

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 18 AUGUST 1885

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.*Tuesday, 18 August, 1885.*

Questions.—Police Officers Relief Bill.—Suspension of Standing Orders.—Formal Motion.—Allora Lands Return.—Proposed Adjournment.—Supply.—Ways and Means.—Financial Statement.—Marsupials Destruction Act Continuation Bill—consideration of Council's amendments.—Rabbit Bill—committee.—Elections Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Colonial Secretary—

Have any complaints been made to the department with respect to the quality of the uniform supplied to the Volunteer and Defence Force?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. W. Griffith) replied—

Commanding officers of corps have hitherto made their own arrangements for supplying uniforms and have not complained of the quality. Some of the uniforms supplied to the Permanent Force have been reported to be of inferior quality.

Mr. BUCKLAND asked the Colonial Treasurer—

1. When will the plans for the new jetty at Cleveland be ready?
2. At what date is it likely that tenders will be called for the construction of said jetty?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) replied—

1. About the 12th September.
2. About the 12th September.

POLICE OFFICERS RELIEF BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, intimating that the Royal assent had been given to a Bill to give relief to persons who, having become entitled to certain rights as members of the Police Force, have, under the Police Act of 1863, ceased to belong to that force but are still employed in the Public Service of the colony.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—I have to ask the indulgence of the House to allow me to move without notice that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of resolutions being reported from Committee of Supply on the same day on which they shall have passed in such committee; the reason being that the speech I have to deliver in connection with the finances of the colony will have to be introduced in Committee of Ways and Means; and, as hon. gentlemen are aware, I cannot approach Ways and Means without some preliminary vote being passed in Committee of Supply. I should have given notice of this motion on Thursday, but omitted to do so; and I therefore ask the indulgence of the House to allow me to move that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will allow a preliminary vote in Committee of Supply to be reported the same day, in order that we may go into Committee of Ways and Means.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no objection to the motion. I should have noticed at the time that the hon. gentleman was going too fast in promising his speech on Tuesday before he had made arrangements for a vote in Committee of Supply being reported, but there have been such extraordinary innovations proposed by the Premier during the session that I waited with some anxiety to see what new procedure would be initiated in this case. The Treasurer asks the indulgence of the House to put himself right. I have no objection, and I do not suppose the House will object.

Question put and passed.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By Mr. BAILEY—

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

1. The approximate cost of printing, etc., the report of the Minister for Instruction.
2. The approximate cost of the clerical work engaged in drawing up such report.

ALLORA LANDS RETURN.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) laid on the table an amended return to an order made by the House concerning the Allora lands, on the motion of the hon. member for Mulgrave; and moved that the paper be printed.

Question put.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said: I wish to explain the necessity for this amended return. In the return already laid upon the table of the House, and ordered to be printed, there is an error—

Mr. MOREHEAD: There is no question before the House.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member may only speak with the consent of the House.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was saying that an error was made in the return ordered to be printed. In connection with the evidence there is as to the fulfilment of conditions—

Mr. MOREHEAD: I rise to a point of order. Unless the hon. member obtains the permission of the House he cannot proceed with a speech on the papers laid before the House.

The PREMIER: Why should not the hon. member address the House upon the question "That the paper be printed"? Besides, when an hon. member makes a motion he has always a right to reply.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I think the hon. Premier is slightly out of order himself. He knows very well that what he has said was not correct. The hon. Minister for Lands had moved that a certain paper be printed, and spoke to that question in putting it to the House; and before that question could be considered by the House he rose again and started to make a speech. He was completely out of order. If the hon. gentleman asks permission of the House I have not the least doubt he will get it; but surely the proceedings of the House should not be varied in this way.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I ask the permission of the House to explain the reason for this amended return.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The error which has caused the necessity for this amended return was in that part of the first return dealing with the evidence there was as to the fulfilment of the conditions of selection by the selectors who applied to come under the Act of 1884. In the first return laid upon the table it was stated that in many cases there was no evidence as to residence. The way in which the error arose was this: When they applied to come under the Act, commissioners were directed to furnish a report, after examination, as to the fulfilment of conditions. As soon as the reports of the commissioners came in they were sent to the Land Board to be dealt with at once; consequently there was no record of these reports in the selection branch at the time the return was made out. I did not see the return until it was in print. When it came up to me I laid it upon the table at once; but when it was printed I saw the error, and hence the amended return which shows what was done.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: But this is not an amended return. It is simply a "Return to an Order of the Legislative Assembly, ordered to be printed," etc. The hon. gentleman says it is an "amended return," but it

does not bear that on the face of it. Of course I know it is an amended return, but it should say so. The return moved for by me was laid upon the table of the House about a fortnight ago. It ought to say explicitly that it is an amended return, but it does not bear that impression at all.

The PREMIER: The Minister for Lands has explained that it is an amended return. The practice has been to lay the amended return on the table and move that the earlier one be withdrawn; that is the usual practice.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: All we want is that it should bear upon the face of it that it is a return in an amended form; otherwise we shall have two returns to the same motion.

Question—That the paper be printed—put.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I object to the paper being printed, unless in the form I say. I wonder the Minister for Lands does not see the difficulty. This is an amended return, and it should bear that upon the face of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Perhaps it will be more correct to have "amended" put on it. If I am in order I will withdraw it and lay it on the table again; and I will see that "amended" is put upon it.

Mr. SCOTT: I will point out that if that only is done we shall have two returns, one a correct and the other an incorrect one, and both will appear in the same volume of "Votes and Proceedings." The better way will be to withdraw the first return and place this in its stead; then only the correct return will appear in the "Votes and Proceedings."

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not see why the former report should be withdrawn. I think it is against the rules of the House for the report to be amended in the way proposed. It is not a matter of vital importance that the amended report should be laid on the table to-day; and the Minister for Works had better withdraw it, and introduce it in the form he desires to-morrow. I think it is too late now to make the amendment, after the question has been put that it be printed.

Question put.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Is it to be printed as an amended return, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER: It will be printed in the form as amended by the Clerk.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then it becomes another paper.

The PREMIER: It is not an amendment in the return at all; it is simply calling it by another name. We can call it a parcel of green cheese if we like. What is written on the fly-sheet is no part of the return; it is simply put there as a means of reference.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker, whether an amendment can be made in a paper laid on the table by a Minister of the Crown, such as is proposed to be made by the Minister for Lands?

The SPEAKER: My ruling will be that the amendment can be made, because it does not affect the return itself, but has reference to a previous return. The word "amended" simply shows that the return now laid on the table of the House is an amendment of a former one.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I ask your ruling whether that amendment can be made without the consent of the whole House?

The SPEAKER: I think if a majority of the House consent to it it can be done.

Mr. SCOTT: What has become of the former paper, Mr. Speaker? Has it become part of the records of the House?

The SPEAKER: Undoubtedly.

Question—That the paper be printed—put and passed.

PROPOSED ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving—

That the House, at its rising to-day, do adjourn until 7 o'clock p.m. to-morrow—

said: This motion is made, of course, for the convenience of hon. members who wish to attend the Exhibition to-morrow. I believe many hon. members would not find it convenient to get here by half-past 3 o'clock, our usual hour of meeting. Last year the same course was adopted. A doubt has arisen as to whether it was desirable to make it 5 instead of 7, in which case there would be half-an-hour before dinner; but it seemed most convenient to follow the practice of last year. I have no doubt that in the evening we shall be able to get through a good deal of work.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think that in the motions for adjournment last week or this week the hon. member has consulted the members on both sides of the House, or has tried, in fact, to further the progress of business. I myself would be ready to come at 7 o'clock to-morrow; but look at the absurd position in which we place ourselves! The week before last we adjourned for a small show at Rosewood.

