can be devised for assisting the miners of the colony to strike payable gold at a greater depth than it has hitherto been discovered at, the Government are very willing indeed to give all the assistance they can.

Mr. SMYTH said: As a representative of a mining constituency and as a miner, I must say that my constituents do not agree with the proposal of the hon. member, nor do I agree with it. The system has been tried before. It has been tried in New South Wales on the Adelong Gold Field, and a reward of £1,000 was given to the party of miners who got gold at a depth of 800 feet. A company named the Great Victoria Extended raised a few tons of quartz, and the Inspector of Mines pronounced the stone as being payable. That stone returned 1½ oz. to the ton, but after the £1,000 had been paid the mine did not turn out according to prospects. Well, the same company sunk down 1,026 feet and they got gold again, and claimed another reward of £1,000; but I do not know whether they got it or not. It strikes me that this offering of rewards is like greasing a fat pig. If a man sinks 1,000 feet and gets payable gold at that depth he does not want a reward for it. For myself, I prefer the loaning system, which has been carried on in Victoria with great success. Last year the Government assisted sixty-five companies in Victoria to prospect for gold, and in fourteen or fifteen cases their efforts were successful, and those companies have been the means of opening up several mines that would never have been worked had it not been for the assistance of the Government. Up at Charters Towers Mr. Thomas Mills, an old and experienced miner, feels certain he can find gold below 1,000 feet, and he has gone down to Victoria to get the necessary machinery for prospecting at that depth; but he would never think of claiming a reward of £5,000 if he was successful enough to strike payable gold.

The PREMIER: Would he not?

Mr. NORTON: My word, he would!

Mr. SMYTH: I strongly object to this proposal on the grounds that the depths are not fairly apportioned. Then we have it that Gympie must go down to a depth of 1,320 feet before any reward can be claimed on that field. Now, the deepest shaft on Gympie, the United Smithfield, is sunk down to a depth of about 830 feet, and it cost £20 to sink every foot. That shaft has not had payable gold for the last 600 feet. Ever since they left the 250-foot level nothing has been found, and I do not think it fair that Gympie should be handicapped to the extent of 1,320 feet, as proposed by the hon. member for Townsville. They are handicapped 230 feet more than Charters Towers, and 420 feet more than Ravenswood. We do not think that is fair, considering that at Gympie, at the present time, we have sixteen shafts over 500 feet deep, and eight others over 400 feet, besides several crosscuts extending over 500 feet in length. It would be a mistake to award a claim for one single deep shaft. There are many claims in which good yields are got which are worked down to the gold level. The owners get good dividends; they pick the eyes out of the claim, and

then they clear out. That has been the case in a good many instances. We had a report before us the other day which showed that the Ida mine at the Palmer had obtained 4,782 tons, which yielded 11,636 ozs. of gold, and that gave a return of £46,544. But then they sank no deeper. And there was the Queen claim at the Palmer, from which 3,499 tons were taken. That gave 11,186 ozs. of gold, which brought £44,744. Why should these be subsidised if they got such handsome returns?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Many of the men who got the returns have sold out and gone.

Mr. SMYTH: They are getting no returns now.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No; not at present.

Mr. SMYTH: The usual system in working a mine is that while we are getting payable stone we devote part of the profits towards doing a certain amount of dead-work, perhaps in sinking. I know that in the Gympie mines it is always considered right to keep ahead of their work. They keep the shaft going down. I know several shafts that have been sunk over 500 feet in the last three years right straight down. If a *bonâ fide* system is carried on, then the Government might give a subsidy on the wages that are paid in working a mine, say 10s. for every £1 spent in actual miners' wages; and let the representative shafts be selected by competent persons. I know shafts where as much will be proved at 600 feet as in others at 900 feet, on account of the different strata. We know that when we come to a particular strata we shall get gold. I think the hon. member for Townsville, in asking for some assistance in this way, should see that justice is done to all the mining townships. I do not think the miners in the colony will agree to this proposal. I believe the miners at Maytown will disagree with it, and I know the miners at Charters Towers and Gympie do; but I shall have much pleasure in supporting the hon. member if he brings forward his proposal in a better form.

Mr. LISSNER said: I may say that Ravenswood and Charters Towers are of far greater importance, as far as population is concerned, than Gympie; but the hon. member for Gympie has the advantage in the fact that he has got the opinion of his constituents that they did not like the proposal. I have not. I have had no news from my constituents as to whether they approve of this scheme or not; and, therefore, I stand here to act on my own judgment. There is nothing more difficult than to judge mining matters; and though I have been connected since 1856 with mining in Victoria, New Zealand, and other places, I am at a loss to say whether this is a good scheme or not. Superficially, I do not think it is a good thing. I do not think it will improve the working miners, those who *bonâ fide* go into the bush to look for gold. It will only benefit those who are in a position to sink deep shafts. As the motion stands now, any party will have to go on exactly in the same shaft that is known to be at a particular depth, and will have to sink for the sake of the reward. Now I do not think anyone could go to Gympie, and, starting on a new line or supposed new line of reef, sink 1,320 feet in three years. The rewards, of course, will lapse at the end of 1888. At Charters Towers, too, I do not think anybody could sink a shaft in three years to the depth required, unless indeed he had double or treble shifts, which would require a great deal of capital. If the Government intend to support capitalists, I believe this scheme will be a good thing; but if they intend to encourage

people who are engaged in mining just now in going deeper with their shafts, I do not think it will work. I should like the hon. member to withdraw his motion for the present, and allow the representatives of the different mining communities to have a conference with the miners to see whether they can frame any scheme of reward that will be a benefit to the whole colony. As it stands now, I say, only those miners can get the reward who are in a position to sink for it. For instance, at Maytown and Charters Towers claims can easily be sunk down the required depth, produce the 50 tons of stone, and get the reward. But that is not what is wanted. I hope the hon. member will come to the conclusion that it would be better to let the matter stand over for a while, and allow the miners to think over it.

Mr. MELLOR said: Mr. Speaker,—I am sorry that the hon. gentleman who introduced this motion is not in his place; but I am glad to see a motion of the kind introduced to this House, as I consider the subject to be of the greatest importance. Like the rest of the speakers who have addressed the House, I do not believe in the principle upon which it is brought forward, and I think it is unfair that Gympie should be handicapped to the extent it is; Charters Towers coming next. I believe they are getting gold at as deep levels at Charters Towers as at Gympie; but to fix the depth to be reached before the awar can be claimed, at 1,320 feet will not be much of an inducement to the miners at Gympie. There is one shaft at the present time which is costing £20 a foot for sinking—that is an exceptionally expensive shaft on account of the water. To obtain the reward they would have to sink 166 feet a year; that would cost something over £3,000 a year for three years. I do not think they would be able to do it in the time. The shaft is sunk in low ground liable to floods, and they might be stopped for months together. I think it would be better if the hon. member were to withdraw his motion, and accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Kennedy to consult with the members for the different goldfields, and see if some scheme could be devised that would be fair and just, and be an encouragement to deep-sinkers. The hon. member said he believed all the best goldfields in Queensland had been discovered. That is a matter of opinion. It was only the other day that we saw one of the most important discoveries yet made in Queensland—that is Mount Morgan; and I believe it is quite likely that we may get a good many Mount Morgans in Queensland, though they may not be discovered in the way we expect—that is by tracing the alluvial, and then working the reefs. I do not think we should look at it as the Minister for Works has done, who is afraid that rich companies might obtain the reward. If we can only induce people to go down and get payable gold, it will give such an impetus to mining that it will be worth a great deal more to the Government of the country than the reward. If a man discovers a fresh goldfield, we do not consider whether he is rich or poor; and even if he came on it accidentally it is of as much value to the country as if he had discovered it by hard work. Something has been said about the geologists predicting that deep sinking would not be successful. I do not think we should place too much reliance on the report of geologists after the experience we had of them, and the damage they caused to Gympie in the early days. I am confident that deep sinking will be as successful here as in other colonies. There is a shaft at Sandhurst in Victoria called the "180" shaft, which is down 1,760 feet, and they are getting good gold at that depth; and I do not see why we

should not expect the same results in this colony. The discovery of gold at greater depths would have a double advantage. There are so many mines where all the machinery is on the ground for sinking shafts, and that is the first and heaviest cost. They could go down twice the depth with no more expense for machinery. Besides that, the discovery of gold at greater depths would give confidence, and add stability to the industry. I should be glad to see some scheme by which encouragement would be given to parties sinking deep shafts, even if they were unsuccessful. We might adopt the Victorian plan of paying 10s. for every £1 paid in wages; or we might even be more liberal than that, and make it £1 for £1. In case they were successful in their efforts, they could refund the money to the Treasury; whilst if they were unsuccessful they would have some relief. There is £5,000 on the Estimates at the present time for prospecting for gold. I do not think that amount can possibly be expended in the manner proposed by the Minister for Works; I think that the £2,000 on the last Estimates was not nearly spent. The hon. gentleman, I think, might go beyond gold discovery, and give some reward for tin and other minerals. Discoveries of this kind are very valuable to the colony, and I should be glad to see some encouragement given in that direction.

