

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**MONDAY, 22 DECEMBER 1884**

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Monday, 22 December, 1884.*

Votes and Proceedings.—Ways and Means—resumption of committee.—Appropriation Bill of 1884-5, No. 3.—Messages from the Legislative Council.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Gratuity to Parliamentary Librarian.—Loan Bill.—Appropriation Bill No. 3—committee.—Motion for Adjournment.—Appropriation Bill No. 3.—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 2 o'clock.

## VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—Before we proceed to the Orders of the Day, I would like to call your attention to what appears to be an omission from the "Votes and Proceedings" of last Saturday morning, regarding a question of order. The report said:—

"An item in the Loan Estimates, Bowen to Coalfields, £100,000, being under discussion, an amendment had been moved to omit 'Coalfields' and to insert 'Mackay.' He, the Chairman, had ruled that, inasmuch as this amendment would change the destination of the vote, it could not be put.

"The Speaker ruled that the proposed amendment would not be in order, as it was not competent for the Committee to change the destination of a vote as amended by the Crown.

"The Committee resumed."

That is not a correct report. After you ruled that the word "Coalfields" could not be omitted with the intention of inserting the word "Mackay," you ruled that the word "Mackay" could be inserted after the word "Coalfields," and upon that motion the Committee had agreed. The whole of that has been omitted from the report.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to say a few words upon this point. This is an incomplete report, sir, because

t does not refer to one of the most important matters that was referred to you, and in which you gave a decision. A point of order was raised as to whether the word "Coalfields" could be left out and the word "Mackay" inserted, and you, yourself, when you came to give your ruling, gave it in these terms:—

"There are two distinct points raised. The House at the present time is in Committee of Supply. May observe—

"In Committee of Supply it is irregular to propose any motion or amendment not relating to a grant under consideration, as the committee may grant or refuse a Supply, or may reduce the amount proposed, but have no other functions."

"The Constitution Act provides that—

"Every appropriation must be recommended by a message from the Crown, and the direction of that appropriation is set forth in that message."

"In this case the message of the Governor comes with the Estimates in which the particular item referred to by the hon. member for Townsville is set forth—Bowen to Coalfields—and I do not think it is competent for the hon. member to alter the appropriation in the way in which he proposes in his amendment. The practice in England, as laid down in 1843 by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, who is acknowledged to be an exceedingly good Speaker and well up in parliamentary practice, is clear here, because when the question is referred to him he distinctly states:—

"It is not competent for the House to make any alteration which will change the destination of a vote."

That is your decision in one case. Then going further on, and in referring to the other part you say—

"The Committee will clearly understand the ruling I gave. I do not think it is competent for the hon. member to omit the word 'Coalfields'; but I can see no objection to the hon. member inserting the word 'Mackay.'"

Then again—

"The Committee will clearly understand me; my own impression is that the word 'Mackay' can be inserted after the word 'Coalfields,' because that is not a change in the destination of the vote."

Now this was a matter of principle which you decided. The grounds upon which you were asked for a decision were as to the right of the Committee to insert the word "Mackay" after "Coalfields," because it was held that the item "Bowen to Coalfields" was an indefinite item, and that it was no infringement of the rules of practice of the House of Commons or of this Parliament if the word was put in; and you ruled that it was perfectly competent to put in the word. That was a most important part of your decision, and yet it is left entirely out of the "Votes and Proceedings." The hon. member for Townsville was perfectly right in drawing attention to the matter; and if he had not done so I should have called attention to it myself.

The SPEAKER: I did not see the "Votes and Proceedings" until this afternoon, and upon making inquiry from the Clerk I find that it is not customary, or has not been the custom in this House, to place on the "Votes and Proceedings" any point of order, when the House is in Committee of Supply, unless it has been reported by the Chairman of Committees. That point has been recorded; but as the other point arose when the Speaker was in the chair it was not considered necessary, in accordance with the usual practice, to put it upon the "Votes and Proceedings." As the hon. member observes, the proceedings are properly reported in *Hansard*—correctly reported. That is the only explanation that I can give. The omission has not been caused through any action I have taken in any way. The "Votes and Proceedings" are prepared by the Clerk, in accordance with the practice usually observed by Parliament.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I think the "Votes and Proceedings" have been wrongly prepared. The point was raised in committee, and ought to have been reported by the Chairman. You will remember that the Chairman was corrected in his report, and it was shown that he was wrong in one of the statements that he made. He referred to the money set down in the Estimates, whereas the money had nothing to do with the point raised, and he afterwards said that he referred to it as illustrating what he intended to show. He did not deliver the message he had received from the committee. The Chairman thought he was understating the case, whereas he was overstating it; but, in any case, the hon. member for Townsville asked distinctly for a ruling upon a certain point, and when you got into the chair he asked for it again. I doubt the ruling—but it is not exactly a ruling—which you have now given. You have been informed by the Clerk that it is not the custom to put into the "Votes and Proceedings" simply the statement of the Speaker in the matter referred to, but I do not believe that a case of this sort ever occurred before. I do not remember when two points have been decided by the Speaker, one of which happened to arise when he was in the chair, and where the one decided by him had arisen while he was in the chair was not reported in the "Votes and Proceedings," while the other was. It is an important matter that we should understand what the journals of the House really are, and that we should know that the journals are a record of what actually happens. When you gave your decision upon an important point while in the chair that ought to be recorded in the "Votes and Proceedings." I do not care a straw for the Clerk's opinion in this case; I question its correctness. I do not think the same case has ever arisen before, at all events since I have been a member of Parliament. The fact remains that an important decision has been given while you were in the chair, and has not been recorded. You gave your decision, and it was a most important one, yet it is deliberately left out of the journals of the House, and I think that is against the practice of the House.

Mr. FRASER: I understood the leader of the Opposition to say that the last point in which you ruled was submitted to me. That was certainly not so. The only point submitted to me—I may have overstated the matter or not—but the only point submitted was the motion to omit "Coalfields" and insert "Mackay." I do not know what bearing that may have upon the question now under consideration, and I am not prepared to say.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: There can be no question that the journals are incorrect. Take the last words which you have said: "The destination of the vote cannot be changed." The "Votes and Proceedings" then immediately say, "The Committee resumed"; but between your giving that ruling and the Committee resuming you gave another ruling which is not in the records of the House at all, and I maintain it should be there. Upon that ruling the Committee had a division, and a very important matter of that sort should be in the journals. It is not sufficient to say that it is in *Hansard*. *Hansard* is not an official record of the House the same as the "Votes and Proceedings."

The SPEAKER: As the leader of the Opposition has said, the point is an important one, and my impression is that the rulings of the Speaker should always appear in the journals of the House in order that the record may be as complete as possible. I will endeavour to see if the journals of Saturday morning cannot be amended so as to insert the particular point to which the hon. member has drawn my attention.

# WAYS AND MEANS—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Ways and Means.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1884-5, a further sum not exceeding £1,305,441 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What is that?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was the balance of the Estimates. It represented the amount of the General Estimates for 1884-5, which had been passed, less the two Appropriation Bills, amounting to a total of £450,000, which had previously been passed. £1,305,441 was the balance of the revenue appropriation for the current year.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, as they would not have many more opportunities of getting information from the Government before the House prorogued, he thought it was not an inopportune time to bring forward a matter which concerned the revenue of the colony, inasmuch as it referred to an officer whose salary would come out of the consolidated revenue. He wished to ask the Minister for Lands who was to be the second member of the land board. A promise had been given that the information would have been supplied long ago, but that promise had not been carried out. Now that the Bill had passed, they should have the information before the House prorogued.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the second member of the board had not yet been appointed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Neither of them has been appointed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he would probably be in a position next day to inform the House who the second member of the board was to be.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, as the hon. leader of the Opposition had interjected, neither of them had yet been appointed; but they had been given the name of one who was to be appointed. They had a direct promise from the Premier that the names would be disclosed even before the Bill was discussed in another place, and that promise had not been carried out. The Minister for Lands was in honour bound to give them the information now that the Bill had passed and shortly would become law.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that it had been pointed out on a subsequent occasion to that referred to by the hon. gentleman that the members of the board could not be named or appointed till it was known what functions they had to perform, and that would not be the case until the Bill became law. The second member had not yet been selected.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman had got himself on the horns of a dilemma. If it would not be proper to nominate the members of that board before the Bill became law, why nominate one of them?—and why should they have been told by the Premier that the names of both members would have been given to the House before the Bill passed? The Bill only needed the signature of the Governor to become law, and there was no fear of the Governor withholding his signature. One name having been mentioned by the hon. gentleman, and the promise that both names would be given having been made by the Premier, the hon. gentleman was on the horns of a dilemma.

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He was certainly inconsistent—that was not unusual; and he was certainly breaking faith with the House, which was also not unusual.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could assure the Committee that, while one of the gentleman who was to be a member of the board had been selected by the Cabinet, no second name had been submitted to the Cabinet. His hon. colleague the Minister for Lands might have a name in contemplation, but it had certainly not been brought before the Cabinet.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman was evading the question. The Government had made a distinct promise that both names would be disclosed to the Committee; and they were now either unable or unwilling to carry out that promise.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not think the Premier ever gave a distinct promise to that effect.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He did.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Premier had certainly adopted the suggestion as one which, possibly, it would be desirable to carry into effect, but he did not undertake to name either member of the board before the Bill became law. On a subsequent occasion the Premier pointed out that it would be undesirable to name the persons who were to be appointed until they knew whether the Bill was likely to become law or not. Afterwards he named Mr. Deshon as one of the gentlemen selected, and at that time he stated that the Government were not then in a position to say who the second member would be. It had not yet been determined; but he (the Minister for Lands) had no doubt the Government would be in a position to give the information to the House to-morrow.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman was in error. He would repeat that they had had that promise from the Premier, and they had also a statement from the lips of the hon. Minister for Lands himself that one of the positions had been offered to a gentleman in New South Wales. Yet the hon. member told them now that it would be wrong to make those appointments till the Bill became law. Long before the Bill passed through the Assembly the hon. member had felt so sure of his majority that he had felt himself justified in offering the appointment to Mr. Rankin; and now he told the House he did not think it the proper thing to give the information wanted because the Bill was not yet the law of the land! Could anything be more inconsistent? As regarded the statement that they had not got any promise from the Premier, *Hansard* would prove whether the hon. gentleman's statement or his (Mr. Morehead's) was correct.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he believed it was he who suggested that the names should be given to the House. He pointed out at the same time that Mr. Gladstone had been compelled by his followers to insert the names of the commissioners in the Irish Land Bill, and the Premier here acknowledged that it was a right thing to do. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) did not say that a distinct promise was made by the Premier; but he certainly understood that the hon. gentleman would give the names before the Bill came from the other Chamber; and he believed that on a subsequent occasion the hon. gentleman said he would give the name. If the Cabinet were in possession of the name of Mr. Deshon, they ought to be in possession of the name of the other member at the same time. It was nothing for the hon. Colonial Treasurer to