The PREMIER: There was no business to go on with.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: There was plenty of business to go on with, and the hon. gentleman would have been the first to say so if he had not wanted the adjournment. Now we have what is really a public holiday. It is a show everyone wants to see; I suppose we shall all be there, and we shall be pretty well tired when we get back. Yet we are asked to come here and spend two hours—because we shall not meet till half-past 7—and the business will be done at half-past 9. It is scarcely reasonable that members should be treated in this way. I had rather see an adjournment till Thursday, with all my proclivities for getting through business. I do not think any business will be done to-morrow, and I believe the country members will be those most exhausted by the show and least inclined to come.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the feeling expressed by the hon. leader of the Opposition is the general feeling among members on both sides of the House. Several members I have conversed with think it is an absurdity to come here for two hours and a-half. Experience has shown that no business is done in cases of that kind. Some members I know, if we adjourn till Thursday, will go to their homes, but if we adjourn till to-morrow they will have to stay in town for the sake of two hours to-morrow evening in which no work will be done. In addition to that, if we sit here doing no work we deprive the servants of the House and the Government Printing Office of a holiday, which everyone else enjoys and which they ought to get.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: I hope we shall hear something from the other side with respect to what has been said by the hon. leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Cook. I

think there is a great deal in the contention that the officers of the House, the *Hansard* staff, the Printing Office, and all connected with the working of this House, should be entitled to the privilege of a holiday the same as any other Civil servants. It is an anomaly that even members of Parliament should be expected to work on a public holiday, and it is really the great holiday of the year in Brisbane. I am sure very few members of the House are anxious to come here to-morrow night at half-past 7, and I know also that very little work will be done. It is just as well not to make two bites at a cherry, but to swallow the whole at once, and, when the House rises, adjourn till Thursday. I am perfectly certain the Premier is not at all disinclined to such an adjournment, for he knows very well that there will be no work done by meeting to-morrow at half-past 7. The hon. gentleman will see the force of the arguments of the hon. member for Cook, that the officers of the House, who have to work hard, should have a holiday to-morrow. I am sure you, Mr. Speaker, will enjoy the holiday better if you have not to come here in the evening. I am not going to appeal to the fine feelings of the Minister for Works, because I know they are so very fine that they cannot be touched. The hon. member for Rosewood, who got an adjournment for his show, will, I know, be the last to oppose an adjournment for the greatest show that takes place in Queensland.

Mr. ISAMBERT said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it is the native modesty of the Premier that has prevented him proposing an adjournment for the whole day for the show of the very town of which he is the representative. I think it is rather severe on hon. members who wish to go to the Exhibition to have to come here after having made an exhibition of themselves.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I trust the Premier will consent to the adjournment till Thursday. To-morrow is a public holiday, and it would scarcely be consistent with the proclamation of that holiday for this House to meet for business to-morrow evening. Besides that, people will expect a holiday—the various employes about this House will expect the whole day; and I think the Government might very graciously consent to an adjournment till Thursday.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I hope the leader of the Government will see fit to amend his motion, and make it stand till Thursday, not so much on behalf of the members of this House as for the officers who have been mentioned by the hon. member for Cook—namely, the officers of the House, the *Hansard* staff, and the employes in the Government Printing Office. Personally, I think there will probably be as much work done during the two hours after 7 o'clock to-morrow as during any other two hours, but I do not think we ought to deprive these people, who number perhaps 200 or 250, of their full holiday. I think it is only reasonable to ask the Premier that the adjournment should be till Thursday. It is no argument to say that because we met last year we ought to do the same this year; probably we are wiser now than we were then. I hope the Premier will adopt the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very much disposed to think that if I had proposed that the House adjourn till Thursday I should have been met by the statement that it was a most preposterous motion, and told that last year we met on Wednesday evening and did a lot of work. I am quite satisfied that whatever motion might have been proposed would have

been received with an equal amount of opposition from members on that side of the House. It is just as well to have an understanding as to what we are to do on these occasions. Probably no one suffered more inconvenience last year by the course then adopted than I did. I should have been very glad to have had a day's rest either then or at any other time, but really I do not think we should take a holiday so frequently. It has been urged that an adjournment was made for the Rosewood Show. An adjournment was certainly made then, but only because everybody wished to adjourn.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Because the majority had made up their minds.

The PREMIER: Because everybody wished to adjourn. There was absolutely no business on the paper except two formal motions, and hon. members were not willing to go on with Government business. It was certainly not worth while, then, to come here for two formal motions. I cannot consent to the adjournment over to-morrow. There is business that we can go on with very well to-morrow, and I believe very useful work may be done. It is all very well for us not to overwork ourselves at the beginning of the session, but if a certain amount of work has to be got through, and we only take two days a week, we shall be a longer time doing it than we ought. Hon. members have expressed a wish that the session should close early; but if we are to have these adjournments that cannot be done.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Let us meet on Friday.

The PREMIER: I am disposed to think that we ought, from the beginning of the session, to take three days for Government business. The practice has been to work very slowly at the beginning, and then as the session approaches the end the business is passed through with a rush. I do not suppose, if we adjourn till Thursday, that hon. members will be agreeable to take Government business on that day, as some hon. members have motions on the paper which they will very likely wish to go on with. Unless the House generally is of opinion that we ought to adjourn till Thursday, I think we should meet to-morrow.

Mr. ARCHER: I quite agree with what the Premier says as to the number of adjournments. I think there are too many adjournments. We have already begun to make an effort to stop them. We did not adjourn for the Toowoomba Show this year, and I hope that next year we shall not adjourn for the Rosewood Show, or for the Beenleigh Show. But the Exhibition which takes place in Brisbane to-morrow is the show of the country. I intend to go to see it, and very likely I shall not be inclined to come to work here to-morrow evening. Let it then be a fixed rule, or rather let it be understood, that this is the show for which we are going to adjourn. It is the great show which collects exhibits from all parts of the colony, and the best stock that is produced in Queensland. I am quite prepared to support the Premier in voting against the adjournment of the House for any other shows, but I think that on the present occasion there ought to be an adjournment till Thursday. I am not prepared to move an amendment on the motion before the House. The Premier himself will no doubt amend his motion.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Move an amendment. The Premier will not do it.

Mr. ARCHER: I move, then, that all the words after "until" be struck out, with a view of inserting the word "Thursday."

Mr. MELLOR said : Mr. Speaker,—As a country member, I agree with a great deal of what has been said with reference to the adjournment till Thursday. I think if we adjourn at all it should be for the Brisbane Show. I do not believe in adjourning for country shows. There is a great deal in what has been said this afternoon with reference to the servants of this House. To-morrow has been gazetted a public holiday, and I think they are entitled to it. I shall certainly support the amendment.

Mr. FOOTE said : I scarcely look upon this as an adjournment, because what we are asked to do by the motion is simply to postpone the time of commencing the business of the House for two hours. While I am as anxious as anyone that business should be got on with at a reasonable rate of speed, I think the House might very well, on this occasion, if we adjourn over to-morrow, give up Thursday for Government business. With the exception of the motion of the hon. member for Warwick, there is no private business of importance on the paper, and if that hon. member will postpone his motion for a week I think the House might well concede Thursday to the Government, so that no time will be lost. It will not be of much use to meet at half-past 7 to-morrow evening.

Mr. DONALDSON said : I have on more than one occasion opposed these adjournments, because I think they are a waste of the time of the House ; but on the present occasion there seems to be a general desire on both sides that we should adjourn until Thursday, for which some very good reasons have been given. I certainly do object to a number of adjournments. Last week not a great deal of business was done, and this week there is every prospect of there being much less. There is a good deal of work to be got through, and some consideration should be shown to country members, either by sitting later or by having more frequent sittings during the week. I trust the Government will consider, before long, the advisability of having an additional sitting day. While not opposing the adjournment, I must say that, personally, I believe we ought to go on with the work before us.

The PREMIER : It appears to be the general wish of the members that the House should adjourn until Thursday ; and, that being so, I take it as settled that we should adjourn for the Brisbane Show. I am very glad the matter has been brought up and discussed, and it may be now considered as settled. Under the circumstances, I shall accept the amendment of the hon. member for Blackall.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said : Mr. Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair, and that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Mr. Fraser,—With a view to opening proceedings in Committee of Supply, I beg to move—

That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1885-6, the sum of £300, to defray the salary of an Aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor.

Hon. members will understand that the adoption of this motion does not commit them to the Estimates as they are now submitted, nor does it affect the criticism on the Estimates and the Financial Statement — which will no doubt form the subject of subsequent debate.

But I take the first item on the Estimates, as being one that has been dealt with in this form for several years past and is not open to debate at the present time, with the view of initiating the Statement which it will be my duty to make in Committee of Ways and Means.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair and reported the resolution to the House. The report was adopted, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Thursday next.