Mr. ARCHER said: Mr. Speaker, — For persons with no practical experience in mining this is rather a difficult subject to speak on. I myself feel some diffidence in giving an opinion on the matter; but I think the debate, except with regard to part of what fell from the last speaker, has drifted entirely away from the purpose the hon. member for Townsville had in view when he brought this matter forward. I remember distinctly that he said he did not want to make this a rich or a poor man's question: he did not consider in any way whether it would assist one reef more than another; he simply wished to prove that in Queensland, as in other countries, there was gold at a greater depth than it is now mined for. He said he did not care who got the reward—whether it was the wealthiest company or the poorest man—so long as they satisfied the country, and, therefore, encouraged others to go to deeper levels than now for the discovery of gold. The hon. member for Townsville had also said that so far as experience and knowledge went, the opinion of the miners was that gold was not discoverable at great depths, and that private enterprise was not likely to sink deep mines. The Minister for Mines said that the plan proposed by the hon. member for Townsville would not enable the poor man to get any benefit from it, but the hon. member for Townsville says he meant it for the benefit of Queensland at large, and not for the benefit of the miners. The best way to find out whether there was payable gold at great depths would not be the best way to encourage poor men to sink. The best way would be to encourage wealthy companies who have already deep shafts, to expend money in sinking them deeper. It is said that there are large companies who had found gold at certain depths, and who by following down their reefs would pay for the sinking of the shafts, and thus, having attained the required depth, would claim the reward, although they had done nothing except to enrich themselves. But even if that were the case, the object would be fulfilled. It would show that there were deep-lying reefs in Queensland, and it would encourage others to look for them. That is the object of the motion, so far as I understand it. The hon. the Minister for Works has met the motion somewhat unfairly. He is anxious to second the member for Townsville in

encouraging deep mining, but his difficulty was that he could not see the best method for doing it. It is therefore necessary that the question should be fully debated by those practically acquainted with mining, so that we may secure the object in view—namely, the best method of expending the money in developing and encouraging deep mining. If that were kept in view hon. members would not care whether deep mining was proved profitable by wealthy companies or by poor men. The great thing is to prove that deep sinking will lead to gold reefs, and therefore be a constant source of wealth to the colony.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Mr. Speaker, —I regret that duties detained me elsewhere, and prevented me having the advantage of hearing the hon. member for Townsville submitting his motion, and the speech he made in support of it; as also the remarks of the hon. gentlemen who, I understand, have already addressed themselves to the subject. There can be but one opinion as to the motive which prompted the hon. gentleman to introduce this motion to the House. There can be no doubt that he is actuated by the sincerest desire to advance the prosperity of the great mining industry of the colony. And to the extent that he has sought to accomplish his object by this resolution he is to be heartily commended. I fear, however, that, while commending the hon. gentleman's excellent intention, I cannot see my way to support the resolution in the shape that it has assumed. There can be no doubt that it is of the greatest importance to the mining industry that deep sinking should be encouraged. I know that in the Charters Towers Gold Field it has been found that the deeper they sank the richer the stone they have obtained; and that in the opinion of many experts there, as well as in other parts of the colony, there are very rich reefs lying at considerable distances below the surface. But men who have the requisite skill, and energy, and enterprise for engaging in the attempt to discover these deep reefs are debarred, and absolutely prevented in many cases, by the amount of capital necessary for the work of sinking the shafts. There are many men, not only up there, but in other parts of the colony, who are perfectly willing to embark in enterprises for the discovery of deep reefs; but they like to be assured that they shall not engage in attempts that will absolutely ruin them. My opinion is, that if this motion were passed in its present form it would have the effect of giving great rewards to a few fortunate men. There are parts of the goldfields where men of large practical experience are fully assured that, by sinking in certain localities, they will strike gold reefs at certain depths, and it may be in their power to sink to those depths. And there may be other men elsewhere who, not having that certainty, have not the courage to sink deep shafts. I think it would be better if a system were devised by which persons who are anxious to test the quality of deep reefs were assisted by liberal grants from the Government on somewhat similar conditions to those that obtain in Victoria. I have ascertained that in Victoria it is the practice to assist persons engaged in deep sinking by giving them considerable amounts proportioned to their outlay—those amounts to be refunded to the Government in the event of those who sink deep shafts being successful. That is a reasonable way to encourage the mining industry. But it is a different thing when persons who, from no fault of their own, are not successful, should get nothing at all for their outlay and enterprise, while other persons, simply because they have had the good fortune to strike a reef at a certain depth and bring up fifty tons of payable quartz, should get the handsome reward of £5,000, in addition to the untold wealth that

lies before them. It would be no hardship to a successful miner, who was encouraged to proceed till he found a reef at a certain depth, to refund to the Government the amount they advanced, and which advance enabled him to make the discovery; and the unsuccessful but equally deserving miner would not be ruined by his enterprise. I am glad to know, from a conversation I have had on this subject with my hon. colleague the Minister for Works, that he has been before to-day, and is now, exceedingly anxious for the formulation of some scheme to assist the prosecution of deep sinking on our gold-mines. The hon. gentleman is fully alive to the importance of it, and is only anxious to know which is the best way to proceed. I understand that my hon. colleague in the representation of the Kennedy, has made a suggestion to the House that it would be a good thing if those who represent goldfields were to meet for consultation on the subject of what would be the best means to adopt. That is a very excellent suggestion, and I have not the slightest doubt that the Minister for Works would be very glad to give his cordial support to any well-considered scheme emanating from those hon. members. When I visited my constituents some twelve months ago this question of assisting persons to sink deep shafts was often spoken of, and I then expressed the opinion I have done now, that the best plan would be for the Government to contribute an amount in proportion to the expenditure incurred; such amount to be refunded in the event of success being achieved. Of course those who did not succeed would not be called upon to refund the money advanced by the Government. In this way enterprise would be considerably extended, and I do not think it would be much to be regretted, even if a rich company were to be successful in sinking the shaft. Whoever had the enterprise to undertake the work, whether rich or poor, let them have all the assistance the Government can afford; and if the rich company is successful in happening upon a payable reef at a great depth, the country would not be the loser, especially as that rich company would refund the money which had been advanced by the Government to assist the enterprise. If the hon. gentleman were to withdraw this resolution after hearing the expression of opinion upon it, and bring forward the subject at some future time, after consultation with the other members who represent mining interests, he would effectually serve the object which he had in view when he brought this resolution forward.

The Hon. R. B. SHERIDAN said: It is simply an act of justice on my part to correct a statement made by the hon. member for Townsville. I understood that hon. gentleman to say that the discoveries of gold in Queensland were by accident, and that he knew the best of them had been so discovered. I happen to know quite the reverse of that. When—what has since turned out to be of such incalculable worth—the Gympie Gold Field was discovered, it was to me that the discovery was reported, and I granted the discoverer his protection area, and reported the matter to the Government. I was also concerned in getting him his just reward. I allude to Mr. James Nash, who, after prospecting hundreds of miles, unassisted by anybody, but entirely through his own exertions and at his own expense, finally discovered Gympie. That discovery was made at a time when the colony was at its lowest ebb, and gave the turning point to its affairs, since which it has continued to progress in wealth up to the present time.

Mr. NORTON said: I think the hon. member for Maryborough has misunderstood the hon. member for Townsville. That hon. member did not say that all the goldfields of the colony had been discovered by accident, but that most

of them had been so discovered. He did not refer to any one mine in particular, and his statement had no connection with Gympie or any other particular goldfield. I am sure the hon. member for Townsville would be the last man in the House to detract from the credit which Gympie deserves for the assistance it gave to the colony at a time when assistance was most needed. I am glad to hear that the Minister for Mines is anxious to forward some well-considered scheme for the encouragement of deep sinking; and every hon. member will be glad to see such a scheme brought forward—whether he be a goldfields member or not—and give it every possible assistance. Had that been done earlier the hon. member for Townsville would have had no occasion to move his present motion, and that is the only scheme which the House has now before it. It appears to me that, in the objections raised to the motion, the old bugbear of the capitalist has been dragged out in a most extraordinary way. No one who knows anything about deep mining can possibly suppose that such a work could be undertaken by a poor man; and if it is not to be undertaken by capitalists it will have to be undertaken by the Government. The Government might undertake the work under the direction of a geologist, who would inform them where trials of that kind should be made with a chance of their proving successful. Reference was made just now to the damage which had been done to Gympie by the report of the geologist. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have a geologist in the colony whom, I think, no one can say anything against.