say they were not in possession of it; they ought to be. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) was very doubtful about their getting the name to-morrow. He saw the Minister for Lands consulting with the Colonial Treasurer, and he thought the Colonial Treasurer would see that the business to-morrow would not exactly square in with that—that was, if the session was then to come to an end, as he hoped it would do. He thought it very important that Ministers should give the name of the second member for their own honour's sake. It was really a matter of very little importance, after all, now that the Bill had passed. It was far more important before the Bill had passed. That was why Mr. Gladstone was compelled to insert the commissioners' names in the Irish Land Bill, so that it might be seen whether they had the confidence of the country in the administration of the Act. But Ministers here ought to give the name for their own sake. It was an easy matter for the Minister for Lands to mention the name to his colleagues. If it was necessary that the name should be considered at a Cabinet Council before it was mentioned to the House, he was afraid the Cabinet Council would not be held before to-morrow.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would like to know whether they were to understand from the Colonial Treasurer that the names of the gentlemen who were to be appointed had not been submitted to the Cabinet up to the present time?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: With regard to the second name.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then the Government were prepared between then and to-morrow to receive any suggestion from the Minister for Lands, and to settle the question? That was, that in that short time they were going to make an appointment almost equal to that of a judge, when the qualifications of the gentleman to be appointed had not yet been considered. That was an extraordinary position to be landed in; he could hardly conceive it possible. He was sure the Colonial Treasurer was not likely to make a mistake.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could only reiterate what he had said: No second name had been put to the Cabinet. The matter had been considered by the Premier and the Minister for Lands, but certainly the Cabinet, as a whole, had not considered a second name; and he could only repeat that his colleague intended to submit the name to-morrow. He (the Colonial Treasurer) was quite as ignorant as any hon. member of the name that his colleague intended to submit; and he was sure that he could say the same of his colleagues, the Minister for Works and the Attorney-General.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked what would be the occasion of saying anything to-morrow? He supposed the Government expected the Appropriation Bill to pass through that night? Did the Government intend to go on with the Triennial Parliaments Bill and the Queensland Spirits Duty Bill? If not, what would be the occasion of speaking at all to-morrow?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that after the third reading of the Appropriation Bill it was the intention of the Speaker to adjourn the House till 7 o'clock, by which time the Premier would be in his place, and in making a statement as to the disposal of the rest of the business of the session it was possible he might feel himself justified in announcing the name; or, if the business sent to the Upper House was not disposed of that night, the House might have to meet to-morrow.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, were they to understand that the Government would not take till to-morrow to give the name, and that, as soon as the Premier came, he would settle the question? He presumed the Minister for Lands had the confidence of his colleagues; and yet that business was to be taken out of his hands. The unfortunate Minister for Lands was crushed again. Again he was moved out of the way. He (Mr. Morehead) was sorry for the Premier's colleagues; they seemed to be utterly lost when he was absent. The Committee had been told that at 7 o'clock the Premier would be present, and then he would name the second member; and yet they had been told that that mysterious kind of man was to be revealed by the Mahdi in Council to-morrow. He did not see why they should adjourn till 7 o'clock. Why could they not go on with the business? He was perfectly satisfied that the Premier's colleagues thought themselves capable of conducting the business, whether they were or not. Why could not the business go on? Why was not the Premier present? At that particular period of the session he ought to be present. There were still further reasons that he could urge why the hon. gentleman should be in his place.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not pledge himself or the Government that the Premier would make any statement with regard to the appointment of a second member. He stated that probably the Premier would be in his place at 7 o'clock, and might do so in announcing the arrangements for the further disposal of business. His absence was accounted for by the fact that he had been delayed in the Bay.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked what was the use of making the announcement on the morrow; it would be useless if it was not made that night. He could see no imaginable reason why it should not be made that night except to prevent discussion. There was no reason for meeting on the morrow except to hear the announcement from Government House that Parliament was prorogued, so that the promise to announce the second name on the morrow was a device to prevent the Committee discussing the propriety of the appointment made. It was quite possible that the other side might be as happy in the selection of the second member of the board as of the first; but if so it would be gratifying, he was sure, to the Committee to learn the name. At all events, they had urged and urged again strong reasons that that was a matter upon which the Government ought to take the Committee into their confidence. And it was the promise that such information would be given that helped to ease some of the friction that took place in passing the Bill through the Committee.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1883-4, a further sum of £107,966 12s. 4d. from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. That was the amount of the Supplementary Estimates for 1883-4.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he had to express his strongest reprobation of the action of the Government in regard to those Supplementary Estimates. It always used to be said by the other side when his party was in power that they made the Estimates too small, and predicted large Supplementary Estimates as a consequence. As a matter of fact, the expenditure of the late Government was smaller than ever incurred by any Liberal Government up to that time—not only smaller in proportion to income, but smaller

in actual fact. The largest amount of Supplementary Estimates they had ever had was £85,000, but, as he had predicted, the first Supplementary Estimates of the other party had increased to £107,000. Supplementary Estimates pointed to a great national evil. While the majority on the other side were so subservient that they would not criticise the action of the Government, but left the power in the hands of the Government, the consequence was that a large amount of money was spent without parliamentary authority. The proof was that those Estimates were three times larger than most years of the late Administration, and double what had been incurred in the heaviest year. He had not the slightest doubt from the confidence displayed in the Ministry by the party opposite—taken by the very small amount of information they asked as to the destination of the money voted and the power placed in their hands—that the Supplementary Estimates would be very much increased next year. They had voted a Loan Bill of ten millions, and the real deduction to be drawn from the action of the party opposite on the Supplementary Estimates was that they would pick and choose out of that ten millions what they would spend. £107,000 of money that had never been voted had been passed unquestionably by the Committee in a few minutes at a time, when the country party had gone to their homes for the session, and when members were tired out with the day's sitting, and when the most responsible officer of the Government had given up and gone home himself. That was what it had come to from the actual want of performance of their duty on the part of the members on the Government side of Committee, who refused to criticise the action of the Government and gave them unlimited power.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was true that the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1883-4 were large, but there was circumstances to account for that. Those Estimates were not altogether due to the present Government. At least there was £20,000 which they inherited from the requirements of the year over which the hon. gentleman the leader of the Opposition presided, and there was also the item of £22,000 paid to Mr. P. F. Macdonald. If those sums were subtracted from the Supplementary Estimates it would be found that the latter exceeded to a very little extent the amount of the Supplementary Estimates of the late Government. He was free to admit that the Supplementary Estimates of the late Government had been kept down, and he trusted that the present Government would be able to do the same.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that no doubt for a certain portion of the Supplementary Estimates last year the present Government were not responsible, but that was very little. He had been speaking from memory when he said that the Government had doubled the Supplementary Estimates of the late Government. He believed that they would be more than trebled next year, and they might as well hand over the Treasury to the Ministry at once.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that, toward making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, a further sum not exceeding £15,682 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland. He said that was the amount of the Supplementary Estimates for 1884-5, which were voted on Saturday morning last.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was sorry that the Premier was not present, because he would like to draw his attention to a mistake which appeared

in connection with the defence force. The first item was that of "Naval instructor," which was a wrong name to give the officer in charge of the naval brigade. The naval instructor was generally the chaplain on board ship. He was the individual who gave the necessary instruction so far as navigation was concerned, and he (Mr. Beattie) thought the name should be altered. He presumed that the advice had been obtained by the Premier from a military officer, and, therefore, he was evidently led into a mistake. It ought not to read "naval instructor," but "officer in command of the naval force." Another thing he wished to point out was, as hon. gentlemen would see—that one "chief petty officer, drill instructor" was set down at a salary of £80 per annum. That was simply ridiculous. The sergeant of a volunteer corps of sixty men was set down for £150 a year, and in this estimate the instructor and chief petty officer, with 140 men, was asked to give his services for £80. That officer must be a first-class man, and he knew there were one or two such whom the Government would be very glad to get—men of great experience. The fact of the matter was that instead of taking the advice of a man who knew something about it, the Premier had evidently taken that of some military man, and put the officer down as drill instructor at £80 per annum, the same as a drill instructor in the volunteer force. That officer would have an immense amount of work to do.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he wished his hon. colleague the Premier had been present to give information upon the vote. The scheme of the naval defence was to have three companies of fifty men each. Two of them would be in the southern part of the colony, and one at Townsville, and the vote was intended to provide for the expense connected with the payment of these men for six months. It would be, of course, an experimental scheme, and it was likely that the money would not be expended during the present six months. No expense would be incurred until the arrival of one of the new gunboats, when the advice of Captain Wright would be taken as to the best form in which the scheme could be carried into effect. He had no doubt that before they adjourned that evening the Premier would enter more fully into the matter.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: When will the explanation be given?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had called attention to the vote on the Supplementary Estimates referring to the naval defence force, and he was saying that, when the Premier came, fuller information would be given if required. The vote was for £4,150, and was supposed to make provision for the expense of one of the gunboats for six months, and also for six months' expenditure for the naval force.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: That passed on Saturday morning.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: As he had stated, it was not likely that the expenditure would be incurred in connection with that vote, until the advice of Captain Wright of the "Gayundah" had been taken.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the Chairman leave the chair and report to the House that the Committee had come to a resolution.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was not present when the Supplementary Estimates passed on Saturday morning, or he would have referred

to a matter which he promised to mention when the General Estimates were going through. That was the action of the Minister for Lands in connection with the notices of forfeiture of the runs in the Cook, Burke, and North and South Gregory districts. When he spoke about it when the Estimates were passing, he had not sufficiently gone through the return to know really how the matter stood. He had since found that up to the 18th September, 1884, when the return was called for, the Minister for Lands had given notice of forfeiture of 1,285 runs, and up to that date he had reinstated 975, leaving 310 still under notice of forfeiture, which had not been reinstated. He then pointed out that the action of the Minister for Lands did not serve any other end but simply to harass and put to useless expense the squatters in those districts, who had at that time little need to be put to any extra expense, considering that they were suffering from a severe drought and had to have their stock off the runs. The reason they received from the Minister for Lands was an unsatisfactory one—because they had not sent in returns to the Inspector of Stock. As he had pointed out, there was very good reason for not sending in returns to the Inspector of Stock, because a great many of those men had their stock off the runs at the time, and they did not think it was right to send in a return of stock that were not on the runs—that were travelling. The Minister for Lands said it was because the stock returns were not sent in that he gave notice. The hon. gentleman ought to have had far better grounds than that to go upon before he put those men to the expense they had been put to. There was no doubt that thousands of pounds had been taken out of the squatters' pockets to enable them to give evidence before the Minister for Lands to show cause why they should be reinstated; and the Minister for Lands had, in almost every case, accepted the statements made by the squatters. As he said, up to the 18th September, 975 out of 1,285 runs were reinstated, and since that time he believed many more had been reinstated. He would like to know now from the Minister for Lands if he had any idea how many runs he had since that date reinstated, or how many were left still under notice of forfeiture?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman charged him with having taken the action he had against the lessees for harassing purposes. There were very few men in the country who had any knowledge whatever as to the manner in which that country had been stocked. For the last four or five years they knew that a great deal of the country taken up had been taken up without any stock at all, and an attempt was made by the late Government to ascertain whether it was or not. They sent out a man at a cost of £900 to examine half-a-dozen runs. The report was laid on the table of the House, and any hon. member who looked at it would see how useless it was and how little information was given that could be acted upon. The action taken by the late Government was absolutely futile. Now, he did not think that anyone with any knowledge of the subject would doubt that large numbers of runs had been taken up without stock—had been held without stock; commission agents were continually advertising them to be sold without stock in every paper in the colony, and the difficulty of ascertaining whether they were stocked, or whether the provisions of the Act were being carried out, was very great indeed. He required those people who had made no returns of their stock to show cause why their runs should not be forfeited, on the assumption that they had no stock. The Act required that every

man must make a return of his stock under the Brands and Scab Act, and those men had made no returns for some years. Of course, there were some cases in which the owners had been obliged to remove the stock for want of water, and he had taken that as a good and valid excuse; but in the first instance, when a man took up country, he ought to intimate to the Government that he was not in a position to comply with the law. In some cases he knew of runs that had been taken up and held for two or three years without putting any stock whatsoever upon them, and accordingly he had required very explicit explanation of the reasons why the country was not stocked, and in many cases reasonable and good excuses had been made. In some cases it was said there was no water on the runs, and it was utterly impossible to keep the beasts on the run, and in every case of that kind the runs had been reinstated. There were 334 runs in which no satisfactory reason for non-stocking had been given. The hon. member for Normanby had said he could not extract any information out of the papers laid on the table of the House, and could not tell what runs had been reinstated and what had not; but he (the Minister for Lands) had taken up the papers and gone through them, and there was not five minutes' work in finding out that information. His action had been commented upon very freely by members on the other side, and he was free to admit that the course adopted had not been a very satisfactory one. On the other hand, he could not see that there was any practicable means of getting at those men who did not stock their country. He dared say there were a great many people who did not know how those things were done. He had known a number of cases eight or ten years ago in which men with 150 head of cattle had travelled down the streams and taken up 2,000 or 3,000 square miles of country, making their pre-emptives all along the watercourses.

[The proceedings at this stage were interrupted by a heavy storm, and the CHAIRMAN announced that he would resume the chair in ten minutes.]