WAYS AND MEANS.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in making his Financial Statement, said :—

Mr. FRASER,—

In presenting to the country the Annual Financial Statement, I feel justified in expressing my opinion that at the present time more than ordinary interest attaches to the financial position of the colony, naturally arising from a feeling of apprehension based on the continued severity of the seasons which have rolled on with almost uninterrupted inclemency since I last delivered the Budget Speech ; also, from the circumstance that the estimate of Annual Revenue disclosed on that occasion was not fully accomplished by the results of the year's transactions ; and, further, from the appearance of the Estimates recently circulated, whereby an excess of Expenditure over Revenue presents itself for our consideration as the not improbable result of the financial transactions of the year 1885-6. These appearances, however, if intelligently considered, will be found to furnish no cause for present uneasiness, and I hope, sir, before concluding, to be able to dispel satisfactorily from the minds of hon. members any doubts or misgivings regarding the solid prosperity of the country, and to submit incontrovertible assurances of its continued progress and stability. That an unfortunate curtailment of the fuller development and remunerativeness of one at least of our great industries, through adverse seasons, has been sharply experienced is undeniable, but the whole statistics which I have to submit will show that all the essentials of much greater progress than we have accomplished in the past are possessed by the country ; and if such progress be not as immediately or as rapidly manifested as we all desire, it is gratifying to know that it does not arise from any poverty of resources or from any want or exhaustion of the great factors of wealth, which the colony possesses in abundance, but from the circumstance that our forces are necessarily dormant in the face of events exceptionally unpropitious.

Continuing the precedent of former years, tables have been compiled at the Treasury furnishing statistics up to the 30th June last, which will enable hon. members to follow my remarks. I intend to deal—

- 1st. With the Consolidated Revenue, including Receipts and Expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1885 ; also, with the transactions of the Trust and Loan Funds during the same period ;
- 2nd. The Estimated Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year, 1885-6, on which we have now entered ; and,
- 3rd. Our present position, and the intentions of Government in relation thereto.

THE CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND DURING
1884-5.

Table B shows that on the 30th June, 1884, the credit balance of the Consolidated Revenue represented £366,301. The revenue for the twelve months ended 30th June, 1885, amounted to £2,720,656, while the expenditure for the same period amounted to £2,819,853, leaving at the credit of the Consolidated Revenue on 30th June, 1885, the sum of £267,104, or £99,197 less than what appeared at the credit of the fund at the commencement of the year 1884-5.

Two circumstances here specially attract attention—first, the apparent diminution in the balance of the Consolidated Revenue on 30th June, 1885, as contrasted with the balance on 30th June, 1884; and, second, the large apparent excess of expenditure over revenue during the financial year 1884-5, both of which are susceptible of very simple and I trust satisfactory explanations.

The balance of the Consolidated Revenue on 30th June, 1884, amounting, as before stated, to £366,301, comprised a sum of £231,593, being the balance then unexpended of the Special Revenue Appropriation of January, 1884. If this amount be deducted, the balance of revenue proper on the 30th June, 1884, will represent £134,708.

On the 30th June, 1885, the revenue showed, as I have just stated, a credit balance of £267,104. This amount also contains the unexpended balance of the Special Revenue Appropriation of January, 1884, but such unexpended balance has been reduced to £100,043 by disbursements made during the year. If this sum be deducted as in the former case from the apparent revenue balance, it will be found that the actual credit balance of the Consolidated Revenue proper on the 30th June, 1885, stood at £167,061, thereby showing an improvement of £32,353 on the corresponding period in 1884.

In like manner the expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue for the financial year 1884-5, amounting, as before stated, to £2,819,853, has been affected to the extent of £131,906 for disbursements made during that period on account of the Special Revenue Appropriation of January, 1884—the actual expenditure proper from revenue for the service of the year 1884-5 amounting to £2,687,947, or £32,709 under the revenue for the year collected up to 30th June, 1885. If further inquiry be made into the expenditure for the financial year just terminated, as contrasted with the preceding year, it will be found that, while the apparent results are as stated—namely: total expenditure for 1883-4, £2,511,651; for 1884-5, £2,819,853; increase, £308,202—nevertheless, if there be deducted the amount of disbursements respectively made within each year on account of Special Supplementary Appropriation—namely: for 1883-4, £78,072; for 1884-5, £131,906—the expenditure proper for the service of the year 1883-4 actually amounted to £2,433,579, and for 1884-5 to £2,687,947, thus reducing the apparent excess of expenditure in the latter year from £308,202 to £254,368.

Returning to the consideration of the revenue received during the financial year 1884-5, the amount collected—namely, £2,720,656—as contrasted with the revenue of the preceding year, 1883-4, amounting to £2,566,358, represents an increase of £154,298, or at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum.

The revenue for 1884-5 fell short, however, of the estimate for the year by the sum of £27,844, or about 1 per cent. less than was anticipated.

The causes of this comparatively small deficiency will be made apparent on a consideration of the several sources of revenue; but I desire specially to direct the attention of hon. members to the encouraging fact that the large amount of revenue furnished this year represents an average individual contribution of £8 15s. 7d. per head of estimated population, a rate which exceeds in proportion to population the capitation contributions to revenue in any of the other Australian Colonies.

During the first three months of the year 1884-5 the increase in revenue over the corresponding period of the previous year represented £88,699, or at the rate of 12·4 per cent.; the second quarter showed a decrease of £58,382, or at the rate of 9 per cent. on the corresponding quarter of 1883; the third quarter exhibited an increase of £63,856, or at the rate of 10·8 per cent.; and the last quarter resulted in a decrease of £16,754, or at the rate of 2·4 per cent. on the similar period of the preceding year.

An analysis of the principal sources of revenue will assist in explaining these fluctuations.

Customs furnished a revenue for the year 1884-5 of £937,224, showing £17,224 in excess of the estimate for the year, an increase on the preceding year's transactions of £70,750, or at the rate of over 8 per cent. During the year the first three months showed an increase of 19·2 per cent., the second quarter nearly 4 per cent., the third quarter nearly 3 per cent., and in the last quarter the increase rose to 7·2 per cent. over the corresponding period of the previous year.

The Customs Revenue of Queensland for 1884-5 represents a contribution of £3 0s. 5d. per head of estimated population. While our tariff is not felt to be oppressive, and has not been framed on any avowed policy either of free trade or protection, it furnishes an income far exceeding the amounts derived from this similar head of revenue in the other Australian Colonies, considered in proportion to their respective populations—a fact which must be regarded as proving the higher average of individual purchasing power enjoyed by the people of Queensland, and, consequently, their larger average pecuniary means of income and expenditure. It cannot fail to be considered also as a satisfactory proof of the elasticity of the resources of the country and of the prosperity of the people generally, notwithstanding the depressing effects of the continued severe drought on many of the chief industries of this colony.

During the years 1883-4 and 1884-5 the quantity and classification of Spirits on which duty was paid appeared as follows:—

	1883-4.		1884-5.
	Gallons.		Gallons.
Brandy ...	153,408	...	152,395
Whisky ...	165,082	...	188,027
Rum ...	57,967	...	67,524
Geneva ...	73,989	...	73,543
Other Spirits...	32,680	...	35,010

While on goods admitted under *ad valorem* the amount received for 1883-4 represented £127,282; and for 1884-5, £132,110.

Under "Excise Duties," the revenue from Colonial Spirits, amounting to £31,087, shows a decrease of £2,388 on the previous year, or at the rate of over 7 per cent., and for the first nine months of the year this decline has been continuously exhibited. During the last quarter a small increase, at the rate of 3·5 per cent., has been observed.

The export duty on Cedar collected during 1884-5 amounted to £926, and did not reach by

4 per cent. the amount received during the previous year. The total excise duties yielded £2,986 less than was estimated for the year.

Stamp Duties produced during 1884-5 a revenue of £105,566, or £15,566 in excess of the estimate for the year, showing an increase of £17,400, or at the rate of 19·7 per cent. on the previous year. This large increase is attributable to the great number of transactions in real estate, to the system recently adopted in collecting fees of office by means of stamps, and is also owing to the increased number of important financial operations rendered necessary by the business and the expanding circumstances of the country.

Taxation proper has therefore contributed to revenue during the year 1884-5 £1,125,536, an increase of £90,053, or at the rate of 8·7 per cent. on the previous year's transactions, representing a contribution of £3 12s. 7d. *per capita* of the estimated population. The estimate for the year under this head was £1,093,000, and the receipts have exceeded anticipation by £32,536.

Turning to the Land Revenue for 1884-5, it will be at once observed that the total territorial receipts, amounting to £600,579, not only show a decrease of £32,498 as compared with the revenue for the preceding year 1883-4, or at the rate of 5·1 per cent., but also that the estimate for the year has not been fulfilled under this head by £34,421. The causes of this derangement are sufficiently well known as to dispense almost with the necessity for further comment. The character of our land tenure and the conditions regulating the acquisition of country land were entirely remodelled by the Land Act of last session, which practically did not come into operation during the year under review, whilst at the same time new operations under the Act of 1876 were wholly suspended on the 1st March. Even under ordinary seasons a temporary disturbance of land revenue must inevitably have resulted from the introduction of a system substituting perpetual leasehold for freehold tenure, and this divergence has been undoubtedly aggravated by the severe drought which still holds large areas of the colony closed to settlement. Under a favourable season I believe the estimate would have been fulfilled, and that a large extent of settlement would have already taken place as the forerunner of those beneficial results to the colony which the Land Act of 1884 must undoubtedly accomplish.

