

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 12 DECEMBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 12 December, 1884.

Question.—Formal Motion.—Gympie Gold Field—Gratuity to Mr. Nash.—Message from the Legislative Council.—Defence Bill.—Reduction of Waterworks Loan Debts of Ipswich, Toowoomba, and Maryborough.—Gratuity to Parliamentary Librarian.—Order of Business.—Bundaberg Gas and Coke Company (Limited) Bill.—committee.—The New Ireland Boys.—Maryborough and Urangan Railway Bill.—consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendments.

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

QUESTION.

Mr. BUCKLAND asked the Minister for Works—

Whether it is the intention of the Government to open the Logan Branch Railway line before the bridge over the Logan River is completed?—and, if so, at what date?

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

The matter is at present under consideration.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to :—

By Mr. FERGUSON—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, copies of the contract for, and of all correspondence connected with, the proposed lighting of the Parliamentary Buildings by electricity.

GYMPIE GOLD FIELD—GRATUITY TO MR. JAMES NASH.

Mr. SMYTH, in moving—

That this House will, at its next sitting, 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 on the Supplementary Estimates for 1884-5 the sum of £1,000, as a further recognition of the services rendered to this colony by Mr. James Nash, in discovering the Gympie Gold Field—

said : In speaking to this motion, asking for an additional £1,000 to be given to Mr. James Nash, I would like to state my reasons for putting the motion on the paper and bringing it forward in this House. I hold in my hand a petition signed by 439 residents of Gympie, Wide Bay, and Maryborough, asking that £1,000 be granted to Mr. Nash, in addition to the £1,000 he has already received, but I have been informed by members of this House that according to the 202nd Standing Order such petition would be informal—asking, as it does, for a money vote. I have therefore brought this matter forward in the shape of a resolution. The claim of Mr. Nash—and it is a claim similar to many that have been brought before the House—is, I think, at least equal to the claims of those persons whom I notice have been granted sums of money for past services or for the services of their relatives. The position Mr. Nash stands in is this: In the year 1867 the Government advertised in the *Government Gazette* that they were prepared to give £3,000 reward for the discovery of a payable goldfield that would support 3,000 persons for the space of six months. The last *Gazette* this appeared in was the *Gazette* of the 28th January, 1867. In the *Gazette* of the 2nd February, 1867, an alteration was made, when a reward of £5,000 was offered for the discovery of a payable goldfield; but it was allotted in various sums, according to the distance of the field from the nearest gold workings, and the population it would support. The greatest award in this case was £1,000 “for the discovery of a goldfield, distant more than five miles from the nearest gold workings, and on which there shall be employed within six months after the report

of the discovery, not less than 500 men.” If Mr. Nash had discovered the Gympie Gold Field nine months earlier than he did, in January, he would have been entitled to the reward of £3,000. He discovered a goldfield which I am sure has never maintained annually less than 5,000 persons for the last seventeen years. At one time there were as many as 20,000 people on the field, but I am sure the average for the last seventeen years has not been less than 5,000. But the Government having altered the conditions of award he became only entitled to the £1,000 offered for the discovery of a goldfield that would support 500 men for six months. Considering the importance of Mr. Nash's discovery, I think he is entitled to some further consideration. Let us see, taking two years back, what the revenue from the Gympie Gold Field has been. The business licenses from various sources for the year 1882 amounted to £3,225, and for 1883 they gave a revenue of £2,984. In the year 1882 there were 1,571 miners' rights taken out on that field, and in 1883, 1,511 miners' rights were taken out, or more than on any other goldfield in the colony last year. The mining leases held last year were 116, with an area of 928 acres, or an average of 8 acres to each lease; and returning a revenue to the colony of £928 a year, £1 a year being paid per acre per year for a mining lease. We also find that the return of gold from that goldfield since it has been discovered has amounted to about 1,050,000 ozs. I cannot say what amount has got into private hands, but we know that more than 1,000,000 ozs. have been produced, and I do not think that more than £50,000 worth of gold has been taken out of the colony. It has nearly all been retained and spent in the colony. Many of the miners have gone into business in the towns or become interested in sugar plantations, in grazing and various other occupations, and have spent their money in the colony. Many hon. members here well know what was the position of the colony when this goldfield was first discovered. In 1867 the colony was almost bankrupt. I was not here myself at the time, but old residents have informed me that when Nash discovered Gympie Queensland was almost bankrupt, and that his discovery put Queensland once more on her feet, as it were. Between four and five months after the discovery of the goldfield, from 25,000 to 30,000 people came to Queensland from New South Wales, Victoria, New Zealand, and other colonies. The consequence of a large number of people coming here from fields which were turning out well at the time in New South Wales and New Zealand was that a large amount of money was brought into the colony. The ships also coming here at the time were crowded with people. Ever since the discovery made by Nash the colony has prospered and progressed. The miners from Gympie spread all over the colony; some of them discovered goldfields in the North, and these discoveries have been the means of establishing thriving coast towns; and there can be no doubt that towns like Maryborough and Townsville owe their establishment and progress to the discovery of mining fields at their back. Mr. Nash got the £1,000 reward offered at the time. He has written to me stating that he wants the balance due to him. After looking at the *Government Gazette* in which the reward was offered I may say I cannot find that any balance is due to him, but I consider that the services which Nash has done to this colony by his discovery of the Gympie Gold Field entitle him to some further consideration—to more consideration than many other persons who have received grants of £1,000. I do not consider that I have got a very strong case to make a

claim—in fact it is not a claim I make at all—it is an appeal, as it were, to the members of this House and to the people of the colony. On the Gympie Gold Fields at present we have 165 head of stampers working, and forty winding engines. Gympie is not a mushroom place—a place where a little alluvial gold is got, and soon deserted again. It is a mining township in which the people are thoroughly settled down, and likely to be for a great number of years. Townships like Charters Towers and Gympie I look upon as quite as permanent as places like Brisbane, Maryborough, and Rockhampton. I therefore appeal to the good sense of the House as to whether Mr. Nash is not entitled to some consideration from the importance of his discovery, which delivered Queensland from a bankrupt condition and placed her in the way of progress and prosperity. I ask this House to take the case into consideration, and recognise the services which Mr. Nash has rendered to the colony by his discovery of the Gympie Gold Field. I now beg to move the motion standing in my name.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—No one will deny that the discovery of the Gympie Gold Field has been of very great advantage to the colony. I remember very well that at that time the colony was in a very low condition indeed. The finances of the colony were so low in 1866 that I think there was not as much money in the Treasury as would meet a cheque for £8. No doubt the discovery of Gympie gave a great impetus to trade; in fact, greatly helped us out of our difficulty. The hon. member for Gympie has not stated that Mr. Nash is in very straitened circumstances. I remember very well, that some time after the discovery of Gympie, he was reported to be very well off and represented to be worth some £20,000; whether he is now in straitened circumstances or not I do not know, and I should like to know what cause or necessity the hon. member advances as a reason for asking for this £1,000. Mr. Nash has already received £1,000. Whether that was a sufficient reward or not I do not know; but he also became the possessor of a very large prospector's claim. He may perhaps have been unfortunate in business circumstances, or lost money through speculation. I may say there is now a vacancy that may suit him—that of powder magazine keeper. If he is satisfied with that position I think it would give him a little assistance, provided he is competent to be put in charge of it. I am not quite certain—and I do not like to state anything if it is not correct—but I am told that Mr. Nash is intemperate in his habits. I should not like to make such a statement from hearsay; but I have been told that. I know there is a vacancy to take charge of the powder magazine at Gympie, and I thought it might suit him; but after making inquiries I am rather doubtful whether he is suited for the position. I am not sure if he was put in possession of £1,000 whether he or the publicans would get the most benefit from it. At all events, I think the Government are bound to oppose the motion.

Mr. MELLOR said: I should like to say a word or two on the motion. I know the circumstances of the case and the circumstances of Mr. Nash. No doubt what has been advanced by the hon. member for Gympie—with regard to the discovery of Gympie being a great benefit to the colony—is quite correct; the discovery was very opportune. I do not think anything has occurred either before or after that has been of greater importance to the colony; and I think hon. members will admit that Gympie has to a great extent been the saviour of Queensland. The permanence of the place

has been pretty well established: instead of degenerating it has become far more prosperous. Of course at one time things were in a depressed condition, because we thought we could not get gold at the deeper levels as on some of the gold-fields. But the prosperity of the field has kept up, and I believe that it is now only in its infancy, and that it will be of greater importance to the colony in the future, even, than it has been in the past. I do not think, therefore, that what the hon. member has asked for the prospector is too much—that is, a reward of another £1,000. It has been suggested by the Minister for Works that the Government might give him a situation. I know that Mr. Nash is in needy circumstances. Of course the discovery of Gympie was a great benefit to him as well as to the colony; but he has since been unfortunate, and at the present time, as I say, he is in needy circumstances, and it will be a great benefit to himself and his family if he can receive some assistance. I should be glad if the motion were adopted, because I am sure it would not only be doing justice to a man who deserves it, but the country is entitled to pay it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: I do not know what Mr. Nash's opinion of this motion may be, but I do not think he will thank his friends for the way they have advocated his case. The plain fact of the matter is that Mr. Nash was acknowledged to be the discoverer of the Gympie Gold Field, and was rewarded by the colony to the extent of £1,000. Not one word has been said as to why that reward should be further extended; but the Minister for Works said that if we were to give him the money it is doubtful whether he or the publicans would benefit most. I think there is one phase of the matter which has been overlooked. What about the rich miners of Gympie who have benefited by this goldfield? Cannot they put their hands into their pockets and help the man? If they cannot give him money, cannot they try to redeem him from the courses he appears to have got into? I think that ought to have been done before bringing the matter before the House in this way. Of all the suggestions I ever heard, the one made by the Minister for Works is the most ridiculous. If we cannot trust the man with £1,000 because the publicans will get it, how can we trust him to take charge of a powder magazine? If the Government have made up their minds to give him a billet as a matter of business, let them at all events consider the impropriety of the inhabitants of Gympie being compromised to the extent suggested by the Minister for Works.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: I am sure the proposal of my hon. colleague was suggested by the kindest feelings and the best motives.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: To the inhabitants of Gympie?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Although it may not be wise to entrust Mr. Nash with £1,000, the possession of which might lead to disastrous consequences for a time, yet, if impressed with the responsibility of office, he might become a safe powder magazine keeper. I have no doubt my hon. friend will fully satisfy himself of his fitness for the position before entrusting him with it. I think the suggestion was a very happy one, because if Mr. Nash is a steady man and fit to be placed in that position it would be a permanent provision for his old age, while if he got £1,000 it might pass away very soon. Therefore, I think the mover of the resolution would do well to consider whether Mr. Nash would not be much better off if he received a permanent endowment for life than if he had £1,000. I am sure that is the best alternative to the resolution.

Mr. FERGUSON said: I have listened carefully to the few remarks made by hon. members on the other side, and especially to those of the Minister for Works. From what little I know of Mr. Nash, and from what I have been informed, I think this money would be ruination to him if he got it; and if he is not fit to take charge of £1,000, then he cannot be fit to take charge of a powder magazine. The man, I understand, is incapable of taking charge of himself. Whether he is justified in asking for this £1,000 or not is another question; but I trust the advice given by the Minister for Works will never be carried out.

Mr. BEATTIE said: Mr Speaker,—I would suggest that perhaps it would be safer to the community generally if the Colonial Treasurer, who I know has often vacancies in his department, could give Mr. Nash a situation where there is no temptation. I believe Mr. Nash deserves some consideration at the hands of the country, but if, as I am informed, the powder magazine at Gympie is contiguous to some of the centres of population in that district, I would not ask the member for Gympie to accept the offer made by the Minister for Works. I do not think, if what has been said is true, that it would be a proper thing to place Mr. Nash in such a position unless the magazine is so situated that it can do no injury to anyone but himself. Then I would not have the slightest objection to the appointment. I hope, however, that the Colonial Treasurer will be able to find him some billet on one of the islands along the coast—as lighthouse-keeper, for instance, or something of that sort—which would answer the purpose the mover of the motion has in view, and make Mr. Nash comfortable in his old age; and I hope the suggestion I have made will also receive the consideration of the Minister for Works. At the same time I should like to see Mr. Nash receive some consideration, as there can be no doubt that the discovery of Gympie has been a great benefit to Queensland.

Mr. ANNEAR: Mr. Speaker,—It seems to me that those who are least acquainted with Mr. Nash know most about him. I happen to have known him for the last eighteen years, and have seen him frequently, but I have never seen him in a condition in which he could not take care of himself. At one time he purchased a farm near Tiaro, which was well known to the member for Wide Bay. He planted that farm, and in two successive years the whole of his crops were swept away by the floods. I know that if £1,000 was voted to him by this House his wife would be able to take care of the money and provide for their large family in a most creditable and honourable manner. I think the member for Gympie might have made out a much better case for Mr. Nash, whom I regard as a benefactor to the colony. Mr. Nash endured great hardships for a long time, and spent a good deal of his own money in finding out the Gympie Gold Field, and since it has been discovered he has got a large family too. I am sure, as I have already said, that if the sum of money asked for is voted, Mrs. Nash will take care of it and see that it is properly expended. It seems to me that the proposal to place Mr. Nash in charge of a powder magazine has been treated as a joke. Hon. members have stated that he would not be able to take care of the magazine. I differ from those hon. gentlemen. In my opinion he is fully capable of performing the duties that would be required of him. I am only sorry that the Minister for Works has not a better position to offer Mr. Nash. The Gympie Gold Field was discovered at the time when it was most needed, and when the colony was on the verge of insolvency; and I hope this matter will

not be treated as a joke. I know that this House has previously voted sums of money for less deserving cases than this, and on more than one occasion; and I shall have much pleasure in supporting the motion of the hon. member for Gympie. I saw Mr. Nash last week and he was then in the full possession of his faculties. I suppose he is like many other men, and that he takes a glass or two sometimes, but I never knew him to be a drunkard.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker,—I think we can get over the difficulty proposed by the hon. member for Mulgrave.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I proposed no difficulty.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL: The difficulty was, as I understood the hon. gentleman, that Mr. Nash was not able to take care of a powder magazine.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I said nothing about that. The hon. member is misrepresenting me. I only referred to the remarks made by the Minister for Works.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL: Well, it does not matter by whom the assertion was made; the assertion is there. There are not many members in the House who have known Mr. Nash longer than I have done. I will say nothing of his personal habits; but I have a distinct recollection that when a vote for Mr. H. M. Clarkson came before the House earlier in the session, the hon. member for Mulgrave took a very wise course, I think, and proposed that on account of Mr. Clarkson's intemperate habits it would be—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That is a gross misrepresentation. I never said one word about Mr. Clarkson's habits.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

Mr. BEATTIE: I must certainly correct the hon. member for Cook. No such statement was made on either side of the House. It would be untrue if it were made.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL: It is possible I may have made a mistake, and I apologise if I have done so. But I think the money was given to Mrs. Clarkson because the man was not able to take care of it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That is not true either.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL: I think the money was not given to Mr. Clarkson as he would not be able to take care of it, there being, I believe, some lawyers in the case.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member having applied the term "intemperate" to a gentleman who is not in this House to protect himself, I think the hon. member should withdraw the remark unreservedly.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL: I have already explained that I apologise for any assertion I have made that was likely to be untrue or false, and I think that is sufficient; I do not think I have any occasion to withdraw or apologise further than that, unless, of course, I am authorised by a competent authority to do so. If you, sir, think I should withdraw the word "intemperate," I shall do so; but I think I have made full amends for anything I have said. I believe the principle in the two cases is the same. If the sum asked for in the resolution were granted to Mrs. Nash and her children, the object of the hon. member for Gympie would be fully attained. There is no member in this House, I believe, who will not agree that the discovery of Mr. Nash has been a very great, an almost incalculable benefit to the whole colony, and I think that for that reason Mr. Nash is worthy of some little consideration.

Mr. BAILEY : Mr. Speaker,—I have no doubt that neither Mrs. Nash nor Mr. Nash will thank me when I say that I would much rather see this money voted for the benefit of their family than given to Mr. Nash. I fully recognise the services which Mr. Nash has rendered to the colony. I remember what a miserable condition the country was in when he discovered the Gympie Gold Field : traders were bankrupt, merchants were bankrupt, and the Government was almost bankrupt. The discovery put new life into the colony, and we have gone along well ever since. This resolution is a very small recognition of the services performed by Mr. Nash, the good effect of which has been felt for many years past, and will last for many years. His exertions have led to the establishment of a settled goldfield in the colony. We cannot dispute that, and to adopt this motion will be only giving a small token of the gratitude of the colony to Mr. Nash. I should like to see a sum of money secured to Mr. Nash's children and wife ; but I should be very sorry to see it in his hands. I do not know enough of the circumstances to express any bad opinion of him, but this House has often voted money to the families of men who have conferred services on the State ; and this is a peculiar case where a man has once received a sum of money as a reward, and his family are now in needy circumstances. Mr. Nash rendered good service to the country by his discovery of that glorious little goldfield, and I hope the House will not be stingy in the matter, but will vote the money and secure it for the benefit of his family. As the hon. member for Gympie said, it is not a claim on the House, but an appeal that we should perform a little act of kindness to the family of a man who has rendered good and true service.

Mr. LISSNER said : Listening to the expressions of hon. gentlemen on the other side, one would imagine that Gympie was the only place in the world that deserves any credit for having done anything at all. It is said that the colony has been preserved from ruin simply through Mr. Nash's discovery of Gympie. I believe it was a good thing that he found it, but it was only a lucky hit. According to the laws he got £1,000 reward, and I do not think, as far as the colony is concerned, that we owe him anything more. The discovery of Gympie was a fortunate thing for the colony, and a credit to Mr. Nash ; but other goldfields have been discovered since, and some of them nearly as good as Gympie. Charters Towers was discovered when the colony was not quite insolvent, and good use has been made of the discovery ever since. All that was given for the discovery of Charters Towers was £1,000, and that had to be divided between three or four people. I know some of them are hard up again ; and what would the House think if next week I were to ask for another couple of thousands for them ? There seems to be a mania to come here for charitable purposes. I think the country has completed its engagement with Mr. Nash. If the Gympie people think he deserves more, as many of them have been very successful in consequence of his discovery, let them subscribe for him. I think we would do the same in Charters Towers if any of our prospectors were in want of money, and get up £500 in no time. I shall vote against the motion.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said : Mr. Speaker,—I concur with what has fallen from the hon. member for Kennedy. I think there are other goldfields in the colony whose discoverers are as much deserving of recognition as Mr. Nash. I do not know of a single discoverer of gold in the colony who received the same amount of benefit from his discovery that Mr. Nash did ; I know the discoverers of

Charters Towers received nothing like it. As the hon. member for Kennedy says, some of those men are not in very good circumstances ; and if Mr. Nash is entitled to get £1,000 as a further recognition, I shall support the hon. member for Kennedy if he brings forward a motion for the grant of an additional sum to the discoverers of Charters Towers, and the hon. member for Cook, if he makes a similar motion with regard to the discoverer of the Palmer, which has produced more gold than any other field in the country. I agree with the suggestion of the hon. member for Kennedy, that the rich miners of Gympie and the storekeepers who are making fortunes there should put their hands in their own pockets and do something for the discoverer of the field. I do not think either Mr. or Mrs. Nash will be very thankful to their friends for the way in which they have been brought before the House this afternoon. I hope the hon. member will withdraw the motion. It is a motion most hon. members do not like to vote against ; but still to be conscientious they must do it.

Mr. FRASER said : Mr. Speaker,—There is no doubt the finding of Gympie was a very fortunate thing for the colony, and Mr. Nash was a very fortunate man in discovering it. He received his reward for the discovery, and it seems to me that the supporters of this motion do not place him in a very flattering light. The claim seems to be advanced simply because Mr. Nash has not been able to take care of the reward he has already received. Well, if it is put on a purely charitable foundation we can understand it. I quite agree with the hon. member for Kennedy, that those who have made very large fortunes at Gympie should put their hands in their pockets and show their appreciation of Mr. Nash's services. I do not think such claims should be perpetually brought before the House simply on such a foundation as this.