On the Chairman resuming the chair,

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the Sergeant-at-Arms might remain in his place a little more. He was receiving a large salary, and he should not leave his duties to be performed by the Clerk Assistant. He would not have made any remark on the subject, but the absence of the Sergeant-at-Arms from his place was continual, and he hoped it would not occur again.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said with regard to the action taken by the present Government he was quite prepared to accept the whole responsibility, because the proceedings were instituted and carried on entirely by him and at his suggestion. The proceedings would have been productive of more satisfactory results if the season had not been so bad, as that rendered the Government less disposed to carry the matter out in its entirety. At the same time, if the action did press heavily upon some of the persons concerned, it was not the fault of the Government; because if the returns required by law had been made by runholders, they would not have been subjected to the call to show cause why their runs should not be forfeited. In many cases no attempt whatever was made to comply with the law in that respect; and with those men he had no sympathy at all. If they had any difficulty in getting or keeping stock on their runs, it was their bounden duty to represent it to the Government, and apply for the extension of time which the law provided. They simply ignored that, and took it as a matter of course that as long as they had the country and paid rent for it they had nothing further to trouble themselves about. They had

heard a great deal in the House about the difficulties, dangers, and expense to which pastoral tenants were liable. He had been a pastoral tenant ever since he had been in Queensland, and he knew something of the difficulty and danger and expense—the bad seasons, increased price of labour, blacks, and many other things; but there was none of these which the pastoral tenant had to fear more than getting into the hands of a stock and station agent, or commission agent—whether it was a man who acted as a financial agent, or one who sold the pastoral tenant's produce. If any man sent stock to town, and attempted to treat with a butcher directly, there was a combination made between the commission agents and the butchers to defeat anything of the sort; and the only chance he had of selling his stock was to pay 2½ per cent. to the commission agent. He himself had had a good deal of practical experience of the matter; and of all the difficulties the pastoral tenant had to contend with there was none that equalled that. Whatever might be the ultimate outcome of the action of the Government, he was satisfied that it would secure more conformity with the law; and that men would begin to understand that they could not, with security, hold land in defiance of the plainest requirements of the Pastoral Leases Act. If it had not been for the late dreadful season, there would have been a great many runs sent to auction already and submitted to those who were willing to occupy them, and not merely to hold till they could sell to others at a large price, leaving the purchasers to provide the stock. His sympathies were entirely with the man who carried out the spirit of the Act, inasmuch as if he stocked his country under the difficulties which stocking necessitated he was worthy of all sympathy and consideration. But when a man took up land with one or two hundred head of cattle, and then put it in the hands of a Brisbane or Sydney commission agent for sale, that man was an enemy to the country, and should be hounded out of it; and his best efforts should be exerted in that direction.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Hon. gentlemen might laugh and call out "Hear, hear." Why did they not take steps to put a stop to that sort of thing a good many years ago? Why did they not take steps against those unscrupulous grubbers in the country who made fortunes out of men who had occupied country by stocking? He knew men in the Western district who had made £50,000 and £60,000 in that way.

Mr. STEVENSON: Are you describing yourself?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: With the exception of the solitary attempt made by the late Government to do what he had mentioned, he had not heard of anything having been done. He had attempted to do his part; but what did the late Government do? Nothing could have been more imbecile. Action was taken against men who had made themselves obnoxious to somebody. He knew one man; that was Mr. Hungerford.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He certainly made himself obnoxious to the other party.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That was Mr. Samuel Hungerford. He was speaking of the father. Action was directed against that man because somebody had taken a personal dislike to him, and representations were made that he had acquired country in defiance of the law. The outcome of that was sufficiently well known. The report of the man who was sent

up to inspect those runs showed how difficult, how almost impossible it was for anyone to go on to a run and tell what number of stock there was upon it. He might know that there was stock there, but it was impossible to tell the number. He (the Minister for Lands) would refer to some rather insulting remarks that had been made from time to time in that House in reference to the stocking of some runs, by the firm of Bell and Dutton, on the Thompson. Those runs, he might tell hon. members, were purchased from the man who took them up. Some new country was taken up as dry country. After it had been applied for, Mr. Bell went out to examine it and found that a great deal of it was dry country, but that some portion near the Thompson was well watered. As soon as they found out that, Mr. Bell asked that his application for dry country be set aside, and put in an application for watered country. Before Mr. Bell got there, the stock were on their way out, and the run was continuously stocked from that time. The law, therefore, was in every respect fairly and honestly complied with. The hon. member for Balonne charged him one night with having an insufficient number of stock. He denied that utterly. The country he took up was sold by the hon. member's firm in Sydney—Morehead and Young.

Mr. MOREHEAD: They never sold an acre of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Well, at all events, when he sold Nive Downs, the lessee of Bungeworgoral knew that the number of stock was double that required by the Act; in fact, twelve months before that time he (the Minister for Lands) had more than doubled the stock. So much for the statement of the hon. member for Balonne. The hon. member's statements in other respects were just as reliable as that one.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, taking the latter part of the hon. gentleman's speech first, he had admitted, with reference to the Thompson country, that he absolutely bought his leases—at all events, so far as the lower portion of that run was concerned—and that it was stocked with stock belonging to another person. He (Mr. Morehead) did not want to go beyond that, although he could show that in other respects what the hon. gentleman had stated to the Committee was not altogether consistent with truth. The hon. gentleman admitted that he obtained the lease of that country, which he afterwards sold for an enormous price, by the stock of another person; indeed, he went further and defended his action by saying that he had carried out the whole spirit of the Act, or words to that effect. The hon. gentleman had also made some remarks with regard to stock and station agents. He (Mr. Morehead) might tell the hon. gentleman that he (the Minister for Lands) would not have been there but for the stock and station agents. Had it not been for considerable advances made to him by one of the leading firms in the colony he would not be there, nor, indeed, would he have been in a position to take up that country. He (Mr. Morehead) thought that, after the opinions the hon. gentleman had just expressed, if he had any influence in the Cabinet he ought to bring in a Bill to abolish station agents, even if he swept away the Colonial Treasurer at the same time. He thought that that truly virtuous man, the Minister for Lands, ought to show his virtue by sweeping away station agents; although he (Mr. Morehead) was perfectly certain that he himself and the hon. member for Stanley would have to protest against it, and would do all they could to see that it was not carried into effect. He did not intend to discuss the question as to whether there was collusion



between the agents and the butchers to ruin the squatters or not. He did not think there was; he did not believe it; he had never heard it except from the hon. gentleman; and he had considerable doubts about any statements coming from that source. With regard to what was stated by the hon. gentleman as to the action taken by the late Government as to runs in respect to which it was supposed improper means had been used by the holders to obtain possession—that was, that they were obtained by declarations which were false—what was the action taken by the late Government? They did what no Government had done, except that of which the hon. member was a member. They selected a highly trustworthy public officer—a man of honour and integrity—and sent him to investigate the matter. That gentleman went out, and while agreeing with the Government on certain points, that there were great difficulties in the way of finding out as to whether those runs had been properly stocked or not, he had done very good work indeed. Everyone knew that it was a difficult position to place a man in—to discover whether a run had been properly stocked. At any rate, he held that was one of the best ways to obtain information on the subject. He might be wrong, but it was the best and most honest and straightforward way. But what did the Minister for Lands do? He said to himself, “Here is a chance of getting at some of these men, and this is apparently an opportunity of seizing a large quantity of country that may or may not be taken up.” He went outside his own department to the Treasury, and behind the backs of those men he made an investigation as to the number of cattle and sheep that were returned under certain Acts as being on certain runs of the colony. With that mathematical mind of his he said in certain cases if a certain number of cattle and sheep were not on those runs then the runs were forfeited under the Act. Whereupon the hon. gentleman gave notice to something like 1,300 pastoral lessees, without any further inquiry, that it was his intention to forfeit those runs. That was the position that gentleman took, knowing, as he ought to have known, that under one clause of the Act of 1869 runs might, under certain conditions, such as drought, damage by fire, and so on, be legally and lawfully understocked, without giving notice to the Minister for Lands. But he went into the outside districts, attacked men living in the wilderness, and gave notice of his intention to forfeit their runs. Mr. Kellett, the member for Stanley, knew what a shock had been given to those men in the outside districts—men who had tried to act in a straightforward manner to keep up their stock, but who, from circumstances over which they had no control, but which unfortunately for them and the colony had caused great losses of stock, had to understock their runs. Those were the men that had been pounced upon by the Minister for Lands, and been told that their country had been forfeited and was to be taken from them. Why the hon. gentleman should have patted himself on the back for having done what he did was a wonder to him (Mr. Morehead). He had said the test by which the Lands Department should discover whether the lands were stocked or not was whether assessment on a certain number of stock had been paid to the Treasury. The hon. gentleman must see that if the squatters were such rogues as he gave the public to understand they were, there would not be the least difficulty in keeping the country stocked. All they had got to do was to send down a cheque to the Treasury as assessment, with a return that there was a certain num-

ber of stock on their runs. For he presumed that, as it was difficult for an inspector riding over a run to say what was the number of stock on that run, it would be much more difficult for the Government when they had once accepted payment of assessment on stock under the existing law of 1869 to find out whether that stock was there or not. In fact, by his theory the Minister for Lands had made the retention of country more than possible—perfectly easy by any man who chose to send in a false return of stock and a remittance for the assessment to the Treasury. The hon. gentleman had not in any way freed himself from the very serious difficulty in which he had placed himself. He had not in any way shown that any benefit had been derived by the State from the action he had taken. He had admitted that he had to give way, and the principal reason for doing so was the existence of the drought. But the hon. gentleman knew of the existence of the drought when he sent out the notices. The drought was then raging at its worst, so that that reason must go to the wall. But if those men were doing wrong under the Act of 1869, what had the drought got to do with it? If those men had not stocked their runs to start with, the drought had nothing to do with it. The hon. gentleman gave way because he found the force of public opinion was so much against him, and that he himself was not clean-handed and had better leave it alone. He (Mr. Morehead) had not the least doubt that the latter argument had had a great deal to do with his giving way, for he had shown that he had taken up his country with stock that belonged to someone else. Nevertheless the hon. gentleman had pursued those men in the out-districts, had put them to an enormous amount of expense, and had injured and damaged them, simply to gratify his own spleen. That was the only solution he (Mr. Morehead) could find. He had taken advantage of the honest action of the late Government to try and discover if the lands had been improperly taken up, and had made use of that as a lever of oppression against a large number of unoffending men. The action of the late Government was to strike at men who had improperly taken up country, and whom they attempted to bowl out by the best possible means at their disposal.

Mr. PALMER said he was not present when the Minister for Lands had given his reasons for declaring the lands forfeited. There had been no opportunity since of referring to it, and he had been very much surprised at the reasons given for forfeiting the runs; because the runs in the Burke and Cook districts that were declared forfeited were taken up under the Act of 1869; the rents were only paid under that Act, and if any contravention of any other Act had transpired it was not fair or just that people should be punished under another Act. If there had been any contravention of the Brands Act, that Act provided a penalty—it provided a means for punishing offenders. There was no justification whatever for declaring those runs forfeited under one Act for the contravention of another. He believed it was quite illegal. In some cases where the runs were not properly stocked in that peninsula, the Government ought to be very glad to have received the rent, whether the country was stocked or not stocked. When he (the Minister for Lands) said he knew of runs having been taken up and held without stock for three or four years, he knew more than a great many other people knew. The commissioner ought to report the cases. The hon. gentleman did not quite understand the dignity belonging to the office he held, or he would scarcely have so demeaned himself as to go into another office to find men out and

punish offenders under another Act. He did not think the Minister for Lands would repeat it after his experience of a session of parliament. He came into office like a boy beginning his education. He did not begin his A B C in the House; but had made a jump as a fully fledged Minister for Lands, and his position had run away with him. He did not think the hon. gentleman would again declare runs forfeited for the reason he had given. A great many of the runs that had been forfeited had been fully stocked for many years, and that was the reason why he had been astonished at the action of the hon. gentleman; and in cases where they might have been understocked the country was of that wretched nature that the Government ought to have been glad to have had somebody to pay rent for it. According to the ruling given by the Minister for Lands, a person had only to send in his returns; he need not have stock upon his run, but so long as he sent in returns he could hold it, and the Minister for Lands would justify him in holding the runs without stock. He believed that the action taken by the Minister for Lands had led to the sales of a great many runs falling through. A great many people had declined to speculate in runs owing to the action of the Minister for Lands. He did not think the hon. gentleman fully understood the nature of the step he had taken. It was a most arbitrary proceeding altogether to send forth his fiat, "I proclaim these runs forfeited," and give his reasons for doing so afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman seemed rather tender on the matter. He did not know how long that gentleman had had his run on the Flinders; but, however long he had been there, he had only just got the number of the stock there, and he must have been there for about twenty years. Then the hon. gentleman supposed that the only method of getting at the number was by the returns, under the Brands Act. It was one way of doing it, and it did not seem to be a bad way either. There were one or two things that those men must have done. They must either have made a false return under the Brands Act, and did not comply with the law, or else they did not stock the country at all. Then the hon. gentleman said that some of the country was so poor that men ought not to be required to stock it as the Act required. He should like to know what was the good of having a law of any kind. He did not know what value the hon. gentleman attached to the law; but if those men did not stock their runs they would be amenable to the penalties the law imposed. He did not think that those men who had started to stock their runs with any *bond fide* intention of stocking them within the meaning of the Act, had been at all inconvenienced or subjected to any unnecessary expense by the action the Government had taken in the matter. It might press pretty hardly upon some of them; but it was by their failure to observe the laws which stockowners knew perfectly well they ought to observe. They were just as much required to send in their stock returns as they were to stock the country they held from the Government.