In a country like Queensland, where land receipts form a very considerable portion of the yearly Consolidated Revenue, the total annual revenue cannot be accepted as wholly or truly gauging the progress or prosperity of the colony. A deficiency in any one year may be created by a diminution of land sales, while apparent prosperity may be artificially produced by an enlargement of this source of income. It has been well said that "there is no particular cause for rejoicing in capitalising one's landed property in a greater measure, just as there is no cause for dissatisfaction in selling it less freely. If Queensland has sold less land she has more to sell, or lease, probably at a better price, as population increases. A higher measure of prosperity is indicated by progress without, than with, the alienation of public land; for whilst the public estate remains as a source of income in the one case, it has passed away in the other so far as selling or leasing is concerned."

The revenue from Auction Land Sales received during 1884-5 amounted to £43,138—a decrease of £32,122 on the preceding year. Homestead and conditional selection purchase instalments

produced £236,549, or £10,048 under the previous year—a result chiefly brought about by the repeal of the Act of 1876, on 1st March.

Pastoral Occupation produced £258,908 for 1884-5, an increase on the year 1883-4 of £4,484.

Under "Mining Occupation" the receipts during 1884-5 from miners' rights and leases represented £12,096—an increase of £760 over the preceding year. These figures afford but a slight indication of the benefits which the colony has received during the past year from the great revival of mining operations during such period, and it is gratifying to know that this industry has attained a magnitude far surpassing any previous condition in this colony since 1878, and is now in a flourishing and prosperous state with greater prospects of permanency than it has ever before exhibited in Queensland. The yield of gold during the past three years has been as follows, namely:—

	Oz.
1882	224,893
1883	212,783
1884	307,804

The revenue from Public Works and Services is more reassuring, and shows total receipts, during the financial year 1884-5, of £854,532—representing an increase of £94,157 on the previous year's revenue, or at the rate of 12·3 per cent.

The increase under this head obtained in 1883-4 over the preceding year 1882-3, amounting to £129,640, encouraged a larger return to be anticipated for 1884-5, and accordingly the estimate framed for that year was set down at £893,500, which, however, has not been fulfilled by £38,968.

This decrease is mainly traceable to the severity of the drought in the western portion of the central districts of the colony, as will be observed from the returns for the year of the Central Railway.

The Southern and Western Railway furnished, during the year 1884-5, the sum of £381,038—being £1,038 in excess of the estimate of the year—and exhibited an increase of £54,494 on the previous year's transactions, or at the rate of 16·3 per cent. During the year 16 miles were opened, making a total, on 30th June, 1885, of 569 miles open for traffic on this line.

The Maryborough and Gympie Railway produced for the year £44,908, or £1,092 under the estimate, but establishing an increase of £7,070, or at the rate of 18·6 per cent. on the previous year.

The Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway contributed to the revenue of the year 1884-5 the sum of £9,312, being £4,688 less than the estimate for the year but £702 in excess of the receipts of 1883-4—showing an increase of 8·1 per cent.

The Central Railway furnished to revenue in 1883-4 the sum of £153,121, and for the ensuing year an estimate of £195,000 was expected to be fulfilled. The receipts, however, for 1884-5 only reached the sum of £153,183, or about the same amount as was collected in the previous year, notwithstanding that during the year 53 additional miles were opened for traffic. The total extent of mileage open on 30th June, 1885, on this line, amounted to 369 miles.

That this absence of increase is wholly traceable to the severity of the season is exemplified by the quarterly returns during the year furnished by this railway.

The year 1883-4 showed an increase on this line of £25,239, or at the rate of 19·7 per cent. on the previous year.

During the first quarter of 1884-5 the line produced £32,884—an increase of £6,260, or at the rate of 23·3 per cent., over the similar period of the preceding year. In the second quarter £32,940 was received, being £7,651 less than in the corresponding period of 1883-4—a decrease at the rate of 18·8 per cent. In the third quarter £40,512 was collected, showing an increase of £1,081, or at the rate of 2·7 per cent. And in the last quarter of 1884-5 the amount contributed was £46,485, showing a small increase of £371, or at the rate of under 1 per cent., on the similar periods respectively of 1883-4. The greatest depression appears to have occurred in the last three months of 1884, and therefore it is to be hoped that the period of severest trial has passed. If so it may safely be averred that with a return of favourable seasons the Central Railway will speedily reassume its position as one of the best paying lines of railway in the colony.

The Northern Railway produced during the year 1884-5 a revenue of £76,092, being £6,092 in excess of the estimate, and exhibiting an increase of £19,564, or at the rate of 34·6 per cent., on the previous year. This most satisfactory result has been obtained from the traffic on 129 miles open on 30th June, 1884, and from 44 miles additional opened during the year—making a total length of 173 miles available for traffic on 30th June, 1885.

The total revenue furnished by the Railways in 1884-5 amounted to £664,534, establishing an increase of £81,893 over the preceding year, or at the rate of 14 per cent.; but, owing to the absence of increase on the Central line, falling short of the estimate for the year by the sum of £11,817. I shall have occasion further on to refer to the remunerativeness of our railway lines. Meanwhile, I may say that, reviewing the whole character of our railways, we must not allow any temporary unfulfilment of anticipated revenue to obscure our perception of the great value to the State of these investments, or their vast utility to the people of the colony—conditions which should stimulate the present and future Governments to expedite by all practicable means the earliest further extension and construction of railroads throughout the colony.

The revenue received from the Post Office for postages during the financial year 1884-5 amounted to £93,800, showing an excess of £8,800 on the estimates for the year, and an increase of £12,986, or at the rate of 16·7 per cent., on the preceding year's transactions. Electric Telegraph receipts produced, during 1884-5, £75,394—an increase of only £213 on the previous period, and not fulfilling the estimate by £4,606.

Pilotage and Harbour Dues produced £15,810 for 1884-5, or a decrease of £823 on the previous year; while the Marine Board furnished £2,263, or an increase of £774 on the corresponding period. The Graving Dock contributed £1,664, showing a decrease of £700 on the receipts of the year 1883-4.

It may interest hon. members to learn the extent of encouragement and protection afforded to shipping under our present rates of pilotage and harbour dues in the respective ports of the colony, and it will also enable them to judge of the difficulty experienced by the Government in dealing with the frequent demands made by local authorities for the establishment of steamers for harbour purposes in lieu of the present sailing vessels, which are maintained at a considerably less annual cost.

The following statement, which is framed exclusive of Customs and Lights, shows that the receipts for the year ended on the 30th June,

1885, failed to meet expenditure for this service to the extent of £22,050, to which, if there be added the cost of the Lighthouse Service for 1884-5—namely, £20,089—a charge of over £42,100 may be assumed as annually borne by the taxpayers of the colony to provide for the safety of shipping visiting our ports, in addition to the large expenditure continuously being made out of loan for dredging and general harbour improvements—

Port.	Expenditure.	Receipts.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Brisbane and Moreton Bay ...	9,529 12 8	7,334 7 11
Bowen ...	1,513 6 6	220 19 4
Bundaberg ...	1,104 15 4	525 3 5
Cardwell ...	849 16 0	46 12 10
Cooktown ...	1,263 5 8	568 2 8
Dungeness ...	457 18 0	60 19 0
Gladstone ...	1,292 0 6	381 6 10
Johnstone River ...	518 12 0	...
Mackay ...	1,481 3 0	589 10 8
Maryborough ...	7,220 18 10	1,126 3 0
Port Douglas ...	516 8 9	99 14 10
Rockhampton ...	4,705 13 2	1,281 7 9
St. Lawrence ...	602 13 11	60 15 5
Normanton & Burketown ...	2,366 0 6	405 6 0
Townsville ...	1,898 7 10	1,891 8 9
Thursday Island ...	728 4 4	908 0 7
Trinity Bay ...	1,191 17 0	310 19 6
Bloomfield River ...	7 2 6	...
General ...	613 18 3	...
	£ 37,861 14 9	15,810 18 6

The revenue from Other Receipts produced during the year 1884-5 a sum of £140,007, being an increase of £2,586 on the preceding period, or at the rate of 1·8 per cent., and showing an excess of £13,007 over the estimate for the year.