Mr. SMYTH: Only one.

Mr. NORTON: I am not saying we have more. I refer to Mr. Jack; and I say he is a man who, I think, from the reports he has made, has led to our placing an immense deal of credit and confidence in any statements he makes in regard to geological matters, and I am quite sure that if he had reported as another geologist is said to have done upon Gympie, his report would have been of a much more satisfactory nature. Therefore it is hardly fair that because one gentleman who represented himself as a good geologist made a mistake, that everyone who followed him should be abused. In reference to this matter one thing ought to be taken into consideration. There is already a sum on the Estimates of £5,000 towards the assistance of persons who like to go out to prospect for gold. That sort of work can be undertaken by poor men. Subscriptions are raised in order to enable them to go out, and those subscriptions are supplemented by Government assistance, and the result is that a considerable number may go out who would not be able to engage in any mining which entailed a very great expense. I would also point out that if this work is undertaken by capitalists, it is not they alone who will benefit by it. They do not do the work themselves, and if they succeed in finding gold in payable quantities others will go out and will open up fields of labour for other miners. It seems to me to be a mistake to be always dragging in this wretched capitalist, as if he was a man with no object on earth but to injure the country. It is impossible to work the mines of this colony without capital, and the very men who condemn capitalists are of that class themselves. The Minister for Works is very much given to decrying capitalists, but there is not in this House a richer man than he is. He is not afraid of being rich; and why should he be afraid of other men becoming so? The hon. member, if he has got a finger in the pie, does not mind in the least. We know him well, and we understand him by this time. I do not think the hon. member means what he says when he speaks against capitalists.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You say all this often enough in the *Courier*.

Mr. NORTON: I daresay that they do say it in the *Courier*, and I daresay they are quite right. I think the hon. member would much rather be a capitalist than a poor man. With regard to the motion, I cannot say I altogether agree with it, because it ought to be made applicable to all fields of the colony, and I am sure the hon. member for Townsville will be prepared to amend his motion in such a way as will make it applicable to the whole colony. One advantage might ensue from a motion of this kind. There has been an expression of opinion that the Government ought to provide diamond drills in order to test the country for gold, and I think that would lead to a number of companies and private individuals providing diamond drills for themselves if they found the operations successful, and in that way they would be able to sink for gold at great depths and obtain the Government reward. On the whole I think that the proposal of the hon. member is a very good one, and I am quite sure from what has fallen from hon. members that they think something of the kind would be very beneficial to the country. I believe everyone recognises the importance of the mining industry, and it is only a question of the proper way in which such a proposal as that made by the hon. member should be carried out. That is the only difficulty, I gather, from what has been said, and I am sure the hon. member for Townsville, if any suggestions are made, will be prepared to amend his motion so as to make it acceptable to every member of the House.

Mr. FRASER said: I cannot pretend to know much about mining. I have had a little experience of the sinking process connected with it as regards mining companies, and that is the extent to which my knowledge goes; but it has always been a matter of wonder to me why such distinguished preference should be given to the gold industry, and that all the other industries that are capable of being developed should not be encouraged. I can see no reason for it. It may be my obtuseness, but I cannot see anything that can entitle the gold-mining industry to a preference of this kind. I may be somewhat heterodox in this matter, and I should be glad to be enlightened. I have not the slightest doubt that, by processes of this kind, we should be able to establish a good many industries on a successful footing—industries which, it seems to me, would give abundance of employment to numbers of men. It seems to me, at all events, that these rewards should be offered for the discovery of all minerals, and I cannot see why this constant preference should be given to the gold mining industry. I am as anxious as anyone in this House to see the gold-mining industry flourish, but it is just as well to call attention to this feature of the question occasionally. Coming now to the proposal of the hon. member for Townsville, it would be, of course, presumption on my part to criticise it, but I do not think it is quite fair. The hon. member proposes to give £3,000 for the discovery of gold on the Hodgkinson at a depth of 540 feet; on the Palmer, at a depth of 570 feet; and on the Etheridge, at a depth of 517 feet. While, I presume, the object of giving a reward for deep sinking is to find out whether gold is to be found at such depths, I think that at Gympie and elsewhere it has been already proved; and what has been proved there in all probability may be said to exist in other places. The hon. gentleman has framed a series of differential depths for different goldfields. I do not think that is fair. It may be right that at Gympie and some of the older goldfields they have gone down deeper than in other places; but in cases of that

kind it is ten chances to one whether sinking to prove whether gold can be found at those depths will not be begun at the depth that is already attained. It may be undertaken by many capitalists, and will be in connection with the greater depth already attained. I think if a reward is to be offered at all, in the form in which the hon. member has put it, all the fields should be placed on an equal footing. Of course, I am not sufficiently conversant with the matter to offer an opinion as to what course should be taken; and I have noticed in the course of the discussion that those who are conversant with it hold diverse opinions as to the best mode of inducing parties to engage in this enterprise. I admit that it would be a great advantage to the colony if it could be proved that gold was to be found at much greater depths than have yet been tested; and judging from the nature of things I do not see why it should not be so. I think it is a fair conclusion that gold can be found at very much greater depths. The suggestion made by some hon. members, that the Government should give 10s. for every £1 spent, has some serious objections. I think it would encourage an extravagant and profitless mode of expending public money; and as to expecting the repayment of the money, I should like to know to what extent the refunds have been made in Victoria and elsewhere where the system is in force. I think the best plan would be something in the form the hon. member has put it, although, as I have said, there is an element of unfairness in the different depths which are stated.

Mr. PALMER said: Like the hon. member who has just spoken, I am not practically acquainted with gold-mining; but I feel compelled to take an interest in the question, because Etheridge—one of the oldest gold-reefing districts in the colony—is in the constituency I have the honour to represent. With reference to the argument used by the hon. member for South Brisbane, that he did not see why prizes should be offered for sinking to greater depths—he must know, or perhaps he has heard, that gold-mining is one of the most precarious callings in the colony, and one in which, where one man is successful, perhaps ten are unsuccessful; so that some inducement to carry on and extend the calling is not only very much needed, but will be thoroughly appreciated by the miners. The argument has been used that none but capitalists will reap benefit from this. I fail to see that that is a good argument, because I am quite certain the country will reap an indirect benefit. Working miners will be employed in working the mines, and they eventually will reap the reward of what the capitalists have done. The difference in the depths on the Northern and Southern fields is, I think, fully explained by the great difference in the price of stores, the rate of wages, and the charges for carriage. Some of the Southern fields are alongside railways; but in the North the facilities of carriage are far less. Etheridge, for instance, is over 300 miles inland, and the road is over rough country. I am quite certain that the difference in the depths has been well arranged by the hon. member. There may, of course, be many points in the motion which will meet with disapproval; but they may be amended. As far as the principle is concerned, I am quite in accord with the hon. member, and I believe in saying that I am speaking the sentiments of the miners I have the honour to represent.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: I do not intend to say much on this motion; but it strikes me that there are features in it that I should not like to see pass unnoticed. I think

that gold-mining deserves special encouragement, because it stands in a different category from any other industry in the colony. We must all admit that it is gold mining that has been the means of settling population in the Australian colonies and placing them in such a foremost position amongst civilised countries; and therefore I think it is an industry that we ought to regard as entitled to our most favourable consideration. The question then is how the encouragement can be most favourably and most equitably given. I believe the hon. gentleman has the development of the industry thoroughly at heart, and that he intends that it shall reassume those important dimensions it attained to in the past. Looking at the motion in that light, there are some features in it that are not altogether satisfactory or equitable. The motion proposes—

"1. That, for the purpose of encouraging deep mining on the goldfields of the colony, it shall be lawful for the Colonial Treasurer to pay the sums of £5,000 and £3,000, respectively, as a reward, upon the following conditions, namely:—

£5,000 to the miner or party of miners who shall be the first to obtain and report the getting of 50 tons of payable quartz on either the Gympie, Charters Towers, or Ravenswood Gold Fields."