Mr. STEVENSON: The Minister for Lands has not told us how many runs he has reinstated since that return was laid upon the table.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could not give the exact number; he had not got it with him. There were about 939 reinstated, and about 334 still in abeyance. He was not quite sure of the figures. The hon. member could see from the return.

Mr. STEVENSON: I can tell up to the time the return was made, but I cannot tell since.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That return is correct at any rate.

Mr. STEVENSON: The return says that 975 were reinstated up to the time it was called for—the 18th September. I wish to know how many have been reinstated since?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot say.

Mr. STEVENSON: There are a great many.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am sure there are not.

Mr. STEVENSON said he knew there had been a good many. It simply showed that the whole action of the Minister for Lands was quite uncalled for. He had reinstated nearly every run of which he gave notice of forfeiture. Three hundred and ten had not been reinstated up to the time the return was made, but a great many of them had been reinstated since. The hon. gentleman had admitted that he had made a mistake, and he made the mistake at the time it told very seriously against those men, and put them to a very great expense and annoyance. Not only the actual expense, but, as the hon. member for Burke had pointed out, it would no doubt very likely destroy the chance many of those men had of being able to dispose of their runs.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As unstocked country.

Mr. STEVENSON: He said unnecessary expense, because, according to the Minister for Lands himself, the country had been stocked, and he had admitted it by reinstating them. He could inform the Minister for Lands that it was quite possible to sell country without stock. People could sell country without the stock, and take the stock away and stock some other country with it. The law could not interfere; it was legitimate to do that, and there was nothing at all against it. The Minister for Lands talked about his experience—that he knew this, that, and the other about the difficulties there were in taking up new country, and so forth. He knew a great deal of how it was taken up. He knew that there was not compliance with the Act, but evasion of it. "Set a thief to catch a thief" was an old saying; but it was a very true one in the case of the Minister for Lands. That gentlemen thought, when he came into office—"I will be a new broom and will sweep clean. I believe that a lot of those fellows up north have taken up runs the same as I did, and I will have them down if I can, and show that I am looking after my office." The Minister for Lands had been trying to explain how he took up Bimerah. He had admitted that it was taken up before the stock was put upon it, and it was purchased. He (Mr. Stevenson) knew it was purchased for a very few hundreds of pounds, and he knew the gentleman from whom it was purchased. The hon. gentleman made £40,000 or £50,000 out of that. That was the kind of bargain he made by giving a few hundred pounds for the information;—thus securing the country by taking it up before one single head of cattle or sheep was put upon it. That was the hon. gentleman's own statement that afternoon.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. gentleman told them that the country was originally taken up as dry country.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. STEVENSON said that was the hon. gentleman's statement. He said the country was originally taken up as dry country, and he (Mr. Stevenson) said it was not taken up according to the Act, because he said a great part of the country was well watered.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was corrected as soon as possible.

Mr. STEVENSON said a very nice way it was corrected. He could tell hon. members something more. In the meantime, while it was held as unwatered country, another man was prevented from taking up the country legitimately. He knew that for a fact. The application was made at the land office in Tambo, and the country was taken up as unwatered country when it was watered country. One of the hon. gentleman's neighbours on the Thompson, seeing his statement, had wired to him (Mr. Stevenson) from Aramac to "ask Dutton how it came about that he was so virtuous now, when he took up three or four blocks of country with frontage to the Thompson as unwatered country." The hon. gentleman said it was corrected as soon as possible, and he (Mr. Stevenson) would refer to that. He did not blame the Minister for Lands and his partners for taking up the country as they did. As he had often said, a great part of Queensland would never have been taken up at all if people had had to comply literally with the Act; but when the hon. gentleman made himself out so virtuous he (Mr. Stevenson) was just going to let the Committee know the kind of virtue that was practised by the Minister for Lands. The hon. gentleman said, "It was corrected as soon as possible." He said Mr. Bell went away out and found out that some of the country was watered, and that cattle were sent out to stock it. Suppose that half that country—about 800 square miles were taken up—suppose that 300 square miles of that was watered country—and he was sure that was a very low average to take—well, the mob of cattle that went out to Bimerah numbered 750.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; they did not. That is not true.

Mr. STEVENSON said, would the hon. gentleman say what the number was?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not true what you say.

Mr. STEVENSON said, what was the number?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: 1,250 went out the first time.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had it on good authority that 1,250 head did not go out, and he had that from a gentleman who had written to him since the first discussion of the matter in the House—that was Mr. Harris, from whom the hon. gentleman purchased the country. That was where he got the information from, and it was quite as good an authority as the hon. gentleman's statement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not true.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. gentleman used to sit down quietly and let his partners do the work, and so very likely he did not know. He (Mr. Stevenson) would rather take Mr. Harris' word for it, for he showed the way out when the cattle were taken.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He did not take the cattle out.

Mr. STEVENSON said he showed the way to take the cattle, and he knew what cattle went out. Supposing that only 300 square miles were watered, it would take 1,500 cattle to stock that 300 miles; so that he did not see that the hon. gentleman held the country according to the Act. The country was kept stocked like that for years and years, and it was worked in that way in anticipation of selling it. He blamed the hon. gentleman for undoubtedly harassing

other pioneers when he himself knew what the difficulties were that had to be contended against, and when he himself made his fortune by taking up country not in accordance with the Act. Yet the hon. gentleman pretended to be so virtuous in the House and said he could make everyone else conform literally with the Act. Well, he did not think that the hon. gentleman would get much thanks for what he had done, either inside or outside the House, and the action of the hon. gentleman had had a very bad effect on those gentlemen who had got those notices of forfeiture; and he said that if there was much country in Queensland to take up under the Act—which there was not—the action of the Minister for Lands would have hindered anybody, and prevented the country being taken up as it otherwise would be. He did not think the hon. gentleman had made out a very good case, and he (Mr. Stevenson) had shown that he was not justified in the action he took. There was no fair case against those squatters, and the hon. gentleman had taken a very clumsy way of doing what he had done. The information he went on was information upon which runs ought never to have been forfeited. He harassed people to the very uttermost, even after they put their cases before him in a straightforward manner. The hon. gentleman took every opportunity of putting those men to expense before he would reinstate their country, and he (Mr. Stevenson) thought the hon. gentleman was not to be complimented on his action. He wished to say a word in reference to what the Minister for Lands said about the member for Burke having held his country for twenty years, and its not being stocked now. Well, the hon. gentleman was simply stating what was untrue. The hon. member for Burke when he took up his run did not take up the amount of country he held now. He took up the amount he stocked for, and he had increased his run and stock in the same ratio, and at the present time there was far more stock on the run than required by the Act.

Mr. MOREHEAD said perhaps the Colonial Treasurer would let them know when the Premier was expected back, so that he might re-chain the Minister for Lands?

Question put and passed.

The House thereupon resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House, and the report was adopted.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that a Bill be brought in founded on the resolution.

Question put and passed.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL OF 1884-5, No. 3

The COLONIAL TREASURER presented this Bill, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: I think it would be very much better, instead of pushing the business forward so rapidly, as the Colonial Treasurer seems to wish, if we were to adjourn and wait until the Premier is in his place. This Bill will certainly be obstructed in committee until we get the information we desire with reference to the appointment of the second member of the land board. I do not object to the second reading, if after that the House adjourns till such time as the leader of that party—if it may be called a party—comes into his place.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: If the Bill be read now a second time, I shall move the postponement of its committal till a later hour in the evening.

Question put and passed; and Bill read a second time.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for a later hour in the evening.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The Speaker announced the receipt of messages from the Legislative Council, notifying that the Council had agreed to the plans, sections, and books of reference of (1) extension of Fassarfern branch of the Southern and Western Railway from Harrisville to Teviot; (2) extension of Maryborough Wharf Branch; (3) extension of Cooktown Railway; (4) extension of North Coast Railway to Caboolture.

#### SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, this Order of the Day was discharged from the paper.

#### GRATUITY TO PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIAN.

The CHAIRMAN reported the following resolution, which had been arrived at in committee:—

“That an address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for the year 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.”

On the motion of Mr. BUCKLAND, the report was adopted.

#### LOAN BILL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council returning this Bill without amendment.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL No. 3—COMMITTEE.

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

Preamble postponed.

On clause 1—“Appropriation”—

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said as the Premier was now in his place he thought it would be a most convenient time to give him an opportunity of redeeming the promise which he made during the session of naming the members of the land board. One member had been named already—Mr. Deshon—and he might say that that gentleman's name had been received with general approval on both sides of the House. He thought, for the honour and honesty of the Government, it would be well if the hon. gentleman would mention the name of the other member. He might inform the hon. gentleman that the question was asked during an earlier period of the day, and the Minister for Lands stated that he was not in a position to name the second member, but that he would be to-morrow. Even considering that all the business of the country would be finished that evening, and that there was scarcely any likelihood of what the Minister for Lands implied—namely, a Cabinet Council for the selection of the other member being held until to-morrow—he scarcely saw how they were to get the information if they did not get it that night. That was the most convenient time to give the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government an opportunity of supplying the information. He did not think it was a matter

of very great importance, as he mentioned earlier in the evening, for this reason—the names of the members of the board were required, that hon. members might have confidence in the administration of the Act, and therefore those names should have been given some time during the passing of the Bill through the House, as was done in the House of Commons. He believed himself that Mr. Gladstone would have had great trouble in getting the Irish Land Act through the House if he had not given both sides of the House the fullest confidence in naming the gentlemen who would have the administration of the Act in their hands. By doing so he facilitated the passing of the Act, and it was for that reason that he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) asked the hon. gentleman on a previous occasion to name the members. But now the Bill had passed he did not look upon the matter as having the same importance, although it was still of importance, because it would give confidence to the people of the country; and if a second member was named in whom they could have the same confidence as in Mr. Deshon he was quite sure the people of the country would receive with satisfaction the names of the members of the board.