Mr. STEVENS said : There is one point that has not been raised, which, I think, deserves a little consideration—that is, the effect the granting of this money would have on men who devote their time to looking for goldfields. No doubt Mr. Nash received the Government reward, but the very fact that in his old age and misfortune he received a little further consideration would still more encourage men who are looking for goldfields. I give the hon. member for Kennedy credit for sincerity in what he said ; but, coming from the member for a goldfield, it looks as if he were wishing to put a damper on anyone who might come and request his services in the House. He points out beforehand that he does not consider it a good thing, and therefore discourages them from making an attempt of that sort. I think a good case has been made out by the hon. member for Gympie, and the Government might very graciously grant this money to be settled on Mr. Nash's family, or Mr. Nash himself. I am sure it would have a good effect in still further encouraging men to go into the wilds and seek for rich goldfields.

Mr. NORTON said : I think if we wish to encourage men to go out and look for goldfields we should offer all the inducement at once, and that they should be given to understand that if they do not take care of the reward it will not be given to them again. Mr. Nash has already received his reward for discovering the Gympie Gold Field ; and are we to give him that reward over again, simply because he has not known how to take care of it ? If Mr. Nash went out to discover this goldfield simply for the benefit of the community at large, perhaps he deserves more than he got ; but it strikes me he went out on his own account and for his own benefit ; and why should

we be asked to vote again the money we have already given? I take it the Parliament that voted the money previously was in a better position than we are now to estimate his title to a reward for the discovery; because we have forgotten the facts of the case. The fact that the goldfield has turned out richer than was expected has nothing to do with the question; the question is what Mr. Nash deserves from the country for having found a goldfield, and what were his motives in looking for gold? I have not the slightest doubt that he went out to benefit himself, and the country has given consideration to him for what he did. I shall oppose the motion.

The HON. R. B. SHERIDAN: Mr. Speaker,—I have known Mr. Nash as long if not longer than any person in this House, and when I lived in Maryborough—I am speaking from what came under my own knowledge—I can conscientiously say that I never saw Mr. Nash unfit to carry on his business in a respectable manner. The character which he has got here may or may not be true. I do not say that it is. I only speak of what I know myself. What one hears is no evidence at all. I have frequently seen Mr. Nash both on business and otherwise, and I know his family are very respectable indeed; and, so far as I am personally acquainted with him, he is respectable. He has conferred very great benefit on the colony by his discovery of the very best goldfield in Queensland. True, he got his reward; but that was quite inadequate to the enormous benefit conferred on the whole colony, because I believe that many of the gentlemen who discovered goldfields elsewhere, were persons who gained their experience in Gympie. Charters Towers, Ravenswood, Maytown, and other valuable goldfields which benefit the colony so much, owe their origin to those who gained their experience in Gympie.

Mr. NORTON: That is a supposition.

Mr. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker,—The question, it appears to me, is this—Is Mr. Nash entitled to this money? If he is entitled to the money, and if the colony has received the great amount of benefit from his discovery that is alleged, it might not be a bad thing to give the money. But I am given to understand that, besides Mr. Nash having received the £1,000 formerly voted, he reaped a rich reward from the gold he recovered from that field. I think I saw it mentioned a number of years ago that Mr. Nash cleared £20,000 out of one gully. If that be true—I am not giving it as a true statement—but if it be true, I think he has been very well paid. I was rather amused by the member for Logan, Mr. Stevens, who made use of a curious argument in reference to this claim. He said it would discourage anyone else coming here, who had spent all his money and the money of his children and the £1,000 that he had got from the Government, from making a fresh claim.

Mr. STEVENS: The hon. member is saying almost the very opposite of what I stated. I said it would still further encourage men who are looking for goldfields, instead of discouraging them, if this £1,000 were granted.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I did not understand the hon. member in that light. For every fresh goldfield that is found out there is already a reward given of £1,000, so that there was no use his employing that argument about encouragement or discouragement. However, as was well remarked by the hon. member for Kennedy, if this money is paid it will be put down as a precedent, and all other discoverers of gold in other districts of the colony who have spent their money and have come to poverty will be induced to come here and make a similar claim, and ask that even-handed justice be dealt out to them.

Mr. BUCKLAND: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know what amount Mr. Nash made out of this rich mine at Gympie—whether it was £20,000, or half that amount. I have some recollection that at the time it was stated that he made about £14,000. Be that as it may, he deserved all he got, for it must be in the recollection of many hon. members in this House, that at the time Gympie was discovered by Mr. Nash the colony was in very depressed circumstances—not only Brisbane, but, as an hon. member remarked, Ipswich especially. At that time the Government were borrowing money at a very high rate of interest. Trade and manufactures of every description were at a very low ebb. I am very glad to be able to support the motion of the hon. member for Gympie on this occasion. I believe that up to the present time of this year Gympie has produced over 100,000 ounces of gold, and, taking it at £3 per ounce, that represents over a quarter of a million of money. I consider Mr. Nash deserves the amount mentioned in the motion from the country, and if it be the case, as has been stated by hon. members, that Mr. Nash is not to be entrusted with this money, we should do the same with Mr. Nash as we did with Mr. Clarkson, and settle the money on his wife and family for their benefit. I think that would be only doing justice to the discoverer of one of the best goldfields of the colony. Members must not forget the depression that existed previous to the discovery of the Gympie Gold Field. I can recollect it, and I only hope this vote will pass.

Mr. JORDAN: Mr. Speaker,—All my sympathies go with the mover of the resolution, and in favour of Mr. Nash. I think that the discovery of the Gympie Gold Field was just in the very nick of time to save the colony from a condition of very great commercial and general depression; and though Mr. Nash received £1,000 for it according to promise, yet the discovery has turned out far beyond any expectations which had been formed of it before that reward was offered. And I think it would be a graceful act on the part of this House if £1,000 were given to Mr. Nash. He has not put in a claim for it, but he has an equitable claim for it, and he puts it to the generosity of the House and country. Under the peculiar circumstances of the case, and the great value of the discovery he was fortunate enough to make, and, also considering that his family are in the midst of trouble, all my sympathies and feelings go in favour of the resolution. I doubt, however, whether we should be conferring a great benefit on Mr. Nash and his family by carrying this resolution for giving him £1,000—even supposing we gave it to him personally or to his family. I am very glad to hear what the two hon. members for Maryborough—Mr. Annear and Mr. Sheridan—have said, and that there was a false impression about Mr. Nash's habits. We have heard, too, that he has lost the money which he had embarked in farming by a visitation of Providence. The Minister for Works has made an offer, or what is tantamount to an offer, to do something better for Mr. Nash than giving him this £1,000. If the hon. gentleman is prepared to give him a permanent situation in some position, the duties of which he is capable of fulfilling, at £100 or £200 a year, it would certainly be a great deal better for him, and I would suggest to the hon. member for Gympie to withdraw his motion, resting on the implied promise of the Minister for Works to give him some permanent employment in the Civil Service.

Mr. BLACK said: I do not altogether understand the hon. member for South Brisbane. First of all he says it would be a graceful act on the part of the House to give Mr. Nash

this £1,000 and then he advises the hon. member for Gympie to withdraw his motion on the strength of an implied promise of the Minister for Lands to find some permanent employment for him. It is very easy to talk about doing a graceful act in giving away other people's money. We are not giving away our own money; we are giving away the money that is contributed by the taxpayers of the country, and I maintain that no sufficient cause has been shown why the Government should depart from those strict economical motives which, I hope, always actuate them. Mr. Nash's discovery has undoubtedly been of great benefit to the colony. We are told that at the time Gympie was discovered the colony was on the verge of insolvency—whatever that may mean. There is no doubt the colony was in a depressed state at that time, though I am not aware that it was in a more depressed state then than it is now and is likely to be for some time. When Mr. Nash made his discovery he received the reward of £1,000, as a recognition in full, I believe, of any services he had rendered to the colony by the discovery of this goldfield. It would be setting a very bad precedent if the Government were now to admit that there should be no finality to these claims, and for that reason I am certainly not prepared to support any further recognition in the way now moved for. At the same time, if the Government have a situation at their disposal for which Mr. Nash is fitted, I see no reason why they should not bestow it upon him. There seems to be a good deal of Southern feeling worked up in this motion. Hon. members connected in any way with Gympie, or who represent constituencies about Gympie, seem inclined to vote for an expenditure for which I do not think they have shown sufficient reason. We have heard a good deal about Gympie, and we are often told that Gympie is the grandest goldfield in the colony. I have looked up the statistics, and I fail to see that it is much better than some of our other goldfields. We might as well have this matter placed on a satisfactory footing, so that whenever Gympie is referred to in the future we shall know what is its relative position amongst the goldfields of the colony. I find from the official statistics that up to the end of last year Gympie had produced 931,000 ozs. of gold.

Mr. SMYTH: How much was got last year?

Mr. BLACK: I am taking the Government statistics, which are the only statistics that anyone is justified in quoting in this House. Up to the same period the Palmer had produced 1,228,000 ozs. of gold, and Charters Towers 1,071,240 ozs.; to say nothing of Ravenswood, which may almost be considered a portion of it. So that, according to the statistics—which, I believe, are sufficiently accurate for our purpose—Gympie ranks third among the goldfields of Queensland. It is as well that hon. members should understand that, when we so often hear it said that Gympie is the premier goldfield of the colony.

Mr. MIDGLEY: I really cannot see the utility of making laws and regulations with regard to these matters, if they are to be interferred with from time to time by motions of this kind. The people's representatives of the colony passed a certain law offering a specified reward to encourage prospectors to make discoveries of gold. Mr. Nash, it is stated, discovered the Gympie Gold Field, for which he received the stated reward. Not only was his discovery beneficial to other people, but it conferred a solid substantial benefit upon himself. Supposing Mr. Nash had not done so well, a plea might have been raised that he had spent a great deal of time and labour, and subjected himself to

a certain amount of peril, in discovering the field, and a good deal might have been said in favour of it. But no such plea can be raised in this case; and I object to the motion because it makes child's-play of regulations and laws. If there is to be no finality we may expect to be flooded with motions of this kind. If the good lady who recently got a vote of £2,000 were to live another ten or twenty years, there might be another application to the House for a similar grant. I have no wish to say anything that will hurt the feelings of Mr. Nash or his family, or to say anything whatever in depreciation of the Gympie Gold Field, or of the benefit it has been to the colony, but we may rest assured that if the motion is passed there will be no end to applications of this kind. We have already had an intimation that if it is carried there will be some from Charters Towers; and there ought to be some for a thundering big amount some day from the men who discovered Mount Morgan and the Palmer. I regard this motion as an improper attempt to take the people's money. The man has had what was due to him, and there the matter should stop. It is a motion of a kind of which there is more than one on the paper, and I intend to oppose it to the utmost of my power.

Mr. SMYTH, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—Some hon. members on the other side of the House have compared Gympie with other goldfields. We are very glad to hear that Charters Towers has yielded as much gold as we have at Gympie.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It has yielded a great deal more.

Mr. SMYTH: We like to see other goldfields in the colony as prosperous as ourselves. The hon. member for Townsville has referred to the Palmer Gold Field, which has turned out more gold than any other field up to the present time; but it has fallen off considerably lately, and the yield for last year from alluvial gold and quartz altogether was only 24,000 ounces; whereas in Gympie it was 68,000 ounces, and this year 120,000 ounces.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: What was the yield from Gympie in 1881?

Mr. SMYTH: 67,000 ounces.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It has been as low as 38,000 ounces.

Mr. SMYTH: 38,000 ounces is the lowest; but it has gone up 80,000 ounces more than that, and I hope it will continue going up. It was the existence of Gympie which brought other fields into existence; without it there would have been no prospecting upon the Palmer. Mr. Mulligan followed the tracks of some surveyors, and but for him that goldfield would have remained undeveloped. Mr. Mulligan would never have been in Queensland had it not been for Gympie, and the 1,200,000 ounces of gold got from the Palmer Field would have remained still in the ground, and the Chinamen who fossicked there would have remained in China. There are other gratuities upon the Supplementary Estimates for persons who did nothing but draw full salaries while they were alive, and after they were dead they left their wives and families to be provided for; and in some cases those claims have been allowed. There is one gentleman, Mr. Landsborough, who, I have been informed, received £2,000 for prospecting for pastoral lands for his friends and relations—prospecting for lands for other people, and not for the country at all. In discovering the Gympie Gold Field Mr. Nash was entitled to a reward of £1,000 if he discovered a payable field not less than five miles away from

any other. The one he discovered was nearly 200 miles from the Crocodile, which was the nearest; whereas, had he discovered a field in January, and only twenty miles from another field, he would have received £3,000. But he discovered one at a long distance from any other, in a good healthy place, and a place which is thickly populated. I am not going to press the vote, as the Government have made some kind of a promise to do something for Mr. Nash—to provide for him. If he does not get the appointment to take charge of the magazine somebody else will, but if he gets it he will earn his money. He is well able to take charge of it. I have heard of his intemperate habits outside of this House, but I cannot say that I ever saw him the worse for liquor. Some reports may have got about, but I never saw him the worse for liquor. I am sure that his wife will be able to look after him, and I think that he will keep any situation he gets. Some people say that on account of his intemperate habits he would not be able to look after a magazine any more than the £1,000. I do not believe there is a pound of blasting powder on Gympie; the magazine is full of dynamite, which is securely packed up in cases, so that all Mr. Nash will have to do will be to store them in the magazine, and then hand it out to be taken away, and keep a check of it. He will also have to protect the magazine from fire and storm and other things, which, I think, he is well qualified to do. I will withdraw this claim now in the hope that the Government will recognise it in some other way. Mr. Nash will be in no better position than a man just taken out of the barracks; he will have to earn his money, and if he is of intemperate habits I will guarantee that he will not remain there long if I can help it. I would not, for the sake of the people of Gympie, put any man of intemperate habits in charge of a dynamite magazine. Hon. members opposite say that this is a new thing—giving a man employment as a reward for services rendered; but it was done lately in New Zealand in the case of two old prospectors. Men engaged in prospecting soon lose their health, and get rheumatics and fever, and I know many men in Queensland who have become total wrecks; so that what the Government here propose to do is what the New Zealand Government have already done—they are taking those people in hand who have benefited the country. I therefore beg to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL—DEFENCE BILL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council returning the Defence Bill, with amendments, in which they invited the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) moved that the message be taken into consideration on Monday.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Is it the intention of the Government to take that business before the business already announced?

The PREMIER: Yes; I think so. The amendments, so far as I know, are entirely formal, and I do not think there are many of them.

REDUCTION OF WATERWORKS LOAN DEBTS OF IPSWICH, TOOWOOMBA, AND MARYBOROUGH.

Mr ALAND, in moving—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:—

1. That the House, having in view that the water works loan debt of Warwick has been reduced by the

sum of £5,000 since the passing of the Public Works Loans Act, is of opinion that a similar concession should be made to the municipalities of Ipswich, Toowoomba, and Maryborough.

2. That an address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause the necessary steps to be taken to give immediate effect to the foregoing resolution.

said: Mr. Speaker,—I was in hopes that after the deputation that waited upon the Colonial Treasurer some two months ago, and in such a clear and able manner brought this question before his notice, that there would have been no necessity for me to move in the matter in the House. I certainly did think that from the very favourable way in which that deputation was received, and the most hopeful answer with which they were sent away, that a very different reply would have been sent to them from what they received. It has been stated that a resolution like the one I bring forward is a matter of repudiation—that the municipalities interested in this motion wish to repudiate their liability to the Government. I wish to most emphatically state that this is not a matter of repudiation at all. All those three municipalities which I have mentioned were indebted to the Government, and are still indebted to the Government, but they took over the liability. Had they wished to repudiate they might have held out and not taken over these works, and, in fact, placed themselves in a somewhat similar position to that which the Warwick Municipality placed itself in. However, these municipalities did nothing of the sort. They believed, with the Warwick Municipality, that they were entitled to some allowance from the Government. The allowance was not made, but the municipalities mentioned in this notice of motion took over the liability, and they have ever since been paying their annual instalments towards the reduction of the debt. Now, it will be remembered that some two years ago, in 1882, there was a municipal conference held in Brisbane. That conference discussed many matters connected with municipal government, and they brought up a report of their proceedings. They presented it to the then Colonial Secretary—Sir Thomas McIlwraith—and I believe I am correct when I say that he gave them great credit for the manner in which they had conducted their proceedings, that he considered many of the suggestions which they brought forward were good ones, and said that he would take them into his consideration. Now, one of the matters which that conference brought forward was the subject of water supply. The mayor of Warwick proposed a resolution on the subject, and I will read it. It was to this effect:—

“That, in the opinion of this conference, the debts forced upon the various municipalities for waterworks weigh heavily on the ratepayers, and that the Government be requested to reduce the debts by the liability incurred over and above the original estimate; also, that the Government be urgently requested to pay endowment on water rates.”

That matter was discussed, and as far as the endowment of water rates was concerned it did not meet with the full approval of the conference; but it was thought by every speaker that, in the case of waterworks carried out by the Government officials or the municipalities, the municipalities had some claim upon the Government for assistance. The resolution which was carried was one moved by yourself, Mr. Speaker, and it was to this effect:—

“That, from the statements made to the conference by the representatives of the majority of the municipalities, it appears that the waterworks in many of them have cost nearly double the amount of the waterworks engineer's first estimate, thereby doubling the original estimate of water rates to be levied: Resolved—

(1) That the conference sympathises with the unfortunate position these municipalities are placed in, and recommends them to the favourable consideration of

the Government. (2) That grants in aid from the general revenue should be made in the preliminary construction of waterworks within all municipalities to the extent of one-third the actual cost. (3) That grants in aid should apply to the municipalities in which waterworks are already constructed to the extent of one-third the actual cost, as a means of reducing the present burdensome water rate."

That resolution was seconded by the member for Warwick, Mr. Horwitz, and carried unanimously. I would like to point out what the Minister for Works, Mr. Miles, who then represented the municipality of Allora, said. I will just give the last few words of his speech, because, although the whole of it bears upon the subject, that is the best part of it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Read the first part of it.

MR. ALAND: Very well; then I will give the whole of it:—

"Mr. Miles hoped the mayor of Ipswich (Mr. Willey) would not press his proposition, and thought Mr. Groom's resolution met the difficulty, not only as far as existing works were concerned but also those to be undertaken. Gympie had no waterworks; neither had the municipality which he represented. The resolutions were general, and he hoped they would be carried unanimously. They merely contained suggestions which would greatly assist the Legislature in considering the matter. Warwick had, no doubt, a special claim. He did not find much fault with the cost of the works, and it was perfectly useless to do so. They were carried on under the supervision of a Government officer. The municipal council had no control over them, but he was not prepared to altogether exonerate them from blame. If they knew what was going on they should have made representation to the Government, who would no doubt have looked into the matter; but he believed the council thought they would not have to repay the money that was being wasted. No doubt the works were scamped. They dare not put more than four feet of water in the reservoir at the present time. He thought the Government made a blunder in the first instance in not handing the money over to the municipality, and merely providing a Government officer to supervise the works. At the same time, the council had a perfect right to say 'You have squandered our money, and we ask you now to help us out of the difficulty in which we are placed.' He had great pleasure in supporting the motion."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I will repeat those words, because I expect to have the Minister for Works with me on this occasion:—

"You have squandered our money, and we ask you to help us out of the difficulty in which we are placed."

