

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

MONDAY, 22 DECEMBER 1884

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Monday, 22 December, 1884.

Fassifern Branch Railway Extension.—Maryborough Wharf Branch Railway Extension.—Cooktown Railway Extension.—North Coast Railway Extension.—Motion for Adjournment.—Loan Bill of 1884.—Loan Bill—committee.—Report of Select Committee on the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.—Motion for Adjournment.—Appropriation Bill No. 3, 1884-5.—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4 o'clock.

FASSIFERN BRANCH RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said : Hon. gentlemen,—I beg to move—

That the Report of the Select Committee on the proposed Extension of the Fassifern Branch of the Southern and Western Railway from Harrisville to the Teviot be now adopted.

I think this is an extension which all parties are agreed should be carried out. The evidence taken before the Select Committee is of a satisfactory character. It is to the effect that the extension will serve to open up an agricultural district second to none in the whole of Queensland. The extension to Harrisville has been in operation for some time, and has been paying satisfactorily; and it is anticipated that this extension will make the present line more remunerative still. It is not intended that the extension shall stop at Teviot, but that the line shall be extended further towards the border. In view of the fact that the present line is working well, and that the country through which it passes is one of the most valuable agricultural districts in the colony, I feel sure that the Council will have no objection to the proposed extension.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I beg to move, as corollaries to the resolution just passed—

1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed Extension of the Fassfern Branch of the Southern and Western Railway from Harrisville to the Teviot, 18 miles 1 chain 10 links to 34 miles 64 chains 60 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 11th instant.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form.

Question put and passed.

MARYBOROUGH WHARF BRANCH RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—I beg to move—

That the Report of the Select Committee on the proposed Extension of the Maryborough Wharf Branch along Kent street, and sidings to Sawmills, Maryborough, be now adopted.

This railway is an extension for a little over half-a-mile of the present Wharf extension of the Gympie and Maryborough Railway to the sawmills on the Mary River. The evidence taken before the Select Committee is to the effect that the proposed extension was initiated at the request of the sawmill proprietors on that River. The evidence states that the traffic along the proposed extension is likely to be very considerable; but it is not anticipated that it will be of any other description than timber traffic. Hon. gentlemen who have traversed the railway between Maryborough and Gympie must have observed the enormous quantity of timber growing in the district through which that line runs; and I may say that it is the opinion of experienced men that there is enough timber in the district between Maryborough and Noosa to provide work of a reproductive character for nearly a century. A large quantity of the timber cut down in the scrubs in this district finds its way out of the colony across the railway from Maryborough to Gympie. If this railway is constructed it will go straight from the line to the sawmills, and be converted into sawn timber ready for export. Some doubt was expressed when the matter was before the Select Committee as to whether the Government intended that the sidings should be constructed at the expense of the State; but the Government never contemplated that they should be constructed otherwise than at the expense of the individuals into whose properties the line runs. The committee, however, placed the matter beyond doubt by recommending that the sidings should be constructed at the cost of the individuals who will receive benefit from the railway.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I beg to move—

1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Maryborough Wharf Branch along Kent street, and

sidings to Sawmills, Maryborough, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 11th instant.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form.

Question put and passed.

COOKTOWN RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—I beg to move—

That the Report of the Select Committee on the proposed Extension of the Cooktown Railway be now adopted.

This extension forms a portion of the line from Cooktown to Maytown, of which Parliament approved some time ago. About thirty-one miles from Cooktown westward are now in course of construction, and ought to be out of the contractors' hands by the middle of next year. The line, however, does not traverse any country suitable for either agricultural or mineral development, and the evidence given before the Select Committee went to show that unless the line is extended there is little likelihood of the portion now constructed being of any value to the public. The extension will terminate fifty miles from Cooktown, and the plans show that in one or two instances a gradient of 1 in 33 was proposed to be adopted; in another, of 1 in 38; and in some others, of 1 in 44. This was a matter to which the Select Committee gave careful consideration, and they came to the conclusion that trunk lines for heavy traffic should not be constructed with gradients of this description. They consider it to be essential in the interests of the public that the ruling gradient should be the same in all trunk lines throughout the colony—1 in 50—and the Government confidently anticipate that it will not require much variation from the route already adopted to secure a gradient of this description.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH said: Hon. gentlemen,—The only objection I have to the Postmaster-General's statement is that he is mistaken in referring to the ruling gradient upon our lines as 1 in 50. It is not so.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I said main trunk lines.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH: I do not know what the hon. gentleman calls main trunk lines, but I consider the line from Townsville to the interior is a main trunk line, and there we know that the ruling gradient is very severe—in fact, it is so severe that it incapacitates the line from doing the work it is called upon to do. The Postmaster-General is therefore quite misinformed so far as the line from Townsville westward is concerned, and I consider that as much a main trunk line as the line from Brisbane to Toowoomba. The hon. gentleman should not have asked us to acquiesce in what is—I will not say a misstatement, because the word is unpleasant—but in the mistake he made in saying that the gradient of 1 in 50 is the ruling one in the colony. It is not so.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hon. gentlemen,—One word in reply. The hon. gentleman himself was on the committee who brought this report forward. I believe there are some gradients on the line from Townsville to Charters Towers less than 1 in 50; still, notwithstanding that, I think the committee were quite accurate in saying that the ruling gradient on the Queensland railways is 1 in 50.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed Extension of the Cooktown Railway from 31½ miles to 50 miles, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 11th instant.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form.

Question put and passed.

NORTH COAST RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

That the Report of the Select Committee on the proposed Extension of the North Coast Railway to Caboolture be now adopted—

said: Hon. gentlemen,—This extension is the first link in the chain of railways it is proposed to construct to connect all the leading ports along the coast of the colony. Last week this House expressed its approval of the scheme by passing the connection between Howard and Bundaberg. This extension will start about six miles from Brisbane on the Sandgate line, and will proceed by way of Zillman's Waterholes and the Bald Hills to Caboolture. It is intended ultimately—and, in fact, at an early date—to extend this to Gympie; and that extension, with the Gympie and Maryborough and Maryborough and Bundaberg lines, will really connect Brisbane and Bundaberg. I hope before many years have elapsed to see the coast system of railways in operation throughout this colony. Owing to the quantity of creeks that have to be crossed on the first portion of this line, this railway will be more costly than the railways we have just approved of. The route has been chosen after a great deal of consideration, both by the Minister and by the Chief Engineer of Railways, and I may mention that the Minister and the Chief Engineer are in accord as to the route chosen. There is no doubt it is the most direct route between Brisbane and Gympie, and will serve to open up a very large number of important districts. It crosses the South Pine at the only point I believe where a good crossing can be found. The only question raised is whether it would not be advisable to run the line into Sandgate. I think a little consideration will show that, for engineering purposes, it would be highly inexpedient to take the line into Sandgate. It would have to start from about two miles from the town of Sandgate, and I do not think it would be of any benefit to the people residing in the neighbourhood. The route selected has been chosen for two very good reasons—first, because it presents the most engineering conveniences, and, secondly, because it is the most direct route between the two towns of Brisbane and Gympie. I beg to move that the report be adopted.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE said: Hon. gentlemen,—Having been on the committee appointed to investigate this proposal, and after some remarks I made in the House the other day in connection with the evidence offered to these committees, I think I am bound to make some remarks upon this railway. This is the first railway which I have had the honour to investigate as a member of a committee of this House, and I must say I cannot quite approve of the way in which these committees usually perform their duties to the House and the country upon these questions. The whole of the evidence given, and the whole of the proceedings of the committee, I suppose did not occupy more than about an hour; it may have been less than that. I found that while the chairman of the committee had in his hands a series of questions to be put to the official witnesses—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I had not a series of questions.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE: The hon. gentleman had some information which I took to be a series of questions, and the Commissioner for Railways had a corresponding document from which he gave his answers.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That is not correct.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE: That is not the way in which, I think, an important investiga-

tion by this House should be conducted. In the next place, the shortness of the time allowed for the performance of the duties of the committee was such as to prevent myself, or any other member of the committee who might be so inclined, from having a more complete investigation of the matter than they were able to have under the circumstances. I shall, after making these remarks, call attention to some of the evidence given in this particular instance. Mr. Phillips, the Engineer in charge of Railway Surveys in the southern division of the colony, in answer to questions 66 and 67, said he did not recommend this route in preference to others agitated for by different deputations that have waited upon the Minister. He, in fact, expressed his own opinion that it was not the cheapest route. At question 71, Mr. Phillips stated that, by starting from Sandgate or nearer Sandgate, some three miles would be saved in construction, and that saving he estimated at about £10,000, exclusive of a very important saving from resumptions. The resumptions at this part of the line proposed are likely to be expensive, because it goes over land subdivided into very small farms, and the greater portion of the country is occupied by woodcarters and labourers, who live principally upon Sandgate, whither they bring their labour and firewood, and have no extensive agriculture. At question 77 I find:—

“Would it not be better, in your opinion, for the line to branch off somewhere nearer Sandgate, close by Cabbage-tree Creek, or a little nearer the station than the way taken, to a point on the South Pine, or where the proposed line comes? Yes; I think it would be more convenient to a large number of people; but it would not make a better line to Gympie.