The PREMIER said he had never given an unconditional promise to name the members of the land board. If the Government had determined upon a second member he would name him with the greatest pleasure; but the Government felt the difficulty and importance of the selection as much as anybody else could do. He knew that in the Irish Land Act the names of the first commissioners were mentioned, and that precedent was before the Government when they framed the Land Bill which would probably become law to-morrow. He would not be “telling tales out of school” if he said that in one draft of the Bill a clause was inserted saying “the first members of the land board shall be—” although the names were not filled in. It was thought better, however, on consideration, not to do that. He hoped at the Cabinet Council to-morrow they would be able to decide upon a second member, but at the present moment they had not done so. The Government had had various discussions upon the subject, and several names had been submitted to them, but they had not yet arrived at a definite choice. He could assure hon. members that the Government recognised the importance of the matter, and they felt that the success of the Bill and their own reputation to a great extent would depend very much upon the selection of the members of the board. There would be no patronage exercised, and he might say that he would be very glad to receive suggestions from hon. members opposite. What the Government desired was to appoint another member of the board who would give satisfaction to both parties in politics and to all classes of the community. That was their most earnest desire. Any suggestions that hon. members opposite might give—not in public, because that might not be desirable—but any private suggestions the Government would be very glad to receive.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he did not think it was a good thing for the Premier to ask for suggestions as to the character of the man to be appointed. The hon. gentleman had just stated that the character of the Ministry would depend a great deal on the success and administration of the Act, and the appointment rested entirely with the Government of the day. It seemed to him that they should endeavour to give confidence to the public in naming the other member. The hon. gentleman seemed to forget that naming the member to-morrow would have this effect: that it would prevent that

House from expressing an opinion as to the appointment the Government made. The first appointment announced to the Committee had elicited approval. The Government had everything to gain by naming the gentleman, if he was acceptable to the Committee; but they had a great deal to lose if, having made the announcement, they did not at the same time give Parliament a chance of expressing their opinion on the matter. Should the announcement be made to-morrow, he would like to ask the Premier what opportunity the House would have of expressing an opinion on the subject? By all appearances, he did not see anything now to obstruct the passage of the whole of the business of the Government that night; and what opportunity would the House have to-morrow of expressing an opinion in connection with the appointment?

The PREMIER said he did not know how the opportunity would be given of expressing an opinion. He did not see exactly how he could suggest any way in which an opportunity would arise.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said, exactly. The Government had kept back the announcement until Parliament had got no time to express an opinion. That seemed to be the system the hon. member had adopted. He could assure the hon. gentleman that that system of tactics would not redound to his credit, and seemed to forecast an appointment that would not be acceptable to the House, and if it was not acceptable to the House it would not be acceptable to the country.

The PREMIER said the Government were approaching the matter simply with a desire to appoint someone who would be acceptable to the House and the country—he did not mean the other side of the House alone, but the whole House and the country. He did not think there was any danger of the Government making a bad appointment; if they did, they would very soon get an expression of opinion on the subject.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was quite willing to give the Government credit for a desire to appoint the best man they could get; but seeing that since the Land Bill was introduced they had had four or five months to consider the appointment, and that they had decided on one member of the board, there should be no difficulty in choosing the other. Surely, out of the number of names the hon. member told them had been submitted and discussed, one could be selected! It did not look well to put off the announcement at the last moment of the session, when the hon. member himself admitted he did not know how Parliament would have an opportunity of expressing its approval or disapproval. He did not think it could be altogether press of business. If the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government and the Minister for Lands had taken the matter seriously, he was quite certain they could have come to a decision already; but probably they were under the impression that the Bill was not likely to pass this session. It was now several days since the appointment of Mr. Deshon was announced, and the announcement of the name of the second member should have been made at the same time. He was sorry the hon. gentleman could not give the House the information, as it was far better that such an appointment should be one that members on both sides of the House could approve.

Mr. PALMER said he rose to contradict a statement which had been made earlier in the afternoon by the Minister for Lands. He would have done so before, but he thought the contradiction by the hon. member for Normanby would be sufficient. He had since

been asked, however, why he had not contradicted the statement, so he would assure the hon. gentleman that the statement he (the Minister for Lands) had made, as to his (Mr. Palmer's) having held country for many years with an insufficient number of stock, was not in accordance with facts. He had had sheep on the country for many years, and at all times, as well as at present, he had had far in excess of the number of stock required by the Act. He supposed the hon. gentleman would accept that assurance.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that at a previous part of the session he asked the Colonial Secretary to produce all the papers in connection with the recruiting of kanakas in New Guinea and the adjacent islands, and on that occasion he was met with a denial that any such papers were in existence. At last it was admitted that there was a telegram from him to the Inspector of Islanders at Mackay, and that he found had been produced. He was quite satisfied that he had not got the whole of the information he asked for—that the whole of the papers had not been produced. There was one telegram that he had mentioned three different times when the Speaker was in the chair, and once or twice in Committee; that was a telegram the Governor received from Lord Derby calling attention to the fact that islanders were being recruited in New Guinea. It was proved by internal evidence that that telegram existed, because it was referred to in the papers produced; but it was not amongst the correspondence laid on the table. He had seen that telegram himself, and had written the reply and several minutes on it; but that telegram and several other telegrams had been suppressed.

The PREMIER said he was glad the hon. gentleman had mentioned the subject—he had been afraid the hon. gentleman would not allude to it. The hon. gentleman had said several times during the session that while he was in office he took steps to stop recruiting to New Guinea, and he (the Premier) asserted that the hon. gentleman had never done anything of the sort—or else he did it in such a manner that no trace of his action could be found in the department. He was therefore very glad when the hon. gentleman moved for a copy of all correspondence between His Excellency and the Imperial Government last year, on the subject of recruiting kanakas in New Guinea and adjacent islands; and also all telegrams and letters on the same subject between the Colonial Secretary and the various ports. The hon. gentleman asserted, as positively as possible, that he had sent telegrams to the different ports of the colony forbidding any recruiting from New Guinea.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: That was not my assertion.

The PREMIER: Those were the words the hon. gentleman used, and those were the words taken up by his friends outside. He (the Premier) asserted that the hon. gentleman no more interfered with recruiting from New Guinea than the Chairman himself did as a private member of that House. The hon. gentleman said some telegrams had been suppressed. The return which had been laid on the table contained all the telegrams that could be found in the colony on the subject. He would just read them, so that hon. gentlemen and others who had not seen them might know what the action of the hon. gentleman really was with respect to recruiting from New Guinea. The hon. gentleman's action amounted to absolutely nothing, unless indeed the step that was taken to annex New Guinea was with the view of stopping recruiting. Of course, as the hon.

gentleman said, the correspondence bore internal evidence of a telegram having been received from Lord Derby, and what the contents of that telegram were was made perfectly clear by a despatch dated 4th June, 1883, from Sir Arthur Palmer to the Secretary of State:—

“Government House,  
Brisbane, 4th June, 1883.

“MY LORD,

“I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Lordship's cablegram of the 30th May, inquiring whether the reports current in the English newspapers, that a vessel had left Mackay for New Guinea to obtain labour, were true.

“In answer to that cablegram the following cablegram was transmitted to Your Lordship, which I now have the honour to confirm:—

“Cannot ascertain that any labour vessels have gone to New Guinea. Vessels clear for South Sea Islands only. No labourers have come from New Guinea. If annexation confirmed cannot recruit there. See Pacific Islands Labourers Act. Some labourers have come from New Britain.”

That was the whole despatch. The telegram mentioned as having been received from Lord Derby could not be found, or it would have been included in the correspondence; but its contents were quite apparent from the despatch. Now, what action did the hon. member take on receipt of that telegram? Did he send instructions to the various ports that no vessels were to go to New Guinea? The only telegram sent was as follows:—

“TELEGRAM FROM THE UNDER COLONIAL SECRETARY TO THE INSPECTOR OF PACIFIC ISLANDERS, MACKAY.

“Colonial Secretary's Office,  
Brisbane, 31st May, 1883.

“Have any vessels left Mackay or other port with avowed intention of recruiting islanders from New Guinea or adjacent islands. If so give names of vessels and date of clearance.”

That was merely an inquiry whether any vessels had gone. The telegram from Lord Derby was received on the 30th May. The reply, dated 1st June, was—

“No vessel cleared at this port for New Guinea. The ‘Fanny’ reported to have gone there cleared for South Sea Islands 6th February her real destination was New Britain where recently seen by ‘Hopeful’.”

On that the hon. gentleman who now led the Opposition sent to Sir Arthur Palmer, the Administrator of the Government, information on which the despatch which appeared there was founded. That was all that took place, except the despatch in answer to Lord Derby's despatch, refusing to confirm the so-called annexation of New Guinea, which might perhaps be said to be remotely connected with the subject. That was the only correspondence that ever took place. After a most careful search in the Colonial Secretary's Office, on two or three separate occasions, to discover whether any telegram was in existence that had been sent from that department to any ports of the colony, nothing of the kind could be found. He did not accuse the hon. gentleman of inventing the story; but he imagined the thing. The hon. gentleman had a very strong imagination, and he assumed that he had sent such instructions. But, as a matter of fact, no such instructions were given by any Government department in the colony with respect to recruiting in New Guinea, unless they were instructions given privately by himself, (Sir T. McIlwraith) and of which there was no record. It was possible that had the circumstances been as they were afterwards, the hon. gentleman might have given such instructions; but as a matter of fact he did not do so.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he was obliged to the hon. gentleman for his explanation of his (Sir T. McIlwraith's) imagination. His imagination, at all events, so far impressed that House with the idea that he actually sent some

telegrams; and in spite of the denial made by the Premier that no telegrams had been sent, he forced out of the hon. gentleman the fact that at least a telegram was sent to Mackay. It would be in the recollection of hon. members that the hon. gentleman denied that any such telegram existed, and yet he found that telegram. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) knew he did send a telegram to every port in the colony, and he afterwards gave that information to His Excellency. The hon. gentleman said that he (Sir T. McIlwraith) certainly did not give instructions, the record of which could be found in the Colonial Secretary's Office, that no recruiting was to take place in New Guinea. Instructions might be given in a number of different ways. That that policy was admitted and acted upon—that no recruiting vessels should be allowed to approach New Guinea—was apparent from the admissions made by the hon. gentleman himself in the House—namely, that no recruiting took place while he (Sir T. McIlwraith) was in office, nor in fact for six months after the hon. gentleman got into office. The hon. gentleman admitted that. The policy he (Sir T. McIlwraith) pursued was seen perfectly well from a letter of his written to His Excellency:—

“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 been actuated by any such motive; nor was there the slightest ground for believing the statement.”

He wrote that on the 28th September, 1883, and the hon. gentleman asked them to believe that up to that time he (Sir T. McIlwraith) had given no instructions whatever to prevent recruiting.

“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.”

He asked the Committee to say and believe whether there was any possibility that he could not have given instructions up to the time he wrote that despatch. As a matter of fact, no islanders had come from there up to that time, and by the admission of the Premier himself no recruiting took place in New Guinea until June, 1884.

The PREMIER said there was nothing easier than to deny an assertion that was never made. The hon. gentleman said that he (the Premier) denied that any such telegrams existed—as what? As the hon. gentleman asserted existed. He (the Premier) denied that any telegrams were in existence showing that the hon. gentleman ever gave any instructions that recruiting was not to take place in New Guinea. He did not deny that any telegram was sent to Mackay.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Yes, you did.

The PREMIER: He never denied any such thing, and the hon. gentleman never said anything of the sort. The matter never, perhaps, came under the hon. gentleman's notice. The hon. gentleman said he did give instructions, but the information given to Sir Arthur Palmer

clearly showed that he never gave instructions to prevent recruiting in New Guinea. The information he gave was about vessels clearing for the South Sea Islands only. What did that mean? The Government did not know where vessels were going to. And, besides that, the hon. gentleman had no power to prevent them going to New Guinea, so that he never could have prevented them if he had wanted to.

Mr. ARCHER: On what authority did you do it?