It seems to me that the obtaining of fifty tons of payable quartz only is not a sufficient quantity to determine that a rich reef has been discovered at the depth mentioned, and I will therefore direct the attention of the hon. gentleman who introduced the motion to the point as to whether that amount of quartz would be sufficient to indicate that a substantial or large reef had been hit upon. That is one demerit of the motion. The second is as to what the hon. gentleman considers to be payable quartz. That, I take it, is a very uncertain term; without entering upon an explanation of what I consider to be payable quartz, which I do not think myself competent to do, I consider that the motion is extremely vague in that direction. Then, again, the third fault I find with it is this: that the hon. gentleman has based his depths at 500 feet deeper than the deepest shaft at present sunk upon the fields mentioned. Assuming that to be so—and I am informed that the greatest depth attained at Gympie, in the Smithfield reef, is 820 feet—if this mine is sunk 500 feet lower, to 1,320 feet, and they come upon a payable reef, from which 50 tons of quartz can be obtained, they will be entitled to the remuneration. I will point out that that reef is placed at a great advantage over all competitors, because it may be the only reef on the field that has attained that depth of 820 feet, and that the other reefs, in proportion as they are less deep, are handicapped as against the Smithfield reef, which has a considerably less amount of labour to undergo than the others. Therefore I think that the motion will be inequitable in its operations, and will encourage claims or shafts which have at present attained the maximum depth, as against those which are not so deep. I think, therefore, that while it is the duty of the Government to encourage gold-mining by all legitimate means—and I am thoroughly alive to the assistance the industry gave to the development of Australia, particularly in regard to Victoria, in the years 1853 and 1854, when the fields of Forest Creek, Castlemaine, Bendigo, and Ballarat were discovered, without which Victoria would not have attained the position she has during the last twenty-five years, of one of the greatest dependencies of the British Empire—at the same time, I think, it should be done upon some basis which will commend itself to the acceptance of the whole of the gold-mining community. Therefore, I am of opinion that the hon. gentleman—who is admitted to be an authority upon mining, and

who introduced the motion with the interests of the industry at heart—would do well if he would take the advice of those gentlemen who represent gold-mining constituencies, and withdraw this motion with the view of reintroducing it in such a shape as not to have the defects to which I object, especially that of giving such an advantage to those shafts which are at present sunk to the maximum depth, and would have consequently a great deal less work to do.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL: I think that the object of the hon. member for Townsville in introducing the motion is an excellent one; but I do not think he has introduced it in the most practical form; at the same time I daresay that a motion upon such a subject could hardly be introduced which would not meet with great variance of opinion. The object of the hon. gentleman seems to be to show that gold can be found at a certain depth, and that, by showing that, it would give an impetus to gold-mining, and induce people to spend their money and energy in sinking for that gold. There is no doubt that the importance of the gold-mining industry can hardly be overrated. I think that every hon. member in the House will agree with the hon. gentleman in saying that. Had it not been for the great gold discoveries in the colony, we should not be in the prosperous state we are. Some hon. gentlemen have taken exception to the conditions of the award to be given to the Northern goldfields—the Hodgkinson, Palmer, and Etheridge—and to that given to the Southern fields of Gympie, Charters Towers, and Ravenswood. It is well known that carrying out deep sinking in the Southern fields is not so arduous as upon the Northern fields, and for the reason pointed out by the hon. member for Burke, that the Southern fields have greater facilities for carriage and obtaining labour. On the Palmer, every foot over 500 feet costs twice as much as every foot over 1,000 feet at Gympie. It does not matter whether it is a company or an individual; but whoever undertakes deep sinking upon the Palmer must be ready to invest an enormous amount of capital. They would have to sink to 570 feet, or 300 feet beyond the deepest shaft there now, and would have to employ powerful machinery; and the apparent concession that is given to deep sinking upon the Palmer is not unwarrantable considering the circumstances of the field. With regard to the Hodgkinson, there is no doubt that that field has turned out an immense amount of gold; but under the present circumstances it is almost impossible for the men upon the field to develop its resources. It has been pointed out that deep sinking is precarious. It is not the same as any other industry; a man may go into the wool industry or the sugar industry, and know that he can calculate upon a certain return, which may be small; but in gold-mining it is altogether different. A man may go down and expend thousands of pounds, and not know whether he is going to get one farthing return. That is a difficulty that should not be overlooked. If hon. members keep it in view, they will not carp so much at the proposition before the House. Now, sir, two of those fields are in my constituency, and I have not the slightest doubt that if this small concession were granted to them it would give an impetus to the industry, which is languishing, not for want of capital but for want of means of employing that capital. The enormous rates of carriage paid on the Palmer and Hodgkinson at the present time are almost prohibitive. If carriage were light, if rations and machinery could be got easily, and if labour were nearly as cheap as in the Southern goldfields, no doubt capital would be invested. I have had several communications, from the Hodgkinson in

particular, asking that the Government would make some such concession as this. I would very heartily support the resolution, but there is one difficulty I can hardly get over. The Colonial Treasurer spoke with regard to the indefiniteness of the word "payable," but I think that is almost got over by making the warden of the goldfield the judge of whether quartz is payable. What I understand by the word "payable" is this—*that if a party of men spend £10,000 in reaching gold, and from that depth take out £15,000 worth, they are certainly £5,000 to the good, and that would be payable gold.* If the gold raised recoups them for the money expended in reaching it, and leaves a margin of profit, that I should consider payable gold. I think the matter might very fairly be left to the discretion of the warden in each case. Where I find the difficulty is this: A party of miners on the Palmer, for instance, would have to sink 570 feet from the surface before they were entitled to a penny reward. Suppose at 540 feet they came on a reef of payable gold, they might stop there. Every foot they sank might cost them £30 or £40, and they would be unlikely to go down the remaining distance. I think the resolution might be modified and a sliding scale introduced, so that if a person got payable gold at 540 feet he would receive a certain remuneration, and if at 590 feet a greater remuneration in proportion to the depth sunk. If that objection is removed, or even if it is not removed, I shall certainly support the resolution.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am sorry to say I have not the knack of talking on things I know nothing about. Though there is a gold-mine in my district I know nothing about the subject, and I am going to take the same line as the hon. Minister for Works—believe what the hon. member for Townsville said and support the motion.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: If no other hon. member is inclined to say anything, I will say a few words in reply. I must first say that I am very well pleased with the fairness of the criticism my motion has received from hon. members. Some of them certainly did well in saying that they did not know much about mining, because some of them certainly did not show much knowledge of the subject. I am sorry to say that the one who showed the least knowledge amongst all the critics was a gentleman who represents a very important goldfield—the hon. the Attorney-General. Even the hon. member for South Brisbane, although he deprecated any assistance being given to the mining interest above any other interest, seemed to know a little more about mining than the hon. the Attorney-General. I think he was wrong in deprecating the assistance given to mining, seeing, as the Colonial Treasurer pointed out, that gold mining has been the making of Australia. Had it not been for the discovery and working of gold-mines, the whole country would still be a vast cattle and sheep camp. The industry that has caused such a vast alteration in the face of the country deserves more consideration than any other industry. The Attorney-General seems to think that miners know where to find payable gold. Well, I wish they did. He seems to think that there are miners on Charters Towers who have nothing to do but sink and find payable gold. I know that some members besides myself have been trying that game for the last seven or eight years and have not succeeded yet. That is one of the problems practical miners and geologists have not yet solved—where to find gold. The objection raised by the Colonial Treasurer about the payableness of gold has been very fairly answered by the hon. member for Cook

(Mr. Campbell), who, though not a miner, seems to understand mining as much as if he were one. I suppose that comes from a long residence on goldfields. With regard to the depths, I tried to apportion them on the different fields in accordance with a return I got on the subject. I thought at first of putting each field by itself and letting the claims on one field compete with one another for the bonus. Then we should escape the jealousy between one field and another with regard to depths, and I think after all it would be the best plan. I thought, also, of putting particular depths only for Charters Towers and Gympie, seeing that they are in the high road of prosperity, and that companies there are not so backward in sinking as they have more faith in the character of their reefs. The other fields of the colony—those I have mentioned as well as those I have not mentioned—would then all be on the same footing. The way in which I drew the resolution was the plan I decided upon last. It may not be the best form, but I think every hon. member understands thoroughly that my motive in placing it on the paper was to prove that payable gold exists at a certain depth. That is the difficulty with many miners, especially in the Northern fields; they are uncertain. It is nothing to say that because payable gold has been found at 800 feet or 1,000 feet at Gympie it will also be found at the Palmer at the same depth, or on the Etheridge; because in some fields the reefs run out, and in others where the quartz reefs do not run out the gold runs out. Each field has its own peculiarity. Probably, therefore, as I first intended, the best plan would be to let each field have a bonus proportioned to it, and let the claims in that field compete with each other. I should very gladly have heard the opinion of the Premier on the subject. I have waited anxiously to hear what he would say after what his three colleagues have said. I thought the House was entitled to hear his opinion on the subject; but as he has not spoken I take it for granted that he is in accord with the spirit of the motion. It has been suggested by the hon. member for Kennedy that I should withdraw the motion and refer it to a conference of mining members; but seeing that there are so few mining members in the House, and that the mining members who have spoken do not agree with each other, I think it would scarcely be advisable to withdraw it with that object in view. It is quite possible I shall withdraw it for another object. But before coming to that, I wish to point out distinctly, that I may say I thoroughly understand the system as practised in Victoria. Some hon. members seemed to think that I had never heard of it, and knew nothing about it, and that it would be the best system for the encouragement of deep mining in Queensland. I must repeat that our fiscal system is entirely opposed to that of Victoria, and that the mining practice there is the outcome of the system of protection that is adopted to conciliate the miners and prevent them opposing the system of protection as applied to the other industries of the colony. When the miners began to find out that everything they drank, everything they wore, and everything they ate—that their tools, and powder even, were all highly taxed for the benefit of the other industries—they asked themselves what good protection had done them. And to bring them round the miners were treated the same as the other industries. A system of subsidising impecunious companies was adopted. If we are prepared to go in for protection wholesale, we may adopt the Victorian system; but unless we are we cannot adopt it. We cannot subsidise the miners in that way by sinking shafts for them unless we subsidise other industries. The system I have advocated is the system adopted