“Do you not think it would be less expensive to the country? Yes; less expensive to the country, in the first instance, certainly.”

I do not wish to detain the House, but I wish to point this out.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Read the next questions. Read 79 and 80.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE: Yes, I will. At questions 79 and 80 I find:—

“By the Chairman: In first instance? Yes.

“But as the distance to travel would be greater, traffic and working of the line would be more expensive? It would be a further distance, and the working of the line would be more expensive to the country; and the travelling and carriage of goods would be more costly.”

That follows as a matter of course, but the question is whether the saving of three miles in the distance, and the expense of the resumptions, make it desirable for the country to go into an expenditure of £15,000 or £20,000 for the sake of the extra haulage of three miles. I say the committee had not sufficient time to conduct the investigation as I think it ought to be conducted, nor do I think the public had a sufficient opportunity of bringing evidence before the committee in order that a better result might be arrived at.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed Extension of the North Coast Railway, from 6 miles 66 chains 30 links on the Sandgate Railway, to Caboolture, 24 miles 63 chains 70 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 16th instant.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form.

Question put and passed.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I must take up the time of the House for a few minutes to refer to a letter which appeared in this morning's paper over the signature of J. Malbon Thompson. In that letter that gentleman—an old and

respected member of Parliament, and of the Government in this colony, and a gentleman whose integrity no one would doubt for a moment—complains that the Hon. Mr. Gregory did him an injustice the other evening. I must do the Hon. Mr. Gregory the justice to say that I did not hear a word he said, and I do not know what was the accusation he was making against my old colleague and friend, or, as a matter of course, I would have defended him, because I am perfectly sure that Mr. Malbon Thompson is perfectly incapable of committing the offence or of making the mistakes apparently attributed to him by the Hon. Mr. Gregory. In order that I may not be misunderstood I will read Mr. Thompson's letter. He says, in addressing the editor of the *Courier* :—

"To the Editor of the *Brisbane Courier*."

"May I ask the use of your columns to contradict a statement made by the Honourable A. C. Gregory, C.M.G., from his place in the Legislative Council, regarding myself?"

"In *Hansard* of 4th December he is reported to have stated, in effect, that I gave my approval, as Minister for Lands, to a system by which a particular surveyor, by the connivance or contrivance of the then Commissioner for the Moreton district (the late R. J. Smith), was enabled to levy 'blackmail' (that is the expression) on the selectors."

"Under ordinary circumstances I could well afford to treat such a slander with contempt, seeing that my administration of the Act of 1868 has been generally admitted by both sides in politics to have been without fear, favour, or affection, but coming from a person in Mr. Gregory's position, an M.L.C., and an ex-Surveyor-General, I feel called upon to notice it."

"I now give his statement a most emphatic denial, and I believe that so far from sanctioning any such practices I was the first to check them."

"I have no papers to refer to, of course, and at this distance of time I cannot pretend to recollect the details of the numerous conversations which I had with the then Surveyor-General, and it may be that I expressed approval of selectors employing surveyors to prepare their applications; for if an applicant cannot describe what he wants himself he must necessarily get someone who is competent to do it for him, and if the statement of my approval had gone only so far I should have no right to complain, but to impute to me anything more is simply not in accordance with fact, and I trust my denial will be sufficient at any rate with those who know me and whose opinion I value."

"I think I have a right to say that not only was my administration fair and straightforward, but that it required some political courage on more than one occasion to carry out that policy, and I may instance my efforts to stop dunning."

"In conclusion, I may perhaps be excused if I take credit for having left the Lands Office in a better condition than I found it, in spite of that passive obstruction in which the late Surveyor-General is admitted to be a master.—I am, sir, etc.,

"J. MALBON THOMPSON."

"Sydney, 16th December."

I did not hear the remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Gregory the other night, but if he made the statements attributed to him in this letter they are not correct, for a more honest administrator we have not had than Mr. Thompson. It appears that the reporters cannot hear a word I am saying. I am sorry for that, as I feel called upon to do justice to an old and honourable colleague. The accusation made against Mr. Thompson by the Hon. Mr. Gregory is not true; it is impossible to be true. I simply call the attention of the House to the accusation made by the Hon. Mr. Gregory. I move the adjournment of the House.

Question put.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH: I have not spoken in reply. I trust I shall have an opportunity of doing so, but there is nothing to reply to yet. We are not going to allow the business to be hurried through by the storm.

The Hon. A. C. GREGORY: Hon. gentlemen,—The Hon. Mr. Walsh has referred to a letter from Mr. J. Malbon Thompson in reference

to certain statements which I made on the 4th of December in regard to the mode in which the land selection was proceeded with in the West Moreton district. Mr. Thompson seems to consider that I have not done him justice, but that I have attributed to him improper motives; and that from what I said it would be concluded that he countenanced the levying of blackmail on selectors. I emphatically deny that such was my intention. I wished to point out a practice which certainly could not be approved of, and which was allowed to go on in consequence of the want of knowledge on the part of the Minister for Lands as to what was the real meaning of the transactions that were taking place. I simply stated that Mr. J. Malbon Thompson was not aware of the real meaning of what was going forward under his own eyes in his own department. The actual facts with regard to the mode in which selectors were almost compelled to go to surveyors to get their descriptions are as stated then; my remarks were simply statements of what actually occurred. That Mr. Thompson does not dispute. But he disputes that he permitted or concurred in any improper practice. That I freely admit. I do not believe that he would have intentionally concurred in any improper practice, but he really did not understand what was going forward in his department.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH: That is your opinion.

The Hon. A. C. GREGORY: That is my opinion, and I gave my reason for forming that opinion; and I think this House will agree that if the circumstances which I have narrated took place they were such as ought not to have occurred. At the same time I distinctly exonerate Mr. Thompson from having intentionally or willingly concurred in any impropriety. I simply say that he did not understand what was going on.

The PRESIDENT: Hon. gentlemen,—I was in the House when the Hon. Mr. Gregory made the statement referred to; and I need hardly tell you that Mr. Malbon Thompson was an old colleague of mine as Minister for Lands; and if anything had been said against his character as an administrator I should have felt it to be my duty to defend him. But I did not take the Hon. Mr. Gregory's remarks as any reflection on Mr. Thompson at all. The Hon. Mr. Gregory simply pointed out certain irregularities which had occurred in the West Moreton district, as he has just now informed the House. He stated that a late land agent or commissioner for lands sent parties applying for land to another party for the descriptions of their selections. There was certainly no reflection cast on Mr. Thompson, nor do I believe any was intended. If there had been, I should, as I have said, have felt it my duty to defend that gentleman, for a more honourable, upright, intelligent Minister for Lands there never was in the colony than Mr. Thompson, who always tried to do his best in the interest of the country.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH: Hon. gentlemen—

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has replied already.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH: I think I may be allowed to say a word in defence of an old colleague.

The PRESIDENT: With the permission of the House the hon. member may speak, but he must remember that he has replied already.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH: With the permission of the House I think I should be allowed a word or two on behalf of an old

colleague, Mr. Thompson at any rate thought that his character was sullied to some extent by the remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Gregory. He must evidently regret that the President did not get up in his place in the House and defend him. Probably Mr. Thompson regretted that I did not defend him, or that some other hon. member did not do so. I am sure, however, he will take with every satisfaction the explanation given by the Hon. Mr. Gregory, that the construction placed upon his statement was not the meaning the words were intended to convey. I have done my duty. I trust I have not infringed upon my liberties as a member of this Chamber. With the permission of the House I will withdraw my motion, which was really what I intended to do when I rose.

THE HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Hon. gentlemen,—I only wish to say one word on this question. When the Hon. Mr. Gregory said what he did on the occasion referred to, I rose and spoke in somewhat similar terms of the former Minister for Lands, as the hon. the President has now done.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

LOAN BILL OF 1884.

THE PRESIDENT announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Assembly forwarding the Loan Bill, and asking for the concurrence of the Legislative Council therein.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was read a first time, and ordered to be printed.