The PREMIER: On the authority of the regulations made under the power given by that House. There was no power previous to that, and that power was only exercised in this way—that unless they complied with the regulations they would not be allowed to recruit at all. The hon. gentleman said that recruiting at New Guinea only commenced six months after the present Government came into office. That was true, and it was untrue. It was true that on the mainland of New Guinea recruiting only began last June; but recruiting was going on in the small islands on the coast of New Guinea in December last by vessels that left Queensland before the present Government came into office. The papers laid before the House showed that. But as a matter of fact the late Government did not prevent vessels going where they liked. The first time he heard of recruiting in New Guinea was when, after a vessel had come into Townsville after a very short voyage, it was stated in a newspaper that they came from New Guinea. That must have been shortly after the hon. gentleman left office. And then a person, whose name he would not mention, but who was connected with the labour trade, asked him if New Guinea was included in the Western Pacific, and whether the Kidnapping Act or the Polynesian Labourers Act would apply there. He (the Premier) replied that he believed they would. He was in Townsville at the time, and immediately on his return to Brisbane he issued a notification to the effect that recruiting in New Guinea was prohibited. The hon. gentleman could not have done that as there were no regulations empowering him to do so. He (the Premier) had been under the impression that it was stated a few days ago that New Britain and New Ireland were intended to be included in the so-called annexation of New Guinea. Certainly hundreds of men came from those islands during the tenure of office of the hon. gentleman. The papers before the House gave most lamentable particulars of the circumstances of their recruiting. The hon. gentleman had better accept the inevitable, and admit that he never did give the instructions he said he did.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman expected them to accept his statement that the telegrams did not exist, because he could not find the documents. He did not accept that statement, for he knew the facts; and all the facts that had happened since were perfectly consistent with what he said. The hon. gentleman asked how such instructions could have been given, for they could have had no legal effect. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) knew that he had no power to prevent vessels clearing for New Guinea; but the very fact of recruiting having taken place in New Britain had roused him to action, and to let everyone in the trade clearly understand that though he had no legal power to prevent vessels going to New Guinea, he would not allow the recruits from there to land, and the vessels would not be allowed to go back again. As a matter of fact, the hint from the Colonial Secretary's Office was obeyed, and it was only since the present Government came into power, and had

shown laxity in the matter, that recruiting had taken place in New Guinea. In the previous part of the session, the hon. gentleman had denied that recruiting had taken place in New Guinea and adjacent islands until June, but now he said he had found evidence that it had existed in December last. That was perfectly possible, and the hon. gentleman was responsible for that, and not the previous Government. What he (Sir T. McIlwraith) contended was, that he had taken every possible advantage of the position he occupied, to prevent recruiting in New Guinea and the adjacent islands. It was part of his policy to do so, though it was part of the policy of the gentlemen opposite to declare the opposite. He knew that such recruiting did not exist under the late Government, and that it only existed under the present Government through the laxity of the administration of the Colonial Secretary.

The PREMIER said that one could only laugh at a statement of that kind. Could the force of effrontery further go? He had been accused there for the last twelve months of harassing the sugar-planters by putting an end to the Polynesian labour traffic. He had introduced a system of supervision which had never existed before. There was no doubt about it that there never had been any supervision before. Now the hon. gentleman had the effrontery to say that the recruiting in New Guinea and adjacent islands had been permitted through the laxity of the administration of the present Government. He told the hon. gentleman that there had been no administration under his government of the traffic, except that anyone who made a complaint as to the mode of recruiting was immediately dismissed from the Government Service. The hon. gentleman had report after report made to him showing the abuses of the traffic, and nothing ever came of them except the dismissal of the Government agents who made those reports. Yet the hon. gentleman had the effrontery to get up and state that the present Government connived at those abuses. The hon. gentleman did absolutely nothing in the regulation of the traffic—he allowed the department to drift as it pleased. He no more supervised the Polynesian traffic than the Chairman did. The matter was allowed to drift as it liked. The hon. gentleman knew of the introduction of islanders from New Britain and from New Ireland. Did he not know that numerous abuses had occurred in his own time, and what those abuses had led to, and that no attention had been paid to them until the subject was taken up by the captains of Her Majesty's ships, who had investigated the abuses? He (the Premier) thought that the recent disclosures might have silenced the hon. gentleman if anything could have silenced him. The idea that the present Government were responsible by their laxity of administration for the abuses was preposterous. The late Government had allowed the matter to drift into absolute chaos; and yet the hon. gentleman had the effrontery to get up and say that if the present Government had introduced the same administration as under the late Government there never would have been abuses. He (the Premier) ventured to say that if the same administration had prevailed during the past twelve months as during the preceding twelve months, no abuses would have been heard of. No doubt that was true, for every case that had been exposed during the present year would have been hushed up, and nothing would have been heard of them. He said that with great regret, but he was not going to submit to be accused of laxity of administration when the hon. member himself had exercised no supervision whatever. He thought it was unfortunate



that that discussion had happened on the last day of the session, but he was not prepared to allow it to be said that he had been lax in the administration of the Polynesian labour traffic without giving it prompt contradiction.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member had told the Committee that abuses in the labour traffic had existed all the time he (Sir T. McIlwraith) had been Colonial Secretary; that facts had been before him officially in which the abuses of that trade had been shown; that he had paid no attention to them nor had taken any steps whatever except to dismiss the Government servants who had made those reports. Now he challenged the Colonial Secretary—and he had some months during the recess to look it up—to show one single instance in which one of the agents of the late Government or anyone connected with that Government had brought a report before him which resulted in the dismissal of that servant. He challenged the hon. member to bring one single case in which, a report being made, there was not the fullest investigation during the whole of the time of his administration. The hon. member had said that he had allowed the Polynesian Labour Department to drift and had not taken any notice of it, but there was not a single case in that department when he was Colonial Secretary that he did not pay the fullest attention to, and not a single case which he had not thoroughly investigated. The hon. member knew perfectly well that he would not allow a matter of that sort to drop. He (the Premier), after having suppressed information up to the last moment; after having denied the existence of a telegram which he was ultimately forced to produce; after having up to the last moment failed to produce one of the most important telegrams: after all that, he came forward and said that the administration of the late Ministry had been so lax that they had failed continually to investigate cases, or if they did, it resulted only in dismissal of the Government employés who made the charges. Now, that was thoroughly untrue. There was not a single bit of foundation for it. He challenged the Colonial Secretary to produce every paper in the office, for surely there was documentary evidence to prove his allegations. But he challenged him to prove a single case in which there was any evidence, or anything justifying investigation, in which a report had been made or brought before him—and every report was brought before him—which he did not investigate at once and do it full justice. He did not remember that he ever dismissed a Government agent, except for one thing, and that was for failing to perform his duty—the protection of those he was bound to protect—the kanakas. Men had been dismissed by him for neglecting that duty. The hon. member had made a charge against him without the slightest foundation, and he knew perfectly well he could not produce the papers to substantiate his charge. But the challenge being given he was bound to take it up. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) said he had conscientiously administered that Act, and in the interests of the colony. He knew perfectly well, and had held all through, that the trade ought to have been suppressed. He had acted upon that right through, and had tried to bring forward every case that would tend to throw some light upon the labour traffic. He did not think the hon. gentleman had performed the same part as he had done. Those abuses had reached a point during the hon. gentleman's administration which they had never reached before, and those abuses could not possibly be saddled upon the previous Government. They had reached a point when the hon. gentleman was bound to suppress it, and he said

that the hon. gentleman was a participator in the crime, when he came forward and defended his administration. He challenged the hon. gentleman to bring forward any facts to prove his assertion. It was a matter of fact that he (Sir T. McIlwraith) put a stop to the New Britain trade as soon as his attention was drawn to it—since those wild men had escaped down at Moreton Bay; and, from that time to the present, within the knowledge of the department, and within the knowledge of the public, there had been no cases of men having been recruited from either New Guinea or New Britain.

The PREMIER: Lots of them.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it was entirely owing to the action taken by the hon. gentleman himself—by the admission he had just made. He said that cases had occurred in December where vessels must have cleared while he (Sir T. McIlwraith) was in office, and returned in the administration of the hon. gentleman, and he was responsible for it. In the same way, the hon. gentleman said in June last that no cases of recruiting had taken place up to that date. He admitted now that he had found facts to prove that the trade was going on in those islands, and it told against himself. It showed the laxity there had been in the administration. He would challenge the hon. gentleman to bring one case in which a complaint had been made by any member of the public in any Government office of the way in which the trade had been conducted, which he did not thoroughly investigate.

The PREMIER said he would not take the trouble to repeat what he had said before. The hon. gentleman had developed as he went along. He now said that he gave instructions not to have any recruiting in New Guinea or New Britain or New Ireland. He could only say that there was no trace of anything of the kind to be found in the Government department. He had given instructions to find all that could be found. Perhaps the hon. gentleman would tell them the name of the person to whom he gave the instructions. Were they given to the Customs, or would the hon. gentleman give them any means of finding out? He asserted that nothing of the kind had ever taken place. It was an hallucination the hon. gentleman was labouring under—simply an hallucination. As to whether the hon. gentleman or he was responsible for the laxity of administration that had taken place in the labour traffic, he left that to the verdict of the colony and the civilised English-speaking world. Possibly it might be accounted for in this way: the hon. gentleman used the term "laxity" to signify something that hon. gentlemen sitting around him and beside him usually called "harassing the sugar-planter."

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman had stated that the leader of the Opposition was labouring under an hallucination. If so he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) must be labouring under an hallucination also. He could not enter into the discussion about the telegrams or about the special instructions which had been asserted by the leader of the Opposition to have been given by him while in office; but he could assert this: that, however the question arose, it was thoroughly understood in the Cabinet, while he was a member of it—and he did not leave it until the early part of last year—that there was to be no recruiting from New Guinea, and he would just refer the hon. gentleman to what might be taken as proof positive that no recruiting had taken place there, and none should take place there. He thought this would tend to remove the idea of his being under an hallucination on the subject. The hon. gentleman put into the mouth of His Excellency,



when he addressed the House at the beginning of the session, these words:—

"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."

In commenting upon that paragraph in the Address in Reply he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) expressed the same opinion—that no recruiting had taken place there. Why did he say so? Simply because he knew it was understood in the Cabinet that there should be no recruiting there. He could not say how that opinion rose, because he was not in the Colonial Secretary's Office, and he did not know what instructions had been issued; but that was what he said in speaking upon the Address in Reply, after quoting the paragraph he had just quoted:—

"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."

"Mr. MACROSSAN: And you stopped it?"

"The PREMIER: Yes."

"Mr. MACROSSAN: You did very right. But the paragraph says:—'The recruiting of labourers from New Guinea and from some islands in the Pacific, etc.' It is badly put together."

It was badly put together. New Guinea should not have been united with "some islands in the Pacific," meaning thereby that no recruiting was understood to take place from there by the Government when in office. Of course, he supposed that the same rule, however established, was being carried out by the present Government, and it seemed that it was up to the very month of June. The hon. gentleman himself admitted it—that the first recruiting took place there in June. Therefore, however the rule was established, whether by telegram, special instructions, or verbal instructions, it was being carried out under the late Government, and was carried out for nearly eight months after the present Government came into office. There was no hallucination about that. As to the hon. gentleman trying to shake himself free from the responsibility of the abuses in the Polynesian labour trade, he could not do it. There was no amount of claptrap and addresses to the "English-speaking civilised world" that would free him from that responsibility. He was challenged in 1877 by the leader of the Opposition, who was in the same position then as now, to prohibit the labour traffic entirely and fix a certain date from which it would be stopped. The hon. gentleman preferred to tinker with it, and his tinkering led to all that had taken place since. The then Opposition were prepared to assist him to stop it. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) was thoroughly sincere in trying to stop it, and so was the hon. gentleman at the head of the Opposition; and their sincerity in attempting to stop it was shown by their trying to introduce another class of labour in connection with which abuses could not possibly exist. The hon. gentleman might laugh; but that was one of the strongest reasons for it; that it would be impossible for abuses to exist in connection with the system that was asked to be introduced. Of course the country would not have it, and there was an end of it. The hon. gentleman was responsible to that extent that when he had it in his power to stop the labour traffic entirely he refused to do it.

The PREMIER said the present Opposition had five years after that and never stopped it at all. He did not know how the responsibility was divided. If the Government of which he was a subordinate member did not take a certain course of action, and then the

hon. gentleman opposite was in power for five years and did not take that action, it was difficult to see why the blame should fall on him, rather than on the hon. member. Possibly, that was a subtilty too deep for his comprehension.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman's whole nature was so subtle that no subtilty was too deep for his comprehension. But perhaps he would either accept, or not accept, the challenge of the leader of the Opposition. On previous occasions he had accepted challenges; but he did not know whether the result had added much to his credit.