in all freetrade countries—namely, the giving of bonuses or rewards. The hon. member for Gympie said that the system had been tried at Adelong in New South Wales, and had been a failure. I know it was a failure, but that was not the fault of the system but of the people who had the working of it. There is a tradition among the miners that the quartz that was produced had not been obtained from the mines at the specified depth, but from other claims. That is a thing undoubtedly very hard to guard against; but I should suppose that if this system were adopted here the Government would take very good care to see that nothing of the kind was practised. Of course I know that it is quite possible to be done, and that is why it was a failure in New South Wales. As to the amount of quartz that should be produced, I am quite aware that I have mentioned a small amount in my resolution, but I am prepared to make it 200 tons, 300 tons, or 500 tons, if the House consider it necessary. It is not altogether the amount of quartz; it is the quality of the quartz which is to be the test. My motion says it must be payable quartz. That is a term which is well understood by miners, by every mining registrar, and commissioner, and I presume, as the resolution is one regarding miners, it would be interpreted as miners interpret it. As the Government have not opposed this motion, but seem to be in thorough accord with the spirit of it, and as they have already placed £5,000 on the Estimates for prospecting for gold, I am quite willing to trust the matter in their hands. The grant on the Estimates is for surface prospecting only, but I quite agree with the Minister for Works that that plan has hitherto been unsuccessful. I know of a good many parties which have gone out on the system by which the Government grant paid for their horses, tools, and firearms. But no good result ever came from them except in two cases—where they went out ostensibly to look for gold and found tin. Of course I had a strong moral certainty that they were going to look for tin. As I have said, the Government have shown a disposition to assist the mining interest, and as this £5,000 can only be expended on the system of £1 for £1, I am quite willing to trust the matter in their hands if I can get any assurance that they will expend a sum of £5,000 or £10,000 in trying a system like this—modified if they choose. I do not want it exactly like that which I have put here; but let it be put in such a shape as to induce capitalists to go in for it. Only capitalists can do it: ordinary working men cannot sink a shaft like that which is needed. Let the Government make regulations and offer bonuses to any company in the different fields which has obtained gold at certain depths—which the Government themselves may specify. If they do that I would be quite satisfied and withdraw the motion, as my object would be attained. My object has been simply to encourage the mining industry, because I can see the period of depression coming up. We are very prosperous just now in two of our goldfields—Gympie and Charters Towers—but the prosperity there has been caused by those companies which hon. gentlemen seemed to be afraid of. The prosperity has not been caused by small companies or individual miners. The companies at Charters Towers have been employing miners at day-wages: and that is the only form of mining that can pay nowadays. The old system of mining that obtained when I was a miner, and when other members of this House were miners, is wiped out. That system was only fossicking and gully-raking—it was not mining. I should like to hear something from the Premier, and I would then withdraw the motion.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, — I have listened with great interest to the debate, and with as much attention as I have been able. Not only this year, but in previous years, I have been anxious to see some way by which we could practically assist what may be called "prospecting downwards"; but I confess, whenever I have approached the subject, I have been met with very great difficulties, and I have never been able to come to a satisfactory conclusion in my own mind as to what is best to do. I have heard suggestions of various kinds. One of the best was that made by Warden Hodgkinson, an old miner of great experience. His proposal was to pay the first man who gets to a given depth; give a bonus, not sufficient to pay the cost of sinking, but sufficient to give substantial encouragement to a man to risk failure. I believe his proposal, made to the head of the department, was to offer a bonus of £1,000 to the first miner, or party of miners, who sank 500 feet on the Palmer. That seems to me the most satisfactory way. Of course I speak subject to correction; I have not been able to arrive at any definite conclusion on the matter, although the debate this evening will greatly help me in that direction. There is, of course, the chance that a man may sink 500 feet and find nothing, which would certainly not tend to encourage mining on the particular field. Our object should, of course, be to induce as many people as possible to sink to a considerable depth: but every scheme that has yet been suggested has some disadvantages. The hon. member for Kennedy (Mr. Lissner) mentioned a case where it is as certain as anything in mining can possibly be, that gold will be struck at a depth of 1,000 or 1,100 feet. Persons are prepared to sink that shaft, knowing that they will not touch gold until they reach that depth; in such a case it would not be encouraging mining to give them a bonus of £5,000. The Government will take the matter most anxiously into consideration. I think part of the £5,000 vote might very fairly be devoted to the encouragement of prospecting downward; and I would recommend the offer of any reasonable reward, even without first obtaining the sanction of Parliament; because I am sure they would cheerfully vote the amount when it was brought before them. I can give no further assurance than that. We shall endeavour to formulate the best possible scheme, and if the mining members will assist the Government with their suggestions, the Government will be only too glad to give effect to them, and to formulate the scheme in such a manner as will lead to success in the undertaking.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I am very glad to hear what the hon. gentleman has just said. The only objection to Mr. Hodgkinson's scheme is, as remarked by the Premier, that some men might get nothing; which would be a serious discouragement to the field. I know a field where men, who were anxious to sell their claims, were afraid to sink in case they should strike a "duffer." As to the objection of the member for Gympie about "greasing the fat pig," I should have no objection to "greasing the fat pig" if it would produce many other "fat pigs." I beg to withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

PHARMACY BILL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council to the effect that the Council did not insist on their disagreement to the amendment made by the Legislative Assembly in clause 5 of the Pharmacy Bill.

THE NEW IRELAND BOYS.

Mr. STEVENS, in moving—

That the House will, on Friday, the 12th instant, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of an address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed upon the Supplementary Estimates for 1884-5 the sum of £325, to reimburse William Ross, John Bird, Jessie Bird, and D. Louis, for the loss sustained by them in consequence of the Government returning to New Ireland, before the expiration of their term of service, certain islanders under engagement to the said persons—

said: In moving the motion standing in my name, I know I am labouring under a very great disadvantage, for the reason that at the present time anything connected with black labour is received with disfavour. However, I trust that when hon. members have heard the particulars of the case they will divest themselves of all sentiment in connection with it, and treat it on its merits. The history of the affair is this: One of the men named in the motion became the employer of nine New Ireland natives. They were brought here in a labour vessel, shipped under the supervision of a labour agent, received in Brisbane by the Immigration Agent, and by him passed on to one of those men. Having more of them than he needed, he transferred some of them to the other persons mentioned. The men duly took charge of the islanders and put them on board a cutter. The cutter arrived in due course at the Coomera River, and landed the islanders on the bank. Owing to the cutter arriving much sooner than she was expected, the employers of the natives were not on the spot to receive them. The men seemed perfectly quiet, were good-tempered, in good spirits, and enjoying themselves. It was thought by the captain that no harm would happen if the men were left on the bank till their employers turned up, and, wishing to take advantage of the tide, he left them there with no person in charge of them. Not far from where the islanders were camped there is a farm, and one of the persons on the farm fired a shot in order to kill a fowl. As soon as the islanders heard the report of a gun, no doubt from some unpleasant associations connected with the sound, they became very much alarmed, rushed into the river, and nothing more was seen of them for several days. The first place they turned up at was on the shores of Moreton Bay, where they were robbing the cane-fields to get something to eat. They were disturbed there, and crossed the Bay to Moreton Island. There, for want of food, they were nearly starved, and killed a horse, and ate a portion of it. The remains of the horse were found, and their tracks were followed up. They then left Moreton Island for another island in the Bay. These unfortunate men, terrified out of their lives, went from island to island in a half-starving condition, hunted by everyone they came near. The farmers were afraid of them, and in some instances fired at them, hearing they were going to rob their cottages. The police followed them, and after some weeks they were cornered somewhere near Cleveland, and taken prisoners. They were then put on, I think, Peel Island, and kept there for a short time. The employers came to Brisbane, and one or more of them went in the Government steamer to interview these men to see if they would return to their employment. The immigration officer attempted to talk to them, and after three-quarters of an hour he told the employers that the men declined to go back to their work, that they did not understand their agreements, that there was no agreement at all, and they did not know what they had been brought there for. Consequently the Government considered that the proper thing to do would be to return these