THE POSTMASTER - GENERAL: Hon. gentlemen,—I think it will be convenient to move at once that the Bill be read a second time. This Bill is in the ordinary form of our Loan Bills, and authorises the Governor in Council to raise by way of loan for the public service of the colony such sums, amounting in all to £9,980,000, as may be required for the several purposes set forth in clause 1 of the Bill. The purposes mentioned in that clause are identical with those which appeared on the Loan Estimates laid before the Legislative Assembly some weeks ago, and circulated amongst hon. members at that time. In addition to the ordinary authority conferred upon the Governor in Council by the Bill, arrangements have been made with regard to the inscription of our stock, and further, that the Governor in Council may issue debentures or inscribed stock, as may be thought advisable, and place the loan out of the colony, appointing agents for that purpose. I understand from a remark made by the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior at our last sitting, that it is possible some hon. gentleman may require some information on some of the items that appear in this Bill. I apprehend that, following the general practice, it will be more convenient to refer to those matters when the Bill goes into committee, when I shall be happy to answer any question that may be asked. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

THE HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Hon. gentlemen,—I think that never before in this House was so little said by the Minister representing the Government on bringing forward a Loan Bill for its second reading. After having the Standing Orders suspended so that the Loan Bill may go through all its stages in one day, the only information the hon. gentleman gives us upon it is, that some schedule has been before us for some little time. I do think it is very unseemly—very much against proper government, very much against the interests of the colony—that at almost the last hour of the session a Loan Bill of such magnitude should be brought before us. Christmas is

near, a number of hon. members have already left, and there can be no doubt that the Government have not brought this Bill forward sooner, because they were afraid that after discussing the measure it might not become law. There are many items in this Bill—items amounting to several million pounds—that I, and I believe many other hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, decidedly disapprove of. A large number of items are all brought together, and we are thereby placed in a difficulty if we throw out this Bill, which I think we might do. It is a question in my own mind whether another Loan Bill could be brought forward in the same session. The hon. the Postmaster-General seems to think not, and I agree with him there. Therefore the responsibility for throwing out the Bill would be very great. But I have no hesitation in saying that if there were a larger number of hon. members present I would be ready to join in throwing it out; because I think no Government ought to bring a Loan Bill of such magnitude before the House, expecting it to pass in so short a time. Not only has it been brought before this House in the closing hours of the session, but it has also been rushed through very hastily in another place. The hon. the Postmaster-General, in a previous speech, made use of the expression that on this side of the House there has been very little argument but a very great deal of declamation. I totally disagree with the hon. gentleman, and I believe the records of this House will show that a great deal of thought and argument have been used by hon. gentlemen on this side of the House in what they have said and done. It is a wonder that an hon. gentleman who made use of that expression should bring forward a Bill which, at the very least, ought to take this House a full week to go through, and expect us to pass it in the course of a very few hours. Why, I should like to know, are these Bills put off to the very last moment? That is a question I should very much like the hon. the Postmaster-General to answer. I suppose he would say that it is his duty to bring forward these Bills and push them through the House as fast as he can. It may be convenient for the hon. gentleman to do so, but is it for the good of the country to follow out this plan? We have often spoken of it in this Chamber. I can sympathise to a very great extent with the hon. gentleman; but such a Bill as this, when we know that the Appropriation Bill has also to be passed, has never been brought before the House on so short a notice. We have no time to ventilate it—no time for consideration; and it will be a question with me when those railways to which I object—on which three millions of the loan are to be spent—come before us in another form, whether I shall not do all I can not to allow them to pass. When they do come before us I, for one, shall go fully into them, and give my judgment upon them. And on any future occasion—whether this or any other Government is in office—I shall certainly take upon myself, when a similarly important Bill is brought forward in this way, to do all I can in an endeavour to throw it out. At present, I do not feel justified in moving an amendment to the motion.

THE HON. A. C. GREGORY: Hon. gentlemen,—I think it an exceedingly inconvenient practice to bring forward so important a Bill as this at so late a period of the session. Unfortunately, I fear, it is not this Government only that is to blame in matters of that kind; it has been the custom of all Governments to do so, and I cannot but express my opinion that it is an extremely inconvenient one. Here we have a Loan Bill for a sum considerably more than half our public debt; and yet, how many hours have we got to consider it in? We are expected to deal with

it between 4 o'clock and, at the latest, 8 or 9 o'clock. This Bill contains a number of items for railways, of which the surveys have not been made. I do not suppose there is a single individual in this House who can safely aver he really believes it will be possible to make them, except at some enormous expense far beyond the average of our railways hitherto made. Of others we know next to nothing, and we have a map put in our hands—a map which, I think, it would be very desirable to suppress if we are going to ask capitalists in England to lend us money—a map which is sufficient to condemn utterly the principles on which we are basing our railway extension. It is not within the province of this House to introduce amendments into a money Bill; it has long been the practice, and it is a well understood rule, that we should not interfere with them. I take this opportunity of stating that if I do not vote against the passing of this Bill it will in no way be a pledge that I will not oppose the several lines of railway for which it is proposed to make provision, for I trust that when we come to consider them in detail we shall be able to save the country £1,000,000 at least. Possibly when we get into Committee the Postmaster-General will be asked a good many questions as to what the railways are for, and when they are to be constructed.

The HON. W. FORREST said: Hon. gentlemen,—I rise to enter my protest against the manner in which this Bill, which contains matters of such enormous proportions, has been introduced at the end of the session. It was passed in another place in a single night, and our Standing Orders have been suspended in order that we may also pass it at one sitting. Such legislation is hasty, ill-considered, and, to say the least, sensational; and I doubt whether the country has taken into consideration what is being done. We are actually imposing on the people a burden of greater magnitude than the whole of the debt per head in Victoria; for a loan of £10,000,000 means a burden of £35 per head on every man, woman, and child in the colony. I will read from Hayter's Victorian Year-book, the statistics of which are made up to the end of the year 1881. In Victoria the debt per head at the end of the year 1881 was £25 8s. 5d.; in New South Wales, £21 13s. 5d.; in Queensland, £58 7s. 1d.—it is now £65: and an additional £35 will bring it up to £100 per head. In South Australia the debt per head at the end of the year 1881 was £38 3s. 6d.; in Tasmania, £16 16s. 10d.; and in New Zealand—whose loans up to that time were heavier than those of any other colony, but which are now beneath those of Queensland—the amount was £59 4s. 2d. per head. If I allowed the Bill to pass in silence it might be imagined that I approved of the different items in connection with railways and public works, but I do not approve of anything of the kind; and if other hon. members are of the same mind as I am when the different items come before us, the sum of £10,000,000 will not be required for the construction. I again protest against a Bill of this sort being hurried through at the fag-end of the session. If the time wasted in discussing the question whether £200 a year should be given to members of the Legislative Assembly had been devoted to considering a measure which would impose a burden of £35 on every man, woman, and child in Queensland, greater regard would have been shown to the welfare of the colony.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE said: Hon. gentlemen,—From the remarks already made, it seems that the Bill is going to pass; but I cannot let the occasion pass without expressing, in stronger terms than have been used by other hon. gentlemen, my disapproval of the measure.

A Loan Bill, no doubt, is necessary, since the administration of the affairs of the colony has brought the finances and the people to such a pass that they must borrow in order to avoid a serious and dangerous crisis; but, besides that, I think that the framing of the Loan Estimates has been done in such a way as absolutely to gag the great majority of the members of the other branch of the Legislature, and induce them by the bargains they get to be silent on other measures where they should have made strong opposition in the interests of the persons they represent. I cannot get over the feeling of chagrin and disappointment I felt when we were discussing questions at a conference the other day to see so large a number of the representative branch of the Legislature sitting by perfectly silent, and taking no part whatever in the discussion of amendments made in the interests of the persons they represent. I do not think I am far wrong in saying that they have been induced to accept the stringent measure recently passed by a promise of a Loan Bill such as this; that is the only explanation I can give for their extraordinary silence and want of action in regard to measures affecting their constituencies. Ten millions will not construct more than one-half or two-thirds of these railways, and several millions more will be required to complete them. I am not afraid to express my regret that hon. members in this Chamber have not decided upon resisting the Bill, for we should only be doing our duty in resisting what has already been described as a piece of hasty legislation—legislation which I believe, and which I think a good many others believe, is not free from a taint of what I may call a species of corruption. If we are not to step in and interfere on occasions when measures of enormous magnitude and importance are being passed in a hasty way under peculiar circumstances, when are we to interfere—when are we to put a brake on the legislation of this colony? I regret, as I said before, that the Council is not going to prevent the passing of this measure.

The HON. J. TAYLOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—I regret very much that we have not had an opportunity of more fully discussing this measure, for the idea of consenting to a loan of £10,000,000 in a few minutes, or half-an-hour, seems to be monstrous. I have no hesitation in saying that such a Loan Bill will ruin the credit of the colony, that it will have the effect of lowering the debentures 20 per cent., and that the loan will not be floated without allowing most extraordinary discount. Time will prove whether I am right or wrong. It is the most outrageous thing ever done by any Assembly in the world. A good deal has been said about hon. members in the Assembly not speaking on the matter. No doubt they have been well trained, and the various works have been held before them with great effect; but I can tell the hon. gentleman who leads this House that if I am alive when the railways come before us for approval I shall do my utmost to throw out those which I consider ought not to be made. They will have to go before a select committee of this House, who will take evidence as to whether they are required or not; and though we may agree to this Bill, that does not bind us to passing these railways afterwards. I am only sorry that the leading members on this side did not decide at once to throw out the Loan Bill altogether, for then we should see what was really wanted. As I said before, the passing of this Bill will reduce debentures from 10 to 20 per cent. in value. Thank goodness I have sold out, so that it will not affect me; but I look to the future, and regret that the colony should be placed in such a miserable position. The Postmaster-General laughs; but if he had his money in debentures

instead of in law he would put on a very different face. I have heard, on excellent authority, that the Agent-General has informed the Government that the colony can float a million or a million and a quarter annually; and at that rate it will take seven or eight years to float ten millions. I have great hesitation in passing this Loan Bill. I would like to see it passed with about four millions struck off it. Then there would be some sense in it.