The PREMIER: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was a matter of opinion so far as the hon. gentleman was concerned; but there could be no doubt as to the result of the last charge against the leader of the Opposition, because he was not inclined to go on with the base slander—as base a slander as the other which was levelled against the leader of the Opposition. The hon. gentleman told Parliament, in his Speech from the Throne, that recruiting in New Guinea and certain other islands in the Pacific had been absolutely prohibited. Would he explain how that had been done? There had been neither legislative nor, so far as he was aware, departmental action to absolutely prohibit the introduction of labourers from those islands. But when the hon. gentleman stated that any action had been taken he stated what was absolutely untrue; and when he impugned the statement of the leader of the Opposition he also stated what was absolutely untrue. He seemed to court popularity by any means whatever—whether by utter disregard for truth or a reckless assumption of what was not, he did not know; but the hon. gentleman seemed to think he could only hold power as he aspired to power—by trampling over the reputations of those who were in his way. But the hon. gentleman had not gained much by what he had said to-night. He was challenged to prove the assertions he made, but he had not done it. He had made assertions which would go forth to the colony at a critical time, in more ways than one; and it would have been better had he been more guarded in his language. The hon. gentleman talked of the last night of the session; but he would remind him that he was not likely to facilitate the passage of the Appropriation Bill in committee unless he treated members of the committee in a very different manner. He had neither temper, tact, nor judgment; and though he regretted his absence during the earlier part of the evening, he now almost regretted for his own sake that he was not absent. The hon. gentleman must either meet the challenge of the leader of the Opposition or else prove himself to have made a false statement, as he did on a former occasion when he attacked that hon. gentleman.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman was unfortunate in his allusions. He appealed to public opinion. So did he (the Premier) with regard to all he had done in his public career: he appealed to public opinion to say whether he was right or wrong. The hon. gentleman spoke lightly sometimes, and with an insufficient sense of his responsibility. He used big words; but what did they mean after all? Nothing. What had he said? Of what had the hon. gentleman accused him?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Telling an untruth.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman appeared to accuse him of all the crimes in the Decalogue, but he did not condescend to particulars. He was carried away by the exuberance of his own impetuosity to say things which, in his cooler moments, he did not mean.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that was a very easy way out of the difficulty, because the hon. gentleman had an enormous majority at his back. But when he got up and tried to give him (Mr. Morehead) "Disraeli and water," he looked upon it as a compliment, because the words the hon. gentleman attempted to apply were applied by Disraeli to a man who was much greater than even the hon. member at the head of the Government. He had a perfect right to complain of the hon. gentleman making charges against the leader of the Opposition which he was not able to prove. They all knew what public opinion was; and they all knew that the hon. gentleman had at times indicated a desire never to give effect to opinions which he now pretended to hold.

The PREMIER: Never. I am never ashamed of doing my duty.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not know what the hon. gentleman considered his duty; therefore he could not say of what he was ashamed; but he should think it was the duty of every honest man, when he said he had made a gross mistake, to acknowledge it and apologise.

The PREMIER: I agree to that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then why did not the hon. gentleman act as he thought?

The PREMIER: Because the mistake has not been made.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman said he wished bygones to be bygones, and he thought he would have accepted the position and admitted his error, but it did not seem to be so. He now told them that night that he believed what he (Mr. Morehead) believed no man in the colony believed when he asserted that he was of the same opinion with regard to the base charges which were levelled against the leader of the Opposition years ago, and which had been thoroughly disproved, and which he (Mr. Morehead) would not have alluded to save and except that he knew the charges made against the leader of the Opposition with regard to the labour traffic were as false and as base as the charges made by the Premier on a previous occasion. He dared say the Premier would not get for those charges the same pecuniary benefit and consideration as he before received; but they were just as base and false; and the hon. gentleman had not accepted the challenge made by the leader of the Opposition. If he did accept it, he would be defeated by the strength of public opinion, and by the strength of public opinion in other matters, before he was very much older.

The PREMIER said the appeal that the hon. member had last made was unfortunate again, but he would say no more about that matter.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I would not if I were you.

The PREMIER said it was an unfortunate appeal, and he would take no further notice of it. He must confess that he had never been more surprised in his life than that evening, or the last few days. Had anybody, knowing what had taken place within the last twelve months, got up and asserted in face of all the facts—had anybody ventured to assert that there had been laxity in the slightest degree in the administration of the labour traffic under the present Government and rigour under the past Government, he could not have realised the statement. The proposition was utterly preposterous, and no man in the colony, or no man outside the colony, who knew anything of Queensland, would really make such an assertion. He was astonished at the effrontery of any man making such an assertion. Did the hon. member expect that he was going quietly to submit to be accused of a thing of that kind

without retaliation? Let the hon. member understand he (the Premier) had been accused that evening of having for twelve months connived at abuses of the labour trade, when what he had done really was the exact opposite—the introduction of an entirely new system of administration, and the prosecution of offenders with the utmost rigour of the law. Did not everyone know that he had been for twelve months abused from one end of the colony to the other; that in some parts of the colony it was a common toast to drink "damnation to Griffith" with every glass of whisky poured down the throats of the people? Then, after twelve months of that state of things—it being admitted all over the Australian colonies that that was so—that he had been persistently for twelve months adopting a particular course—hon. members had the effrontery to get up and say that he had been doing the very opposite, and that all those things had been done by the late Government. The force of impudence could no further go, and he should say no more. Hon. members might say that it was broad daylight; that the sun was shining in that Chamber at the present moment; they might accuse him of having no clothes on; they might say it was the month of June, or might say that they were not on the earth but in the moon. They might make any other assertions of that kind. They would be equally preposterous and absurd, and he would not take any further notice of them.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said anyone looking at the facts of the case would not consider that the Opposition had shown any effrontery whatever in bringing the assertions. When he particularly accused the Premier of laxity of administration of the Polynesian Act, he did not certainly refer to the other Polynesian islands outside of New Guinea and New Britain. That the Premier had shown laxity there he had not the slightest doubt, and that the outcome of his laxity had been the disasters that had happened was just as plain. He had proved by all evidence that he could produce, while the present Premier was in office, that the late Government did everything they possibly could to prevent recruiting at New Guinea and the neighbouring islands, and he would quote a part of the Queen's Speech and ask the Colonial Secretary a question upon it that would show very conclusively whether the reply he had made was the correct one or not. The Premier said, "I cannot find the evidence of the instructions you have given at the various ports to prevent the carrying on of trade at New Guinea or the neighbouring islands." The following was part of the Queen's Speech, delivered at the commencement of the present Parliament:—

"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."

Now, with all the care that had been taken, that prohibition had not had the effect of actually stopping the trade, and he should like to ask the Colonial Secretary what were the instructions referred to by him by which that trade was actually prohibited. He would like to know whether they were different to the instructions issued by him (Sir T. McIlwraith), when he sent telegrams to all parts of the colony putting an actual prohibition on the trade. He said that the enforcement of the instructions given by him was the policy of the late Government, and those were the same instructions which the

Premier was now carrying out. The hon. gentlemen said he was free from any responsibility connected with the labour trade, and he referred to the fact that he occupied a subordinate position in the Cabinet. That was his excuse for not having done what he might have done in carrying out the Act, and the suppression of abuses. His colleague the Minister for Works was then Colonial Secretary. He appeared without responsibility too, but he was also a subordinate in that Government. Now, what was the actual position during the time that Government was in power? About the years 1875, 1876, 1877, and 1878 the matter came before the House every year. It was brought forward at first by remonstrances from Earl Carnarvon, who was the Secretary of State for the Colonies, with a request to legislate upon the subject. The Government brought forward a Bill in 1875, and it was shelved at the end of the session; they brought it forward again in 1876, with a similar result; and in 1877 that Bill was brought forward by the present Minister for Works, who was then Colonial Secretary. He got into extreme difficulty in carrying through the Bill, not from the opposition of the other side, but because he would not go far enough. Mr. Macrossan, the present member for Townsville; himself (Sir T. McIlwraith); and Mr. Buzacott, then member for Rockhampton, propounded to the House a solution of the difficulty—namely, that in the Bill there should be a year stated for the termination of the traffic altogether. That was the basis on which they proposed that an alteration should be made: that the traffic should terminate in three years from 1877. Well, the result was that the Colonial Secretary of the day began to realise that there was subject for reflection. He moved the adjournment of the House, and on the following day an amendment drawn up by him was circulated amongst hon. members decreeing that the traffic should be at an end at the close of 1881. From that day the Bill was never brought forward again. The Government saw perfectly well that with the aid promised them by men, then prominent on the Opposition benches they were bound to carry the Bill, and they refused to accept the responsibility. On the present Minister for Works and the present Colonial Secretary lay the responsibility of the trade not having been discontinued long ago. They had been another session in power in which they might have carried that Bill, but they refused, because they were supported by men who did not want to stop the kanaka trade. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) had been opposed to the trade all through, and had never delivered a speech in the House inconsistent with that view. The experience they had had of the Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Works proved that those hon. gentlemen had not been sincere. When they had a majority, which would have been perfectly able to put an end to the traffic, they declined to do so, although they were offered the support of some of the most powerful men on the opposite side of the House.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman seemed to be labouring under several hallucinations. It was quite impossible to get angry, or even annoyed, with such speeches as the hon. member was making—they so completely answered themselves. The hon. member had said that the whole evils of the Polynesian trade were owing to the fact that the Douglas Government did not abolish the trade; but the present law on the subject was actually passed in 1880, when the hon. member was Premier; and, though the hon. member was in office five years, he never took a single step to abolish the trade. The hon. gentleman would tell them next that he had always been a most strenuous opponent

of the introduction of Indian coolies and of the construction of land-grant railways. The hon. member wanted to know how it was that last week a notice appeared in the *Gazette* prohibiting the introduction of labourers from New Guinea. That notice bore date the 27th June, and it had been published every week in the *Gazette* since that date. The hon. gentleman also asked on what authority it was published. That was also contained in the notification:—

“Whereas by the regulations made under the above-mentioned Act, and published in the *Gazette* of the 18th of April, 1884, it is provided that the Minister may by a general direction published in the *Gazette*, or by a special direction given on granting a license in respect of any particular ship, forbid the recruiting of labourers at any specified island or islands, and Government agents are required to see that all such directions are obeyed: Now, therefore, I, the Honourable Samuel Walker Griffith, Colonial Secretary of Queensland, being the Minister charged with the execution of the said Act, do forbid the recruiting of Pacific Island labourers at the island of New Guinea, and the small islands adjacent thereto; and all Government agents and masters of labour vessels are required to take notice of this direction, and see that the same is obeyed.

“Given under my hand at Brisbane, this twenty-seventh day of June, A.D. 1884.

“S. W. GRIFFITH.”

Mr. CHUBB: That is under the Act of 1880.

The PREMIER: Yes; but the regulations under the Act of 1880 were framed for the first time in the present year, 1884.