The outcome of that resolution, I think, was—well, I daresay it had a great deal to do with it—that the Ministry of the day reduced the cost of the Warwick waterworks by something like £5,000. Of course, I am not going to say, sir, that it was on account of that resolution or on account of that conference of the different municipalities; but I have no doubt that the Government of the day were very much helped in their decision in this matter by those resolutions, and they did what was only a very just thing to do. They relieved the municipality of Warwick of a part of its indebtedness. It may be said that this matter of the Toowoomba waterworks—I shall speak a word or two about the others, although the members for Ipswich and Maryborough are present and know something about their water supply—but it will be remembered that this matter of the Toowoomba waterworks was once before brought under the notice of the House, and a select committee was appointed to inquire into that matter. As far as I have been able to understand, that select committee was appointed to inquire what money had been actually spent upon the works. If I mistake not that was what the select committee was appointed to do, and was about all they did do in the year 1882. That select committee, as I said before, met for the purpose of inquiring into that and did not go much beyond it, and they brought up a report stating that the money had been spent; and

therefore the Toowoomba Corporation were liable for the amount. The Toowoomba Corporation took over the amount and have been paying their endowment on it ever since. In that report I think there is an expression which after events have not justified. I speak pretty much from memory, but I think the report stated that the supply of water was equal to the demand, that in fact a fair supply of water had been furnished to the inhabitants. Now that is not correct. After events have proved that the supply of water which we were left by the engineer for the works was a supply quite inadequate to the requirements of the inhabitants of Toowoomba. I know that for some weeks, where I live, which is on one of the high levels, we were not able to get a drop of water from the water supply of the town. I do not know whether it is really necessary for me to say much in reference to the waterworks in Toowoomba, or how they were carried out. It was in consequence of a vote for £10,000 on the Loan Account being obtained by you, sir, for water supply. I myself was mayor of the municipality at the time, and we naturally thought that as this amount was on the Loan Estimates we should use the money for the benefit of the town of Toowoomba. I wrote to the Government to place at our disposal the services of an engineer, and, if I mistake not, I made the request that the gentleman should be Mr. Thorneloe Smith; though why I should make the request for that gentleman I cannot say now, unless it was that he had been engaged, and most successfully engaged, in carrying out, at a moderate and economical cost, the drainage of the swamps in Toowoomba. He was the engineer appointed for that work; and I suppose I thought that, as he had carried out that work, he would be the best man the Government could send us to report upon the water supply. The Government did not send Mr. Thorneloe Smith, but they sent a man whom they considered to be a good authority on the matter. We know that Mr. Highfield, the gentleman sent up, took the fancy of supplying the town of Toowoomba with water from a well that was already in existence at a place called the Red Lion Hill. I myself, I know, spoke to Mr. Highfield on the matter, and asked him if he was really sure that that well, which all of us knew, would really supply the inhabitants of Toowoomba with water. I also spoke to Mr. F. T. Gregory and to Mr. A. C. Gregory, and also to several other gentlemen, and the consensus of their opinion was that it was a mistake altogether for Mr. Highfield to think that a supply of water for Toowoomba could be obtained from that well. The council met time after time before they would consent to purchase the property known as the Red Lion Hill, because they knew that if they once purchased that property they would commit themselves to this scheme of Mr. Highfield's; and it was only after I received a letter from the then Minister for Works, Mr. King, and which was something to this effect—I cannot now give the precise words—that unless we decided to purchase the Red Lion property, Mr. Highfield's services would not be continued to us as surveyor and engineer for these waterworks. So that the corporation, against their judgment—I say unhesitatingly, against the judgment of almost every member of that corporation—were compelled either to have the money already spent—and it amounted to a great deal—frittered away, and to have the works stopped, or consent to purchase the Red Lion property. The council purchased the Red Lion property, and from that time they were not consulted in the matter in any way whatever. We know that Mr. Highfield's estimate was

£10,000, but before those works were completed—and completed in the manner in which they were completed—they cost the corporation something like £16,900. Before the inhabitants of Toowoomba were able to get any water from that water supply the works cost something like £1,500 or £2,000 more; so that it will be seen the Toowoomba Corporation were altogether led astray in the matter. I confess that, as mayor of the town, I would never have consented—as I told the ratepayers at the time—to a larger rate than 1s. in the £1 being imposed upon them for a water supply; and estimating the cost of the works at the sum which the engineer gave in—namely, something like £10,000—I felt assured that we should be able to supply the inhabitants with water at a rate of 1s. in the £1. Well, what has it been? Instead of being 1s. in the £1, it is more likely to amount to 4s. in the £1; and in many instances, although the tax has been considerably reduced, it is still a very heavy burden upon the taxpayers of Toowoomba. As far as Maryborough is concerned, the hon. member for Maryborough is present and he will be able to tell all about that; but there I believe the same mismanagement was carried out. I believe, however, that I am correctly informed that the supply at Maryborough is a good supply?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes.

MR. ALAND: They have a good supply there; but if my information is correct, it does not strike me that the manner in which those works were carried out was the right way to carry out those works at all. I am informed that a pump which draws twelve inches of water throws it into a ten-inch pipe, and the consequence is that the pipes near the reservoir, owing to the pressure of the water coming into them, are constantly bursting. So far as Ipswich is concerned, I noticed the other day when the committee went out there to inspect their works they found that the reservoir was in anything but the condition which a reservoir so recently constructed as that should be. The construction of the thing is faulty; and here let me say the construction of our reservoir at Toowoomba is also faulty. We only put a few feet of water in it and it burst. We had to go to the expense of putting that right again, and now, if I mistake not, we can only put a certain quantity of water into it. We cannot put in a sufficient quantity of water to produce pressure enough to supply the higher levels of the town. We dare not nearly fill it now—and as a matter of fact we cannot fill it, for it leaks—but if we did attempt to fill it, I believe it would burst again. Now I want to point out what will be the effect of the resolution I have proposed, supposing it is carried. The Colonial Treasurer, no doubt, thinks it is a tremendous raid I am making on the Treasury. I do not think it is. Of course the aggregate amount is a very good sum; but, seeing that it is payable by the municipalities in annual sums extending over forty years, the reduction in the amount which the Treasurer will receive in the next thirty-five or thirty-six years will not be very much. The estimated cost of the waterworks mentioned in the resolution was £58,000; in other words, the waterworks at Ipswich, Maryborough, and Toowoomba were estimated by the engineer to cost that sum. But when handed over by the engineer, and handed over, too, in an incomplete state—at all events as far as Toowoomba was concerned, and I have no doubt the members for the other places named will state so far as these towns were concerned also—those works had cost £75,000. The total cost, however, up to the present time, is £102,000. The waterworks which were estimated to cost £58,000 have really

cost £102,000; and even now they are not in a satisfactory state. Toowoomba requires a further sum to extend the works. They are not in a satisfactory condition; and I know an estimate was given not long since that it would cost something like £600 or £700 for the tank or reservoir to be put in proper condition. I know that the building upon which the high-level tank rests is not in a very satisfactory state, and I have no doubt it is the same in other municipalities. The resolution means this: I may as well point this out to the Colonial Treasurer in case he has not already considered it, because I think it will help him to decide the matter in our favour. The Warwick waterworks cost, I think, £17,000. The basis I have taken is one-third the amount on which the different works were handed over by the Government to the corporations. The resolution, if carried out, means a reduction of one-third of £75,900—the amount the works had cost when handed over. That one-third is £25,300, and the annual payment on that is £1,375 17s. 6d. That is the amount which these three municipalities are, I say, fairly entitled to be relieved from paying. If that were done it would help them in more ways than one. I am not aware whether the amount owing by municipalities or waterworks affects their borrowing powers.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes.

MR. ALAND: I was under the impression that a corporation could borrow five times the amount of its revenue, exclusive of what was required for waterworks purposes. If that is not the case, it strikes me that some of them have been borrowing more than they ought to have done. Without going into the figures, I cannot see why the little corporations have been allowed to borrow so much for all purposes. I may say that I have only mentioned three municipalities, because their waterworks were carried out under similar conditions to the works at Warwick. I can see no objection—in fact, I think it is a matter worthy of consideration by the Government why all municipalities should not be helped in the matter of water supply. I may be looking at the thing from a very narrow point of view; but I think municipalities are as much entitled to assistance in this matter as divisional boards and as the outside districts. Of course I know that the outside districts have greater claims in that way than we have; but, seeing that the Government have helped places like Roma, Rosewood, and Fassifern, and many others, and seeing also that they are going to be liberal in this direction in outside places, I think that we, in the inside, who have to bear a larger share of the burden of taxation, should also be helped. I know it is often said—in fact, I was asked to day—“Why should the people of Cook be taxed to pay for your waterworks?” I may just as well say, “Why should we be taxed to pay for the Cooktown Railway?” Surely we contribute as much to the taxation for that railway—I daresay a great deal more—than even the people in the district. At the same time I believe the time is coming when that will be a very prosperous district, and when the railway now being constructed will be one of the best paying lines in the colony. I have very good reasons for saying that.

MR. NORTON: Just now, at any rate.

MR. ALAND: The Minister for Works is not in his place, or I would have read something there is in a paper about him; but if he happens to be here when the hon. member for Maryborough is speaking I will get him to read it. I have much pleasure in moving the resolution.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Mr. Speaker,—I have listened with much attention to the remarks of the hon. member for Toowoomba in introducing this widely distributed motion, and I may say at the outset that I regret he should have inferred from my reception of the deputation from the municipalities, of which he was a member, that I held out any encouragement to the deputation, or that he should imagine now that I am assuming a different attitude to that which I promised to assume at the time of that interview. I must say that from what the hon. gentleman has stated I can hardly understand whether he puts forward this motion as an appeal or a claim. In either case I think it falls short of the mark, and is injudicious. It is inconvenient to deal with it at the present time, and I trust hon. members who represent municipalities will consider that they are representatives of the people in this Chamber, and that, however much it might please the municipalities to have their debt reduced—I suppose the extinction of their debt would please them even better than its partial reduction—they will consider the circumstances of the country, and that it is not fair that the taxation of the whole of the people of the country should be applied to the reduction of the debts of two or three corporations. The grounds for the motion are very insufficient indeed. Nothing has been advanced to show that there is any actual necessity for a reduction of the debt of the municipalities which have been mentioned on the score of their inability to pay it. Not one word has been said as to either Toowoomba, Maryborough, Warwick, or Ipswich not being able to raise the amount of rates necessary to cover the annual interest on their loans. The claim is, that because the Warwick Corporation has had the good fortune to have £3,500 of their waterworks loan remitted, a similar concession should be made to Toowoomba, Maryborough, and Ipswich. I really cannot see why the hon. member should not have included the municipality of Rockhampton, and why he should not also have considered the condition of Townsville.

Mr. ALAND: I gave the reason.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I did not catch the remarks of the hon. gentleman on that point. I have not the slightest doubt that if this motion were carried successfully, hon. gentlemen representing other constituencies would regard it as their duty to introduce a motion at a very early date claiming similar concessions in respect of the loans of the municipalities they represent.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: And future municipalities for future loans.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The mover of the motion has not based it upon the resolution of the municipal conference. The 2nd clause of the resolution states "that grants in aid from the general revenue should be made in the preliminary construction of waterworks in all municipalities to the extent of one-third the actual cost." And the 3rd clause is as follows: "That grants in aid should apply to the municipalities in which waterworks are already constructed to the extent of one-third the actual cost, as a means of reducing the present burdensome rate." Now, the hon. gentleman has not accepted that resolution as the basis of his suggestion for the relief of the three municipalities which he considers specially entitled to the consideration of the House. I think he ought to have shown that the circumstances of Ipswich, Toowoomba, and Maryborough are decidedly analogous, as the first ground for considering the claims. But he has not done so, and I am in a position to say that there is a very great difference in their positions—that in

no case are the circumstances of these municipalities analogous to those of Warwick. There is no doubt that the Warwick waterworks were constructed in a very unsatisfactory manner indeed, and that a good deal of money was squandered on their construction. The community was a small one, and the municipality refused to take over the works; and, I think, the Government of the day acted wisely in doing as they did. They had the waterworks valued by the Waterworks Engineer, and his valuation was accepted by both the corporation and the Government; and an Executive minute was passed in 1881 by which the Government remitted a portion of the cost, amounting to £3,047 19s. 11d., and made a refundment of the endowment which had been retained—namely, £2,602 15s. 10d. Upon that the waterworks were taken over by the council, and so far there has been finality on that question. In the case of Toowoomba, Ipswich, and Maryborough the circumstances are slightly different. Perhaps those of Maryborough were more analogous to the conditions of Warwick than those of either Toowoomba or Ipswich. The Maryborough Corporation likewise declined to take over their waterworks, on the grounds that the cost of the work was in excess of the estimate, and that there were certain deductions which ought to be made by the Government. At length, in order to arrive at some settlement of the matter in dispute, a deputation from the council visited Brisbane, and had an interview with the Colonial Treasurer, the result of which was that an understanding was come to on the following basis: The council were to take over the waterworks, and the Government were to forego any claim for interest up to the 30th June, 1881; the first year's interest, from 1st July, 1881, to 30th June, 1882, to be added to the principal sum; the endowment previously retained, amounting to £1,895 5s. 1d., to be refunded, and a further loan of £5,000 to be granted for the extension of the mains; all of which have been duly carried out on both sides. This arrangement appeared to be perfectly satisfactory to the corporation of Maryborough. I hold in my hand a report of their proceedings, from which it appears that the arrangement made by the deputation at the interview in Brisbane was adopted by the council at a meeting held on the 26th of July, 1881:—

"His Worship, in stating the result of the visit of Alderman Murray and himself to Brisbane upon important municipal matters, said that they saw the Premier and the Minister for Works, who met their requests in a fair, equitable, and straightforward manner. The Government could not acknowledge the extra cost of the work, and pointed out that the corporation would require to take over the works as they stood, to comply with the Act. Anything that could be done under the Act would be done in favour of the council, and they were prepared to hand over the waterworks at once. As regards the endowment now due, the Premier said it would be paid shortly; and the Government also promised the deputation that the council would be granted a loan of £5,000 for the extension of water pipes. He (the mayor) thought it would be the best policy to take over the waterworks now and thus end the difficult matter. The Premier also stated that if the interest for last year would be added to the capital it would give a longer time to pay it. The health of the town demanded a supply of water. If the works were taken over at once the water supply could be issued to four points of the municipality and from the stand-up pipes. The sooner the waterworks were taken over the better for the interests of the council."

Then followed a debate, and the motion to take over the waterworks was put and carried, the only dissentients being Alderman Blissett and Boge. Surely there must be some finality. We must accept this deliberate resolution of the municipal council who confirmed the action of the deputation of the Government in 1881. It is very late in the day now to open up the question. I would point out that the Maryborough Corporation

have during the past week made application for a loan of £25,000 to further extend their mains; but I am debarred from giving that serious consideration to the matter which it ought to receive until I am sure that there is no intention to ask at some future time for a remission of portion of that loan. I cannot see on what ground the hon. member for Toowoomba has introduced the name of the Maryborough Municipality into this motion, because, in a recent correspondence for a loan, it has been distinctly understood that by-gones are to be considered as by-gones, and that this indebtedness has been settled by the action of the council four years ago. With regard to the Toowoomba Municipality, my attention was called before the hon. member spoke of it, to the action taken by this House in 1880, in connection with the Select Committee appointed to report upon the Toowoomba waterworks. The committee was composed of yourself, Mr. Speaker, and your colleague at that time, the late Mr. Davenport, Mr. Macrossan, Mr. Norton, and Mr. Amhurst. The report of the Select Committee is very clear, and the matter was evidently fully considered with a desire to arrive at a just conclusion. I shall not trouble the House with the whole of the nine clauses of the report; I think the 8th and 9th will be sufficient. They are as follow:—

"8. Although the Toowoomba waterworks have cost considerably more than first estimated, the total cost does not exceed the general average of such undertakings. The present supply of water is considered sufficient for a much larger population than Toowoomba now possesses.

"9. After carefully considering the evidence, and examining the vouchers, pay-sheets, and papers in connection with the subject referred to your committee to report upon, they are of opinion that the sum of £69,78s. 8d. has been expended by the Government on the Toowoomba waterworks, and the expenditure has been in all instances accounted for. Your committee are therefore unable to recommend any reduction of the amount charged or any remission of interest, which interest they are of opinion ought to commence from 1st July, 1880."

That is signed by yourself, sir, as chairman. I find on looking at the evidence that that report was unanimously adopted, except that there was a division of opinion in the committee as to the date on which the interest should commence. If this question is carried in the affirmative, there can be no satisfaction in advancing money by way of loan to local bodies. They may all urge with equal force that they had to expend a great deal more than they expected in the construction of their public works. We are all in a tentative condition in the matter of construction; and local bodies, whether they construct bridges, buildings, waterworks, or any other works, are more or less at the mercy of the contractors and the architect. Any of them might make a claim for the reduction of the debt with quite as much force as that contained in the motion of the hon. member. I have very good authority for saying that, if this motion be accepted, Warwick will not rest satisfied with her arrangement, Warwick is of opinion that the £16,703 expended on their waterworks, according to the valuation of Mr. Henderson, is far too large a sum for them to be charged with. The cost was £16,703, and that was reduced by £3,047; but the Warwick authorities contend that £9,700 is the maximum that they should be charged; and besides the additional concession of £3,956, which they say they have a right to claim, if Toowoomba and Maryborough and Ipswich are granted the concessions, they will want £455 more, making £4,411 in all. Each district would make out a very strong claim for further consideration, and there would be no finality in the matter. Local government would become an entire fiasco, and we might fairly expect that the whole of the municipal indebtedness, which is now assuming

very large dimensions, would have to be liquidated by the State. Sooner than see that done, I would recommend that the Government should take over the whole of the waterworks and put them under a board, and I believe such a proceeding would entail no loss upon the Treasury. I think, however, that it is better for local bodies to be entrusted with such matters so long as they honestly accept the liabilities and endeavour to discharge them. I must say that it is a very inopportune time to raise an outcry against the expenditure of a few thousands additional for waterworks for a supply of water is a great boon to any community; and there are many other towns where the residents would gladly pay the increased rates if they had the advantage of the water supply. I do not think there is any analogy between the supply of water to municipalities which are centres of population, and concessions to settlers in the interior by which main roads are supplied with water. The latter is a public necessity, which ought to be provided for by the State. I would point out that the Local Works Loans Act was, I believe, framed to meet the necessities of municipalities borrowing for the construction of waterworks. They obtain loans in a remarkably easy manner, with forty years' currency, and the annual payments covering the 5 per cent. interest, and also forming a sinking fund for the reduction of the capital, amount to no more than 5·83 per cent. per annum. They are paying less than 6 per cent. for their loans, and diminishing the capital at the same time. When they have all these facilities, I do not think they have any plea whatever, even on the ground of charitable consideration, for the reduction of the indebtedness which has been incurred for their benefit. There has been no special action taken with regard to Ipswich. On the strength of representations that were made, a further loan was granted before they took over the waterworks so as to provide for the extension of mains. I say when municipal bodies have taken over the waterworks there must be some finality, and henceforward they must be prepared to meet their indebtedness. I contend also, apart from the question of right, that the Treasury is in the right position at the present time in expecting full payment of all these loans. I say that, in view of a large increase to our loan obligations, we have no right to contemplate for a moment giving a free gift of this money. We are about to borrow. We propose to expend our loans in reproductive purposes, and I am quite satisfied that they should be so expended in the shape of loans to municipalities, water-supply, &c. But I say, at the present time, when we have a large loan before us, we have no right whatever to accept a resolution of this sort, by which we would actually make a present of sums of money, borrowed from the public credits, to those municipalities. From what I have said my hon. friend will see the justice of withdrawing his motion, and of accepting the view I desire to impress on him—that the report of the Select Committee in the case of Toowoomba, the adjustment of indebtedness in the case of Maryborough, the acceptance given by the municipal council of Ipswich, and also the acceptance by Warwick of their indebtedness—should induce him to take the view that the matter has been finally settled, and that it would be unwise to reopen it; for if it were reopened it would not stop here. It would not only affect the waterworks which have already obtained loans, but would create distrust in making loans to other municipalities. I shall oppose the motion very strongly indeed.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to make a few remarks as to the argument used by the hon. member, denying that some