Fees of Office produced £23,364 during the year 1884-5, an increase of £2,317, or at the rate of 11 per cent. on the previous year.

Fines and Forfeitures yielded £4,929, a decrease of £510 on the year 1883-4, while Miscellaneous Receipts produced during the year 1884-5 a sum of £111,714, showing a small increase over the similar head of revenue furnished in 1883-4.

The Expenditure incurred during the year ended on the 30th June, 1885, amounted to £2,819,833, of which sum £131,906 pertained to the special Supplementary Appropriation of January, 1884, thereby reducing, as before shown, the expenditure on account of annual parliamentary appropriations to £2,687,947, or an increase at the rate of 10·4 per cent. over the expenditure for the preceding year 1883-4.

The increases have chiefly arisen through increased demands under Endowments to Municipalities and Divisional Boards, the amounts paid during 1884-5 representing £162,521, as against £142,213 paid in 1883-4.

An additional payment of £55,085 was also required for interest on the increased Public Debt.

The Colonial Secretary's Department expended during the year ended 30th June, 1884-5, the sum of £465,936, or an increase over the corresponding twelve months of 1883-4 amounting to £65,022; of which the Police required £12,587, Government Printer £6,181, Immigration £3,922, Colonial Stores £6,528, Grants in aid of Public Institutions £2,171, and sundry new services £25,777.

During the latter half of the year 1884-5 the appearance of grave complications between Great Britain and Russia demanded the earnest consideration of Government, and it was felt to be an imperative duty to put the colony in a position to resist any external danger by which it might be threatened should war be declared by or against the mother-country. Although the imminence of the danger may for the present have happily passed over, yet I feel assured had Government neglected the warnings of the time or hesitated to make due preparation to defend the country against foreign or hostile aggression, it would by such supineness have justly merited the severest condemnation. For it must not be forgotten that the greater the progress made by the colony in industrial resources and material wealth the greater becomes the responsibility of its citizens to insure and defend their country from attack in the event of war. The duty of defence must rest chiefly upon ourselves, and if we repudiate this liability we show ourselves unworthy to possess and occupy this highly favoured portion of the world's surface.

The cost of preparations for defence during the year 1884-5 has amounted to a considerable sum. The expenditure on account of volunteers has increased from £16,596 in 1883-4 to £25,214 in 1884-5, and to enable hon. members to learn the character of the total payments for defence purposes during the year, I give the following details, namely:—

	£
Gunboats and Torpedo Boat ...	49,373
Purchase of Steamers and Barges	29,760
Naval Force	1,617
Lytton Battery	5,500
Ammunition and Stores ...	5,092
Salaries and Pay	7,102
Horses	1,200
Uniforms	2,144
Camp of Instruction	2,466
Townsville	1,450
Thursday Island	750
Permanent Force, Rifle Ranges, Incidentals, etc.	5,985
Total	£112,379

Of this sum £41,577 has been defrayed from the Consolidated Revenue Fund; £27,028 from the Loan Fund; and £43,774 from Surplus Revenue Account.

In the Administration of Justice the expenditure during the year ended 30th June, 1885, amounted to £36,069, as against £33,520 during the preceding year.

The Education Department expended £187,257 during the year just closed, being an increase of £31,376 on the year 1883-4. This considerable enlargement chiefly arises from increased salaries accruing under regulations to the teachers in State schools, amounting to £17,266, from increase in number of new buildings £5,850, and from increased claims in connection with orphanages, £5,056.

The Colonial Treasurer's Department expended during the year ended 30th June, 1885, the sum of £139,228, as against £156,033 in 1883-4, a decrease of £16,805, which is, however, more apparent than real. Under the new system of administering refundments, these payments have not during the year 1884-5 either been admitted into Revenue or charged to Expenditure; accordingly a sum of about £30,000—approximate to the amount of refundments credited to Revenue and subsequently charged as Expenditure during the year 1883-4—disappears entirely from the Treasury Expenditure in 1884-5.

1885—2 A

And it may here be properly mentioned that the new mode of dealing with refundments has also affected the Revenue for the past year, inasmuch as had the sum received during the year 1884-5 been credited to Revenue as formerly, the apparent receipts, instead of being short of the estimate by the sum of £27,844 as I have before shown, would have apparently fully covered, if not exceeded, my anticipations expressed at the commencement of the period. Notwithstanding this desirable consummation, I think it will be admitted that the old system under which Revenue and Expenditure were fallaciously inflated is wisely discontinued.

The expenditure in the Customs Department, notwithstanding that the revenue received during the year ended 30th June, 1885, increased by the sum of £70,750, and contributed to revenue well-nigh to £1,000,000, has been less during the year just terminated than during the preceding period; the expenditure for 1884-5 being £41,316 as against £42,009 in 1883-4.

Harbours and Pilots, Lighthouses and Lightships, have increased their expenditure from £50,193 in 1883-4 to £57,950 for the year ended 30th June, 1885—an increase of £7,757 occasioned by the establishment of new lights and lighthouses along our extensive coast and harbours—a continuous line of illumination extending along our great marine highway from Southport to the bar of the Norman River and Kimberley, in the Gulf of Carpentaria; and even far out of sight of Australian shores, distant upwards of fifty miles from our own coast-line, the solitary light of Proudfoot Shoal, maintained by the Government of Queensland, informs the mariner that he is approaching the western entrance and intricacies of the navigation of Torres Straits.

The Department of Public Lands has during the year ended on the 30th June, 1885, expended £104,191, as against £101,634 during the preceding year, an increase of £2,557. No special enlargement of any of the services under this head calls for explanation.

The Department of Public Works and Railways has expended for the year ended 30th June, 1885, the sum of £494,723, as against £407,638 in 1883-4; an increase of £87,085, or at the rate of 21·3 per cent. on the previous year's disbursements.

This large increase is wholly confined to Railway demands.

The Southern and Western Railway expended for the year up to the 30th June, 1885, a sum of £213,244; being an increase of £34,996, or at the rate of 19·6 per cent. on the previous year's expenditure.

The Maryborough and Wide Bay Railway required £29,892 for the service of the year ending 30th June, 1885; an increase of £2,176, or at the rate of 7·8 per cent. on the expenditure of the year 1883-4.

The Bundaberg and Mount Perry line required £12,316 for 1884-5, or £4,831 in excess of the disbursements for this service in 1883-4; an increase of expenditure at the rate of 84·5 per cent.

The Central Line of Railway required to be supplied with £100,931 for the year ended 30th June, 1885; being a demand in excess of the previous year to the extent of £33,860, or at the rate of 50·4 per cent. on the expenditure during 1883.

The Northern line required £40,999 for the year ended 30th June, 1885, being £12,211 in excess of the sum expended on this service during the year ended 30th June, 1883-4, or an increase at the rate of 42·4 per cent.

Taking the railway lines collectively, and including the departmental expenses, the expenditure during the year ended 30th June, 1885, amounted to £408,235, or an increase of £89,119 over the preceding year.

I have before referred to the railway receipts for the year 1884-5 as representing £664,534, and have explained why these returns were not considerably larger; yet, notwithstanding the restriction of revenue imposed by a succession of adverse seasons, it is satisfactory to note that the revenue obtained is sufficient after defraying current expenses to provide the interest at 4 per cent. on a capital sum of £6,500,000, thereby extinguishing the pressure of indebtedness to that extent of loan moneys employed in railway construction. I may add that the enlarged expenditure on these lines has been caused by the opening up of new sections during the past year, which have not immediately furnished a revenue corresponding to the increased working expenses of their respective establishments—an experience which is not solely confined to Queensland, for we are informed that the last Railway Report issued in New South Wales exhibits also a diminished rate of profit through comparative increase of working expenses on the opening of new lines. These remarks should be noted in reading Table Q, wherein the relative percentage of working expenses to railway receipts is shown to have increased during the past year, and which without this explanation might be construed to discourage railway construction in this colony.

The following statement may prove interesting, and is framed for the information of hon. members:—

QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS.