men to their island. It was said that they did not understand English, and that there was no one to interpret. Well, if that was the case, it was just as possible to get a "yes" from them as a "no." If they could not understand the nature of the agreement, it would be impossible to make them understand whether they should go back to work or not. However, the Government returned them to their island, and the employers thinking that it was rather unfair treatment, applied to the Government for compensation; but it was refused, and hence the action they have taken. The case of D. Louis is somewhat similar. He had four men indentured in the usual way; but when they heard of the desertion of the other men they deserted also, but were cleverly captured by two constables at Nerang, and were also returned home to their island without compensation. If those are the facts of the case—and I believe they are—I consider that the Government, through the action of the agent on board the schooner and the immigration agent, are liable to the employers for the actual money lost. I hope that hon. members will look at this case from a fair point of view; not take into consideration the question of black labour at all, but look at it as a case of justice between man and man; and if they have any doubt in their minds, will give the unfortunate farmers the benefit of the doubt. It is not absolute ruin to these men, but, being struggling farmers, the loss of £325 is a very serious one, and may throw them back in their operations for two or three years.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker.—This motion assumes that the persons mentioned in the motion have sustained a loss in consequence of the Government returning to New Ireland, before the expiration of their term of service, certain islanders under engagement to the said persons. Now, I shall state to the House the circumstances of the case, only some of which the hon. member has stated. To begin with, I distinctly affirm that those men were in no sense under engagement to the persons mentioned any more than I am at the present moment under engagement to the Emperor of Russia. There was no engagement, and nothing in the nature of an engagement. The facts are, that in September of last year a vessel called the "Jessie Kelly" came in from New Ireland with a number of New Irelanders on board. They were distributed among various places; some at Mourilyan Harbour and some in the Logan district. It became known before long that several of these men had escaped from a cutter which was conveying them to the Logan, and, as the hon. member says, they are supposed to have escaped in consequence of having heard a gun shot. Whether that reminded them of the circumstances under which they were recruited I do not know.

Mr. ARCHER: All savages are afraid of guns when they hear them for the first time.

The PREMIER: These men were, at any rate. Well, every hon. member has heard of what occurred when they escaped, and how they roamed about. At last they were found. They had killed cattle and horses, so that they did not starve, but they were subsequently brought to town. They were put for several weeks in the old gaol, and their employers came to see me. I think it must be twelve months ago. They represented that it was very hard upon them. They had paid the importers a large sum of money for passages for the islanders; and the men were engaged to them. I asked the so-called employers, "Did the men understand their agreement with you?" and they could not say that they did. I said, "You can see them and talk to them, and if they understand that there

is an agreement, I have not the slightest objection to their going with you." If they did not understand I could not give instructions to hand those men over to their power. Well, the employers let the matter stand for some time, in order that the men might pick up sufficient English to be able to express an opinion as to whether they would go back to service. This went on for some weeks, and the men were taken down to Peel Island, so that they might have the advantage of the salt air and water. The farmers went over to see them, but they could not make any impression upon them. The men had not the slightest idea of the nature of the agreement. I therefore directed an officer of the Immigration Department to go down with the farmers and see if the men really could understand anything. Well, sir, I have a report which I received in February last. The officer of the Immigration Department, when he went down, was warned by Mr. Hamilton that if the men saw him they would escape to the scrub. However, after Mr. Hamilton had explained that this officer belonged to the Government and would protect them, they seemed contented, and he was able to communicate with one of the men who appeared to be a chief. He ascertained through this chief that the boys did not want to go back to work; they wanted to go back to their island; and the chief said, "We no work; we die first."

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Clever fellow that!

MR. STEVENSON: He knew what he was about.

The PREMIER: I am glad to hear the hon. member say that, for it shows the light in which he regards this question; and I infer from what the hon. member said that if he had been in my place he would have made the boys go back to their work. Then the officer of the Immigration Department assured them that he would take care of them, and induced them to come up to town in the Kate. They were brought before the so-called employers, and some of them were identified; and the officer of the department asking them if they would go back to work, could only elicit the reply, "No, mego along you." That was the only information I could get on the subject. After they had been in the colony five months, of course they knew a little more English than when they came, and it was possible to communicate with them. Under these circumstances, I directed the return of the men to New Ireland on the first opportunity; and any honest man who knows what is right would say that that was the proper thing to do. The strongest point in favour of the hon. member's case is, no doubt, this: I have in my hand a document which purports to be a transfer of four of these men from Mr. Gilbert Burnett to Mr. Louis, one of the settlers mentioned here. It is a document in the form of a transfer under the Pacific Island Labourers Act; and it has four crosses, as if these men had signed it. Then there is a statement signed by the Inspector of Pacific Islanders to the effect that the different transfers were signed by all the parties thereto. The islanders, he said, "Knew no English. The said transfer is approved by me on behalf of the Government. I had no interpreter." This note is marked, "Registered by the Immigration Agent." Now, that document bears on the face of it a statement that the men did not know they were being transferred to Mr. Louis. They had no idea that they were engaged to him. No engagement of that kind, made by getting those men to put marks to it, could be called an agreement. Such an engagement might be characterised in the very harshest language. That is how the case presents itself

to the Government. These men came from New Ireland without the smallest notion of the engagement they are said to have entered into. On the face of the document I have in my hand, they did not understand their engagement, although the Polynesian Act was in force, and it was the duty of the Government officers to see that they did understand the nature of their engagements before they were allowed to go to their employers. What, then, was to be done under those circumstances? When the facts came to my knowledge, that these unfortunate men were wandering about Moreton Bay, having escaped from bondage, and that they did not understand anything about the nature of their engagements, there was nothing left for me to do than to direct that they should be taken back to their homes. Under these circumstances, are the Government bound to pay the passage money of these men from the South Seas? I presume that is what is meant. The money cannot be paid on any other ground. We surely cannot be expected to pay for any loss through a breach of agreement because these men would not work for their employers. I presume, therefore, that what is meant is the amount of passage money. The hon. member did not give the particulars of the amount; and the papers I have before me do not explain them. I have a letter from Mr. Louis, which the hon. member for Logan sent me, in which he states his case very fairly indeed; but I do not see where he specifies the amount. The Messrs. Bird, however, fix the amount at £225. At all events, I came to the conclusion that if anything is to be paid it will be the passage money. On whom, therefore, ought that loss to fall? It ought to fall on the shipowners who brought men here under those circumstances. They got the money from the persons who were going to employ the men, although the men did not understand the nature of their engagements. Are the Government to pay the passage money of men brought to the colony who do not understand the nature of their engagements? If so, then there will be a very large liability for the Government to undertake, I am sorry to say. These are not the only men who have been brought here without knowing the nature of their agreements; nor are they the only men whom the Government have sent away. If the Government, I say, are to undertake to pay the passage money in all such cases, then it will be a very large liability indeed, and one that I do not think the Government should accept. It ought to be paid by the people who brought the men here. When men are brought here without knowing the nature of their engagements, it is nothing but slavery, and I do not think, therefore, it is for the Government to pay compensation for that. I am not prepared to recognise any such claim. I do not think anything has been done to create a vested right in wrongdoing. The persons who got the money in this improper manner are those who ought to refund it. I am, therefore, unable to support the motion of the hon. member. At the same time, I to some extent sympathise with the unfortunate claimants, who, while not altogether free from blame, are, at all events, much freer than those who got the men to come here.

MR. STEVENSON said: I think, from what has fallen from the Premier, that those men did understand the nature of their agreements, although the hon. gentleman tried to make out that they did not. They seemed to understand very well when this man went to them from the Immigration Office; they seemed to have known English then first-rate. I should like to know whether it is not a fact that there is a Government agent on board all these boats, and whether

these men did not understand the nature of their agreements before they came to this colony. Did not these men come to the colony under the sanction of the Government and the Government agent? The captain of the vessel has not to see whether they understand the agreements. The Government agent is the man to do that; and therefore the Government sanctioned the men coming here, and sanctioned the agreements being made. If the men did not understand the agreements in the first instance, why did they come down to the plantations? I suppose they were not dragged down there. I believe the immigration officers sanctioned the whole thing; they witnessed the marks these men put to these agreements. The farmers, therefore, were not to blame in engaging these men. If the men did not understand their agreements, and it was patent to the officials in the office that they did not understand them, the boys ought to have been returned to the ship at once, and the captain made to take them back there and then, and prevent the farmers from paying the passage money. The Premier has no right to tell us that the whole thing is a farce about the men understanding their agreements, and that there was no agreement at all. So far as the farmers were concerned there was an agreement, and that agreement was with the Government. The transactions were sanctioned by the officers in the Immigration Office, and, therefore, the Government were responsible to those farmers. I have no doubt that if those boys had not been interfered with by the Immigration Agent they would have returned to their work without any trouble, if a little care had been taken of them. Those boys understood their agreement thoroughly; and I cannot understand how the Premier can make out that the owners of the ship are the men that the farmers have to look to for redress. The Government officials ought to be responsible; and if these men have suffered any loss the Government ought to reimburse them, as they prevented the islanders going to their work. It is clearly shown by the Premier himself that the boys were not so ignorant as he makes them out to be. They evidently understood English when it suited them to do so; but something happened which made them run away, and they were supported in their action by the Government, and preferred to go back to their islands. I cannot see how the farmers can have any redress unless they get it from the Government, who must be responsible for the action of their agents.