kind of concession should be made to those municipal authorities. I think the hon. Treasurer has lost sight of the argument of the hon. member for Toowoomba, in so far as he seems to have failed to grasp the plea on which this claim is made. There is something very peculiar about it. It is not that any of these municipalities repudiate the money, nor have they refused to pay the interest on their loans; but they say some regard should be paid to the position in which they are placed by the great difference between the estimates given to the municipalities of cost of the waterworks and the actual cost when the works were carried out. I am not acquainted with Toowoomba or Maryborough, but I wish to give a few plain statements to show the position in which Ipswich is placed in reference to the waterworks there. When it was proposed to have these waterworks, it was suggested by the Minister for Works that we should join other municipalities, and allow one hydraulic engineer to construct the whole rather than each municipality have a distinct engineer for itself. It was reported to the municipality of Ipswich, of which I was then a member—by, I believe, the then Treasurer, Mr. Dickson—that it would be much cheaper to accept the Government offer, and have these works made under their superintendence through their own Hydraulic Engineer, Mr. Highfield. That gentleman came to Ipswich and had a personal interview with the mayor and aldermen, and his private opinion was that the works would cost £19,000. Well, the members of the municipality were divided on the matter. Some were in favour of making the work themselves, and others in favour of joining with the other municipalities, and allowing the Government to make them. The party in favour of the Government arrangement being the strongest, the others gave way, and consequently their waterworks were completed under the superintendence of Mr. Highfield. Well, when the written estimate came in, instead of being £19,000 it was £23,000. The corporation did not object at all, though it exceeded the original estimate by £4,000. They did not object to the extra £4,000, because they thought that the Ministry, having joined the whole of the municipalities, would be able to superintend the waterworks much cheaper than we could do it ourselves. Therefore they accepted the written offer, which was £23,000. But what did we find when the works were completed—not completed, for the pipes were only brought to outside the boundary? Why, that the account rendered by the Government to the municipality was £31,000 odd. Now, we would not have grudged the £31,000, or £3,000 more than the written estimate, but the main pipes were left outside the town boundary, and were not of the smallest benefit to the town, and we had to go to the Treasurer and borrow another £5,000 to carry the mains into the town—making a total of £30,000. And before we could get the water into the town another £5,000 had to be borrowed, making £42,000—thus, as the member for Townsville had said, actually making the cost double what had been estimated at the time we proposed to bring the water supply into the municipality. Had the corporation thought for a moment that the water supply was to cost £42,000 they would not have gone into the scheme under the Government; they would have gone in on their own account and have constructed a water supply themselves. That is where we have reason to complain. If we had performed all the work ourselves and had employed our own hydraulic engineer and our own labourers, and had spent £40,000 or £50,000 to complete them, we would have had no just claim on the Government. The hon. Treasurer says that there should be some finality. Well,

so there should. The reason why the other towns in the colony, such as Rockhampton, made no claim was that those towns made their own waterworks. Had we carried out our own works we never would have come to this House and made a claim for redress in reference to some reduction of those sums. I think, seeing things have gone as they are, and that they are not substantial—they are actually giving way now—and that it is probable, in fact almost certain, that in a very few years we will be obliged to borrow again or have no water supply, we have a claim to some consideration. The cost of the works being double over the first estimate was caused because we took the advice of the Government to have the works done under their supervision, and under their own hydraulic engineer. And we have paid for it, and have paid the interest each year. But if we have to borrow again to carry out these other works we shall not be able to pay it. We have been able to pay so much for our water up to the present, because we adopted the principle of rating. We do not charge for the water by measurement; we take the municipal rate, and make the people pay the same for water. Consequently, people who do not use the water have to pay the same as those who do; in my own case I pay £10 a year for water for an establishment where hardly any is used. The Government had nothing to do with that, however; and had that system not been adopted the cost of water would have been so great that the poorer people would not have been able to afford it. By means of the rating system wealthy people pay the bulk of the cost, and the poorer people get it supplied to them at a very reasonable rate. That is owing to the vicious system on which the water supply was established. So far as Ipswich is concerned we have just cause of complaint. Bodies such as divisional boards, which are now borrowing money for local works, have the spending of it themselves, and they do not complain at having to pay the interest upon it. We had not the spending of the money, although we are, of course, to blame for that; but we thought that by taking the advice of the Government the work would be done cheaper than by ourselves. The fact of our taking that advice has resulted in saddling Ipswich with a debt exactly double what it would have been had we taken the work in hand ourselves. I do not want to detain the House. I have given the facts so far as Ipswich is concerned, and I leave it to the House to say whether we have not a very reasonable and just claim for a reduction of that debt.

Mr. HORWITZ said: I feel it necessary to say a few words, because it has been asserted that Warwick had a reduction of its waterworks debt. It has had nothing of the sort. When we decided upon making waterworks at Warwick, the Hon. George Thorn was Minister for Works, and when we applied for a loan of £10,000 he told us it was not the intention of the Government to let us have the spending of so large a sum, as we could not do the work. He said the Government would complete the works in twelve months at that price, and then hand them over to the municipality, no interest being charged in the meantime. Three or four years afterwards notice was sent to the municipality that the waterworks were completed, but on examining them they found they were not half completed, and refused to take them over. They told the Government that as soon as the works were completed, according to the promise of the Minister, they were willing to take them over, but not before. The Government never had any authority to expend more than £10,000 on the works. They saw plainly that was a mistake, and completed the works as nearly as possible according to the original plans and

specifications, and on calling upon the municipality to take them over produced a statement showing that the cost had been £17,000. The corporation refused to take them over on those terms, and a lot of correspondence took place between them and the Government. Sir Thomas McLlwraith was anxious to get rid of us, because he was obliged to leave somebody in charge of the works, and I, as one of a deputation, waited upon the hon. member for Blackall, who was then Colonial Treasurer. He listened to us very attentively, and the result of the negotiations was a suggestion that we should leave the question of cost in the hands of Mr. Henderson. This was agreed to, and Mr. Henderson valued the waterworks at £13,665, and working expenses £455. The corporation were then asked by Sir Thomas McLlwraith if they would take over the works on those terms, and the result was that the corporation, against my advice, agreed to do so. I still think they have a claim against the Government for £4,410 if this present motion is carried. The Warwick people never took the waterworks over, while at Toowoomba they were so anxious that they took them over twelve months before they were completed. By so doing they did a great injury to Warwick. Had they done as we did they would have got their waterworks according to promise. Toowoomba has no claim whatever against the Government, but Warwick has. If the Colonial Treasurer will give me any encouragement I shall be only too glad to support the hon. member for Toowoomba; for I consider that we have a better claim than the people of Toowoomba. If the motion be carried, I shall certainly come down and ask the House for an amount on behalf of Warwick of £4,410; but I think there is very little chance of its being carried. If the corporation of Warwick had taken my advice they would not have taken over the waterworks; but now I think that Warwick has a better claim than Toowoomba, and it is my intention to vote against the motion.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—The Colonial Treasurer, in addressing the House, made this remark: that none of the municipalities interested came to this House in any charitable way for a reduction in the money expended in the construction of the different waterworks. I admit that is perfectly so; but we come to this House to be placed on the same footing as Roma and Warwick. Roma has a water supply which, I believe, cost that municipality nothing; and the cost of the Warwick water supply was reduced in the way set forth by the hon. member for Warwick (Mr. Horwitz). He states that Sir Thomas McLlwraith sent Mr. Henderson, the Hydraulic Engineer, to Warwick to make a valuation of the works constructed. And that is all we ask for—I speak for the municipality of Maryborough—all we ask is that the Colonial Treasurer will do the same as Sir Thomas McLlwraith did, and send Mr. Henderson to Maryborough to make a valuation of the works in that town as constructed by the Government. Hon. members must bear in mind that the works were begun by the Government, and that the officials of the corporation were not allowed to interfere in any way in the construction of the works. I maintain that in a colony like this the first cost of the construction of waterworks should be borne by the State. A good supply of water preserves the health, and, in many cases, the lives of the people; and in initiating a scheme of water supply in a colony like this, as I said before, it would be no loss, but a great gain, to the colony if the money so expended were borne by the State. At the present time the corporation of Maryborough wish to go in for a further extension. But the Colonial Treasurer has told us that the loans to

municipalities on account of waterworks will be considered part of the debt they are allowed to incur—that they will contribute towards the limit beyond which they must not go in the way of borrowing; and if that is the case I think that we are already very near our limit in Maryborough. We want, however, £25,000 to make the water supply we have good and ample for the inhabitants of the town of Maryborough. At the present time they are heavily rated, the rates from all sources being about 4s. in the £1; and that is a very heavy rate indeed. In the month of April last the Minister for Works was at Maryborough, when an influential deputation waited upon him, and brought before him twelve or thirteen different subjects, and one of those subjects, I am glad to say—the reduction of the rate of freight on the coal carried from Howard to Maryborough—has received attention. I see by the *Gazette* of yesterday that tenders have been called for the construction of a retaining wall for the protection of Government property in the town of Maryborough; that is another. But those two things do not in any way affect the general interests of the inhabitants. I often hear it said that Maryborough is a clamouring community—that the people there are always in want of something. There is no doubt that we ask for a great deal, but we do not get very much.

The PREMIER: Oh, don't you?

Mr. ANNEAR: I must now refer to the deputation that waited on the Minister for Works at Maryborough; and I am glad to say that the hon. gentleman was at that time, and I suppose he is now, quite in accord with the views of the gentlemen then assembled.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What paper is that?

Mr. ANNEAR: This is the *Wide Bay and Burnett News*, of 15th April, 1884. The hon. gentleman, in reply, said:—

“If the works had been properly managed, the water supply could have been had at a much lower cost. If they had confined themselves to a reduction of the cost, he could have met them. They might ask for further reduction. (No, no.) A good deal of blame rested on themselves in not stopping what was going on at the time of the construction. An informer's work was not a pleasant one, but when they saw the wrong that was being done they should have made complaint. He knew something was wrong, but could get no proof. With reference to a reduction of the cost, as the Government was something to blame in the matter, he would give them his assistance, but they were clearly to understand that they must not come forward again for a reduction of the cost of future extensions. He was of opinion that these works should be left in the hands of the respective councils to construct, and expend the money granted to them.”

The councils of Townsville and Rockhampton, I believe, had the money for the construction of their waterworks placed in their own hands; and I am sorry that the council of Maryborough did not adopt the same principle. All we ask for—and I know that the mayor of Maryborough, who is a great political friend of the leader of the Opposition, fully believes that we shall have the assistance of that hon. gentleman—all we ask for is that the same shall be done to Maryborough as the hon. gentleman (Sir T. McLlwraith) did for Warwick; we only want a reduction of the Maryborough debt in proportion to the reduction of the debt of the town of Warwick. Now, I wish to point out that the extra cost of waterworks in Maryborough was solely brought about by the defective estimate of the Government engineer. The first estimate he gave was £28,500, and the actual cost was £40,374 19s. 6d. The works as laid down are quite inadequate, and many radical errors were made, the consequence of which will now fall on the council. For instance, the bucket-pump

is eighteen inches, while the rising main into which it empties is only ten inches, so that the engine can only work at half-speed. Consequently the council will have to take up the present rising main a distance of two miles, and relay a new and larger main at a cost of £7,000. Now, that is a most glaring defect, and that defect was brought about by the Government engineer, a man in whom the Government had confidence. The corporation were not in a position to know whether the gentleman was all he professed to be; but results proved that he made a most radical mistake. Here is another large expenditure which will have to be incurred. The main from the reservoir into Maryborough, a distance of about seven miles, will not carry a sufficient supply of water for the wants of the people of the town, and we shall have to take up that main, and replace it with a main in proportion to the engines and pump now erected on Tinana Creek, at a cost of £20,000. I think the Colonial Treasurer is somewhat in error when he states that a concession of some kind has been made to the town of Maryborough. The only concession is this: that the payment of the interest was extended for six months, because, when the Government wanted to hand the works over, it was found that unless a further sum of £5,000 was spent in extending the mains hardly any income could be obtained. I believe I am speaking correctly; if I am not, the hon. the Colonial Treasurer will correct me. There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of the money spent in the construction of the Maryborough waterworks—and no doubt the same thing took place at Ipswich and Toowoomba—was most extravagantly and recklessly spent on certain works that had nothing to do with bringing water into the town, such as the erection of expensive houses, the laying out of gardens, the putting up of fences that had to be taken down again—all these things were not required to be done; and had the work been in the hands of the corporation they would not have been done. I do not wish to delay the House by saying much more on the question, especially as we have such champions as the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, the Minister for Works, and my hon. colleague in the representation of Maryborough, Mr. Sheridan. I hope the motion will be carried. It is, in my opinion, part of the functions of any Government that, in places where good water supply exists, they should give every facility for bringing that water into the town for the use of the inhabitants.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to say many words upon this question, because it has already been discussed pretty well. I think the speech of the hon. the Treasurer has placed the matter so clearly before the House that it does not require much more argument. There is no doubt that water supply is one of the most important works that we can carry out in the colony, especially in towns where there are large populations; and in towns where there are large populations it is very usual for the people to carry out their own works. It is a different thing from carrying out works in the interior, to which some hon. members have alluded. £20,000 or £30,000 will construct waterworks for a town with a population of 10,000, but to construct waterworks for 10,000 inhabitants in the interior would be simply out of all reason. It could never be carried out; so that the Government are perfectly justified in putting a sum on the Estimates for water supply in the interior. I consider that municipalities, and especially old municipalities, under the Local Government Act are themselves in a position to carry out all works of this kind without asking aid from the Government. They can borrow money from the Government on very easy terms, and at a very reasonable rate. They

have forty years to pay principal and interest, amounting to something like 5½ per cent.; so that I do not think the Government should be asked to do more towards encouraging the local authorities than they are doing. There has been a great deal said about the municipal conference, but the different speakers on the motion have been very guarded in their reference to what took place there. They quoted from the speeches of those who were in favour of the resolution referred to, but they did not quote from mine, and I shall now do so myself. I think there are altogether about twenty-one municipalities in the colony; seventeen were represented at the conference, some sending two representatives, the mayor and an alderman; and I think altogether twenty-seven representatives attended the meeting. I attended; and it is a most singular thing that all the young municipalities—those in the North—opposed the resolution for the granting of the concession from the Government, while all those in the South wanted it granted. But the youngest municipalities, who, I suppose, had at any rate as much right as the others to ask this concession, opposed it on principle. On the principle of local self-government they did not think that it was proper or right to ask the State to support them in carrying out works of this kind. Reference has been made to Rockhampton, and to the cost of carrying out different works; and it has been stated that where they have been carried out by the Government they have cost more than under other circumstances. I deny that; I know that in the case of Ipswich—and I believe, also Toowoomba, but I am not quite sure about the latter—they were asked to take the money from the Government to undertake the works, but they declined, saying that they had not officers capable of carrying them out, and they preferred that the Government should do so. That was especially the case with regard to Ipswich. They got the Government to carry out the works, and took no responsibility themselves, except that it was carried out at the expense of the corporation. In the cases of Rockhampton and Townsville, the Government offered them the money, and they accepted it. In Rockhampton the original estimate of the town surveyor was £16,000, but through mistakes on his part, and on the part of the council, the works cost £30,000, and we had to ask for a second loan amounting to £30,000. The first main they put down was too small, and it was not long down when they found that it was not sufficiently large to supply the town with water. A fresh main had therefore to be put down, three or four times the size of the original one. We also found that the reservoir was leaking, and had to go to a large expense in constructing another. This has been done by the corporation; I venture to say that if it had been carried out by a Government official the whole country would soon have heard of it. Townsville stands in the same position. The works there were originally estimated to cost £18,000; but we find that they have cost about £30,000—£12,000 more than the original estimate; while in the case of Rockhampton the works cost £14,000 more than was originally estimated. I therefore think the argument that the works cost more through being carried out under Government supervision goes for nothing. I am not going to detain the House long, but I will read what I said at the municipal conference upon this point. It has been stated by the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, that the motion was carried unanimously, but the reason it was carried unanimously was that it was seen that there was no use in opposing it. A great many motions are carried in this House for the same

reason—because we are able to see how the majority stand; and when one side is strong and the other weak there is no use in opposing them. That is the reason why the motion referred to was carried unanimously; and I will now read what I said myself:—

“Mr. J. FERGUSON said he supposed, as it was necessary to show how the different municipalities were affected, that each member should state the experience of the town which he represented. It seemed to him that Warwick was an isolated case.”—

It was acknowledged that Warwick was an isolated case, and that it deserved the consideration it had since received. The matter was not settled at that time.

“Warwick was an isolated case, and he did not approve of that portion of the motion asking the Government to reduce the loans to the amounts of the original estimate. Rockhampton originally borrowed £6,000 for water supply purposes; this was afterwards extended to £30,000, and now the liability of the corporation, in connection with the matter, stood at the latter sum. Their revenue, however, was sufficient to meet the interest, pay the portions of the principal which from time to time became due, as well as the expenses, and to have a surplus of from £500 to £1,000 per annum, which surplus was applied to extending the mains. They had adopted the same scale of charges as Brisbane. To expect the Government to give an endowment on water rates which were levied to meet loans obtained from them was, in his opinion, out of the question.”

That was another point. It was actually argued by some members of the conference, although the hon. member for Toowoomba, the Speaker, opposed it, that the Government should pay endowments on water rates—on works carried out by money derived from the Government—which I considered was perfectly ridiculous.

“He did not think, if the principle of the resolution was adopted, that it would be fair to other municipalities which had not borrowed money for waterworks, and he could not support the motion.”

What I said then I am now carrying out. I said then, and I say now, that it would be unjust to Rockhampton and Townsville—which have carried out works as large as any of the municipalities mentioned in the motion, and have borrowed as large sums—that those three municipalities should get this concession, and that they should be left out. I know that the reason for leaving Rockhampton and Townsville out is because they are opposed to this proposition. It was no use including them, because it was known the members of those towns would not support the motion.

Mr. ALAND: No, no! That is not the reason.

Mr. FERGUSON: I do not know if that was the reason, but I believe that that is the state of the matter. There are twenty-one municipalities altogether, and I know that Gympie could have had waterworks if the Government were prepared to give £5,000 for their construction; but if that was done the other towns of the colony would just be entitled to the same privilege. I have now given my views on this question, and I will not detain the House any longer, but simply say that I shall oppose the motion.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL said: The hon. member for Warwick has stated that the Toowoomba people took over the waterworks before they were completed. That is not correct, and I wish to say a few words upon that point. The works were completed, and on our being called upon to take them over we hesitated, because unfortunately at that time a severe epidemic of typhoid fever was prevalent in Toowoomba. A committee was appointed, consisting of Dr. Thomson, of Brisbane, yourself, Mr. Speaker, and other gentlemen, to inquire into the cause of the fever. The reason given by Dr. Thomson was the use of impure water, and the committee

therefore recommended that we should get a new supply of water as quickly as possible. Consequently, to save the inhabitants, we did so, believing that at some future time we should get a reduction of the debt, knowing as we did that we were being robbed. That is the plain fact. We were robbed; and if the hon. member for Townsville was in his place he would bear me out. He was one of the gentlemen who sat on the committee; and the disclosures that were made of the malpractices of the engineer, as well as of the contractors, were simply disgraceful. I have every reason to believe that the hon. member will bear me out. I am sure we did not anticipate that the works were going to cost anything near the sum they have cost; £10,000 was the original estimate, and furthermore, we had no control whatever over the expenditure of that money. I remember on one occasion we complained to the Government of the day—I do not remember what Government was in power at the time—of the manner in which the works were being carried out, and asking to have them, or the money, placed in the hands of the municipal council, but that was declined.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: No.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL: We were told that Mr. Highfield was employed to carry out the works; and that he was the proper person to finish them.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: That is not correct.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL: We therefore had no control over the works or the expenditure of the money. In addition to that, I may say that a majority of the municipal council did not agree with the site proposed by the engineer, and wrote to the Government protesting against it; and I remember that at a meeting we had I doubted the possibility of a well like that supplying a town such as Toowoomba, and Mr. Highfield, in reply, told me his professional reputation depended upon the work, and he did not think I had any right to question it. I am sure we have always looked forward to a reduction of the debt, and I trust the good sense of the House will see that we, as well as Maryborough and Ipswich, are entitled to some consideration after the manner in which we have been treated by a servant of the Government.