	Year ended June 30, 1884.	Year ended June 30, 1885.
REVENUE.		
	£	£
Southern and Western ...	326,544	381,038
Maryborough and Wide Bay	37,838	44,909
Bundaberg and Mount Perry	8,610	9,312
Central ...	153,121	153,183
Northern ...	56,528	76,092
	£ 582,641	664,534
EXPENDITURE.		
	£	£
Southern and Western ...	178,248	213,244
Maryborough and Wide Bay	27,716	29,892
Bundaberg and Mount Perry	7,486	12,316
Central ...	67,072	100,932
Northern ...	28,788	41,000
Department ...	9,806	10,851
	£ 319,116	408,235
Net Earnings ...	£ 263,525	256,299

Total Railway Expenditure from	
Loan, to 30th June, 1884 ...	£8,930,198
Expenditure from Loan for year ending 30th June, 1885 ...	1,198,163

Total, 30th June, 1885 ... £10,128,361

On which sum the net earnings as shown above represent a contribution towards interest on Loan of £2 10s. 7d. per cent. as against £2 19s. per cent. on the sum first mentioned for the previous year 1883-4. It will not be denied that the apparent deficiency of £1 9s. 5d. per cent. is far

outbalanced by the benefits accruing to the State through the impetus to settlement afforded by railway extension, and the many social and national advantages conferred on the people of this colony thereby.

The Postmaster-General's Department expended during the year ended 30th June, 1885, the sum of £282,755, being an increase on the preceding year of £30,111, or at the rate of 11·9 per cent.; an increase necessitated by the extension of telegraphic communication, and also by the increased rates demanded by contractors for mail services in the interior owing to the high price of fodder and other causes.

The expenditure on account of the Special Supplementary Appropriation of January, 1884, amounted during the year ended 30th June, 1885, to £131,906, the disbursements on account of the respective services being as follows:—

Immigration ...	£77,337
Harbours and Rivers ...	23,004
Buildings ...	19,588
Bridges ...	417
Divisional Boards ...	11,560
	£131,906

The unexpended balances still available for services authorised by such Special Supplementary Appropriation comprise—

Harbours and Rivers ...	£34,863
Buildings ...	34,877
Bridges ...	29,583
Divisional Boards ...	720

Total unexpended on 30th June, 1885 ... £100,043

I have now analysed the Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year ended 30th June, 1885—

At which date the Consolidated Revenue possessed a credit balance of ... £267,104
 Allowing for the unexpended balances of the Special Appropriation made in January, 1884, amounting to ... 100,043
 There remains an Unappropriated Cash Surplus as on 30th June, 1885, of ... 167,061
 available for further consideration.

I shall advert to this unappropriated balance after dealing with the estimated financial results of the year on which we have just entered, 1885-6. Meanwhile, I desire to glance at the Loan and Trust Funds, and the disposal of the public cash balances, as on 30th June, 1885.

The condition of the Surplus Revenue Fund, created by the Special Appropriations of 1874 and 1882-3, is shown in Table C, from which it will be observed that the credit balance on 30th June, 1885, amounted to £51,993 19s. 3d., being the amount of appropriation remaining at that date unexpended on the following services, as under:—

Pilot Steamer ...	£10,555
Dredge Plant ...	4,200
Harbour Works ...	2,950
Lighthouses ...	2,475
Public Buildings ...	31,552
Defence, etc. ...	261
	£51,993

The character of the expenditure out of this fund made during last year, amounting to £98,074, is shown in Table Q.

The condition of the Loan Fund is shown in Table D, which exhibits the receipts from the balance of the loan of 1882 and the first loan of 1884, representing a total of £2,672,000 sold in London as inscribed stock in May, 1884.

The sale in London during May, 1885, of portion of the ten-million loan does not enter into this statement—the result of such sale not having been received at the Treasury till after the termination of the financial year under review. A small portion of our last loan, however, enters into the transactions of 1884-5, and is represented by the sale of £250,000 of debentures to the Savings Bank in terms of the Savings Bank Act of 1870, at the minimum price placed on our stock in London on 15th May, 1885.

The loan of 1864, representing £1,019,000 and bearing interest at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum, was retired on the 1st January, 1885, from the proceeds of the 4 per cent. loan negotiated in May, 1884. A saving to the country to the extent of £20,380 per annum is effected by this conversion.

During the year ended 30th June, 1885, the expenditure from loan amounted to £1,565,028, being a decrease on the expenditure of the preceding year to the extent of £100,795.

The Loan Fund on 30th June, 1885, exhibited a credit balance of £491,478. Since the Treasury books for the financial year 1884-5 were closed, formal advice of the sale of £2,500,000 of our last loan in London on 15th May has been received from the Agent-General. This stock bore interest at 4 per cent. per annum as from 1st July, 1885, and the price realised averaged £97 19s. 4d. per cent. the terms of payment being as follow:—

A deposit of 5 per cent. on application.

On 2nd June, 1885, £10 per cent.

On 17th July, 1885, £20 per cent.

On 25th August, £20 per cent.

On 9th October, 1885, £20 per cent.

On 20th November, 1885, £25 per cent.

After 2nd June the instalments may be paid in full, under discount at the rate of £3 per cent. per annum.

I need not detain the Committee by referring to the sale of this portion of our loan, which is now a matter of history; but I cannot pass over in silence the highly gratifying circumstance to the colony of the liberal and spontaneous offer of assistance made by the Bank of England in the event of the sale of our loan being necessarily delayed. Whatever views may be entertained by hon. members regarding the last sale of our stock in the light of a successful financial operation, it is eminently satisfactory to find that by adopting the Bank of England's advice and direction in the conduct of such sale we have secured the full confidence of that powerful institution in the financial stability of the colony; and that the disingenuous and misleading statements reflecting on the credit of Queensland made by certain anonymous writers in the London Press have entirely failed to disturb that feeling. The animus which inspired these attacks has been evident, but the financial position of the colony in the London market has fortunately proved invulnerable to such malevolent assaults.

I therefore contend that while we had to take our chance of a sale in a highly sensitive market, at a time when, we are authoritatively informed, "even mere rumours of an unfavourable character were sufficient to reverse the aspect of the money market in the course of a few hours"—and unfortunately such rumours were promulgated on the morning of the sale of our stock—the country has every reason to be satisfied with the result.

The total amount of our securities now in the hands of the public amounts to £19,320,850, representing a loan indebtedness of £60 per head of population. I have previously mentioned that the net earnings of the railways defray the interest due to the public creditor on £6,500,000

of the above sum. The annual interest payable during the financial year 1885-6 amounts to £811,565, or at the rate of £2 10s. 10d. per head of population.

The total available balance of the Loan Fund, including the sale in May of £2,500,000 of inscribed stock, would represent as on 30th June, 1885, a sum of nearly £3,000,000 in addition to the unsold balance of the loan of 1884, amounting to £7,230,000.

The Savings Bank Account is shown in Table E. The receipts during the year 1884-5 amounted to £1,110,142, while the payments amounted, within the same period, to £1,214,040, showing a credit balance on 30th June, 1885, of £313,437.

It will be observed that the cash balance on 1st July, 1884, was £417,335, and that it has been reduced during the year by £103,898. This reduction is owing to a portion of the bank's surplus funds, amounting to £242,500, having been invested in the purchase of Queensland Government debentures of the loan of last session.

The assets of the Savings Bank, which now amount to £1,276,411, are held as follows:—

Q.N. Bank, General Account ...	£35,012
Ditto Fixed Deposit ...	200,000
Bank N.S. Wales, ditto ...	100,000
Government Securities ...	940,499
Mortgages ...	900

It is satisfactory to report that the operations of the bank continue to extend, the number of depositors having increased from 29,849 in June, 1884, to 35,027 in June, 1885, with a corresponding advance in the deposits from £1,115,328 to £1,254,815. With respect to the securities, which stand in the books of the bank at £940,499, it may be interesting to learn that the par value of the same amounts to £975,000; so that when they mature a considerable sum will accrue to the Reserve Fund in aid of the Profit and Loss Account and the equalisation of future interest charges.

Table F represents the transactions of the Trust Funds during the year ended 30th June, 1884-5, and the balance outstanding on that date. The receipts during the year amounted to £148,890, while the expenditure attained to £179,575. The balance of Immigration collections has decreased to the extent of £14,821, the Pacific Islanders Fund by £7,337, and the Sheep Fund by £2,878. Repayments to the extent of £5,360 were made under the 7th clause of the Chinese Immigrants Regulation Act of 1877. As the Chinese Immigration Act Fund is no longer fed by the capitation tax, it may interest hon. members to learn that the sum of £360 was paid into revenue, during the year 1884-5, for capitation on Chinese entering the colony.

The transactions of the Treasury are supposed to be chiefly embraced in administering the revenue and expenditure of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the Loan Fund, and a few comparatively trifling trust accounts. Hon. members generally may not be aware, therefore, that the transactions of the Queensland Treasury, during the year ended 30th June, 1885, amounted to a total of nearly £14,000,000; and this sum is exclusive of the £2,500,000 of loan stock sold last May.