Question put and passed.

LOAN BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the House went into Committee to consider the Bill in detail.

On clause 1—"Power to raise money for certain purposes"—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he would just say a word in reply to the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior's remarks with regard to the manner in which the Bill was introduced. There was no difference in the mode of introduction of that Bill and the introduction of any other Loan Bill. His hon. friend had complained of a system that had been in existence, and patronised by himself (Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior) for many years. It had been invariably the practice to have financial questions brought up to the Council at the end of the session, and for a very good reason. The Legislative Assembly being the custodians of the public purse were very jealous of voting moneys until the other legislative work of the session was through, and invariably their Appropriation Bill and Loan Bills came up to the Legislative Council at the end of the session. The last occasion on which his hon. friend Mr. Murray-Prior passed a Loan Bill through the House was in 1873, and he would read the record of the whole transaction which took place with regard to that Bill, as stated in *Hansard*. It was on the last day of the session, too, and the proceedings were thus reported:—

"LOAN AND APPROPRIATION BILLS.

"The Government Loan Bill and the Appropriation Bill No. 3 were received from the Legislative Assembly, and passed through all their stages forthwith."

The loan voted on that occasion was for £1,466,499 19s. 6d.; in round numbers about a million and a-half. He took that as the last instance in which his hon. friend moved a loan vote in that House, and it had been recognised by their action year after year, and from time to time when Loan Bills were passed, and they had passed eleven Loan Bills through the House since 1866. As a matter of fact the present Loan had been announced to the country before the House met, and the allocation of the votes as tabulated in the Loan Estimates, as they were called, had been laid on the table of the House many weeks ago. The Government, for reasons which they had expressed over and over again, did not see their way for asking the loan to be passed without being satisfied that they would receive sufficient money as revenue for the purpose of meeting the interest that would accrue upon the loan. There was no novelty in the transaction at all. They were following a precedent, and a precedent established by his hon. friend Mr. Murray-Prior, and followed by that gentleman up to the year 1873. As he said on the second reading of the Bill, he would be prepared to answer any reasonable question any hon. gentleman might wish to put with regard to the Bill. He did not wish to anticipate objections; but he would answer objections.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said the Postmaster-General had brought him forward as an example. There was very little doubt that

he did bring forward a Loan Bill as Postmaster-General in 1873; but then it was a very different Loan Bill from the present one. It asked for a loan of about a million and a-half, or thereabouts, and the works to be constructed were necessary works. The present Bill, he supposed the Postmaster-General would say, was merely for a ten-million loan, and for necessary works also.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hear, hear!

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said he thought it made a very great deal of difference himself. If the hon. gentleman took him for an example he would also find that on a former occasion when the hon. gentleman initiated a number of railways, which he took together in a bunch, he (Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior) had an opportunity of throwing the bunch out.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That was not in connection with the Loan Bill.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said that certainly was not in connection with the Loan Bill, but it was in connection with railways, and railways formed a very large part of the present Loan Bill, and to some of those railways there was objection taken. The hon. gentleman who was Postmaster-General in that Chamber must bring on those loans, and he hoped a loan such as that would never be brought forward again. He now asked the hon. gentleman if he would be good enough to explain to the Committee what were the works which the Government proposed to initiate in the first instance.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the works for which the loan was proposed to be raised might be briefly classified in this way: Railways, the improvement of harbours and rivers, public buildings and bridges, electric telegraphs, water supply and storage. There were other matters not of very material moment, besides immigration, to which the loan would also be applied. Those mentioned were substantially the leading works upon which the borrowed money was to be expended. In the matter of railways there was the proposed extension of the main trunk lines. Those the Government proposed should be extended at the same rate as they had hitherto been extended westward. There were lines forming part of the coastal scheme, and the Government would push forward those lines with all reasonable expedition. That system of railways the Government thoroughly believed in, and wished to be pushed forward as speedily as the circumstances of the colony and justice to the several districts would permit. There were small works which also needed attention—for instance, the duplication of the line between Brisbane and Ipswich, the extension into the city and Fortitude Valley, the completion of the South Brisbane branch, the extension from Beenleigh to Southport and the border, the Brisbane Valley branch extension, the Mount Esk extension, the Fassifern branch, the Laidley branch, and the Highfields extension. All those were small extensions and would receive as immediate attention as the resources at the command of the Government would allow. He might here state that the construction of every one of those lines must have the approval of Parliament before they were put in force, so that he might briefly answer the hon. gentleman by saying that, so far as the railways were concerned, their construction would be commenced as soon as the approval of Parliament was obtained, and the resources of the Government would enable them to have the works carried out. About 69 per cent. of the whole vote was proposed to be applied in the construction of railways, and hon.

gentlemen would observe the very small proportion of that which was appropriated for the construction of what might be called local works in the way of railways—for instance, the Brisbane to Cleveland line, for which there was £80,000 down. That was a new line which would, like the Sandgate line, be reproductive. The line from Beenleigh to Southport and the border, he did not call a new work, because it was part of the coast system of railways connecting Brisbane with the southern and northern ports along the coast. He thought that portion of the railways was a national undertaking, connecting the southern portions of the colony with the coast lines by rail, and the House had already agreed to that principle. The extension of the Mount Esk line had already been approved of; the Fassifern branch extension they all agreed to; and they had just passed an extension to the Teviot that day. The Laidley branch involved the expenditure of £30,000, and that was a mere fraction out of the whole sum. The Beauraba branch was a new vote for the purpose of serving an important agricultural district. The Drayton deviation would shorten the distance between Warwick and Toowoomba by nine miles, and would pass through very valuable land.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: Nothing of the sort.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said his hon. friend the ex-member for Toowoomba could not have gone over the route—he confined himself too much to the neighbourhood of Toowoomba. The Warwick and Killarney extension had been already approved of. Then they came to the extension from Ipswich to Warwick.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: That is new.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said it was new; but really it was an extension of the Southern and Western Railway, as well as the extension from Warwick to St. George. These two lines in round numbers involved an expenditure of three-quarters of a million. No doubt it was a matter that should be fairly debated, but the debate would come up at the proper time when the plans and specifications of those railways were submitted to the House for approval. In the meantime he might mention that all that was authorised by the passing of that Bill was the borrowing of amounts in the whole equal to about ten millions, to be expended in the construction of reproductive works. So much for the Southern and Western district. With regard to the Wide Bay and Burnett district, the purely local work should be regarded as the extension from the Bundaberg line to the Isis branch, and it only involved an expenditure of £20,000. There was a very important work—the railway from Maryborough to Gayndah, and he might state in regard to that, that the Government had not decided which would be the most satisfactory route to take for the construction of that line. One route suggested was through Kilkivan, making use of the line already constructed, or in course of construction, to Kilkivan; and another course suggested was that of making the Isis extension part of the extension to Gayndah. The matter had had very careful consideration hitherto, but no decision had actually been arrived at. To his mind, the Isis Scrub route would be preferable if it should prove to be a practicable one. Then there was the extension, Bundaberg towards Gladstone, which was part of the general scheme of coast railways. He took it that there would be no serious opposition to that line. All the rest of the railways in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts were connected with lines already approved of or in course of construction. Proceeding to the Central railways, the only new work

there was the Emu Park Railway, and he understood that that was likely to be a remunerative line, to which no exception could be taken.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: How far will the extension westward of the trunk line reach?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said there would be a further extension of 120 miles from the 327-mile peg, making a total length of 447 miles.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: What water will the extension reach?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he could not tell what water. The line would go in a westerly direction, but the Government had not fixed the exact point. The general direction of the main trunk lines were given with the view of indicating to the public creditor the general character of the works which the colony proposed to construct during the next five years, so that those persons investing their money in Queensland securities might know what works it was intended to undertake, subject, of course, to parliamentary sanction. Then there was a railway in the Northern division, from Herberton to the coast, which would involve an expenditure of £400,000. That was also part of the coast scheme of railways, and had received very careful consideration. He did not think any exception would be taken to that vote. The line from Cloncurry to the Gulf of Carpentaria was a new work. It would open up magnificent mineral country. He thought all parties were agreed that it was desirable that Cloncurry should be connected with a port on the Gulf. The only difference between the two parties was as to the manner in which the railway should be constructed. It was a portion of the scheme of the late Government in connection with the Transcontinental Railway, and he believed one of the inducements which led capitalists to enter into the project was, that the line would open up that fine mineral district. Then there was the railway, Bowen to Coalfields, for which £100,000 was set down on the Estimates. That, he believed, would be a reproductive work. With regard to the vote for the improvement of harbours and rivers, and for lighthouses, he believed that no exception would be taken to them. He could give hon. members a list of the works the Government had in view in connection with those votes; but he did not think it was necessary to do so, and would therefore not do it, unless it was specially desired by the Committee. An expenditure of £180,000 would be involved in the construction of new public offices in Brisbane. The plans which had been decided upon would concentrate the offices in one spot, and he had not the slightest doubt that the sale of the lands on which the present offices were erected would speedily secure a greater amount of money than would be spent on the new buildings. At present it was very inconvenient for persons having business with the public departments to have to wander all over the town going from one office to another, and that would be removed by the construction of the new buildings. With regard to electric telegraphs, those works would be undertaken and pushed on with all possible expedition, because it was the desire of the Government to open up the colony. Then there was water supply and storage. That was a most important vote. The Government were going in extensively for boring. This matter had been receiving a great deal of consideration both here and in the southern colonies, and had been inquired into to a very great extent in America. It appeared that the most suitable appliances were of American discovery, and the Government had made arrangements

for sending to America for an efficient class of persons, so as to have boring successfully prosecuted throughout the whole of the western and interior parts of the colony, thereby benefiting one of the most important industries of the country. Those were the only leading works which he thought it necessary to refer to. He had more details with reference to them, which would be available if hon. gentlemen desired further information.