Mr. BLACK: I do not think the hon. Premier, in commenting upon the motion, has acted in the straightforward way that a gentleman of his legal training ought to do. There is no doubt that this is a question upon which there may be serious differences of opinion throughout the country. What we have to consider now is that so long as the Polynesian Labourers Act remains upon the Statute-book it will be the duty of the Government to see that it is properly enforced, and that all the regulations connected with it are properly carried out. It is necessary to point out the conditions upon which this labour is generally obtained, and what precautions the Government very properly take to prevent that labour being improperly obtained, and also what security the employer is supposed to have. Before any ship is allowed to go down to the islands every shipowner is obliged to enter into a bond of £500 that he will not in any way connive at kidnapping—that he will do his best to conform to the regulations of the Act; and the Government hold that bond as security. In order further to protect the employer, and also in the interest of the natives, a Government agent is sent down by the Government. He is virtually the servant of the Government—their employe

—and the Government, to a certain extent, are responsible for his actions in that service. The ship returns, and before the employer can obtain any labour, the immigration agent has to satisfy himself that the men have been properly obtained; and I think I am perfectly right in saying that no labourer is allowed to leave the ship until a certificate to that effect has been obtained. The consequence is, that any employer having labour upon the ship is supposed to be guaranteed that the labour he gets has been properly obtained, and that the Government have, from the beginning to the end of that voyage, exercised all due care and supervision to see that no malpractice has occurred. The case the hon. member for Logan referred to is this: that the employers, acting upon the full belief that the Government had adopted the proper precautions, and had guaranteed them that that labour was properly obtained, came forward and took charge of these boys. I maintain that the Government are responsible for the acts of their agents. The hon. Premier said, "Who is to pay this?" The hon. gentleman admitted the injustice, and I think that every hon. member in the House will admit that no employer would willingly connive at any of these malpractices. He pays a capitation fee of 30s. per head on every labourer he employs, which is of itself a guarantee that the Government will see that the labour is properly obtained. I maintain that the Government are responsible for taking this labour away. It is not a question of who should pay the money. The Government undoubtedly should see that these employers are refunded, and their remedy is to enforce the bond. I will point out what that bond is, because that is a question of very considerable interest to a large section of the country; and I maintain that if employers are not to have some protection from the Government, then the Government have no right to demand the capitation fee of 30s. per head, which is paid to ensure that the labour will be properly recruited under the superintendence of the Government officer. Now, sir, this is the bond that the shipmaster enters into, and it is undoubtedly intended not only to prevent kidnapping, but also as a guarantee to the employer of labour. No employer would dream of getting labour if he were made personally responsible for the neglect of the shipmaster or Government agent:—

"Whereas by the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880, it is amongst other things enacted that all masters of vessels proceeding to the Pacific Islands in order to obtain labourers therefrom shall enter into a bond with two sufficient sureties for the prevention of kidnapping, and for the due observance of the requirements of the said recited Act. Now the condition of this obligation is such that if the above bounden master of the ship, about to proceed to the Pacific Islands to procure islanders, faithfully observes the requirements of the said recited Act, and the conditions of the license to be granted to the said ship under his application accompanying these presents, and satisfies the Government of Queensland through its officer duly appointed for the purpose that no kidnapping was allowed, countenanced, or connived at, then this obligation to be void, otherwise to remain in full force and virtue."

The Government are by this bond protected against claims of this sort, otherwise what is the use of the bond? It is the duty of the Government to enforce the bond and protect the innocent employer. If the employer had contravened the regulations in any way, he should be made to suffer; but he is not in any way guilty. He engaged the labour upon the certificate of the Immigration Agent that it had been properly recruited, and the Immigration Agent was fortified in giving that certificate by the certificate of the agent of the Government. The Act provides that, where labour is improperly obtained, the Government shall at once enforce the bond, in

order to protect the employer, who is a perfectly innocent party in the transaction. That would be an equitable reading of the Act, and I think I am right in saying it is the legal interpretation of it. I do not think it is justifiable for the Premier, because of his known antipathy to this description of labour, to interpret the Act so as to inflict a very serious injustice upon innocent parties.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He has an antipathy to slavery.

Mr. BLACK: He is quite right to have an antipathy to slavery. I have an antipathy to slavery, and so I hope has every hon. member in the House; but I distinguish between justice and injustice; and I maintain that so long as the Government send down an agent to supervise this traffic they are responsible for his acts. When the Act distinctly provides a remedy for malpractice, it is the duty of the Government to enforce it, and not visit their antipathy on innocent people as in the present case.

Mr. ISAMBERT said: Mr. Speaker,—The whole proceedings in connection with the labour trade are exactly parallel with the administration of our land laws in the past. If the first Land Act had been honestly administered in the spirit in which its framers intended it should be administered, perhaps it would have been sufficient at the present time; but the whole administration of our land laws has been a series of contrivances to defraud the public of the land. The very same practice has been carried out with regard to the kanaka trade. It is simply slavery. Antipathy to slavery! That is what some hon. members profess. Yes, antipathy to being found out. Is it not an open secret that whenever a Government agent on one of these slavers tried to make a statement before the immigration agent he was at once silenced, and his name was "Walker"? That was the reason no case could be investigated. When irregularities were reported, the Immigration Agent went, and he came back, and that was the end of it. The Immigration Agent innocent! The same kind of innocence attached to the head of the Government; and the same kind of innocence is partaken of by all those connected with the whole trade. Innocent! Antipathy to slavery! I think the best thing we could do next session would be to appoint a committee to examine the immigration agents; it would throw a peculiar light on the whole transaction. The Government of those days were as guilty as anyone; and perhaps if they were judged by their acts they would fare just as badly as the men who are now condemned.

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to say a word or two on the subject. I think everyone who has listened to the Premier must be satisfied that these men from New Ireland certainly did not understand the nature of their agreement, therefore the Government were perfectly justified in sending them back to their island. But, sir, I am inclined to think that very few of the Polynesians indeed do understand the nature of their agreement. Nine out of ten, or at all events the greater number of them, have no proper comprehension at all of the nature of their agreement. This is one of the rightful evils of the system. The men are procured improperly in a great number of cases; sometimes they are purchased from their chiefs, sometimes kidnapped. If the Government sent back all who did not understand the nature of their agreements, the difficulty would be to find means to send so many back. Would it be proper for the Government to incur the expense of doing that? Perhaps not. But in this case I do think it would be a hardship for the employers to bear the loss. In

the first place they employed these men in good faith: they paid the price of the slaves—some £25 or less—as an article of merchandise guaranteed by the Government. These men were procured under a system which was sanctioned by the law of the land: the Government officer went with the ship; the owners of the ship gave a bond to the Government that they would be procured in good faith, and should understand the nature of their agreement; and I do not think that the loss should fall on the employers. I am inclined to take the view that was presented by the hon. member for Mackay—that the remedy the Government has is to enforce the bond given by the shipowners. I would have no mercy on those men whatever. At all events, I do think the men were guaranteed articles of merchandise, and were purchased by the farmers at a fair price and in good faith. The Government were perfectly right in sending them back; at the same time, I believe in making the shipowners pay. I have no sympathy with the black labour, but I do feel some sympathy with the farmers.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It seems to me that several hon. members have been led astray on account of the farmers having been the employers of these islanders. The question that is submitted to us to-night is one of very large scope, and will have a very serious effect upon the Treasury if the motion of the hon. member for Logan be affirmed. In fact, it resolves itself into this—that the country will have to pay the passage and the return passage of all the islanders. I think the Government were right in returning the islanders; and that the claim for their services ought to have been preferred by the employers against the importers. The hon. member, before coming to the Government, should have shown that the suppliants had failed to obtain redress, after application, from the importers who primarily were the parties to blame. I am averse to give my vote for relief to the suppliants, and thereby establish a precedent which must result in the payment of the passage money and return passage money of all the islanders who have come here.