With the view of affording full information to hon. members and the public generally who choose to address themselves to the subject—so as to acquire a more exact knowledge of the extent of the Treasury transactions—to note the yearly expanding circumstances of the country in all branches of the public finances, and also to learn the sources and comparative position of our cash balances at the termination respectively of

the three last financial years, an additional Table, G, has been prepared, showing the total receipts and payments and also the cash balances for the financial years 1883-4 and 1884-5 in a form adopted by the Imperial Government in the publication of their accounts and not previously published in any of the Queensland Government returns.

From this Table it will be observed that on the 30th June, 1885, the Treasury cash balances, while amounting to £1,317,162, represented an increase of £226,498 over the cash balances held in the colony at the termination of the financial year 1882-3, and £46,587 more than at the end of the year 1883-4, without taking into consideration the proceeds of the last loan sales of two and a-half millions of stock.

The manner in which the public balances stood invested on 30th June, 1885, are shown at Table H, namely :—

Queensland National Bank—			
Held in Brisbane	£528,282		
„ in London	524,906		
		1,053,188	
Bank of New South Wales, Brisbane		200,000	
Agent-General, London		63,974	
		<u>£1,317,162</u>	

Since advice reached the colony of the sale of the first portion of the Loan of 1884, whereby considerable augmentation of the Government funds has accrued, an arrangement for depositing moneys with local banks has been carried into effect by the Treasury with the consent of the Government bankers; and I think it only right to state that twice during the past year, upon representation being made that public interests would be consulted by the cession of certain rights possessed by the Government bankers under their agreement, a ready acquiescence in the views of the Treasury has been in each case immediately and courteously granted.

The first case arose out of a claim on the part of the Bank of England to conduct the negotiation of loans in addition to inscribing the stock, a right which, under the eleventh clause of the agreement with the local Government bankers, pertained to them, subject to six months' notice; and the second refers to the Treasurer depositing moneys with other banks subject to clause thirteen of the agreement aforesaid.

The balances and deposits held by the Government in the colony at the present date (August) represent not only an enlarged amount of funds, but also a larger basis of depositories, and stand as follows :—

Queensland National Bank—Public			
Account	£57,380		
Fixed Deposits—			
Queensland National	400,000		
Bank of New South Wales	200,000		
Commercial Bank of Australia	100,000		
Bank of Australasia	100,000		
Union Bank	100,000		
London Chartered Bank	100,000		
Mercantile Bank	100,000		
	<u>£1,157,380</u>		

A glance at Table I will show the comparative condition of the balance of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the unexpended votes of annual appropriation, together with the liability in excess of assets at the termination of the respective financial years ended 30th June, 1883, 1884, and 1885.

Hon. members will observe that the financial year 1882-3 terminated with a liability of £192,192 in excess of assets.

The financial year 1883-4 concluded with a liability of £107,238 for votes unexpended at the end of such year in excess of the balance of the Consolidated Revenue. The result of the financial year 1884-5 can only be estimated at present, until the exact amount of votes authorised for services of the year which must be lapsed is ascertained—after the 30th September; but, assuming the amount to be the same as was shown last year, the result will be a liability in excess of assets of £130,899, or £23,661 more than in 1883-4, but an improvement of £61,293 on the year 1882-3.

The unforeseen expenditure on account of Defence purposes, which, although forced upon Government by the exigencies of foreign relations with the mother-country, is happily an abnormal charge on our customary annual appropriations, amounted during the year 1884-5 to £12,668.

A further considerable item of unforeseen expenditure has been forced upon the Treasury through the unfortunate railway disasters at Darra and Albion, under which claims to the extent of £13,181 and £665 respectively have been paid during the year ended 30th June last. These large items of unforeseen expenditure have correspondingly disturbed the financial result of the year 1884-5, as shown under this table, and more than represent the increased amount of liabilities in excess of assets over the preceding year as before mentioned.

And it should also be noted that had the estimate of revenue for 1884-5 been fulfilled, whereby a sum of over £27,000 additional would have been received by the Treasury, a further improvement on the year 1883-4 would have been exhibited, under the working of Table H, in the relative position of the year which terminated on 30th June last.

Table J, showing the liability of the Consolidated Revenue Fund in respect of unexpended balances of votes for the year 1884-5, as on 1st July, 1885, will be found of special interest to all who desire to note departmental expenditure and the balances of votes unexpended pertaining to the respective departments of Government at that period.

I proceed now, Mr. Fraser, to enter on the consideration of the second part of my subject, dealing with the

ESTIMATED REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1885-6,

and refer hon. members to the Estimates, which have been distributed, or to Treasury Table A, circulated this afternoon.

The estimated Revenue of the colony for the year 1885-6 is stated at £2,982,500, and the expenditure out of Consolidated Revenue for the same period at £2,194,649, or, with the interest on the public debt—amounting to £811,565—representing a total of £3,006,214, the assumed result being an excess of expenditure over revenue to the extent of £23,714.

I am quite prepared to hear expressions of surprise from hon. members at the appearance of an estimated deficiency, but surely it is wiser to look the probability in the face—and, in view of any prolonged continuance of the present drought, every day renders that probability a greater certainty. Under the peculiar circumstances of the country at the present time I do not feel justified in submitting to Parliament an estimate which would depend wholly on good seasons for its accomplishment.

The Customs—our most progressive and constant contributory to revenue—is estimated to produce £1,000,000 for the year 1885-6, being an increase of £62,775, or 6·8 per cent. on the previous

year. The year 1884-5 showed an increase of £70,750 on the year 1883-4, or at the rate of over 8 per cent. I have every reason, judging from increase of population, from the prospective consumption by the people of dutiable goods, and from the gradually extending settlement throughout the colony, to believe that this estimate will be fulfilled, and am gratified to be in a position to state that the net receipts from the Customs during the month of July represented £86,342, or at the rate of over £1,036,000 for the year. Indeed, should the country be blessed with an early and thorough breaking-up of the drought, I am confident the rate of increase shown by the Customs returns of last year will be far surpassed in 1885-6.

Excise and Export Duties are estimated at £31,000, being £1,014 less than the receipts for 1884-5. The industry of distillation has been continuously declining since the assimilation of the rates of import with excise duty, and allowance is therefore made for a continued decrease in revenue under this head. I have a hope, however, that this year may establish an improvement—an expectation based on the apparent recent revival of distilling operations.

Stamp Duties are estimated to produce £105,000, or slightly under the returns for 1884-5—the receipts under this head for that period having shown a very considerable increase. I shall be content with the same revenue for 1885-6, and believe that, from the numerous transactions in real estate and the expanding circumstances of the country, this estimate will be fully realised.

The total revenue estimated to be derived from Taxation amounts to £1,188,000, an increase of £62,464, or about $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., on the preceding year, which in its turn showed an increase on the year 1883-4 of £90,053, or at the rate of 8·7 per cent.

The Territorial Revenue for the year 1885-6 is estimated to produce £653,000, an increase of £52,421 over the financial year just terminated. £100,000 is expected to be furnished by sales of town and suburban lands, an estimate which I think hon. members will admit is at the present time capable of fulfilment without necessitating the alienation of any large portions of the public estate, and indeed not exceeding the legitimate demands for town and suburban settlement visible throughout the colony. Rent of homesteads and conditional purchases, in consequence of new transactions under these heads being suspended by the repeal of the Land Act of 1876, naturally present a diminished appearance, receding from £236,550 received during 1884-5 to £210,000 estimated for 1885-6. Rents under the Act of 1884 are estimated to yield £30,000, but it must at once be admitted that this estimate is purely conjectural, and while, under a favourable season, it should be largely exceeded by results, at the present time and as long as the drought continues to bar the settlement of the country this head of Territorial Revenue must, at the initiation of the working of the new Land Act, be regarded as an unknown quantity.

This aspect of the new land revenue, while fully recognised and anticipated by Government, furnishes no solid objection to the amended system of land alienation introduced by the Land Act of 1884 nor lessens confidence in its early beneficial results to the Treasury so soon as circumstances admit of its being fairly tested by experience.

Timber licenses, royalties, &c., are estimated to produce £13,000, or an increase of £6,917 over the receipts of 1884-5—an estimate deemed capable of fulfilment under the Timber Regulations recently issued.

Pastoral occupation—rents of runs—is estimated to produce £260,000 in 1885-6, an increase on the previous year of about £7,000, being slightly in excess of the amount of increase obtained in 1884-5; and mining occupation and business licenses may, in the present active and healthy condition of the mining industry, be fairly assumed to contribute the increased revenue for 1885-6 which is set down in the Estimates—namely, about £490 over 1884-5, or an estimated total of £5,000.