The HON. A. H. WILSON asked the Postmaster-General whether he could give the Committee more information as to how much of that loan the Government intended to place on the market at one time?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he was not in a position to answer that question. It depended entirely on the state of the money market. They had been spending at the rate of two millions a year, and the Government did not intend that the expenditure should fall short of that sum, but to keep as nearly as possible to the rate which had been observed during the last few years.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR asked the Postmaster-General if he had said that when those works came before Parliament hon. members would have an opportunity of either assenting to or dissenting from them?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he had mentioned that. The statutory laws of the colony required that before a railway could be constructed the plans and specifications must be submitted to both Houses of Parliament for their approval. No railways could be constructed in the colony without the consent of the Legislative Council.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: All the other works can.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Public buildings could, of course. There was no special arrangement by which other public works than railways must receive the sanction of the Legislative Council. As he had said, 69 per cent. of the loan was for railways, and those votes must again come before the Legislative Council for their approval before the works could be undertaken by the Government.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said he had asked that question of the Postmaster-General, so that when any of those railways came before them again the hon. gentleman could not turn round and say, "You have already authorised these in the Loan Bill." It would be distinctly understood that hon. members did not consider that by passing or not trying to prevent the passing of that Loan Bill they had assented to all those railways.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE said he thought that after the statement of the Postmaster-General that the rate of expenditure of that money would not exceed the rate which they had been adopting for the past few years, and that hon. members would have the privilege hereafter of rejecting any of those works, or expressing their opinion upon them, the real cause of objection to the Loan Bill was removed.

Clause put and passed.

The remaining clauses and preamble were passed as printed.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the CHAIRMAN left the chair and reported the Bill to the House without amendment.

The report was adopted, and the Bill was read a third time and passed, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly with message in the usual form.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE DUNWICH BENEVOLENT ASYLUM.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: Hon. gentlemen,—I beg to move—

That the report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council, appointed on the 15th July last to inquire into and report upon the management of the Benevolent Asylum, Dunwich, be now adopted.

In reference to that report I have to state that the committee found their labours much more arduous than they expected, and to some extent more painful than they expected; but they believe that—

The PRESIDENT: There is none of the evidence before the Council. I do not see how a report can be adopted without the evidence on which it is based.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I do not know whether the hon. the President is addressing me.

The PRESIDENT: I am addressing the House. Here is a report put on the table without the evidence, and I say, as a question of order, that I do not know how the report can be adopted without the evidence before us.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I can quite understand the hon. the President raising the point of order. The evidence was brought up and ordered to be printed, and the report was ordered to be taken into consideration this day. I believe the hon. the President, under some extraordinary circumstances, was absent from his duty in this Chamber on that day. It was the first time in the annals of parliamentary experience that the President absented himself from his duties in this Chamber to attend to any other duty—probably of more importance—cast upon him by the people of this country. If the President absented himself from his duty, I, at any rate, in charge of this report, did not absent myself. I did my duty, and a most laborious duty it has been, and I shall not allow anybody in this Chamber to reflect upon me for doing my parliamentary duty in bringing up, in a proper form, the report before this Chamber. I beg to move the motion I have just read.

The PRESIDENT: In the course of a pretty long experience here, I have never seen a report brought up for adoption without the evidence taken to substantiate that report, and I therefore refuse to put the question.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: As a question of privilege, it now becomes my very painful duty to really charge the hon. the President with a dereliction of his duty. It is a painful duty, but I feel bound to perform it. The evidence has been brought up, and has been ordered to be printed; and by a most extraordinary concatenation of circumstances—as I may term it—the hon. the President is involved in that evidence. Hence he has taken a personal interest in it.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Order!

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I say the hon. the President takes a most extraordinary and personal view of the matter because he is personally interested in the evidence. I do not, I may say, believe one scintilla of the charge inferred—

The PRESIDENT: There is no charge made, except what you by yourself sneaked out. The hon. gentleman has gone out of his way in this report to bring in my name, and he thinks he will pass the report, while the evidence that he has adverted to—that he has sneaked out in some wonderful manner—is not before you to judge of. Are you going to allow a report of this sort to pass without the evidence? I have a personal

interest in the matter, because my name has been dragged into it, without rhyme or reason, by the hon. gentleman; and I hope, hon. gentlemen, you will insist upon having the evidence before you before you agree to adopt any report upon it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hon. gentlemen,—I may say it is quite true that the hon. the President's name has been introduced in some way into the proceedings with regard to a matter which was entirely foreign to the subject of the inquiry of that committee. I must confess that I was not present when the transaction to which the Hon. Mr. Walsh and the President have referred was brought before the committee, otherwise I should have most strongly protested against the time of the committee, and therefore the time of the country, being wasted over a matter which was entirely foreign to the inquiry, and in which the public themselves can have no possible concern. The President's honour and standing are in no way involved in the matter, and I really am surprised that my hon. friend, Mr. Walsh, should have referred to such a trumpery affair, and sorry that the hon. the President thought it worthy of any notice on his part. I am quite satisfied that no man in the community would believe that the hon. the President would be guilty of any misconduct whatever in regard to such a transaction, or any other transaction. I believe his honour is totally unassailable. I am glad to have had an opportunity to make this explanation; at the same time I cannot help expressing my regret that the Hon. Mr. Walsh, by his innuendo, should imply that the hon. the President had anything in the world to be ashamed of in connection with this report. As a question of privilege has been raised, I may say there is no doubt that it is irregular to discuss a report without the whole of the evidence in print before hon. members. The Hon. Mr. Walsh was quite correct in saying that the report and the evidence were brought up, laid on the table, and ordered to be printed. The evidence is exceedingly voluminous, and it would have been impossible, even with the assistance of more compositors than are available, to have had it in type and circulated amongst hon. members for the purpose of this discussion. Some of the evidence is in print, and is before the House to-day. That evidence would enable hon. gentlemen, if they had time to read through it, to come to a conclusion on the subject; but, as they have not had time to do so, I would suggest to my hon. friend to content himself with simply referring the House to the conclusions the Select Committee have arrived at without asking the House absolutely to affirm a report the conclusions of which are based on evidence the whole of which is not before us. I hope the hon. gentleman will accept that suggestion. I can assure hon. members, on behalf of the Government, that the Government will at once investigate this matter and deal with it, and take steps to secure such reforms as the evidence and the state of the institution indicate are necessary.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: When I was induced, by the extraordinary language of the hon. the President—

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman has spoken four times; he is quite out of order.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: The hon. the President himself has each time prevented me from concluding my speech. The hon. the President is the great sinner against the proper conduct of business in this Chamber, and I tell him so to his face.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. the President does not care one iota for what the hon. gentleman says.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I know he feels himself in an unpleasant position—

The PRESIDENT: Do you think I am going to allow those innuendoes to go without contradiction?

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I am not going to shirk my duty because we have a blustering, boisterous—

The PRESIDENT: Drunken member.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Order, order!

The HON. W. H. WALSH: The President ought to insist upon order, and upon my preserving it. What is the use of the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior calling "Order"? He knows that I am being insulted to an extent that he never saw a man insulted before. And what is the use of other hon. members crying "Order"? Has any other hon. member been treated as I have been? It is of no use hon. gentlemen ignoring the fact that I am maintaining the rights and privileges of all of us, and it is the duty of hon. members to assist me in maintaining them. We will now revert to the question before the House. I bring up a report. Never in my whole life had I so serious or so anxious a duty to perform. I never felt anything like it before in my life. I have done my duty. I have brought up the report, and the President has chosen to feel that it is treading on his toes. I am sorry for it. I have endeavoured to preserve his character all through the examination. I know the hon. gentleman will not give me credit for that, but I have done so. I know his character wants preserving at times.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Order, order!

The PRESIDENT: I shall resume the chair at 7 o'clock.