Mr. HORWITZ said: I should like to correct the hon. member. He stated that I said the Toowoomba people did not take over the waterworks. I said that they did take over the works for twelve months, but that they were dissatisfied with them and gave them up. Then after that they were only too glad to get them back again.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL: The hon. member said we took over the waterworks before they were completed, and I say he is in error.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I have the greatest pleasure in congratulating the Colonial Treasurer in having taken up the very sensible course he has indicated. I think he defended the Treasury well, and he has relieved the colony of a very considerable difficulty in dealing with questions of this kind in the future. I congratulate the hon. gentleman upon the way in which he has spoiled the neatest little bit of log-rolling that has been introduced into this House for many years. I have seen this coming on, and have looked at it with considerable alarm, but I am glad, however, to find that the Government have been firm in the matter, have met this proposition with sound reasons, and have shown their adherence to the principles of local government. It would be a serious matter indeed if the principle which we have established in this colony of local self-government should be weakened at all by an invasion of the principle

such as has been attempted to-night. We have not only to look at the possibility of these municipalities being relieved of certain debts, because that is a very small consideration; but it is what we have to look forward to in the future, for the very liberal way in which the Legislature has provided for local works may be seriously interfered with if we are to admit claims and condone debts in the way proposed by the hon. member for Toowoomba. Now, the hon. member in introducing his motion claimed some support from me because I expressed my sympathy with the municipal conference that met two years ago. I did sympathise with the conference, because when I see the different local authorities meeting together for the purpose of devising the best steps to be adopted towards carrying out the principles of local self-government, such a scheme could not but excite my sympathy. I was glad to see that conference assemble, and I believe it did a great amount of good; but the hon. gentleman should have told the House, as I am sure he knows, that my hearty disapproval was expressed with regard to the very proposal he has made to the House to-night. I told the members of the conference most distinctly—not only separately, but collectively—that they had not the slightest hope of securing my sympathy in their endeavour to obtain a remission of their waterworks debts. I pointed out the great value which the Local Works Loan Act had been to this colony. We have had a foretaste of its value now in the very valuable works which have been made under it in the different municipalities of the colony, and I do not think we ought to endanger it by jeopardising the principle. The principle is, that the Government borrow money in the cheapest market, pledging their good faith to the English money-lenders. We borrow that money, and lend it virtually at the same rate to the municipalities. We give them the easiest terms of repayment—terms which if the works are judiciously managed they can pay, and pay in a short time, so that those works will actually be a source of profit to the municipality in addition to all the good they do. The hon. member is striking the greatest blow at that principle; and at any rate his motion means neither more nor less than a system of repudiation at the start. Countenance to such an action, in the mind of the hon. member, may have been given by the fact that a certain amount was struck off the debt which the Legislature decided was owing to the country by the municipality of Warwick for waterworks. A certain amount was reduced from that debt due by Warwick, but it was under very peculiar circumstances. It was placed in a position in which no other municipality in the colony was placed in, and if similar circumstances arose in regard to any other municipality at the present time I believe it would be entitled to the same relief. I am quite sure that the circumstances under which that reduction was granted to the municipality of Warwick do not apply to any other municipality in the colony. It was not simply a matter of relief to the municipality of Warwick, because it was indebted to the colony. The municipality of Warwick was said to be indebted to the colony to the amount of £15,000, but so long as the municipality did not accept that liability, and would have nothing to do with it, it would have been an act of tyranny on the part of the Government to have forced it upon them. They said—"We stand outside the bargain altogether. You made the works at your own expense, and we are perfectly willing to take them at the price they are worth to us as a municipality, but we decline to take over works at your price, even although you

have passed an Act for that object." I found it would have been an act of tyranny for the then Government to have enforced that Act. They said, "Those works are really not worth that much, and we decline to take them over." The Government had to make the best of the bargain and come to some conclusion as to what the works were worth to the municipality. A price was fixed to which the municipality agreed, and so did the Government; and the municipality then took over the works at that price, and I believe they will keep their bargain. The hon. member for Aubigny (Mr. J. Campbell) is quite mistaken when he says that the municipality of Toowoomba saw with some regret that the Government would insist on carrying out the works there themselves, and that the municipality would have been glad to carry on the works themselves, and no doubt would have done a great deal better than the Government did. But that is not the fact. I was Minister for Works at the time. The hon. member, Mr. Aland, was, I believe, chairman of the municipality at the time, and I know the matter was arranged by the present Speaker and myself. It was the request of the Speaker on behalf of the municipality and the people of Toowoomba that the Government should undertake the work. That was a work I wanted the municipality and the people to undertake on their own account, because I believed then in local self-government, as I do now. The reasons pointed out then by the Speaker, and which were fully endorsed by the action of the municipal council, and by the people of Toowoomba in public meeting, were that the Government should be requested to carry out those works. They were undertaken by the Government on the special condition enforced by me—that while we were willing, for the reasons set forth by the municipality, that we should carry out the works, still the municipality should be responsible for the actions of the Government. That was perfectly fair. The reason the municipality urged the Government to undertake the work was that if the expenditure of such an amount of money as £10,000 was given to the municipality of Toowoomba it would actually ruin the town. That was said at the public meetings.

MR. ALAND: No; nothing of that kind was said at the meetings.

THE HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Yes; I remember the public meetings well. The public meetings were in fact first called to decide the question whether they would accept the grant of £10,000 for water supply at all. They came to the conclusion to accept the grant, and then they came and beseeched the Government to undertake the construction of the works for them, the municipality of Toowoomba being solely responsible. That was done and the works were carried out by the Government, and not the slightest complaint was received all the time from the municipality. However, the works were completed, and then the municipality thought there might be a chance of reducing the debt, which was more than they expected. Still at the same time they were just as much responsible for the expenditure exceeding the £10,000, which was originally contemplated as the amount for which the works could be constructed, as the Government—in fact, they were a great deal more responsible, because we were carrying out what was reckoned at the time a proper provision for the supply of water to the town of Toowoomba. After the works were completed the Toowoomba people took action to try and get the debt reduced. We declined to reduce it; we went a

certain length, however, on the strength of the representations made by this House, on motion of the present Speaker, when the matter was referred to a committee of the House, and that committee decided exactly the amount of the debt that Toowoomba should be responsible for. There was no division in the committee, and the amount to be charged to the municipality of Toowoomba was unanimously agreed upon by the committee. The committee who came to the decision upon the matter were a committee of five, and included the two members for Toowoomba at the time—the late Mr. Davenport and the present Speaker. I ask in what way can we go back now, and revise the whole matter, as proposed by the hon. member for Toowoomba, on the ground that certain exceptions were made in respect to another town, but on different considerations altogether? The hon. member asks us to set aside all those different conditions altogether, and grant a reduction in debt to the municipalities of Toowoomba, Ipswich, and Maryborough. I think the hon. member has made a mistake: he will find that that log won't roll, because there is such a serious consideration behind it. We must not allow any of the foundations of local self-government to be undermined in such an insidious way as this. This House has behaved munificently to all the local bodies, and we ought to be met in good faith by the municipalities, who ought to keep good faith with the Government in every possible way. I have another word of advice to give to the hon. member for Toowoomba, and also to the hon. members for Maryborough and Ipswich, and that is that they need not try to cry down their properties. They have got very good properties in the waterworks that exist at the present time in Toowoomba, Ipswich, and Maryborough. They are properties that can well pay a good and fair interest, and I am quite sure that any company with the power of levying a moderate rate would make those works pay, and pay remarkably well. I am rather surprised to see the hon. member for Toowoomba—who usually speaks with such good sense on matters of this sort—coming in on a small local question of this kind and reviving the old days of Ipswich, when the members for Ipswich used to be such a force in the House. Those times seem to have gone into the back-ground altogether, and there is only one member for Ipswich here now; and I am sure he was more inclined, when he was speaking, to talk upon another subject altogether. If he only had the chance I am quite sure he would have spoken upon any other subject than that of water supply. From the stand the Government have taken I think there is not the slightest chance of the motion being carried, and I hope it will be rejected by such a majority as will show that any attempt of the same character for the future will be useless. I believe the municipalities ought to keep their engagements. If they want more money, let them have it by all means; but let them prove that they are worthy of getting it by paying their debts.

Mr. ALAND, in reply, said: I intend to withdraw the motion, because I have no wish to embarrass the Treasury. I am the last member of the House who would cause any such embarrassment. But I would like to say one or two words before I withdraw it. I am much obliged to the leader of the Opposition for the good advice he has given me, and I can assure him and the House that if the motion has the appearance of log-rolling—and I confess, looking at it now, that it has somewhat that appearance—no intention of anything of that sort floated through my mind when I wrote it out. I know every hon. member will acknowledge that I have never spoken to

anyone in this House on the subject. Some hon. members have “chaffed” me about it a little, but that is all. The leader of the Opposition, just before he sat down, said something about the Toowoomba waterworks being as good an investment as anybody could put their money into. But if the corporation is disposed to sell the works, I certainly should not advise the hon. member to buy them, because they would not be a good investment for the money they have cost, and for this reason: that there is no certain supply of water. It professes to be a water supply, but it is not. It is true that the Select Committee, when they brought up their report, founded on evidence given by someone before that committee, stated that there was a sufficient supply for a town with a larger number of inhabitants than Toowoomba. But what happened within six months? That very source almost entirely failed, and from that time to this very little water has been got from the well which was handed over to us by the Government and Mr. Highfield. The corporation then sank another well, from which nearly the whole of the water supply has been obtained. Ultimately they purchased a piece of land which is known in Toowoomba by the name of the “Dry Springs.” I am sorry that, although the Hydraulic Engineer of the Government favourably reported on it, it has really turned out a dry spring; and I suppose within three or four months after the reservoir was formed at that place we had not a drop of water from it. At the present time Toowoomba is depending upon a small well which was sunk somewhere near to the swamp at the foot of the well which was sunk by Mr. Highfield. It strikes me, though I may be wrong, that the gist of the argument of the Colonial Treasurer—although he was very much complimented by the leader of the Opposition—was that because Toowoomba, Ipswich, and Maryborough have not repudiated their liability to the Government, therefore they are not placed in the same position as Warwick, and that what they ought to have done was to have acted as Warwick did, and refused to take over the works, and then the same concession would have been made to them as was made to Warwick. The hon. member for Rockhampton said that the resolutions at the conference were not carried unanimously. Well, the report states that they were; and it is from the report that I read. I could not go outside what I read. I was not present myself, and therefore could only go by the report. But I would point out to the hon. member this fact: that from him we have heard the municipality of Rockhampton spoken of in a very high manner; and I have no doubt it deserves all the credit he gives to it. I have always heard it spoken of as a kind of model municipality. But I would like the hon. member and this House to understand that Rockhampton has had an advantage over other municipalities in having derived a large revenue from its wharfage. That has been of great assistance to them, and has given them a great advantage. Before I sit down I just want to say this: We are not going to get this money, and I would ask the Colonial Treasurer to take this into consideration. It will be observed from what has fallen from the hon. member for Maryborough that that municipality—and I know Toowoomba, also, and possibly Ipswich—will certainly have to borrow more money. We are in dread every day of the water supply in Toowoomba completely failing, and it is necessary for us to look for a fresh source. I think I know where that fresh source is, and it has always been a wonder to me why Mr. Highfield did not get water from it. Although these municipalities must

have borrowed fully five times the amount of their annual revenue, I would ask the Colonial Treasurer whether he will allow them to borrow something more in order that these waterworks may be made efficient? I hope the hon. gentleman will seriously consider the matter. I know he has had an application of that kind from Maryborough, and he has informed them that he could not see his way clear to lend them more money. But we have heard from the hon. member for Maryborough that it will be absolutely necessary for that town to borrow money. I know that it will be absolutely necessary for Toowoomba to do so, and, therefore I think our borrowing powers should be extended. What is the use of having pipes in the streets, and engines to pump the water, if we have not got the water? I beg to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

GRATUITY TO PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIAN.

Mr. BUCKLAND, in moving—

That the House will, at its next sitting, 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 on the Supplementary Estimates for 1884-5 the sum of £400, as a further recognition (in addition to the sum already paid) of the eminent services rendered to both Houses of Parliament by D. O'Donovan, Esquire, the Parliamentary Librarian, in the preparation of the Parliamentary Catalogue, the compilation of which has extended over several years—

said: Mr. Speaker,—I had hoped that some other means would have been adopted to carry out the object of this motion, as I find that a motion of similar purport was brought forward at the last sitting of the House by the hon. member for Burke. But as nothing has been done I will submit the resolution to the House. I think every hon. member will admit that the compilation of our Library catalogue has occupied a large amount of time, and that the reviews which have been made of the book, both by the colonial Press and the Press of the old country, prove it to be a very valuable and comprehensive work. This House will be only doing justice, I think, to a valuable servant by recognising his abilities, and the time the Librarian has devoted to the preparation of the catalogue, by increasing the gratuity already paid him by £400, making altogether a sum of £1,000. I find that the work has been favourably reviewed, not only by the Earl of Rosebery, the Duke of Manchester, and Mr. Todd, the late Librarian of the Canadian Legislature, but by all the leading newspapers and authorities in the old country; and I have great pleasure, sir, in moving that the sum of £400 be granted as an additional gratuity to Mr. O'Donovan.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I certainly expected that the hon. member, in moving this motion, would have given some reason for it. I have not been able to collect any reason from what few observations the hon. member offered to the House, why the sum of £600, proposed by the late Government as fair remuneration to Mr. O'Donovan for his services, should be increased. In fact, the only argument the hon. gentleman offered was that Mr. O'Donovan is not satisfied with what he has received. We all know that the work done was a very creditable work and a very laborious one, that the catalogue contains an immense amount of information, and that it is a monument of industry. I daresay it is a model of what a catalogue ought to be. But after all, when it is proposed that we should spend the public money, I think we are bound to ask what is the work worth, and what has been paid for it? It must be borne in

mind that it is one of the principal duties of a librarian to make a catalogue. That is understood to be part of the functions of a librarian. In this particular instance the Librarian has made an unusually good catalogue, and in consideration of that he has had an honorarium of £600. I presume that before the Government decided to give him that amount they considered the merits of the case, and came to the conclusion that £600 was a fair remuneration, and I confess that I have seen no reason for dissenting from that conclusion. It is said that the work occupied a great deal of time. No doubt it took a long time and involved a great deal of trouble. But after all our Library is not a large one; and I cannot myself see why the honorarium of £600 should not be a sufficient recognition of the valuable services—what I may call the extra services—rendered in making the catalogue better than catalogues are ordinarily. In saying that I estimate the catalogue at its full value. I object on principle to giving extra pay to public officers for doing their duty, as a general rule. If public officers, in performing their duties, do more than their duty to an extraordinary degree, then it is very proper, no doubt, to make some recognition of it. I have also a strong objection to continually revising remunerations. I think it is a very objectionable thing to be revising them year after year. This matter has been discussed in the House before in Committee of Supply. That the work of compiling the catalogue was a very laborious one, and was very creditably done, we all admit, but no reason has been given why we should give Mr. O'Donovan, in addition to his ordinary salary for performing his ordinary work, an additional two years' pay. He has actually received £600, and now it is proposed to give him an additional £400. I fail to see that any argument has been advanced to justify the House in expending a further sum out of the revenue for this purpose.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Mr. Speaker,—I hope the Government will not deal with this question in a niggardly spirit, but that they will carry out the principle which the hon. member just now enumerated. The Premier says that in considering a question of this sort we ought to consider what the work is worth. That is what I would like to study too. The hon. gentleman also says that it is the business of a librarian to make a catalogue, but the merit of the work of our Librarian is that it contains a digest of the Library. Mr. O'Donovan has read every book in the Library, and the result is, that we can get any information as to any work we may require on a particular subject by consulting the catalogue. It is a work which no librarian has ever approached, except the librarians of some large private libraries in Europe. The fact is, that in no very extensive library at home could such a work be executed by any one man. But our catalogue has been compiled by one man, and to every subject treated, if in the books contained in the Library, a reference is given, so that if a member wishes to be informed of what works there are in the Library on any subject and their nature, he has only to study the catalogue. That is an assistance we have never had before, and an assistance which the members of Parliament in the other colonies do not enjoy. I say this sincerely, that I acknowledge with gratitude the assistance I have got from that catalogue. It has saved me nights and days of labour. With regard to the payment made to Mr. O'Donovan, I must say that if the same amount of work was done by an engineer or lawyer or other professional man the sum would never have been grudged. How the amount of £600 was arrived at by the late Government I do not know. I believe

it was the modesty of the Librarian that fixed it at that amount. I would have voted £1,000 without the slightest hesitation. I know very well that legal work of this kind has been paid for at a ten times higher rate.

The PREMIER: It does not follow that it was worth that.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: No, it does not. Literary work of this kind has always been paid at a higher rate, and I think we cannot do less than vote the small sum proposed in the motion before the House. I know that any member who uses that library, and wishes to inform himself quickly on any subject, cannot but rise with admiration from a study of that catalogue, and cannot help feeling grateful to the man who has helped him to save so much of his time. It is a wonderful work, and it is a work that is impossible for one man in the big libraries at home; and now that we have found a man who has undertaken it we should not let him go unrewarded. There is another reason why we should not pass him by. It is two years since he was paid this £600, and he has been working indefatigably at that catalogue ever since. The Library is increasing every month, and he is keeping that work up with the increase of the books. That is an increase of labour which an ordinary librarian would not have to undertake if he had not such a catalogue as this. Mr. O'Donovan has made it a point of honour to keep up the work to the very latest review, and I think we ought to acknowledge that by paying the small amount asked by the hon. member for Bulimba.

Mr. MIDGLEY said: Mr. Speaker,—One is naturally wishful to keep on the best terms with the officials of this House, and I am influenced by that feeling as much as any hon. member, but I do not think a feeling of that kind should keep a member silent when he ought to speak, or interfere with the discharge of what appears to him to be his public duty. I think that the claim or request put before us to-night, taking all the surrounding circumstances into consideration, is one which this House ought not to entertain. I feel satisfied that if those of us who have made any show at all of fighting for economy and the fair thing all round, are silent on this subject, we shall never be justified in speaking on any other question of the same character. I maintain that undue pressure, undue influence, and persistency are brought to bear on hon. members with regard to this matter.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

Mr. MIDGLEY: Why, the proprietors of St. Jacob's Oil might learn a lesson from someone or other connected with this catalogue. One is ready to admire anything that is good and beautiful and worthy of admiration, but really the advertising, and the puffing, and the manœuvring in connection with this matter whenever it was likely to be subject to discussion in this House have been so persistent and so frequent as to be patent to any ordinary observer. I maintain, Mr. Speaker that the Parliamentary Librarian has the rosiest and the snuggest—well, I could use a long string of adjectives with regard to that particular billet. There is no position in the State, to my mind, which, to a man of any literary taste at all, is more enviable than that. The duties of the Parliamentary Librarian are the lightest and easiest of any Civil servant in the country, and for those duties Mr. O'Donovan is fairly well paid. He was probably elected to the position because of his experience and his qualifications, and he would naturally bring those qualifications to bear, and endeavour to discharge his duties in such a way as to prove

that the qualifications he was supposed to have did exist. I feel confident that, even if this matter went into committee, there would be very little chance of its being carried. I think the claim is an unreasonable one, and ought to be as persistently opposed as it has been imposed on the House.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: I intend to oppose this motion. I do not know whether the gentleman interested has asked anyone to make this claim for him; but, whether he has or not, I think the amount of salary he is paid at the present time is quite sufficient for the duties he has to perform. Now, sir, how do commercial houses value the services of their employés? If they find a man's services are worth more than they are paying him, they give him an advance; and I think the Parliamentary Librarian has had his salary advanced from £400 to £500. Besides that he has had £600 as an honorarium for working out that index to the Library, and I think that Parliament has a perfect claim to the best services of that gentleman. We have already paid what we considered a fair sum for the great work he has executed, and I do not see why we should be asked to make an addition to that sum. I should be ashamed to face my constituency if I voted for this motion. I would just remark here: What advantage have the constituencies from such a work as we are now asked to pay £400 for, to raise the amount to £1,000? It is only for the benefit of members; no one else receives any benefit from it. But my strong argument is that we pay him quite sufficient for the duties he performs. While the Librarian was engaged at that work I suppose it was in the time he was paid for; he was not sitting up night after night at it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes, he was.

Mr. MACFARLANE: Even if he was, £600 is a considerable sum to pay for it. There are a great number of hard-working students, working for far less than that—getting no reward except giving satisfaction to their employers. I think the Librarian ought to wait and see how his services are valued by his employers. If in a year or two the work proves of great service to members of this House, by saving them time and trouble, and is found to be a benefit to the whole colony, it will be time enough then, I think, to ask that the House should vote a further sum for that gentleman. I hope that very few members will not have much to say in favour of this motion.