Mr. KELLETT said the discussion was the most absurd he had heard since he had been in the House. He had no words strong enough to describe the audacity of the hon. members opposite in making statements which every man in the colony knew were contrary to facts. During the five years the other party had held office, they had never done anything to stop the kanaka trade with the exception of bringing in a Bill to introduce coolies, which would have had the effect of driving a large number of white men out of the colony, and of stopping immigrants from coming in. But that was such a question of fact that it was an absurdity to argue the matter. The hon. ex-leader of the Opposition, the member for Balonne, tried to strengthen his case by throwing out an absurd challenge, and saying that the Premier's statements were as true as others which the Premier made before and could not prove. It was very lucky for the Opposition party that the hon. member for Balonne had been out of the House a good deal lately, and no doubt the leader of the Opposition thought so too. The hon. member, at this end of the session, had dragged up a matter, the less said about which the better; but, as certain statements had been made, it would be well to contradict them. The English public had taken the trouble to ascertain all about that steel rails business, and the verdict was the simple Scotch verdict “Not proven.” He had it on the best authority—from men who knew the ins and outs of the whole affair—that all the sensible men in England who took the trouble to inquire into the matter were perfectly satisfied that, though the charges could not be proved, there was truth in them. Perhaps the charges were not fixed on the right person—he did not believe the leader of the Opposition was more responsible than other members of the party—but the hon. gentleman and his party were responsible for the transactions, and as the hon. gentleman had been in England lately, he must have heard that that was the opinion there. The ex-leader of the Opposition came in now on the last day of the session to bring in a firebrand. It would have been better for him to have left those cases in the mire where they were; the House had had enough of them.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was very sorry the matter had been introduced that night; he thought they were going to get home early. He must certainly take exception to some remarks made with reference to laxity shown by the present Government. He had an intimate acquaintance with many of those who had been connected with the Polynesian trade, and he could say that when the new regulations were introduced by the Colonial Secretary they were looked upon with the greatest amount of dissatisfaction by those engaged in the trade. Curses were loud and deep, from both owners and captains of vessels, at the strictness of the regulations. Therefore he did not think it was fair to accuse the Colonial Secretary of laxity in connection with the trade. If his memory was not defective, the cause of the introduction of more strict regulations was the bringing of a large number of islanders from New Ireland. The number of deaths among them at Mackay was so great that the attention of the Government was called to it, and an inquiry being made into the manner in which the islanders had been introduced, these strict regulations were made. He knew that the Colonial Secretary had received a great deal of opprobrium and abuse from most of the men engaged in the traffic, owing simply to the regulations being so strict. On one occasion he himself felt that the regulations were, to some extent, oppressive, because a friend of his, whom he had known for thirty years, was debarred from going as a master in the trade in consequence of their strictness. However, he thought the least said about the matter the better. He did not like to see one side of the House accusing the other of want of attention in connection with the trade; because he believed that all governments were anxious to carry out the law to the satisfaction of the country. He knew that some of the agents in the employ of the late Government did not give the Government that information that they ought to have given as to the manner in which natives were recruited in the South Sea Islands. He had that much confidence in the leader of the Opposition to believe that, had they brought things under his notice which he (Mr. Beattie) knew had taken place, he would have taken the necessary steps to inquire into them. He (Mr. Beattie) believed the trade was altogether bad. He had some knowledge of the manner in which islanders had been obtained in the South Seas for thirty-two or thirty-three years, and it had never been satisfactory. The very first introduction of islanders was a disgrace. They all remembered what brought the Polynesian Labourers Act into existence. It was the manner in which the men were recruited that caused Sir Arthur Palmer to bring in the Bill. He (Mr. Beattie) would be pleased if steps were taken to put a stop to the trade, after giving fair and reasonable notice. After the atrocities that had been brought under their notice from time to time, the sooner they did away with the traffic the better.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that the hon. member who had just sat down must have been outside the Chamber during the course of the discussion, or else had not followed it. The hon. member had taken exemption to the word "laxity" as applied to the Colonial Secretary and the administration of the Polynesian Labourers Act; but that was not what it was applied to at all. The foundation of the debate that evening was whether the late Colonial Secretary took steps to prevent recruiting in New Guinea or not. The late Colonial Secretary asserted that he did; and the present Colonial Secretary denied it. The word "laxity" was not applied to the general adminis-

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tration of the Act; it was applied specially to New Guinea, where, according to the admission made by the Premier, recruiting did not take place till the month of June last. Recruiters knew that they were not allowed to go to New Guinea, and therefore there must have been some laxity when recruiters went there. Hence the atrocities, about which they were all very sorry. Had there been no recruiting in New Guinea no such atrocities would have been committed. He hoped neither the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, nor anyone in the House, would accuse the Colonial Secretary of laxity in the general administration of the Act. The laxity, as he had said, simply applied to New Guinea.

Mr. WHITE said he was very much surprised that no hon. member had moved for a commission of inquiry into the kanaka trade atrocities, with the view of finding out those persons who had been accessories before the fact. He certainly would have no hesitation in hanging those persons.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had spoken of the strictness of the regulations for carrying on the Polynesian trade. He (Mr. Stevenson) thought that if the Premier had been really sincere in trying to prevent the trade being carried on as it was—had been sincere in his desire to prevent the abuses of the trade—he would have taken steps to do away with the labour altogether, instead of playing with it, and shilly-shallying as he had done, simply to curry popular favour. For it had been nothing except that. The Premier had not been sincere at all, otherwise he would have done away with that trade altogether. In regard to the other matter brought up that evening, they all knew that what fell from the hon. member for Stanley in regard to the leader of the Opposition would not have very much weight in the Committee. They knew that no reliance would be placed on what that hon. member said as to the leader of the Opposition. Knowing the relation in which the hon. member for Stanley stood to the leader of the Opposition, he (Mr. Kellett) should have refrained from bringing up anything of that sort. They knew that, because the leader of the Opposition had removed him from a certain position which he thought he was not fit for, the hon. member for Stanley took every opportunity of trying to rake up everything he could against the leader of the Opposition. It was very bad taste on the part of the hon. member for Stanley.

Mr. KELLETT said, that the hon. member for Normanby had made, as usual, an incorrect and untruthful statement. He sat like a dog behind his master's back and barked, barked, barked.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked if the hon. member was entitled to say that a statement made by another hon. member was untruthful?

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member was not justified in saying that a statement made by another hon. member was untruthful.

Mr. KELLETT said he would withdraw the expression that the statement was untrue, but would say that it was a statement contrary to fact. And it was not the first time that the hon. member for Normanby had made statements contrary to fact, nor would it be the last time. The member had made the statement that the hon. leader of the Opposition had dismissed him from a position he had held. The leader of the Opposition had not dismissed him or done anything of the kind. Such statements would not strengthen the case he had brought up; although that was the only way in which he thought he could put the member for Stanley down. It would, however, take half-a-dozen of

such men as the member for Normanby to put him down either inside or outside that House. Anything that had taken place between the leader of the Opposition and himself had been fought out fairly in the courts of the country before a judge and jury; and he had never spoken on the subject directly or indirectly, unless it had been brought up by others, from that day to this. He had been satisfied, for he had won his case at every point. The people of Brisbane and of the colony knew all about the case, and it would take better men than the leader of the Opposition or the member for Normanby to put him down. Those were not matters that ought to be brought up in that Committee, and it did not redound to the hon. member's credit to have done so. If he wanted to fight out his battles fairly in Committee let him do it on matters that came fairly before the Committee for discussion. No man could say that he had ever attacked a man, and brought up private matters; but when he was attacked—thank God!—he was able to answer. He never started till someone started him. He was not like others who barked and snapped like little puppy-dogs and thus showed the style they were. Members who had been elevated to the House in some unaccountable way, ought to remember that they were among gentlemen, and try to become as nearly as possible gentlemen themselves. Seemingly, however, they did not understand how to do it. But what was “bred in the bone came out in the flesh,” and that was the way with those members to whom he referred. He pitied them for their ignorance, for their want of knowledge, and for the dragging up which they had had. He had seen hon. gentlemen who had come into that House who were hardly able to read or write, but they had some little “gumption” and common sense, and they kept quiet for a time until they saw how gentlemen behaved themselves. But there were other illiterate men who could not act as gentlemen, and who were like an ill-bred horse which could not carry his corn. They were dragged up to a position which they could not appreciate, and he left them in that position.

Mr. STEVENSON said that the hon. member for Stanley has spoken of some members being like ill-bred horses who could not carry their corn, but he snarled very like a native dog. He (Mr. Stevenson) had not introduced any private matter, but had said that if the hon. member for Stanley had had any good taste at all he ought to have refrained from bringing up the matter with reference to the leader of the Opposition, considering his relations with that gentleman. The hon. gentleman said he had not been dismissed from his position by the leader of the Opposition. Well, perhaps he was not by the leader of the Opposition, but, at any rate, he was removed by some of those who were considered very closely connected with him. The hon. member said his case was known by everyone. He (Mr. Stevenson) should fancy that, so far as he had known the case, or had seen it in the public prints, the hon. gentleman ought to be very careful not to have it published any more.

Mr. KELLETT said he was perfectly satisfied to have everything the hon. member could say published about himself anywhere.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 2 and 3 were passed as printed.

On clause 4—“Short title”—

Mr. MOREHEAD said that he had been given to understand that the Premier declined to carry out the promise he made to tha

Committee before; that he would name the second member of the land board. If he would do so it would conduce to the passage of business, more especially as it was only carrying out a promise made by himself. Possibly that might not weigh with the hon. gentleman; but, at any rate, as regarded the honour of the Ministry and the reputation of the House, the promise should be carried out. He hoped the hon. gentleman would give that information, particularly as the hon. the Colonial Treasurer had told them that when the Premier came he would do so. He did not accuse the Colonial Treasurer of having made a direct promise; but he certainly made an indirect one. There were many reasons why they should have it, as to-morrow there would not be time to discuss the appointment, which might possibly be that of a member of that House. If a member of that House were to be offered the appointment, surely the House ought to know something about it! If they could not get all the information they might get some of it. Even if the Premier told them that no member of the House was to get it, it would be some satisfaction, not only to hon. members, but to the outside public.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that before the hon. gentleman returned to the Chamber after tea his hon. colleague the Premier had given all the information he was in possession of, and he (the Colonial Treasurer) had nothing to add to that information. As he had stated in the earlier part of the evening, the Cabinet had arrived at no conclusion as to who was to be the colleague of Mr. Deshon on the land board.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would again ask the Premier if the Government had not made up their minds on the subject? Although they had had a distinct promise from the hon. gentleman, his idea of a distinct promise differed from that of other hon. gentlemen. It would have been a distinct promise if made by any other gentleman but the Premier. Had the Government any idea of appointing a member of the House as a member of that board? They had a right to ask the question before the end of the session.

The PREMIER said that, as he had said before, the promise made by the Government was that if they could give the information before the close of the session they would do so. As hon. gentlemen knew, during the last few weeks they had had extremely little time for deliberation. The matter had several times been discussed, but no conclusion had been arrived at.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the hon. gentleman said they had not had time to consider to whom they should offer the appointment, yet three months ago one of the appointments was offered to a gentleman in New South Wales. The Minister for Lands had stated in the House that one of the appointments was offered before there was any very strong probability of the Bill becoming law, and now they were told by the Premier that the Ministry had not yet made up their minds who they were going to give it to. If there were to be any credence placed in the statements of the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Deshon was to be one of the members of the board. Was it the intention to give the other appointment to a member of that House or not? Surely that was a question that the hon. gentleman could answer. If he could not answer that he would put it in another way. Had the Government received any applications from any members of the House for that position, and if so, were these applications under consideration?

The PREMIER said he had never heard of any application from any member of the House, and the Minister for Lands had never had any application made to him.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked if the hon. member would answer the other portion of the question. Had the Government had it in contemplation to give the appointment to any member of the House? They knew that the appointment had been offered three months ago to a gentleman outside of the colony—a very competent gentleman—and the other appointment had been given also, he believed, to a very competent gentleman. He would ask the hon. gentleman to answer a plain question—Had the Government in contemplation the giving of the appointment to any member of that House?

The PREMIER said it was impossible to give any more definite answer. The Government had not determined to whom it was to be given. If he could answer the question, he would willingly tell the Committee all he knew about it.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked if the hon. gentleman did not remember having promised the House to give the information before the recess?

The PREMIER: If possible.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was quite possible at one period of the session, because, if Mr. Deshon was to be selected and Mr. Rankin, there were the two appointments. The hon. gentleman could have given the information then. Why was he reticent now? What he stood there for was to protest against the misstatements made by the Premier. He distinctly promised the House that they should get that information before the Bill went into another place. They had been delayed night after night, and they knew one of those appointments had been offered out of the colony, and they should get the information at such a period of the session as they would be able to discuss it. They were told that the information would be given to-morrow—which appeared to be as doubtful as the other promises made by the Premier—and then they would have no opportunity of discussing it.

Question put and passed.

Preamble passed as printed.

The Bill was then passed through its remaining stages and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

#### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I move that this House do now adjourn.

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. gentleman wish the motion to be put?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I hope the hon. gentleman will not persist in his motion. The Appropriation Bill is now being considered by the other Chamber, and I hope hon. members will allow a few minutes to elapse so that we may go on with the Bill when it comes from the Council.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I think it would be better for you, Mr. Speaker, to leave the chair for a-quarter or half-an-hour than that we should sit here doing nothing. If the Premier knows how long we will have to wait, the Speaker might leave the chair. That would be better than keeping us sitting here for nothing.

The PREMIER said: I only absented myself in order to ascertain how long it would be likely to be before we should get the Appropriation Bill sent down again. As far as I can conjecture it

will be in about half-an-hour's time, and if the hon. member will withdraw his motion the Speaker may then leave the chair.

Motion withdrawn.

The SPEAKER left the chair at a-quarter past 9 o'clock, intimating that he would resume it at a quarter to 10.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL No. 3.

On resuming the chair, the SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council returning this Bill without amendment.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move the adjournment of the House until half-past 3 o'clock to-morrow. The intention, in making the hour half-past 3, is that the House may meet at 4 o'clock, when it is proposed that Parliament shall be prorogued by His Excellency, in person, in the Legislative Council Chamber.

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