On resuming—

The HON. K. I. O'DOHERTY said: Hon. gentlemen,—As a member of the committee which inquired into the working of the institution, I should not like the motion for the adoption of the report to be passed without saying a word. No one can regret more than I the disagreement which occurred here on the introduction of the matter by the chairman of the committee, for I have been a witness to the great zeal he has displayed on behalf of the unfortunate people in the asylum. I therefore regret that anything should have occurred to mar the good feeling with which the House would have listened to the report, and coincided with the recommendations contained therein. But I cannot relieve the Hon. Mr. Walsh from blame in having introduced, either directly or indirectly, the name and character of our worthy President into a matter of this kind. Like the Postmaster-General, I was not present at the meeting at which something occurred—something which has been distorted into a matter supposed to affect the character of the President, but which does nothing of the kind. I say that nothing could be more absurdly ridiculous than that our President should be involved in the matter at all; and it is a most monstrous thing that the President's name should have been introduced. But the members of the Committee took care, as the President can see, that the report should not contain a syllable in connection with this stupid matter. I regret exceedingly that at this last—I suppose—meeting of the Council there should be no opportunity of discussing this report on its merits, and urging the necessity for the Government taking immediate steps to remedy the defects we have discovered in the management of this institution. I think the members of the committee have taken every means to ascertain the exact state of the government and conduct of that institution; we have also endeavoured as

much as we could, in this report, to urge on the Government, not merely steps calculated to remedy defects, but also that those steps should be taken at once. I regret very much that the evidence is not all in print, but the President and the Postmaster-General are no doubt correct in their objection to the report being discussed till the evidence is before the House. I only hope, for my part, that the labour which has devolved on this committee in investigating the state of this institution will not be lost to the country, although we are not now able to discuss the evidence taken before that committee upon its merits. I hope the Government, or the Postmaster-General on their behalf, will not lose sight of the many important facts brought before the committee. I regret very much that our labours should have ended in what appears to me to be very much like a fiasco. However, if the evidence is printed and submitted to hon. gentlemen, when we next meet I hope a more favourable opportunity will be found—probably in this House, if it is necessary to discuss it then—to do so at length, and we may have the advantage of the full force of this House given to the advice tendered by members of it.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—I think we shall do well to adopt the plan which the Postmaster-General has shadowed forth, so that the report may not be entirely lost. The evidence should be printed, and hon. gentlemen should have an opportunity of looking over it during the recess. Very few hon. members would like to adopt the report without any evidence being submitted. The Postmaster-General has promised to have the matter investigated with a view to making such arrangements as may be necessary. I think that will be the best way to leave the matter.

The HON. W. GRAHAM said: Hon. gentlemen,—As a member of the committee, I would like to say a word. I believe in disposing of this question as soon as possible, so that I will not detain the House. I regret extremely that the evidence is not ready, and I believe it has not been through any want of effort on the part of the Hon. Mr. Walsh to get the evidence ready. I believe it has arisen from the fact that there is a great press of work in the Government Printing Office at present. However, the evidence is not here, and I consider the objection that it is not here fatal to the adoption of the report. I believe the report is a good one; it is extremely terse, and deals with the leading subjects in a very concise manner. A great mass of evidence, which in these cases is always brought under notice, has received only that consideration which was considered fair by the committee. The main suggestions are contained in this report, and as the want of evidence will necessitate a considerable amount of delay, it is, to my mind, a matter which is very much to be deplored; while, at the same time, I consider it entirely fatal to the adoption of the report. The evidence has been very voluminous, and if hon. members take the trouble to read it during the recess, in all probability they will come to have clearer opinions of the present state of affairs at Dunwich, and will be the more ready to adopt the report.

Question put and negatived.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—The only other business to be transacted of a formal character is the passing of the Appropriation Bill, and that is under discussion in the Legislative Assembly. I do not know how long the discussion there will last; but I would suggest that the House should adjourn, say, until 8 o'clock.

The PRESIDENT: The House need not adjourn. I can leave the chair and resume at 8 o'clock.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE said: Hon. gentlemen,—Before the adjournment of the House is moved, there is a matter to which I should like to make some further reference before this meeting of the House is over. I made some allusion the other day to the "Hopeful" cases, and to the men who have been condemned. At that time I stated that I had not looked into the proceedings in any way with a view to criticising them; but I have since had some little opportunity of doing it, and there are two matters in connection with it to which I feel it to be my imperative duty to make some allusion, for the purpose of having the information placed upon record. The first thing I wish to mention in connection with this matter is this: That after the two men, McNeil and Williams, had been arrested and brought up for the preliminary investigation at the police court, and after they were committed for trial, there was an Act passed by this Parliament which has had the effect of enabling the Government to bring evidence against these men which would not have been available against them under other circumstances. I allude to the Act to amend the laws relating to the administration of oaths in courts of justice. This Act was passed and assented to on the 27th October last, and it seems to me to be a most serious circumstance in connection with this case. The effect of this Act, in this case, has been to make an amendment of the criminal law, inasmuch as it brought into operation provisions which were not in force at the time the offence was committed, nor even in force before these men were committed for trial. We have changed practically the criminal law to a material extent, and these men went to their trial under circumstances a great deal more unfavourable to themselves than they would have done had this Bill not become law in the meantime. I think this demands most serious consideration in connection with this matter. When I was speaking the other day, I spoke of the two men, Messiah and Dingwall, as being the men upon whose evidence these men were mainly convicted, and the Postmaster-General interjected, "Nothing of the kind." Well, if we take these men out of consideration, the witnesses then resolve themselves into islanders, whose evidence, before the passing of the Act to which I have alluded, would not have been admissible at all in our courts, and would, therefore, have been excluded from the trial. If the evidence had gone through without the evidence of these islanders it is fair to assume that the men would probably not have been convicted at all. It resolves itself into this: that there is a great probability that the fact of these men having been convicted has been owing to some subsequent legislation passed by Parliament. There is one other matter in connection with this case which seems to me of almost equal importance, and I am rather doubtful about how to approach it in a proper and suitable manner. These prisoners at the police court here were defended by Mr. Virgil Power, a gentleman known in this colony to be a very successful and able advocate. The same gentleman defended the men belonging to the "Alfred Vittery" charged with very serious offences some time ago, and in respect to which case what I might almost call a reprimand of this colony was sent by the Home Government to the authorities here. Mr. Power watched the cases for these prisoners at the police court; and after they were committed for trial, circumstances took place which I think I am called upon to state, as I have the authority

from the solicitor concerned in the defence of the prisoners to make the statement I am now going to make. After the men were committed for trial, Mr. Chambers, the solicitor in question, had information from Mr. Power that a difficulty had arisen in connection with his proceeding with the defence in the Supreme Court. On Mr. Chambers inquiring into it, as he was perfectly entitled to do, he had an explanation from Mr. Power, saying that he had received a note from the Attorney-General enclosing a memo. from the Colonial Secretary, stating that his (the Colonial Secretary's) attention had been drawn to certain statements made by Mr. Power in the police court, which he (the Colonial Secretary) thought were inconsistent with Mr. Power's position as Prosecutor for the Northern Supreme Court. The statements alluded to were certain reflections upon the action of the Government in the course they adopted in the prosecution of these men by bringing them from Townsville to Brisbane, to be tried here, instead of at Townsville, which was the first port they touched at in the colony. The Attorney-General's note further intimated that he was quite in accordance with the view taken by the Colonial Secretary. Both Mr. Power and Mr. Chambers were thus placed in a very difficult position. It was their duty to do the best they could for the men with whose defence they were entrusted, and here was Mr. Power, a gentleman on whom they relied chiefly to conduct their case, being absolutely prevented from giving them the benefit of his ability. Mr. Power protested against this, and his reply was that he was not aware that he had exceeded his duty in any remarks made by him at the police court, and that unless he was allowed the usual advocate's liberty of speech he would have to give up the case, and inform the solicitor accordingly. The reply to that, as I have been informed by Mr. Chambers, was to the effect that the Attorney-General did not think it was necessary for Mr. Power, as an advocate, to make such remarks, and that any remarks improperly reflecting upon the action of the Government would not be allowed by him. Afterwards, Mr. Chambers interviewed the Attorney-General on the subject, but his interview did not result in any better arrangement, or in the removal of what I might call, if I were inclined to speak bitterly, a "gag"—or, at all events, the removal of the restriction placed upon Mr. Power's liberty of speech as an advocate, as he put it in his letter. The result was that Mr. Power felt himself obliged to return the briefs and give up the defence of the prisoners. I can well understand the difficulties in which these men then found themselves. Our Bar is not a very large one, and the experienced members of it are few; and when, as we find in this instance, the leading men, or most of them, were in such positions that they could not accept a brief in this case, it was indeed a matter of very serious consideration for these unfortunate men and their solicitor as to what should be done. Mr. Real and Mr. Lilley were both retained to assist the Attorney-General in prosecuting these men. Mr. Power felt himself unable to defend them, and nearly all the other gentlemen holding the position of Crown Prosecutor, who had, therefore, had considerable experience in criminal matters, were in a like plight. The prisoners were then glad to accept the services of Mr. Chubb, who, naturally, when there was any political bias in a prosecution, would meet with a certain amount of prejudice at the hands of juries he would be expected to meet in Brisbane. Once the question was raised as to the political aspect of the case in bringing the prisoners from Townsville to Brisbane, by the charge

that they were brought here because there was more likelihood of getting a conviction in Brisbane than in Townsville, it was impossible to exclude political bias from the matter. I say it was a very great disadvantage to the prisoners, and one to which they ought never to have been subjected, to restrict them in their selection of counsel for their defence as was done in this instance. I do not pose as an advocate or opponent of capital punishment in this matter, but I simply bring forward the matters I have referred to, in order that they may reach the proper quarter. I do not think it would be the wish of anybody, either in the old country or this colony who may have to deal with the question, to have anything to do with the execution of men who have not had a fair opportunity for their defence. It is on this ground alone that I have ventured to ask the consideration of hon. members to the few statements I have made. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

After a pause—

The PRESIDENT said: If no other hon. member is going to address the House, it would perhaps be more convenient for the motion to be withdrawn.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE: With the permission of the House, I will withdraw my motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 3, 1884-5.