Mr. BROOKES: It is not often that we are called upon, Mr. Speaker, in this House to estimate a labour of the kind which is represented by the catalogue of our Library; and perhaps it may be that we are not very good judges of the value of the kind of labour it implies. It is impossible to have the case put better before the House than it was put by the leader of the Opposition. I think he stated it in a very convincing way. I do not look on this matter in a commercial light. At all events, I may take a special view of it. Looking to the work itself, and to the work implied in this catalogue, I consider that labour very cheap at £1,000. I think I have known of £1,000 given by this House for work which is of no value whatever—not the slightest—and for other work which has ceased to be of value almost as soon as the books were printed. I do think that hon. members who have spoken—and other hon. members who have not spoken—but who may be of the same opinion—are hardly aware of the position of a librarian. They think that a librarian is a person whose principal occupation is to record in a ledger the books that have been taken out, and to take care that the books are not injured. I question very much whether, until they saw this catalogue, many gentlemen in this Assembly ever saw a catalogue.

I confess I never saw in all my life such a catalogue as that prepared by Mr. O'Donovan, and therefore I am prepared to endorse what the leader of the Opposition says: that that catalogue will save hours and hours of work and labour of research on the part of persons seeking information. There is this in it: that it was no part of the Librarian's duty to prepare a catalogue. I need not point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that we have had a librarian before, and that there is not a librarian who has ever attempted to prepare such a catalogue as we have. I consider that as a mere advertisement for the colony—and that is a low reason to give—that catalogue is cheap at £1,000. That catalogue goes here and there—in England, on the Continent, in the United States—and is in that way of great value. It tells its own tale about us in Queensland; and on that ground I think that the House should not be niggardly in this matter, but should accord Mr. O'Donovan this amount. I fancy that this £400 would not have been applied for had not the Librarian been given to understand that he would receive £1,000; and it was only natural for him to make the application. We would all have done the same thing if we had been led to expect £1,000, and only received £600; we would have endeavoured to ascertain whether we could not get the £400. Without saying that the House is pledged to the £400, I still think with the leader of the Opposition, that we cannot get out of it with honour unless we pay the £400. I still think that the Librarian was led to suppose that he would receive the £400 which is now being asked for. I would like hon. members to entirely dismiss from their minds the idea that the preparation of that catalogue formed any part of his duty. It was entirely an extra work. It has been to him a labour of love, and I do not believe that there is another gentleman in the Australian colonies who could have done it. I believe, at all events, we shall act in conformity with our dignity and a wise policy if we grant this £400 to our Librarian. Now, the work proceeds; it is a kind of work which can never stop, and the result will be that it will become more and more a perfect catalogue as time rolls on. If this £400 should not be granted—well, then, out dies the professional spirit of the Librarian with reference to this catalogue. He will perform his duties just the same as ever. I do not believe one member in twenty would perceive the slightest laxity in the performance of his duties; but he would never touch the catalogue more. And I should not like that. The catalogue as it stands now is a credit to Queensland. It has been a work springing entirely out of the love of literature possessed by Mr. O'Donovan. It has cost him an amount of labour which even £1,000 would imperfectly repay; and I think we shall honour ourselves and show our appreciation of a good librarian if we vote this sum.

Mr. HORWITZ: All I wish to say is, that Mr. O'Donovan is the right man in the right place. He was engaged as Librarian, and got first £300 a year; then he got a rise to £400, and after two years to £500. Now, he has made a catalogue which contains very useful information to the members of Assembly, but at the same time he gets £500 a year, and I consider he ought to be very well satisfied. He got £600 twelve months ago from the late Government, and if the late Government thought his work was worth £1,000, why did they not put £1,000 down? If we pay this £400 now, some other member may bring forward twelve months hence another motion to give him another £500.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I have but a word to say in support of this motion. It

is of no use my saying that I think very highly of the work, for a great many people much better qualified than I am have expressed high admiration of it. And to anyone who understands it at all it must be evident that it is prepared by a man of high literary culture. But that is not the principal reason why I support the vote. I look upon it as a debt of honour. I consider it would be another act of repudiation if Mr. O'Donovan were not paid that £400.

The PREMIER: There is no evidence.

Mr. STEVENSON: There is not the slightest doubt that every member of the Committee, when we passed the vote of £600 last year, got up with the impression that the sum of £400 would be put down in the next Estimates. I have a distinct recollection of that.

The PREMIER: The very opposite was said.

Mr. STEVENSON: That was the impression left on the minds of hon. members, and I was astonished when I found it was not on the Estimates for this year. It would not be fair to go back on that implied promise in a thin House like this, where there can hardly be a fair expression of opinion. I am satisfied that the money was as good as promised to Mr. O'Donovan. Whatever the Librarian's salary may be, this catalogue was extra work, and very cheap at the money. If it had been done outside it would have cost far more. As has been pointed out, the work is a credit to the Library, and a good advertisement to the colony. I hope the motion will be carried.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL said: I did intend to vote against the motion, but after what the leader of the Opposition said about the catalogue, and the statement he made that the work is still going on—and also after the kind way in which the junior member for South Brisbane spoke of it—I feel it my duty to support the motion.

Mr. ANNEAR said: I never intended to vote against the motion, but for it; and I do so from what I gathered, not only from the Press of the colony, but from papers I have received from Great Britain. The catalogue is a very good one, and we shall be doing a very graceful act in voting this sum, which will only make the whole amount £1,000.

Mr. BUCKLAND said: With reference to the remarks of the hon. member for Normanby as to the implied promise made by the Colonial Treasurer last year, I will read the remarks made by the hon. gentleman on that occasion. The Colonial Treasurer said:—

“He fully believed that everything that had been said in praise of the catalogue had been justified; but the Government had not really had time to consider the matter on account of the session coming on so early in the year. He could hardly make any promise at present, but the expression of opinion that had been given would not be lost on the Government, and before the House met again he could arrive at some conclusion on the subject.”

Such being the words of the Colonial Treasurer, hon. members had a right to expect that some further recognition of Mr. O'Donovan's services would have been found on the Estimates for this year. That is the reason why I brought forward the motion.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I may as well say that the impression left upon my mind at the time, and upon the minds of the majority of hon. members present, was that a distinct promise had been made that the sum would appear on next year's Estimates. The Colonial Treasurer may not have intended to put that meaning into his words, but that was the impression they made; and the junior member for North

Brisbane is quite justified in saying that to refuse to pass the motion now would almost savour of repudiation.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: The report of what I said is exactly correct. I did subsequently represent to the Cabinet the opinion expressed in this Chamber on the subject; that was when we were framing the Estimates for the current year. The question was fully inquired into and considered, and the Cabinet arrived at the conclusion that the £600 previously voted was an adequate remuneration. Therefore I fulfilled the promise I made in the Chamber.

Question put.

The House divided:—

AYES, 18.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Macrossan, Norton, Chubb, Macdonald-Paterson, Brookes, Isambert, Kellett, J. Campbell, Stevenson, Annear, Buckland, Stevens, Donaldson, Ferguson, T. Campbell, and Lissner.

NOES, 14.

Messrs. Dickson, Rutledge, Miles, Griffith, Sheridan, Dutton, White, Black, Macfarlane, Midgley, Horwitz, Fraser, Aland, and Bailey.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to ask the Premier, before we pass to the Orders of the Day, if he has made up his mind exactly about the course of business on Monday—whether the Defence Bill will come on first? The reason why I ask is that the motion making Monday a Government day has only come on lately, and I know several hon. members—I myself, for one—have made engagements for that day which we cannot very well break. I wish to know what business is to be taken, because I desire to be here as much of Monday as I possibly can.

The PREMIER: I said last night that what the Government want to do is to consult the convenience of hon. gentlemen. I have considered the suggestion that was made then, that the Treasurer should make what statement he has to make in connection with the Loan Estimates, and proceed with some other business before we actually go on with them. That appears to me to be the most practicable way. I think, therefore, that it will be convenient to let the Order of the Day for Supply stand at the head of the paper, and the Colonial Treasurer can make any speech he intends to make on the motion that the Speaker leave the chair; but instead of the Speaker actually leaving the chair after the speech has been made, if it be so desired—probably it may be—the motion may be withdrawn, and we can proceed with the amendments in the Defence Bill, which I find, with one exception, are formal, relating to the naval defences, and almost verbal. We can then deal with the Officials in Parliament Bill, which will not take very long, and then proceed with Committee of Supply, and take the Supplementary Estimates, or the debate on the Loan Estimates, whichever is desired.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The hon. gentleman has said that he will try and suit the convenience of hon. members. I think it will be convenient if the Defence Bill be not taken on Monday, as I do not think that all the amendments in it are exactly formal, as the hon. gentleman seems to consider. It will suit the convenience of this side if the Defence Bill be not gone on with.

BUNDABERG GAS AND COKE COMPANY (LIMITED) BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider this Bill.

Preamble postponed.

Clauses 1 to 6, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 7, as follows:—

"All salaried officers of the company shall be competent to hold any share or shares, estate, or interest in the capital, stock, funds, or property thereof, either solely or jointly for themselves or in trust for others."

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked whether the clauses of the Bill were the same as those contained in other Gas Bills passed during the session?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Yes.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked how it was that the indenture gave Mr. Fleming a monopoly of the manufacture of gas in the town of Bundaberg for so many years?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said there would be no monopoly. A bond with the corporation with regard to a monopoly was not worth the paper on which it was written.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that by the agreement the municipality of Bundaberg could not enter into any other contract for the supply of gas for a period of ten years; and it would be monstrous to give a monopoly to anybody for the supply of gas or anything else for ten years.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the corporation would only be bound so far as lamps were concerned. At question 22 of the evidence taken by the Select Committee, the following appeared:—

"By Mr. Donaldson: There is nothing to prevent the corporation entering into an agreement with any other private person or public company, except as regards the supply of lamps by you? No; except the lamps. Twenty is the stated number to start with."

Mr. CHUBB said that a monopoly could only be granted by the Crown. The corporation of Bundaberg had no more power to grant a monopoly to Mr. Fleming than to grant to him the succession of the Crown of England.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he was afraid that among the lawyers the Bundabergians would drop in for a monopoly in the gas line. The preamble of the Bill seemed to adopt the agreement made between Mr. Fleming and the council; and whether they had a legal right to make that agreement or not, the Bundabergians would be bound in honour to take Mr. Fleming's gas for ten years, if that agreement was embodied in an Act of Parliament. He did not think that was intended, nor was it right. Clause 7 of the agreement was not recited in the preamble, but the preamble embodied the agreement; and whether the agreement was legal or not, he thought they were binding the people of Bundaberg to a monopoly.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said it was a very innocent clause after all. The company would be bound to supply gas at a specific price, which would be reduced from time to time; and the quality of the gas was to be of a certain standard. There was, therefore, no chance of the people of Bundaberg suffering from the enterprise of the company.

The PREMIER said that clauses 7, 8, and 9 of the agreement were most objectionable. The 7th clause said:—

"That the said municipal council of Bundaberg shall not for a period of ten years enter into any other contract for the purpose of supplying the inhabitants of the town of Bundaberg and its suburbs with gas other than this."

Suppose the company did not make good gas—the contract still remained. Perhaps they could succeed in an action for damages against the company if it carried on its work in an unsatisfactory manner. The company might fail

to do its duty, but the corporation would be bound not to make a contract with another company. Then the requirements of the town might be beyond the powers of the company. They did not know what the bounds of the municipality would be ten years hence. Probably before that time it would extend to the other side of the river; and in that case no company could be empowered to supply the other side of the river with gas. The 8th clause purported to give Mr. Fleming the sole right to manufacture gas in the town of Bundaberg; Parliament should never sanction a thing of that kind. Clause 9 also was objectionable. It provided that at the termination of ten years the municipal council should have the sole right of purchasing the property of the company, provided they exercised the right of purchasing within six months from the expiration of the ten years. The general provisions inserted in other Bills were not in accordance with that part of the agreement. At the expiration of the prescribed period the "municipal corporation" might not be the local authority empowered to purchase on the conditions prescribed by the Bill. He thought by far the best way out of the difficulty would be to amend the preamble by reciting a reference to the schedule, to insert the agreement as a schedule, and insert a provision at the end of the Bill to the effect that clauses 7, 8, and 9 of the indenture were annulled.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he had no objection to accept the suggestion of the hon. the Premier.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman would see that the House could never allow such clauses as those referred to to pass. Fancy giving a monopoly to one man for the manufacture of coke for the next ten years in Bundaberg! He might want to make coke there himself before the expiration of that time; and there was nothing more probable than that other persons would want to make it. It was the centre of a great copper-mining district; coke was becoming more and more an article of use in the smelting of copper, and the idea of giving one person a monopoly of its manufacture was simply absurd. He was sure the Bundaberg people did not want it.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said, seeing that Mr. Fleming stated before the Select Committee that the only monopoly he claimed was the supply of gas lamps, he had no hesitation in accepting the suggestion of the hon. the Premier.

Mr. ALAND said he would like to ask the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill whether there was not something contradictory between the 6th clause of the agreement made by the corporation of Bundaberg with Mr. Fleming, and the latter part of clause 13 of the Bill. Clause 6 of the agreement provided that the price to be charged by Mr. Fleming for gas for the first four years should be 12s. 6d. per 1,000 cubic feet, and that it should be then decreased yearly for a period of six years; while it was provided in clause 13 that it should not be compulsory on the company to reduce the charges before 30 per cent. of the paid-up capital of the company should have been received by each shareholder.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said if the hon. member would again look at clause 13 he would see that the company could not go beyond the charges fixed in the Bill; but they were not bound to reduce the price until the latter part of the clause had been fulfilled. There was no inconsistency whatever between clause 6 of the agreement and the clause of the Bill referred to by the hon. member.

Mr. ALAND said he did not exactly understand the hon. member. Clause 6 of the agreement said:—

"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 then be decreased yearly by the sum of fivepence per one thousand cubic feet for a period of six years."

According to that, Mr. Fleming could not charge more than 12s. 6d. per 1,000 cubic feet; but the 13th clause provided that until 30 per cent. was paid in dividends he need not reduce the price. Notwithstanding the agreement, he might say at the end of four years that the concern was not paying 30 per cent., and therefore he should not reduce the price by 5d. per 1,000 cubic feet. He would like to know whether that might not be the case?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: No; certainly not.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8 to 12, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 13, as follows:—

"It shall be lawful for the said company to contract with the corporation of the municipality of Bundaberg, or persons having the control, direction, or management of the highways or any of them within the limits of this Act for supplying the same with gas, and also to contract with any person for supplying with gas any such person or any streets, ways, lanes, bridges, or passages, manufactories, shops, warehouses, public or private houses, or buildings belonging to him or in which he is interested or over which he has the direction or control, and also to contract with any person whomsoever for lighting or supplying with gas any shops, manufactories, warehouses, public or private buildings or places whatsoever within the limits of this Act, in such manner and under such stipulation as the said company shall think proper, consistent with the powers contained in the said articles of association and in this Act. And provided always that if the charges that may be made by the said company under and by virtue of this Act, for such supply of gas, shall be found to produce a greater sum than thirty pounds per annum for every one hundred pounds of the paid-up capital of the said company, then and in such case the said company shall at their first meeting after it shall have been ascertained that such greater sum has been produced, reduce the said charges so as that the same shall not produce to the said company a greater rate of clear annual profit divisible upon the subscribed and paid-up capital stock of the said company than the said sum of thirty pounds annually for every one hundred pounds of such capital; and in order that the true state of the profits may be known, it shall be the duty of the directors of the said company, so soon as the profits of the said company exceed thirty pounds for every one hundred pounds by the year, to publish in the *Queensland Government Gazette* annually a full and true statement and account of the moneys received, disbursed, and expended by them, and every such statement and account shall be verified by the secretary of the said company by solemn declaration to be made before a justice of the peace. Provided that it shall not be compulsory on the said company to reduce the said charges before the sum of thirty pounds per annum for every one hundred pounds of the paid-up capital of the said company shall have been received by each shareholder of the said company in respect of his share or shares therein from the commencement of the said company."

Mr. BAILEY said he would point out to the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill that there were three parties concerned in it—Mr. Fleming, the corporation, and also the consumers of gas. In the interests of the consumers he trusted they would get their gas in the course of a few years, at a much less rate than that proposed, and he would suggest to the hon. member that the amount of 30 per cent. should be reduced. He thought 20 per cent. was a very fair profit; it was rather more than the usual profit in industrial undertakings; but, as the Bill stood, the consumers of gas would have no claim to have the charge reduced until there was a profit in excess of £30 for every

£100 of capital paid up. That was not a fair thing to the consumers, and he wondered the corporation of Bundaberg had agreed to such a contract. He thought the hon. gentleman should agree to reduce the percentage, so that the consumers of gas should be able to obtain it at a more reasonable rate. He thought that when a work of that kind brought in 20 per cent. the company could well afford to let the consumers have a slight advantage in the way of a reduction in the price of their gas. The clause did not only provide that there should be 30 per cent. profit for one year, but for a number of succeeding years; and until that was accomplished no reduction could take place in the price of the gas. He thought that was rather an extravagant proposal. He was sure the hon. gentleman would admit that the consumers had a great interest in keeping down the price, and that he would see his way to reduce the abnormal and extravagant rate proposed.

Mr. CHUBB said in the last Gas Bill passed the rate was fixed at 20 per cent.

Mr. BAILEY said the rate was not to be reduced when the profits reached 30 per cent. for the first time; but all previous years had to be taken into consideration. The first year there might be a profit of 10 per cent.; the next year 25 per cent.; and the next year 50 per cent.; but an average had then to be struck, and if the average did not come up to 30 per cent. the price would not be reduced.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the hon. gentleman had lost sight of the circumstance that there was a right of purchase. The price was fixed for ten years, and at the end of that time the corporation might take over the plant. He had not paid much attention to the clause, because he believed himself that the Bundaberg people would purchase the works. He was bound to say that he did not think the company should ask for a higher rate of interest on their money than other companies recently established.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the very possibility of the corporation being likely to buy up the works was the very reason why the rate of interest should be reduced. While the company had power to draw profits up to 30 per cent. the value of the works was enhanced.

On the motion of Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON, the clause was amended in the 24th and 30th lines by the omission of the word "thirty" and the substitution of the word "twenty."

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON moved that the clause be further amended in the 34th line by the substitution of "twenty" for "thirty."

The PREMIER said the clause as it stood was quite inoperative. It was the duty of the contractors when the profits exceeded 30 per cent. to reduce the price of the gas, but there was no means of knowing what the profits were, as the company was not obliged to publish its returns. That part would have to be dealt with in the General Gas Bill.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the same point had been raised before, and it was as well to let companies understand that they would be limited by the General Gas Bill, and they must not take it as a hardship if that Bill was retrospective in many respects.

The PREMIER said the hon. member for Toowoomba asked whether there was any contradiction between the last proviso and a stipulation in the agreement that the charges for gas should be reduced 5d. per 1,000 cubic feet

for every six years after the first four years. Well, there was and there was not. If the 6th clause of the agreement had any meaning there would be a contradiction; the clause under consideration was intended to be a stipulation by Fleming that he would reduce the rates, but the public were no parties to the agreement, and they could not enforce it. He did not know what to do with the thing. There was an agreement which was not an agreement at all. The thing was absolutely absurd. They had better add a proviso to the effect that, notwithstanding anything before mentioned, it should be compulsory on the company to reduce the charges as provided in the agreement.

On the motion of Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON, the clause was further amended by the substitution of the word "twenty" for the word "thirty" in the 4th line from the end of the clause.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he hoped the hon. member understood that the Bundaberg Municipality had made an arrangement with Mr. Fleming to supply their town with gas at a certain price for the next ten years, and the Committee, by Act of Parliament, were making a different arrangement altogether. The arrangement with the municipality was that Mr. Fleming should supply gas at 12s. 6d. per 1000 cubic feet for the first four years, and at an annual reduction of 5d. upon that price afterwards. The Committee were making an arrangement entirely different—that until the works paid profits equal to 20 per cent. he need not reduce the price. How was the hon. member going to get over that difficulty? He did not see how it was to be got over by embodying an amendment in that Bill. To embody in an Act of Parliament an amendment of that sort was absurd.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the inhabitants of Bundaberg were not bound to take a supply of gas from Mr. Fleming. That clause did not invalidate the agreement made.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Yes, it does. Read the preamble.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he had not drafted the Bill, but there was nothing in it that was not in other Gas Bills.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Oh, yes, there is. There is an agreement with a private company.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he thought the suggested amendment of the hon. Premier would get over the difficulty.