Mr. STEVENS: In reply to the hon. gentleman I would say that it is very little use for the employers to apply to the shipowners, for they naturally shelter themselves under the certificate which they have got from the Government agent. That will protect them at once. I pointed out, when I introduced the motion, that I felt sure the subject would be surrounded by a great deal of sentiment. And so it has been in the case of almost every speaker except the hon. member for South Brisbane. He evidently treated the case in a fair and impartial way and judged it on its merits; and I hope when I go to a division other hon. members will treat it as fairly as he has done. The Government, by means of its agent, allowed employers to take these islanders away on the assurance that they had been obtained properly; that they were servants in every sense of the word; that they had been passed by the ship's agent and passed by the Inspector of Polynesians at the Immigration Office. I have a certificate signed by Mr. Horrocks, who states that the men did not know the nature of the agreement; but at the same time he handed them over to the employers. If the men did not understand the nature of the agreement Mr. Horrocks had no right to hand them over. But having handed them over to the employers the Government became at once responsible. Otherwise, what is the use of the Government having an agent? If they are not responsible for their agent, one would decline to deal with that agent. If the Government knew—as they evidently did know by their own documents—that these men did not understand the

nature of the agreement they should have enforced the bond from the shipowners, and then we should have had the money to fall back on. There is no doubt that the bond was meant for that purpose. What was the use of its being introduced into the Act, unless for the special purpose of being enforced? The Government say they are not responsible for their agents; and the hon. member, Mr. Isambert, allowed his feelings to overcome him, and became very violent on this subject. It is not very long ago since the Government acknowledged that they were responsible for their agents, by paying the German Government £500. But here is where the difference comes in. In the one case it is the powerful German Government, and in the other it is only four hard-working farmers. The German Government had only to put in a claim and they at once got twice as much as they asked; but these farmers try every means in their power to obtain redress and they are treated almost with scorn. All the sentiment in the world cannot get over that. It is a hard fact. The man who destroyed the property was a Government Polynesian Agent, and the Government recognised the claim at once, without making any inquiry as to whether it was a fair one or not.

The PREMIER: Did you ever read the papers?

Mr. STEVENS: Yes.

The PREMIER: Then you will see that there was a full inquiry made through Mr. Romilly.

Mr. STEVENS: The documents show that there was no inquiry actually made by this Government. They took for granted the first information that reached them.

The PREMIER: No; the information was got by Mr. Romilly.

Mr. STEVENS: It has been proved since that the property damaged was not worth more than £300.

The PREMIER: Read the papers, and you will see that it was worth more.

Mr. STEVENS: The public Press is a free one—

The PREMIER: And a stupid one, too, sometimes.

Mr. STEVENS: But for the public Press hon. members and the public generally would have remained under the impression that £500 was a fair amount to be paid.

The PREMIER: But for the misrepresentations of the public Press they would have been of that opinion now.

Mr. STEVENS: I object to be interrupted in this way. It is no laughing matter to those unfortunate farmers. I hope hon. members will divest their minds of every particle of sentiment, and take the whole evidence as it has been put before them by me and by the Premier. That trip of the "Kate" to Peel Island, with the Government officer and the farmers, was as great a farce as ever was enacted in Queensland. The officer took the men some distance from the farmers, and remained with them for three-quarters of an hour. No doubt that was sufficient to drill into the one intelligent nature the words, "I would sooner die than go to work."

The PREMIER: Nonsense!

Mr. STEVENS: It is strange that those savages should pick up even a smattering of English in so short a time. Certainly they were five months in the colony, but for the greatest part of the time they were afraid to look at a

white man; and yet after three-quarters of an hour with the immigration officer, one of them was able to use the words I have mentioned. Those farmers had nothing to do with introducing the islanders into the colony, and the Government, by the acts of their agents, are liable for the expenses those men were put to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have before me the accounts sent in by those men, and hon. members will be rather amused to hear the details. The first item is four boys at £25 a head, £100; twelve months' interest at 10 per cent., £10; 47 days searching for the boys, at 10s. per day, £23 10s.; compensation, through boys breaking their indentures, £25. Does the hon. member know what he is asking for?

Mr. STEVENS: I am not asking for that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then the next item reads: Three boys at £25 per head, £75; 12 months' interest at 10 per cent., £7 10s.; 26 days searching for boys, at 10s. per day, £13; compensation, £18 15s. The next item is: Two boys at £25 each, £50; twelve months' interest at 10 per cent. £5; 27 days looking for boys, at 10s. per day, £13 10s.; compensation, £12 10s. The hon. member can hardly have known what he was asking for when he brought forward his motion.

Mr. STEVENS: I am not asking for anything of the kind. The amount I ask for is simply the actual cost of the islanders to their employers. Hon. members seem inclined to ridicule the thing, but if they were in the position of those struggling farmers they would not look upon it as a joke.

Question put.

The House divided:—

AYES, 12.

Messrs. Chubb, Jordan, Stevens, Lalor, T. Campbell, Smyth, Stevenson, Bailey, Black, Jessop, J. Campbell, and Palmer.

NOES, 12.

Messrs. Griffith, Dutton, Buckland, Aland, Mellor, Midgley, White, Isambert, Rutledge, Dickson, Miles, and Fraser.

The SPEAKER: The votes being equal, it becomes my duty to give a casting vote, and as the motion is one for going into committee, where the matter will receive further consideration, I give my vote with the "Ayes," and the question is therefore resolved in the affirmative.

SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY RETURNS.

Mr. JESSOP, in moving—

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

1. The number of passengers carried by the Southern and Western Railway from Brisbane to Mitchell, inclusive of the intermediate stations west of Toowoomba, from 1st January to 31st October, 1884.

2. The number of passengers carried by the same railway from Brisbane to Stanthorpe, particularising the number from Toowoomba to Warwick and Stanthorpe, from 1st January to 31st October, 1884.

3. A similar Return, showing the goods and stock traffic to and from Mitchell and Brisbane, and all intermediate stations west of Highfields, from 1st January to 31st October, 1884.

4. A similar Return, showing the goods and stock traffic to and from Brisbane, Warwick, and Stanthorpe, from 1st January to 31st October, 1884.

—said: I thought this motion would have gone as a formal one. My reason for bringing the matter forward is to get a return so that the House may know on which lines there is the most traffic. The Loan Estimates will come on in a short time, and it is right that we should have this information so that we may know whether we shall be justified in voting for the construction of all the lines mentioned on the Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Has the hon. member any idea of the labour involved in preparing this return? If the motion is carried the information certainly cannot be supplied during this session. The Commissioner for Railways asked me to consult with the hon. member as to what he really does want, because if the return is prepared in the shape asked for it will involve such an amount of labour that it cannot be supplied this session. If the hon. member wants to know the traffic between Brisbane and Mitchell, I can let him have that information easily enough, but he wants to know the traffic between all the intermediate stations. If he will modify his motion I shall be very glad to supply any reasonable amount of information.

Mr. ALAND said: I think if the hon. member can see his way clear to modify or alter this motion it would be well, because I know from a conversation I had with the Commissioner for Railways that this return will be a very costly one both as regards time and money. I think I know what the hon. member wants to get. He wishes to know what is the traffic from Brisbane to Warwick, and Brisbane westward to the Mitchell. Well, I think he could get a return not quite so elaborate as the one asked for, and one which would suit his purpose equally well. I am sure if the hon. member modified his motion, and moved it on Monday or Tuesday, it would go as formal. I would like to see as good a return as possible, but, knowing the amount of time it would take to prepare such a return as the hon. member has moved for, I think it would be better to ask for a more simple one.

Mr. STEVENSON said: This is a return that would give a good deal of information; but I fancy that a return showing the revenue, instead of the passenger and goods traffic, would answer the purpose of the hon. member equally well. It would not be difficult to prepare such a return, because the earnings are published weekly.

Mr. JESSOP, in reply, said: My object in moving for this return was, as I have already said, to let the House and the country know the amount of traffic on the two lines; comparing the Western line with the one from Warwick to Brisbane; and I am surprised that the Minister for Works did not let the motion go as formal when it was first brought on, so that the information might now be laid before the House. It is all very well for the Minister for Works to say that it cannot be done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not say it could not be done. It can be done.

Mr. JESSOP: The hon. gentleman said it would take a lot of time and money; but I consider that the information to be obtained by that expenditure of time and money will be valuable, and I fancy that the object of the hon. gentleman is to burk information on the subject. He is afraid it will be like a return called for by his hon. colleague (Mr. Kates) in regard to money received for land. When that return was laid on the table it was found that the amount received for land at Dalby was considerably in excess of that received at Warwick; though it was expected that the return would place Dalby in an insignificant position. I think the Minister for Works knows as well as I do that the Warwick returns would be very much smaller than the returns for the Western line. That was my reason for bringing the motion forward. When the Loan Estimates come on, I want to show that the Warwick line has not the traffic to warrant the proposed expenditure. Anybody moving for a return must have some object, and

I am not afraid to admit the object I have. However, as it appears to be the wish of the House, I will withdraw my motion for the present, and bring it forward in another form.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: I have no intention whatever to burk returns. If I wished to do so, I could do it in another way, and the hon. member would know nothing about it. I only explained that the return could not be prepared this session.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

The House adjourned at five minutes to 10 o'clock.