The PRESIDENT announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Assembly forwarding the Appropriation Bill, and asking for the concurrence of the Legislative Council therein.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the Bill be read a first time.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: Hon. gentlemen,—Before that question is put, I should like to understand the position we occupy in this Chamber. I cannot for the life of me understand on what grounds we have been adjourned from 7 o'clock till this period of the evening, I do not think it has been done by any resolution of this Chamber; I do not understand on what parliamentary precedent it has been made. We are simply waiting like slaves or dolts on the other Chamber for them to send up business to us. It is a new form of procedure which I, at any rate, protest against. I should like to know where is the precedent for this extraordinary procedure. We have been dangling about the floor, waiting in the other Chamber for them to send up a Bill to us, and as soon as they have done so we have shown our obedience to that Chamber by congregating here. It is an undignified proceeding; it is new; and I do not hesitate to say that under that eminent President of the Council, Sir Maurice O'Connell, it could not have occurred—it would not have been allowed. I say it is not comporting with our high position and the dignity which we have a right to maintain and insist upon. However, I call upon hon. gentlemen to announce whether they are willing to sacrifice their dignity and submit to the arrangement which I have pointed out to them.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the Bill be now read a second time.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: Hon. gentlemen,—I do not intend to let an important Bill like this pass without offering some comments upon it, although it may take me a long time to do so. I should not be doing my duty to my country, or to this Chamber, if I did not. Here is a Bill which empowers the Government to spend

nearly two millions of money, and we have never heard a word about the necessity for such an extraordinary expenditure, or the good that will be produced by it, or the works that will be carried out. I say we have a right to know these things. We are not committed to this Chamber for the sole purpose of acceding to this extraordinary demand on the part of the Government—this lavish expenditure of money belonging to the people of the country. We are not allowed to get even five minutes' notice of it. The Bill is sent up to us within one minute of the time we are called upon to consider it; and as fools or slaves—which ever category we select to go under—we have to comply with it. Probably, with the exception of myself, I regret to say, not one member of this House will be found to consider it his duty to defend, or maintain, or insist upon the interests of the country, and require an explanation as to the expenditure—an explanation as to the wherewithal by which the expenditure will be made. To me this mode of procedure seems absolutely monstrous. We are now asked to sanction the expenditure of two millions of money, without any information as to how it is to be spent; and only the other day we were told we were a House of “old women,” or something of that sort, who ought not to be taken into consideration at all. That is the position we seem to occupy at this moment. The hon. the Postmaster-General has moved the Bill for this gigantic expenditure without one word of explanation. Are we such—I do not know what to call us—are we such persons—to use the term in its most unpleasant meaning—as to be called upon to vote those two millions without any explanations whatever? And yet, when it pleases us to do so, we claim to be better representatives of the people than the people's representatives. Let me ask my hon. friend, the Hon. Mr. Hart, whether he would sanction an expenditure of two millions of money without thoroughly investigating the why and wherefore of it—or the Hon. Mr. Turner, or the Hon. Mr. Heussler, or the Hon. E. B. Forrest. The Hon. Mr. Forrest says he would be very glad to have the opportunity of doing so, and I have no doubt he would. At any rate I would not do so, and I trust other hon. gentlemen in this Chamber would not do so. While I have been waiting here these two hours the Usher of the Black Rod seems to be the only person who had any control over the Chamber, and as soon as he thought it necessary for the House to resume he proceeded to summon it; and when that official brought in the President, the President seemed to sanction the proceedings. It is odd, it is peculiar, it is strange, and probably it is a very fitting introduction to the introduction of a Bill for the expenditure of nearly two millions of the people's money, without giving us any time whatever to consider it, or to know in what way it is to be done. I have no doubt that nine-tenths of the hon. members of this Chamber have agreed to pass this Bill; but I ask is there one of them who knows a single item in connection with this expenditure? Not one of them has weighed whether it would be just to the country if this expenditure were carried out. They are going to do it, however; and in spite of that, when it suits us to rise to the dignity of our position and claim our characters, we claim to be the representatives of the people. I must confess that I know nothing about the Bill; it seems to be bristling with extravagances. I wish to goodness the Postmaster-General had explained some of the items. I see there is down an item “General Establishment,” for which £11,200 is to be expended. Surely the Postmaster-General might have told us what this means! Does it mean pro-

pitating the members of the Council or members of the Legislative Assembly? £95,000 is to be expended upon State schools. If we had sufficient time to examine into that expenditure, can it be supposed we could agree to it? Is not the grossest political extravagance being carried out in this country at the present moment, and should we not to a man object to it if we had time to consider it instead of trying to force the iniquity upon the people of the country? I see a sum of £6,580 is to be expended upon the Benevolent Asylum of the colony. That brings me back to the grievous matters which have been going on for some time in that establishment at Dunwich. By some extraordinary concurrence or concatenation of events that report which was brought up after arduous labours on the part of a committee appointed by this House, that report—I do not know whether it has been negatived, or whether it has been merely refused this evening—but I do know this, that no greater insult could have been offered, no greater insult could have been imposed, as I have no doubt it was—not by those who were the innocent parties to it, but by the conspirers upon the subject—no greater insult could have been passed than the negativing of that report. I took the deepest interest in it; no man has laboured more than I have to inquire into the management of that institution, and no man is more convinced than myself that there has been foul management. No man had less to do with the drawing up of that report than I had. Nearly the whole of it was written by the Postmaster-General, or by his excellent friend the Hon. Mr. King. I had nothing to do with it, but by some connivance of some kind during my unintentional absence this afternoon that report has been set aside. How the Postmaster-General has given an explanation of it I do not know. I believe I am not transgressing my duty by saying that he has given me a promise that the recommendation of the committee shall be positively carried out.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No.

THE HON. W. H. WALSH: I was wrong there. If the hon. gentleman will allow me time to correct myself, I believe the Postmaster-General said that the best attentions of the Government would be directed to the matter, and to the manner of conducting that institution. That is all we want; that is all we demand; that is all I laboured for; but I cannot help thinking that the House almost disgraced itself this afternoon when it negatived a report which was written almost entirely by the Postmaster-General.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It was not.

THE HON. W. H. WALSH: It is no use saying it was not—I say it was. It was at any rate written by the hon. the Postmaster-General and by the Hon. Mr. King. I did not write any of it. That would have relieved some of these gentlemen, probably, from what they considered their duties this afternoon. I do not hesitate to say that if I had written that report according to my conscience it would have been a different one indeed. I declare a more disgracefully managed institution does not exist upon earth. I believe that instead of handing over the examination of the management of that institution to a parliamentary committee it should have been handed over to the police from the very first; and I say that if the police were worthy of their occupation at all there would by this time have been some extraordinary revelations made. I will say no more. I found it a most painful duty myself, but I carried it out, and with the greatest difficulty in every possible way; and then during my short absence this afternoon I find, by some concatenation of

circumstances, or by some extraordinary coincidences of opinion such as I did not expect, it was agreed to that the report should not be adopted until hon. gentlemen got the evidence. When hon. gentlemen get that evidence they will be shocked and disgusted. I believe a great deal of the mismanagement on that island is not due to the culpability of the officers so much as to the way in which the Government have neglected their duty in looking after the management of that institution. I do not want to see them visited with all the ignominy and punishment which would fall upon them if they had been given directions and instructions and had full cognisance of what their duties were, and they would not then have been so derelict as they have been proved to be. I think I can call upon the Postmaster-General in the examination carried out down there of which he was a witness if my desire was not at all to prove that the officers were remarkably culpable, but solely that the institution required a better style of management. To think that during my short absence from the Chamber this afternoon, when I was within the precincts of the Chamber—the absence of the chairman of the committee, who had devoted so much time to it and given anxious and sleepless nights to the consideration of that question—to think that, during my inadvertent absence, the House should consider the matter, I say, at any rate, it is a very poor recompense to me, and it is a very unjust termination of that committee; and I trust it will not be fatal to the better government of that institution in the future. I repeat again, I am perfectly satisfied with the promise made by the Postmaster-General, that the Government will give it the fullest consideration with a view to immediate action for the relief of those poor people at Dunwich. I will not harrow hon. member's feelings with information on all the cases brought before us, but I will only be doing my duty by pointing to one or two cases. We had witnesses before us who told us that a poor dying boy implored the man in charge of him not to flog him, as he was dying, for that is certified to by more than one witness, and the boy died, and that is certified to also, and there can be no disputing that the boy was flogged. When that kind of evidence came before the committee—when I certify again an equally frightful case, where the superintendent has to admit that the cart that takes a corpse to the grave in the morning and takes the nightsoil from the closets, we will say, in the middle of the day, takes the meat to the poor people in the afternoon—that is the one cart—without any necessity for it whatever—when that has been the custom of the place hon. gentlemen will agree with me that there has been a want of feeling shown that must have been most vexatious to the poor unfortunate people there, and that it is high time some change should be made in the management. I never heard a more harrowing tale than that which the poor men related to us, with tears in their eyes—that they saw a cart taking the soil from the privies in the morning and taking a corpse in the afternoon—unwashed, mind—and taking the meat, later on, for the inmates; and all this without any assertion on the part of the superintendent that such had not taken place, acknowledging, in fact, that it was so. I never heard anything at all to compare with it. I only tell hon. gentleman that if I had chosen to go further, I believe I could multiply these cases *ad infinitum*, so many and so grievous were they. Another point I feel it my duty to call hon. gentlemen's attention to is that during the whole of the time this investigation was going on there was an amount of terrorism exercised by the officials at the institution over the