The PREMIER said he proposed to add to the clause—it was a very clumsy way of doing it, but it was the only way they could get over the difficulty—a proviso to this effect:—

Provided that nevertheless, notwithstanding anything hereinbefore contained, it shall be obligatory on such company to reduce the said charges from time to time as in the said recited indenture is provided.

That would be effectual although it was clumsy.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 14 to 20, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 21—"Satisfaction for accidental damage to lamps, etc."—

Mr. CHUBB asked why a person should be liable for damage caused by accident? It was not ordinarily the case, and he did not think it should be the case here. The clause said "If any person shall carelessly or accidentally break, etc." He did not see why a person should be liable for damage done by accident. He moved that the words "or accidentally" be omitted.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that if a person broke or destroyed or damaged a lamp carelessly or accidentally he ought to be responsible. Such a thing was beyond the control of the municipality.

Mr. CHUBB said he did not see why an exception should be made in that Bill to the general law. If his horse ran away, unless he was guilty of negligence he was not responsible; but under that Bill, if a person broke a lamp by pure accident he was made responsible, and he was liable to imprisonment. He would like to improve his amendment, and would, therefore, beg to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

On the motion of Mr. CHUBB, the word "negligently" was substituted for "carelessly or accidentally" in the 1st and 7th lines.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

On clause 22—"Escape of gas"—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that the clause penalised the company or a man for a future offence. They were liable to punishment for not effectually stopping an escape of gas, and also preventing "any future escapes." That was ridiculous verbiage. He would move that the words "any future escapes" be omitted, with a view of inserting "such gas from escaping."

Amendment put and passed; and clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 23 and 24—"Contamination of water by gas company," and "Power for owners of waterworks to dig street and examine the pipes of gas company"—passed as printed.

On clause 25—"Remedy for recovery of rents"—

Mr. CHUBB said it seemed to him that the penalty in that clause was too severe. If a man omitted paying his gas bill once the company could cut off the supply of gas and never give him any more, as the clause provided that they might thenceforth "discontinue the supply of gas contracted for with the said company by such person."

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 26 to 31, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 32—"Appeal to the judge of the nearest district court"—

Mr. CHUBB said he thought the part of that clause limiting the time within which a person could appeal should come out, as it was possible there might be no appeal court held in the time specified. He therefore moved that the words "within four calendar months" be omitted, with a view of inserting the word "next."

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. CHUBB said he thought a consequential amendment was required. The section as it stood required twenty-one days' notice. The court might be held within twenty-one days, and perhaps there might not be another for five or six months.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON moved the substitution of the word "fourteen" for the word "twenty-one."

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 33 to 36 passed as printed.

Clause 37 was passed with a verbal amendment.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the following new clauses were inserted after clause 37:—

The 7th, 8th, and 9th clauses of the said recited indenture are hereby annulled.

At any time after the expiration of fourteen years from the passing of this Act, the local authority within whose jurisdiction the company carries on its operations

may purchase and take from the company the whole of the lands, buildings, works, mains, pipes, and apparatus of the company on such terms as to ascertainment and payment of the purchase money as may be from time to time prescribed by Parliament.

In the event of the company carrying on its operations within the jurisdiction of more than one local authority, such purchase may be made by such one of the local authorities as may be prescribed by Parliament.

Clauses 38 and 39—"Interpretation clause," and "Short title"—passed as printed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the indenture made on 27th September, 1883, between Walter Adams, mayor, on behalf of the corporation of Bundaberg, and Robert Fleming, was inserted as the schedule of the Bill.

The preamble was passed with a verbal amendment, and the insertion, on the motion of the PREMIER, of the following words after the word "part" in line 5—"and a copy thereof as set forth in the schedule hereto,"

On the motion of Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported the Bill to the House with amendments.

The report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Monday next.

THE NEW IRELAND BOYS.

Mr. STEVENS moved—

That the House resolve itself into 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 of 1884-85 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.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—The motion for going into Committee on this subject was carried last week by the casting vote of yourself. The Government intend to oppose it, for reasons given very fully on the previous occasion. This motion, if carried, will involve a liability very much larger than the amount stated in it, and I propose to take a division now on the question of going into Committee. I explained fully last week the circumstances under which the claim was made. The men in question were never engaged by these persons in any rational sense of the term. The so-called engagements were made without any Government interpreter being present—in entire ignorance on their part that they were being engaged for service here; and as soon as an attempt was made to set them to work, they escaped and roamed about the shores of Moreton Bay for several weeks. They were ultimately recaptured, and the Government, as they were bound to do, sent them back to their homes. Now it is proposed that we should accept this principle: that in cases of men having been improperly brought here, and whom the Government are in the interests of humanity bound to send back to their homes, the Government of this colony should undertake to repay to the persons who have engaged the men the total amount they have paid to the shipowners who brought them. That is the principle set up. In cases of that kind the Government are to undertake to bear the loss of the speculation. It will make it a very profitable speculation indeed to bring men here. If the men serve—all right. If they turn out to have been brought here improperly, and the Government, for the honour of the country and of the British name, send them back to the place whence they were improperly taken, the colony of Queensland is to bear the cost of the speculation. I am bound to protest against any speculation of that kind being foisted upon the colony. I am very sorry

for these people, as I have said, and I am prepared to take their case into consideration, and to deal with it on an equitable basis if we can. The principle that Government, in cases of this kind, are to pay the loss of the speculators, I decline to admit; and the Government intend to take advantage of all the forms of the House before the hon. member will succeed in inducing the Government to place this amount on the Estimates.

Mr. STEVENS: Am I entitled to speak again?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member can only do so with the consent of the House.

The PREMIER: There is no objection.

Mr. STEVENS: The Premier's action simply amounts to this: that he is trying to take advantage of some form, of which I suppose every hon. member but himself is entirely ignorant. I have been in the House some five years, and I have never seen this point raised before.

The PREMIER: Your memory is defective then.

Mr. STEVENS: The motion was carried last Friday night by the casting vote of the Speaker, and I suppose it is evident to the Premier that he is likely to suffer a defeat. Therefore he is taking advantage of some form of the House to defeat this Order of the Day, and to still further treat with injustice the men whose names appear in the motion. It is opposed to every principle of fair play. One of the Premier's arguments against the motion is, that if it is carried there will be several other cases, and that it will involve thousands instead of hundreds of pounds. If the Government are in the wrong, and the petitioners are entitled to redress, it does not matter if it involves £300,000, we are here to see that justice is done. The subject should be divested of all sentiment, and then I think the Premier's argument will not commend itself to any right-thinking men. I shall not go into the merits of the case. There are enough members in the House to defeat the Premier's object, and I am prepared to stand or fall by the division. But I think it very unfair, not only to hon. members who are of the same opinion as myself, but still more to those farmers who have suffered the wrong.

Mr. BLACK said: I do not intend to refer at very great length to this matter, but it is only right that I should point out that, in my opinion, the issue the Premier has raised is an entirely erroneous one. I entirely agree with what the Premier has said up to a certain point. The Government were perfectly justified, in the interests of humanity, in sending these men back. I agree with that; but I do maintain that the innocent people who never connived at the introduction of these men are protected by the act of the Government officer, who certified that these islanders were properly obtained; as without that certificate they would never have consented to employ them. On these grounds, I maintain that the point raised by the Premier is a wrong one. It should be decided by this House whether the Government are or are not responsible for the acts of their servants. It rests with the Government to appoint men, and they should be more particular in doing so, knowing that they will be held responsible for the acts of their servants. It is a matter of no consideration to me what the amount involved in this matter is. I have no doubt there will be many similar claims of this sort brought forward.

The PREMIER: Hundreds of them.

Mr. BLACK: The hon. gentleman himself, and the Government, have admitted that the

Government is bound to do justice where injustice has been done, and they showed that most distinctly when they paid Mr. P. F. Macdonald his claim, on the ground that no matter what amount of money is involved the Government are bound to act straightforwardly.

The PREMIER: That was a legal debt.

Mr. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—Every one has foreseen that this abominable South Sea Island trade would bring us into some such fix as we are in now. I believe that the receiver is as bad as the thief, and that is a good maxim in regard to the South Sea Island trade. The doctrine that the Government are responsible for the acts of their servants cannot be assailed; but still it is a doctrine subject to limitation, and surely to hold the Government responsible for the acts of their Government agents may be fairly said to be one of the limitations to which the doctrine of responsibility will not apply. What have we seen lately? A Government agent got drunk, and all sorts of enormities have been committed. Are the Government responsible for the acts of that Government agent? It is contrary to common sense to think so. This is the way in which I look at it: If any farmers in Queensland will go and buy men from the people who steal them, and bring them here, they must take the consequences. This is not a case where there are mitigating circumstances which may be brought forward to relieve the pressure of great expense upon very few men. Here are four farmers—four fools, there is no mistake about that—

Mr. STEVENSON: They were Germans.

Mr. BROOKES: Their names do not sound like it.

Mr. STEVENS: Three Englishmen and one German.

Mr. BROOKES: All I have to say is this: they were farmers, and were not sugar-planters, so I must let the hon. member for Mackay off this time. They were farmers. I did not suppose that the virus had gone so deep as to reach farmers. Every cockatoo farmer will want to have his nigger, and that will be the style of agriculture carried on in Queensland. That is a pretty picture for any rising artist; but that is not all. These farmers must be devoid of common sense when they go and get these New Ireland savages; of all wild South Sea Islanders they are the wildest; they were so unaccustomed to all civilised usages that when a gun was fired they ran away into the bush, and cost the Government no end of trouble in getting them back again. If those four persons were such fools, I would make them take the consequences of their action. The selfishness of the sugar-planter is now coming down to the cockatoo farmer, and instead of going, as he ought to have done, to the immigration dépôt when a ship came in, and selecting his German, or Scotch, or Irish, or such other immigrant as come by the proper line of immigration ships, he tries to steal a march upon the colony—to commit a fraud upon the colony—and goes to the thief who has stolen men, and gets them cheap, as he thinks. But, lo and behold! as soon as he gets them down, he fires a gun in the neighbourhood, and off those savages go. I dare say that those stark-naked savages went down in the Beenleigh coach with a tin medal hung by a piece of string round their necks—but perhaps they were too wild to travel in such a civilised conveyance as the Beenleigh coach.

Mr. STEVENS: You are finding your facts as you go.

Mr. BROOKES : I am speaking on behalf of the taxpayers of Queensland. Those four foolish men were trying to commit a fraud upon the colony to get their labour below the market price, and do an injustice to the men who were looking for work in the neighbourhood. To ask the taxpayers to pay them a sum of money for those men is monstrous ; and I consider the Premier perfectly right in using all the forms of the House to prevent the passage of this motion. The thing is so plain—these men were stolen to begin with ; the theft was so flagrant that the Government had to send them back. That is one feature of the case. Then the men were so utterly useless that they ran away, and I suppose it cost something to get them again. The people in the neighbourhood were in terror lest those islanders should drop in upon them in the dark, and the whole neighbourhood was turned upside-down. The whole thing had its origin in the avarice of four farmers. It was bad enough to see, as I have seen, twenty-five islanders travelling from Maryborough to Bundaberg with a string round their necks and labels, like prize sheep. I cannot find words to adequately express my sense of the crime that those four men committed against the spirit of the community in which they live. I call them thieves, for they are receivers of stolen goods, and as bad as the thieves ; and for the Government to allow this compensation is to simply draw upon themselves a number of similar claims from other receivers of stolen goods. The thieves will be flourishing, and it will be a very good investment for people to steal men, and bring them here ; and then the persons who buy them, if they do not find them any good, can get rid of them, and send in a bill to the Government—and yet this is supposed to be a European and Christian colony, governed by British principles ! I say all this with great pain, because I know that the gentleman who puts his name to the motion is actuated by motives which cannot be called in question. I know him to be a gentleman who is sincerely of opinion that he is doing these people a good turn ; but I would remind him that by this motion he is really justifying theft, and the receiving of stolen goods. I shall stand by the Premier through thick-and-thin in opposing the motion.

Mr. STEVENSON said : It is nothing new to be treated to all kinds of exaggerations and random statements by the junior member for North Brisbane on a matter of this kind—in fact, I believe he is a little mad on the subject—but I did not expect to hear the Premier say that he would use every form of the House to oppose the motion. He might have let the matter go into committee in the regular way. However, the Premier thought he had not a good case, or he would not have spoken as he did. He told us that the agreements were made while the men were not present, or that they did not understand those agreements even if they were present. But that is not the fact, because the men put their mark to their agreements in the presence of the immigration officer ; so that they must have been present. Whether they understood their agreements or not is a matter of opinion. I believe they did ; but I do not say that I am right. At any rate those men showed their intelligence very well, when it came to the question whether they should work or not. One said he would rather die than work—and in English too—according to the Premier's own showing. It is not right for the junior member for North Brisbane to say that these farmers were to blame. They were not to blame, because these men were approved of by the Government agent—the recognised officer of the Government—and the immigration officers here witnessed the agree-

ment. How then were the farmers to blame ? They conformed with the Act, as far as I can see, in every particular, and there is nothing to show that they did not ; so that the Premier need not talk about the fine speculation, and about persons who find islanders breaking their agreements coming down on the Government for money. The Government agent and the immigration officers were to blame if the islanders entered into an agreement which they did not understand. The farmers could not be expected to know the language of the men, or to know whether they understood the nature of their agreements or not ; but the Government officers should have known ; so that if there was blame anywhere it attached to the Government officers, and the Premier need not try to make out that the farmers were to blame. The hon. gentleman is quite right in using what forms he likes if he has a majority ; but he might have shown enough courtesy to the hon. member for Logan, who is not a very great partisan in this House, to let the motion go through in the usual way, and be decided on its merits.

Question put, and the House divided :—

AYES, 15.

Sir T. Mellwraith, Messrs. Archer, Chubb, Black, T. Campbell, Donaldson, Stevens, Midgley, J. Campbell, Ferguson, Palmer, Buckland, Stevenson, Bailey, and Kellett.

NOES, 12.

Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Sheridan, Dutton, Dickson, Griffith, Macfarlane, Fraser, Horwitz, Brookes, White, and Isambert.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The House went into Committee.

Mr. STEVENS said, as one or two hon. members now in the Chamber were not present on the last occasion on which the matter was brought forward, he would briefly state the facts of the case. There were some islanders brought to the colony from New Ireland in one of the authorised labour ships ; they were procured under the supervision of the Government agent ; they were landed here and handed over to one of the employers mentioned, and afterwards divided amongst the others under the supervision of the Polynesian Immigration Agent. The usual certificate was signed. It had been stated that the men did not understand the nature of the agreement, as had been said by the hon. the Premier that evening. But if they did not understand their agreement they had no right to have been handed over to the farmers. Once the farmers received them in proper course from the Government, the Government became responsible as to whether they had been introduced into the colony properly or not. Nine of those islanders were put on board a cutter and taken down to the Coomera, where they were landed on the bank of the river ; the cutter men being anxious to catch the tide, leaving them there without any white man being in charge. The islanders were peaceably disposed ; did not appear to be frightened of anything, and were perfectly good-tempered. It happened that a person in the neighbourhood fired a shot at a fowl, and as soon as the islanders heard the report of the gun they jumped into the water and were not seen again for some days. Afterwards they were found on the shores of Moreton Bay, where they had been cutting sugar-cane to save themselves from starvation. They then went to Stradbroke Island ; the police then got on their tracks ; they were followed from place to place, and eventually captured somewhere about Lytton, and handed over to the officers of the department. They were kept in Brisbane for some time, and then taken down to Peel Island. The farmers who had engaged

them came up to try and get them back from the Government, as they were willing to take them, stating that they had no doubt that with kind treatment they would soon settle down to work. An officer was sent down to the island with the farmers; a long "confab" took place with the islanders, which lasted about three-quarters of an hour, and the officer then told the farmers that the islanders did not understand the agreement, consequently there could be no engagements; and that they preferred to go back to their homes. The farmers then gave the matter up, thinking that there was no earthly chance for them, and went home. They then, through their solicitor, requested the Government to give them compensation, and a claim was made for a certain sum of money. Their application was refused, and they then asked him as member for the district to bring the matter before the House and try and obtain redress in that way, trusting that the sense of fair play on the part of hon. members generally would enable them to obtain their rights. There could be no doubt that the Government were responsible for those islanders. If they thought the men had been improperly engaged they ought to have enforced the bond, which the Act enabled them to do; but instead of that they allowed those farmers to take them, and then they actually took them back from them and sent them back to their homes. The farmers in question had suffered serious loss, but the only claim they made was for the actual loss in costs—the £25 per head; and he trusted that hon. members would see the fairness of their demand. He moved—

That an Address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed upon the Supplementary Estimates for 1884-85 the sum of £335, 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.

The PREMIER said it was as well that hon. members and the country should understand what the motion meant, and what were the grounds upon which it was put. In the first place he should like to know whether the amount named was claimed from the Government by way of damages for sending to their homes men who had been kidnapped and brought to the colony against their will? That was an intelligible ground to take; and he would like to know whether it was on that ground it was taken up—that the Government were wrong in sending back those men who had been kidnapped, and therefore they ought to give compensation to the employers of those men—of those slaves? Some parts of the hon. gentleman's speech appeared to indicate that as the ground for claiming compensation—that the Government had done wrong. If that was the ground any hon. members who chose to take up that position could do so. He had nothing to say to that, because the very statement of the proposition was its best answer. He dealt with the matter upon the opposite assumption—that the Government did right—that finding men here who had been brought to the colony without the slightest notion of what they were being brought for—who were entirely ignorant of any engagement or contract of any kind whatever, but had been simply brought here, and handed over like cattle to those four farmers—the Government finding that, and also that these men, after wandering about Moreton Bay for weeks, a scandal to the colony, were at last captured—sent them back to their islands. He maintained that in doing so the Government did right, and if the Government were right, how could any claim for compensation come in? If any

claim for compensation could come in it must be this: that those islanders having been brought here improperly, the Government were bound to repay the cost of their passage to Queensland. Let them understand what they were doing. That was the proposition that the hon. member in effect laid down—that in every case in which an islander had been brought here improperly, not the shipowner, who had got the money improperly, should bear the loss, but the Government of the colony should do so. That was the proposition; there was no way of getting out of it. The shipowners who brought those men here were to pocket their £25 apiece, and the people of Queensland were to pay that amount per head to the employers who bought the men. He denied that proposition entirely. There was another way in which it might be put, which was this: that the Government under whom the men were engaged connived at their being kidnapped and handed over to those four farmers without any knowledge whatever of the nature of their agreements. If it were put on that ground, then he should expect to see the members of the Government who were charged with such connivance voting for the motion. As a matter of fact, those men were not engaged. Their so-called engagement to the four farmers referred to was made admittedly without the slightest knowledge on the part of the men that they were being engaged. The farmers knew that as well as anyone else; they were as much guilty of buying those men—of taking them as cattle—as the men who brought them to the colony were guilty of bringing them here improperly, and as the officers were in dealing with them in the way they did. He could only say that if any documents of the kind he had read last week ever came before him again, and they were signed by a Government officer, he should certainly meet with instant dismissal. If the claim were put forward on the ground that the Government approved of the arrangements that had been made—that the Government approved of those men being sold and dealt with as cattle—then he admitted that the honour of the colony was bound. But he disputed that proposition; he denied that the Government of the colony ever connived at men being sold and bartered in that way. And yet the only claim rested upon that—that those men were engaged to the farmers, knowing nothing whatever of their engagements. The farmers knew that, and on that basis they asked compensation—that they were taking the men, who knew nothing of the terms on which they were engaged.

Mr. STEVENS: No.

The PREMIER said that was so. On the very face of the so-called agreement, it appeared that there was no interpreter present.

Mr. STEVENS: At that time.

The PREMIER said he repeated that that appeared in the very face of the document, and those farmers took the men on those terms, and now asked the colony to bear their loss.

Mr. STEVENS: There was no interpreter present at that time.