witnesses and over all who were inclined to give evidence. That has been going on from first to last; and only this morning I received a letter from a most intelligent, frank, and honest-looking man—a more honest-looking fellow I never saw in my life, who has been employed down there as a carpenter, he is not an inmate—stating to me that he had been removed from his work, or that it was intended that he should be removed from his work in consequence of the evidence he had given. However, I tell the hon. gentleman the fact that during the whole of this time, when the committee were bound to get all the fair and honest evidence they possibly could, the witnesses have written to the committee clearly proving that they were subject to coercion. Of the 400 of our fellow-subjects in that institution, 200 or 300 have borne the burden and heat of colonisation of this country. They are men who are deserving of our greatest sympathy, and for years and years, in consequence of their age and their inability to protect themselves, they have been dependent upon the asylum. These men have been subjected to the greatest coercion and the greatest cruelty possible. I could go on and dilate for hours and mention atrocious cases in connection with this matter, but I do not wish to do so. I rely upon the assurance of the Postmaster-General that the Government will in the future look into the management of the place and see to its improvement. There is one thing, however, I must do. Since the report has not been adopted I must point out the object of that report. It stated remarkable facts, which will barely be credited in any part of the world when they are read—and they will be read—that no officer, no superintendent, no deputy superintendent, no visiting justice, no medical man connected with the asylum has ever received any instructions as to his duties. He does not know his duties. Now, let that be thoroughly understood. No regulations have ever been issued for the guidance of the officers or the control of the patients to this day, and yet have we been going on spending our money lavishly and maintaining these poor creatures in such a way as is deserving of us as Christians! There is another thing I feel bound to call the attention of the House to, since the report has not been adopted. The Postmaster-General says it is ordered to be printed, not adopted. That is another reason why I should state the circumstances to which I allude. There are young women down there mingling with those old men; how they got there and why they are there nobody seems able to tell; but they are there and a most licentious state of things results, I believe. Nobody knows anything about it. The visiting justice does not know anything about it, and the doctor knows nothing about it. Most painful incidents have occurred. Men have committed suicide apparently; they have died suddenly and there is no inquiry. The visiting justice does not think it is his duty to hold an inquiry, nor does the superintendent or the doctor. Men may come and men may go, but no inquiry is instituted. When I listened to the horrible tales that were related to the committee, of men being left in the sick ward importuning for a drink of water, and some assistance, I did not know what conclusion to come to. It is not the fault of the committee that the evidence has not been circulated among hon. members. I hardly know how to describe it, but the evidence has been kept back, and the result is probably that the report will not be adopted, though nothing can ever gainsay the truth of the evidence, which justifies a report of tenfold the power of the one which has been submitted to the House. I say if our report had brought up a recommendation that certain persons should be indicted for the

deaths that have occurred down there we should not have gone one bit further than we ought to have done. No magistrate has felt himself justified in making an inquiry, or felt it necessary to make one when those men have died sudden deaths or when suicides have been committed. If such things occurred in Brisbane or the purlieus of the city as have happened there, there would have been an outcry at once and an investigation. But persons can die down there by strangulation and all sorts of disease, and no investigation has ever taken place in any one instance. I asked the doctor if he never had an inquiry or a *post mortem* examination in case of sudden death, and he said, "Never." The committee have investigated these matters and laboured hard for many months, and now their report has not been adopted by this Chamber. There is only one reason for it, and that is that the report is too mild in its form. I am considerably disappointed, but I accept with satisfaction the promise of the Postmaster-General that the Government will look into the management of the institution in future, and I shall consider, at any rate, that I have done my duty to a lot of my fellow-creatures in the world, if the Government will honestly fulfil the pledge given by the Postmaster-General.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the President left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the Bill.

Clause 1—"Appropriation"—passed as printed.

On clause 2—"Treasurer to pay moneys as directed by warrant"—

THE HON. SIR A. H. PALMER said before that Bill went through he wished to call the attention of the Postmaster-General to a portion of the Supplementary Estimates No. 1, for the year 1884-5, which he thought concerned the members of that Committee. He believed it had always been an understood thing that officers of that Chamber should be placed on the same footing as officers of the Legislative Assembly. That had been always carried out by the Legislative Assembly, and invariably insisted upon by the Council, yet he found that in the Supplementary Estimates, under the heading "Executive and Legislative," the principal messenger and the second messenger of the Assembly had received an increase to their salaries, the former by £25, and the latter by £15 a year; but no notice whatever had been taken of the messengers of the Council. He thought that was not fair. The principal messenger of that Chamber, in addition to his duties as messenger, really performed the duties of third clerk of the Legislative Council, or a great portion of them, and he thought it was not fair that he should have been left out on that occasion. When sending in his (Sir Arthur Palmer's) estimates to the Government, as he was asked to do, he added a foot-note, to the best of his recollection—or at any rate requested the Clerk of the House to do so—to the effect that if an increase were granted to the messenger of the Legislative Assembly he considered it only fair that the messenger of the Council should also receive an increase. It was no use making any motion with regard to the Bill, and he merely called the attention of the Postmaster-General to the circumstances. He (Sir Arthur Palmer) might add that the principal messenger of the Council had been nineteen years in the Government Service, and the second messenger a great deal longer, so that both had very considerable seniority over messengers of the same standing in the Assembly.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he could not agree with the President that there had been a distinct understanding as far as the salaries were concerned.

The PRESIDENT: I did not say "distinct."

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Well, then, an understanding that the officers of the Council should be on precisely the same footing as officers of the Assembly. That matter of the chief messenger's salary had cropped up in that Chamber on more than one occasion. He recollected a long discussion on it eight years ago, when the President submitted a proposal to the Government that the principal messenger's salary should be increased. The proposal then was to increase it beyond the amount voted for the messenger in the Legislative Assembly; but the Government of the day could not see their way clear to adopt the suggestion, although the Council urged the increase; and the President had to submit. However, he (the Postmaster-General) quite concurred with the President with regard to their chief messenger's salary. His hours in the performance of his duties in that Chamber were not so long, nor were his duties so arduous, as those of the messenger of the Legislative Assembly; but they ought to take into consideration the length of previous service. Mr. Kelly had been attached to that House for nineteen years, and did his work well. There was no doubt that a large portion of the work done by him outside the Chamber was of a clerical character, and very materially assisted hon. members in the performance of their legislative duties. The President did suggest, when sending an estimate down, an increase to the salary of the chief and second messengers, and the Government took the suggestion into consideration, but they concluded that it was inexpedient to give larger salaries to the messengers of those two Chambers than were received by the messengers in the other branches of the Public Service. Since that time, during the discussion of the Estimates-in-Chief in the other branch of the Legislature, a strong expression of opinion was made to the effect that the chief messenger of the Assembly should have an increase of £25 per annum. When that was considered he did not happen to be present at the Cabinet meeting, and therefore had no opportunity of reminding the Colonial Treasurer of the sort of understanding arrived at, that the messengers of both Houses should be placed on the same footing as far as salary was concerned. He would take care that the omission was rectified when the additional Supplementary Estimates for the year were prepared. With regard to the second messenger, he might remind hon. members that his salary had already been increased by upwards of £10.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4, and preamble, passed as printed.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was reported to the House without amendment.

The report was adopted, and the Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form.

ADJOURNMENT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hon. gentlemen,—In moving that this House do now adjourn, I may state that it is the intention of the Governor to prorogue Parliament in person to-morrow afternoon at 4 o'clock. I take the opportunity of congratulating hon.

members on the termination of their arduous and responsible labours, which I anticipate will result in very great advantage to the community. We have passed through a very trying session; I think I may safely say that no more important session has ever taken place in the annals of Queensland. I look forward to the most beneficial results ensuing from our labours.

THE HON. W. H. WALSH: Hon. gentlemen,—May I remind hon. members that this is the last opportunity they will have this session to address the Governor, or the Government, with regard to those poor men who are now lying under sentence of death? I trust they will see the importance of doing so now if they have anything to say.

Question put and passed.

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