The PREMIER said the endorsement on the agreement by the Government Inspector was that the boys "knew no English." The said transfer is approved by me on behalf of the Government. I had no interpreter. If that was not selling those men like cattle to the so-called proprietors, he did not know what was. Let them understand what the basis of the claim really was, and he would like to know which of the three bases he had suggested was rested upon. Was it that the Government were wrong in sending those men home

after they had been brought here unjustly; was it that the Government of the day approved of the action taken, and, therefore, the honour of the country was bound? Or, to put it as his hon. friend, the junior member for South Brisbane put it cynically the other night, that those islanders were warranted merchandise by the then Government, and that the colony was bound to fulfil the warranty of the Government of the day. Let them understand what really was the ground. The present was a case of thirteen islanders—but he knew hundreds of other similar cases—were they going now to lay down the principle that in the case of every man who had been kidnapped and brought to Queensland, and engaged by employers knowing perfectly well that their servants did not understand the nature of the engagement the colony was to bear the loss of £25 or £30 per head? Was that to be the principle that was to be adopted? If they adopted that principle in the present case, he could not see how they could ever do anything else in other cases. Were the Government to undertake to indemnify every employer in the colony for the loss of every man who had been kidnapped? Was that the principle that should be acted upon under the circumstances? He had told the hon. member both outside and inside the House that the Government desired to deal fairly with those farmers, but they desired to deal with the whole of the cases together. The present was the case of thirteen men, and, as he had said, he knew of hundreds of cases of a similar character. He might as well say at once that what the Government proposed to do was this: To get full information in all those cases and to ascertain what men had been kidnapped, and restore them to their islands at the earliest possible opportunity. They proposed to inquire into the different cases of the employers of those men, and ascertain where they had a just claim for compensation. He proposed to deal with them as Great Britain dealt with them when the abolition of slavery was decided upon; but he objected to taking up two or three isolated cases and laying them down as precedents. Why, he should like to know, was that matter not brought forward earlier in the session?

Mr. STEVENS: Because you would not give redress.

The PREMIER said he told the hon. gentleman again and again that the Government would not deal with one or two cases until they had an opportunity of dealing with the whole matter, and when that was done they would take the present case into consideration with the numerous others that existed. He would not say anything as to how the hon. member had endeavoured to secure votes in support of his motion. He had no objection to his doing what he thought fitting and proper, but it would have been better if the matter had been confined to argument inside the House. He protested in his place in that House against a motion of such importance being brought on in that manner, in a thin House, and at that time. Let the question be dealt with as a whole. He would tell the Committee what they intended to do almost immediately. They proposed to appoint a commission to inquire closely into the numerous alleged cases of kidnapping which had recently been happening, and they proposed to return to their islands every man that had been kidnapped; that they were bound to do, for the honour of the country, and especially when they knew that so many men had been brought to the colony unlawfully and unfairly. Then, with the information so placed at their disposal, the Government proposed to deal with the whole matter, and would be prepared with that information to propose to the House to give such compensation as might fairly be given to

men who had suffered any loss, whether through the action of the Government officers or through any reason for which they could not be held justly responsible. He thought that was a fair proposition, but the Government did not propose to do anything more than that until they were absolutely compelled. He thought the hon. member might very fairly be content with that. If those four farmers had a fair ground for compensation amongst others, then the Government would be prepared to give them fair play; but he objected most distinctly to their being asked to commit themselves to the principle that they would indemnify employers who got men under the circumstances he had mentioned. He objected distinctly to dealing with the question with no more information in the hands of the Committee than that which they had before them on the motion brought forward by hon. the member.

Mr. KELLETT said he happened to have been away when the discussion was on before; but from what had been said by the Premier he understood that votes had been obtained in some unaccountable way, not altogether fair. He might say that no one had asked him for his vote, and no one had influenced him in any way whatsoever. He had read the debate which took place the other night on the subject, and he considered that the farmers were entitled to something. He believed that they engaged the islanders in a *bond fide* manner, and that they had suffered loss through the action of the officers of the Government. He was sure he had just as great an abhorrence as the Premier, or any other member of the Committee, of the abuses of the labour trade, and he was sorry the hon. gentleman had addressed the Committee as if he was the only one who acted or voted in a particular way. He (Mr. Kellett) had as great an objection to kidnapping as anyone had. He would do away with the whole system, and the sooner it went the better for all concerned. He believed the atrocities that had been perpetrated within the last month or two had opened their eyes. They knew before that there had been outrages committed which were a disgrace to the colony; but he did not believe anyone had any idea of the atrocities that really were perpetrated in the South Sea Island trade. A slave trade was only a mild term for it; but that was not the question before them, and he believed firmly that it was through the action of the Government officer in sanctioning those men being taken away from the farmers who had paid for them that a just claim arose. The Premier had said that he intended to go into the whole matter, and he (Mr. Kellett) hoped the result would be that the whole South Sea Island trade would be exterminated. They had been informed also that a commission was to be appointed to inquire and report upon the kidnapping cases that had occurred, and the amount of compensation justly due to the employers who were deprived of their men; and he could only say that he would be glad to support the Premier in any action he might take in that matter. It would be a good business to deal with the question of South Sea Island labour once and for all, and he, for one, would give his vote for its total abolition. He thought that the hon. member who brought in the motion might very fairly now—since he had been told that the whole matter would be taken in hand, and that the Ministry were quite prepared in that, and in all other cases where a grievance of the kind had arisen through the action of the Government agent, to fully indemnify all those who had suffered—accept the proposal of the Premier to deal fairly with the whole question.

Mr. STEVENS said the Premier had just stated that he told him inside and outside the House that he intended doing what he now said he proposed to do. He had spoken of it, but he had not by any means given such a full statement as he had just made, or enough to make him (Mr. Stevens) think that there would be a fair chance of those men obtaining redress. He had risen now, before other hon. members, as he had an idea of taking advantage of the Premier's proposition and thus save discussion. Before sitting down, however, he would like to say something in reply to the Premier. The hon. gentleman, although he did not censure him in very hard terms, still spoke of him as having tried to gain votes outside, inferring that it was not a correct thing to do. If he (Mr. Stevens) had the force of language possessed by the hon. member he need not attempt to gain any votes outside; but if he had to pit himself against the hon. gentleman in a speech in the House he would have a very poor show. He considered that when a man took up a case—and he considered he had taken up a case in the present instance—he was bound to take advantage of fair means to carry that case, and a man could explain a matter to another in five minutes outside better than he could in a speech of half-an-hour inside the House; because he was able to hear his arguments and answer them. He was not ashamed of having explained the matter to hon. members outside, but that he asked any hon. member for his vote he absolutely denied. He explained the matter as fully as he could according to his lights, but he challenged any hon. member to say that he had asked for his vote. There was a great point made of the farmers having engaged those men, knowing that they did not understand their agreements. All the farmers knew was that when they took the men from the Immigration Office there was no interpreter present; but they fully believed that the men were engaged in the first instance properly, and that their agreement was explained to them by an interpreter. The Premier had also blamed him for bringing the matter forward so late in the evening, and at the fag-end of the session. As to his bringing it on at a late hour of the evening, if other hon. members had spoken less on the motions which had come on for discussion before his, the matter would have come on very much earlier. The reason why it had not been brought on earlier in the session was that those men had been trying for some months to obtain redress and compensation from the Government, and it was not until their application was refused that they came to him and placed the matter in his hands. The very day after it was placed in his hands he put the notice of motion on the paper. He could not possibly have brought the matter on any sooner. He thought, after the explanation given by the Premier, those men would receive full compensation. He was therefore inclined to accept the hon. gentleman's proposition; the more so, because if he did not it would almost amount to admitting that those men had not a fair claim. He believed positively, in his own mind, that they had a fair claim, and would therefore get compensation. With the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw the motion.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he was not present last week when the hon. member brought forward his motion. The hon. member had been charged with having touted for votes outside; but the allegation could not be very well founded when he did not even ask the assistance of the leader of the Opposition when the motion was brought forward. Upon reading the motion he would have opposed it; but after the explanation that had been made by the Premier that night,

that he intended to make an investigation into all those cases, and settle the responsibility upon the right shoulders, he believed himself that the hon. member would do well to withdraw the motion at once, as he expressed his intention of doing now. He did not consider the Premier was quite right in adverting to the action of previous Governments in having connived at a system of kidnapping, which he virtually did. He did not think the hon. gentleman did right in that.

The PREMIER: I said I declined to believe such a thing.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Yes; but the insinuation was plain throughout the hon. member's speech that those men had come here, somehow or other, by the connivance of the Government. Those men, he believed, came here under the Government over which he presided, and had he been in the hon. gentleman's place when the facts came before him, he should have returned them to their islands, and he had actually given instructions that that should be done. He was glad the hon. gentleman had acknowledged the principle of the Government's responsibility in that matter. It was not only the Ministers who were in power at the time who were responsible. Those men might have been brought here improperly, and he believed they were, and they ought to take those matters into consideration, and make, what the Premier proposed now, a general investigation, and return every islander who had been kidnapped. If there were men in the colony brought here in that way—and the Premier said there were hundreds—by all means let there be the fullest investigation possible, and return every one of them. With that they all agreed; but he did not believe himself that the national conscience should be judged by examples of extreme punishment in one particular case when the national feeling might be excited. They knew that twenty years ago there was a large amount of kidnapping done, from the investigations which were made then and the revelations made at those investigations. They ceased for some considerable time from the fact that the recruiting for the trade was in islands where the English language was spoken to some considerable extent, and where interpreters could be found, and where there were not the same occasions, nor were there from the demands of the trade the same temptations to kidnap as there had been lately. Labour got scarce in the colony, and the Government got lax in their supervision over the districts where those men ought to be allowed to recruit: that he believed had been the cause of the whole evil. Twenty years ago the vessels went down to savage islands where the men could not speak the English language, and where no interpreters could be found to interpret between our language and theirs, and a great deal of kidnapping took place. That had been proved. It had been due to the places where recruiting was allowed to take place. Recruiting had taken place recently from such islands as New Ireland and New Guinea, and that ought never to have been allowed, and the strictest restrictions should have been placed upon recruiting from such places. He believed the Government would take care that no recruiting took place there again. He knew very well that his Government took every precaution to prevent recruiting from there, and he was surprised to learn that those islanders came from New Ireland. But to his astonishment he found now that islanders had been brought from New Guinea. It was a fact that until the month of May or June no islanders were recruited in New Guinea.

The PREMIER: Yes; as late as December and January. That was on the little islands close to New Guinea.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: If that was so, the hon. member had got information since the House met. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) took the most stringent precautions, as the correspondence he had moved for would prove, that no recruiting should take place in New Guinea or the adjacent islands; and he knew perfectly well that when the House met the hon. member was under the impression that no recruiting had taken place there. It was since then that the hon. member had got the information.

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Well, he himself was not present when the House opened; but he had before given the House his impressions of what took place. The late Government set their faces against recruiting in New Guinea or any adjacent islands whenever they heard of the possibility of such a thing taking place; and up to the time they left office no men had come from any of those islands. The admission made by the hon. member in the Governor's Speech showed what actually took place. The paragraph was as follows:—

"I regret that recent events have unmistakably disclosed the existence of grave abuses in connection with the Pacific Island labour trade. Stringent regulations have been made under my statutory authority with the object of preventing the recurrence of these scandals, and some offenders have been brought to justice. My Government will continue to use the utmost vigilance in the supervision of the traffic and the enforcement of the law. I hope that the colony may thus escape the stain which must inevitably have attached to its reputation if the abuses now discovered had been permitted to continue. The recruiting of labourers from New Guinea, and from some islands in the Pacific whose inhabitants were found to be physically so unfitted for plantation work that a lamentable mortality ensued on their arrival in Queensland, has been absolutely prohibited."

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN, in speaking on that, said:—

"I was not aware until I read this paragraph that any natives had been recruited from New Guinea.

"The PREMIER: Nor have they. A ship started last week, or the week before, with the object of going to New Guinea.

"The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: And you stopped it?

"The PREMIER: Yes.

"The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: You did very right."

So that according to that, the hon. gentleman himself knew when the first recruiting actually took place in New Guinea. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) believed that the whole of the evils had resulted from the Government being lax in allowing recruiting to take place on that ground. He was sorry for it, because he believed the national character of Queensland had been unjustly aspersed. He believed they had grovelled in the dust, and repented of sins that had not been committed. He believed that grave atrocities had taken place by the fault of the nation or the Government—he did not say whether by the late or the present Government—allowing recruiting to take place on that ground. The great fault had been committed by the Government in allowing labour vessels to go to New Guinea and the adjacent islands; and, as he had said, the late Government took the utmost means to prevent recruiting of that kind. If recruiting had taken place since then the Government were responsible for it. It was a misfortune for the nation; at the same time, he did not know why they ought to admit that such atrocities had been committed during the past twenty years, while the labour trade had been going on, as seemed to have been proved lately. The proper remedy was to go a great deal further than the Premier had gone. If he had carried out the principles that he had so often enunciated, with such a majority at his back, he would have put his foot on the trade

long ago. There was always some means of preventing atrocities—either to take the trade into the hands of the Government, or force it into the hands of the English Government, or stamp it out altogether. The other side of the House had had opportunities to do that over and over again if they had followed out their principles; and they would have been afforded help from the Opposition side to honestly put down the trade and stop the thing fairly. They might have done better than they had done in accomplishing what he presumed to have been their object. He regretted that the action of the Government had had the effect of making the colony appear in the eyes of the world a great deal more iniquitous than he believed it actually was. Crimes had been committed in the South Seas, but he believed they were due to the laxity of the Government and the laxity of the Government supervision lately.

The PREMIER said he did not think it necessary to go at any length into the question then, although he might say a good deal in answer to the hon. gentleman. He did not know, until about the month of June, that any recruiting had taken place in New Guinea; but from what they had heard during the last three or four weeks it was begun certainly earlier than June. The first time he heard anything about vessels visiting New Guinea was in June, in Townsville, when he was informed that a vessel was going there. As soon as possible a notice was put in the *Gazette* absolutely prohibiting it. The hon. gentleman was not in the colony; but it was notorious from statements in the public Press early in the present year that vessels had been recruiting in the small islands on the coast of New Guinea. He was not going to take much trouble to refute the hon. gentleman's argument about the present Government and recruiting in New Guinea. The hon. gentleman had referred several times to some correspondence which was in existence showing that he prohibited recruiting there; but there was no such correspondence to be found in the Colonial Secretary's Office, as he (the Premier) had said before. Since the hon. member's motion was carried, on the motion of Mr. Archer—and even before that—a careful inquiry has been made; and no such correspondence could be found. The hon. gentleman said he caused a letter to be addressed to the Governor on the subject. The only thing that could be found bearing on the point at all while the hon. member was in office, was a reference to it in a paragraph in a despatch, dated 28th September, 1883, which the hon. gentleman himself laid on the table of the House at the commencement of the last session, in November last year. He would read the paragraph—

"Allusion is made by Lord Derby to a statement in the Press, that one reason why Queensland desires the annexation of New Guinea is the facility which would thereby be afforded for obtaining a large supply of coloured labour for the sugar plantations without going beyond the limits of the colony. On behalf of the colony, I deny that we have ever been actuated by any such motive; nor was there the slightest ground for believing the statement. The only attempt at an assertion of fact in favour of such a position was that made by Lord Leamington, in the House of Lords, that immediately the annexation had taken place, a labour ship was despatched from Mackay to New Guinea in quest of labour. As a matter of fact, no labour vessels have as yet cleared from any port in this colony for New Guinea; nor have any natives of that island ever been introduced into Queensland. The inhabitants on the coast of New Guinea are agriculturists themselves, with abundance of land to cultivate, and it is quite likely that any improved system of European cultivation would give employment to a large body of New Guinea natives in their own country; but there is no probability, nor was it ever contemplated, that natives would be taken to the Australian coast."

That was the only utterance on the subject that could be found.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he would repeat what he said the other night as to what the correspondence actually was. There was a cablegram from Lord Derby to the Governor asking whether it was a fact that vessels were fitting out for recruiting natives in New Guinea. That was submitted to him (Sir T. McIlwraith) as Colonial Secretary by the Governor. He wrote down the facts of the case—whether in the shape of a letter, which would be in the Colonial Secretary's Office, or on the back of the telegram, he did not know—and sent it back to the Governor. Immediately on doing that he telegraphed to Mackay, Townsville, and Maryborough, and other places from which vessels cleared, to find out the facts as to whether any vessel had cleared for New Guinea or the adjacent islands. He got replies to those telegrams, and all those were in the Colonial Secretary's Office. Then he himself read the despatch which the Governor wrote to Earl Derby, giving the facts he had obtained. If the hon. gentleman meant to tell him that that despatch did not exist he told him what was not true, for he (Sir T. McIlwraith) had seen it and read it. He would like to know from the hon. gentleman whether he had asked the Governor to produce that correspondence?

THE PREMIER said he had not had an opportunity of asking the Governor to produce that correspondence. He only could say what he had discovered in the office. The hon. gentleman talked about instructions he had sent to different parts of the colony. Well, he (the Premier) could not find any. The hon. gentleman also said there was a telegram from Lord Derby. There was a despatch from Lord Derby of the 11th July, to which the despatch from which he (the Premier) had read an extract, was a reply. In that reply it was stated that "Allusion is made by Lord Derby to a statement in the Press, that one reason why Queensland desires the annexation of New Guinea is the facility which would thereby be afforded for obtaining a large supply of coloured labour for the sugar plantations without going beyond the limits of the colony." The allusion referred to was in Lord Derby's despatch of 11th July, 1883. As far as he (the Premier) could recollect, a telegram was sent to Mackay about that date, asking whether any vessel had cleared at that port for New Guinea, and a reply was received to it; but that was all the telegrams he could find on the subject. There were no telegrams to any other place containing the instructions referred to by the hon. member as far as he had been able to discover, but he would direct further search to be made, and if anything else were found he would produce it.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said if the hon. gentleman had admitted so much before, he could have put him on the track of getting more. The Premier admitted now that there was a telegram in the office inquiring as to the truth of the allegations in Lord Derby's despatch. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) made inquiries at other ports beside Mackay.

THE PREMIER: There is no record of it.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman admitted now that he (Sir T. McIlwraith) had made inquiries at Mackay. The Premier said nothing about that before, but stated that there was absolutely no correspondence. Now they found there was, and if the hon. gentleman would look up the memorandum he would find that the information he (Sir T. McIlwraith) gave the Governor was written in a despatch by him to Earl Derby.

THE PREMIER said he could find no correspondence in the Colonial Secretary's Office. Surely they all knew that copies of despatches from the Colonial Secretary to the Governor were preserved in the office! He (the Premier) was speaking from official records, but, as he had said, he would endeavour to discover whether there was anything more on the subject.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he had now spoken three times on the subject, and he had never once mentioned that he, as Colonial Secretary, had written a despatch to the Governor. What he said was that on receipt of the cablegram from Lord Derby he made inquiries and obtained certain information which he gave to the Governor, who wrote a despatch embodying the views of the Government; and the facts it contained proved conclusively that up to that time there had been no recruiting at New Guinea. If there had been any recruiting there since, the responsibility lay with the present Government.

MR. STEVENS moved that the Chairman leave the chair.

Question put and passed, and the House resumed.

MARYBOROUGH AND URANGAN RAILWAY BILL — CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of Mr. FOXTON, the Speaker left the chair and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider this Bill.

MR. FOXTON said that in order to save time, as it was late in the evening, he would move that the whole of the amendments of the Legislative Council be agreed to. He might mention that virtually they were only three. The first gave the Government power to purchase the wharf as well as the railway. The second enabled the Commissioner for Railways to lease a certain portion of the Government land to the company on such terms as the Minister should think fit; and the third was to enable the company to open their railway, as soon as it was constructed, as far as Pialba. Those were the only amendments that had been made; they were all in the interests of the public, and such as the promoters of the Bill were perfectly prepared to accept.

Question put and passed.

MR. KELLETT asked if it was a usual thing to include several clauses in one motion in that way?

MR. FOXTON said he understood it was usual. They had a precedent for it in the Minister for Lands moving that several amendments made by the Legislative Council in one clause should be agreed to.

THE PREMIER said it was extremely unusual, but not entirely unprecedented.

On the motion of Mr. FOXTON, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported that the House had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendments.

The report was adopted, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

The House adjourned at thirty-one minutes past 11 o'clock.