Receipts from Public Works and Services are estimated to yield during 1885-6 the sum of £981,500, an increase of £126,967 on the year 1884-5, which in its turn furnished an increase of £94,158 over the preceding year of 1883-4.

The total receipts from Railways estimated to accrue during the present financial year 1885-6 amount to £778,000—an estimated increase of £113,466 over the actual revenue (£664,534) derived from these sources in 1884-5.

The Southern and Western Railway, which produced in 1884-5 a revenue of £381,038—an increase of £54,494—is estimated to yield an additional sum during 1885-6 of £38,962, or a total of £420,000.

During the present year it is anticipated that No. 8 section Western Railway, section No. 2 Killarney line, and the second section of the Logan branch will be opened for traffic—representing a total distance of about seventy-seven miles of new roadway.

As the estimate for the year 1884-5 was realised, it is expected that with the projected openings the estimate now made for the year ending 30th June, 1886, will be quite fulfilled.

The estimate for the Central line is placed at the same amount as was anticipated to be realised in 1884-5, an expectation based on the opening of the extension to Jericho and on the fact that for the present year (1885-6) the average length of road open for traffic will exceed by thirty-nine miles the extent of line open during 1884-5.

The Northern Railway receipts, which in 1884-5 surpassed those of 1883-4 by nearly £20,000, are expected to reach £100,000 during 1885-6, an increase of about £24,000 on the preceding year. The average mileage open for traffic on this line for the present year will be considerably greater than last, and as the receipts continue to show a very satisfactory increase it is expected that the estimate will be fulfilled, especially as an increased traffic is anticipated after opening to Torrens Creek.

The Maryborough and Gympie Railway is estimated to yield £50,000 for the year 1885-6, an increase of about £5,000 on the previous year, and which is supported by the expectation of enlarged coal traffic during the year. The Bundaberg and Mount Perry line is represented to contribute £10,000, being a small increase of £700 and within the amount so obtained in 1884-5 on the preceding year.

Two new lines—namely, the Mackay and Cooktown lines—are expected to furnish revenue during 1885-6, with £2,000 and £1,000 respectively. These estimates are, however, admitted on very limited data.

The Railway mileage now open in the various districts is as follows:—

S. and W. Lines	...	569 miles.
Wide Bay and Burnett	...	144 „
Central	...	369 „
Northern	...	173 „

The total, amounting to 1,255 miles, exceeds the mileage open in the previous year by 114

miles; the additional mileage expected to be open during the year ending 30th June, 1886, representing—

S. and W. Railway ...	50 miles.
Killarney Branch ...	11 "
Brisbane Valley Branch ...	22 "
Kilkivan Branch ...	26 "
Mackay Railway ...	30 "
Cooktown Railway ...	31 "

Amounts to a total of ... 170 "

The Post Office, which produced in 1884-5 the sum of £98,801—being an increase of about £13,000 on the preceding year—is estimated to realise £100,000, or £6,199 in excess of 1884-5. A similar increase in 1885-6 to that obtained in 1884-5 over the preceding year is not expected to be realised, chiefly through the extension of the penny postage in suburban districts, and also from the expectation that receipts from London will be less than the apparent increase in the returns of the past year, which included more than one year's adjustment of accounts with the Imperial postal authorities.

Electric Telegraphs are estimated to produce £80,000 for 1885-6, or an increase of £4,605 over the previous year. On the 30th June, 1885, the total mileage of telegraph lines in the colony amounted to 7,138 miles—the extent of wire stretched being 11,579 miles.

Harbour Dues and Escort Fees are set down at £22,000 and £1,500 respectively, increases of revenue which may fairly be anticipated to be sustained—the first with the increase of shipping visiting our ports, and the second owing to the fresh vigour with which mining operations are being conducted.

Miscellaneous Services and Fees of Office, amounting to an expectancy of £160,000, are based upon the increasing business and circumstances of the colony, and on the increased public balances bearing interest during the year 1885-6.

I now turn to the Estimated Expenditure for the financial year 1885-6, which represents departmental requirements to the extent of £2,194,649, or, with interest on the public debt—representing £811,565—a total estimated expenditure of £3,006,214.

The departmental demands exceed by the sum of £217,466 the appropriation voted for the year 1884-5, and this large increase is wholly due to the expanding circumstances of the country. The Estimates have been strictly framed on the principle that at the present time, when the revenue may prove insufficient to defray the cost of the public services for the year, no increases of large or even moderate salaries shall be allowed. Accordingly, it will be found that with the exception of two or three cases—submitted for reconsideration in consequence of the officers having been disallowed last year the increase of salary to which they were entitled, and which I believe would have been then voted but for misconception concerning their emoluments and position—no salaries exceeding £150 per annum have been increased on the Estimates under consideration.

The Schedules represent an appropriation for the year 1885-6 of £236,704, an increase of £30,644 on the year 1884-5—accounted for, under Schedule B, by salaries provided under legislative enactments for a seventh Minister and for the new Land Board; under Schedule D, increased endowment to municipalities and divisional boards; the appropriation required for the year 1885-6 being estimated at the sum of £175,000, as against £145,000 in 1884-5, or an increase of £30,000 on the preceding year.

The appropriation demanded for the Executive and Legislative during the year 1885-6 amounts to £25,718, or an increase of £7,060 on the preceding year. Of this sum £60 embodies small increases in salaries to orderlies, messengers, etc., while £7,000 appears for the first time on the Estimates in payment of the expenses of hon. members of the Legislative Assembly, at the rates and under the conditions prescribed in the Members Expenses Bill, which has thrice received the approval of this branch of the Legislature.

The Colonial Secretary's Department requires provision to the extent of £473,021 for the financial year 1885-6, or an increase of £14,548 on the preceding year. The prominent items under which this increased expenditure is demanded are for preparation of Census Returns to be collected in 1886, £5,000; increase in Police Establishment, £11,000; increase in Colonial Stores, £5,000; increase in maintenance of Steam Vessels, £3,000; increase in Defence Force expenditure, £12,000; and an apparent increase in Marine Force Defence expenditure of £6,800, provision for six months only having appeared on last year's Estimates; and increase to Charitable Institutions, nearly £3,000.

The Department of the Attorney-General (Administration of Justice) requires £32,497 for the service of the year 1885-6, being an increase on the preceding year to the extent of £4,272, chiefly demanded by increased provision for payment of fees to justices, surgeons, jurors attending Supreme and Circuit Courts, travelling expenses and allowances to witnesses and jurors.

In the Department of Public Instruction the estimated expenditure for 1885-6 amounts to £198,841, being an increase of £35,748 on the year 1884-5, of which sum £20,000 is claimed for increased salaries and allowances accruing under regulations to classified teachers, £10,000 for the erection and furnishing of new schools, additions, repairs, etc., and £3,000 is represented to be necessitated this year by the increased claims of orphanages.

During the past year 42 new schools were opened, making the total number of schools under the department 433 as on 30th June, 1885, while 17 additional were under construction; representing an increase of 33 schools on the preceding year, 1883-4. The number of scholars enrolled on the 31st December, 1884, represented 52,556, as against 46,262 at the corresponding period of 1883; while the average attendance exhibited 27,863 in 1884, as against 24,247 in the previous year.

The Colonial Treasurer's Department requires £138,569 for the service of the year 1885-6, being an increase of £12,281 on the year just terminated. This increase in expenditure is chiefly composed of the following items, namely—£1,000 additional required to cover commission, exchange, etc., in connection with the inscription of our loan stock in England; £2,500 additional to cover the cost of completing the survey, in conjunction with the Admiralty, of our eastern seaboard by the "Paluma"; £2,633 additional required to increase the Customs staff throughout the colony; and £3,523 increase in the Department of Harbours and Pilots. This latter department would have shown a decrease for the present year, 1885-6, but for the steamer "Fitzroy" requiring new engines and boilers at a cost of £4,700. Lighthouses require an additional sum of about £1,800 to complete provision for the year 1885-6—chiefly an apparent increase, however, inasmuch as the Estimates for 1884-5 did not contain a full year's provision for several of these services.

The Department of Public Lands represents requirements for the present year, 1885-6, to the extent of £134,159, being an increase of £28,228 on the appropriation made for 1884-5, occasioned by the clerical staff of the new Land Board, which requires £1,005 of this increased amount; the division of runs, which necessitates a new service, to cost £7,000 per annum; and the survey of land, which is anticipated to require provision during 1885-6 to the extent of £74,751 as against £50,708 required for the similar service of 1884-5, being an increase of £24,043.

The Department of Public Works and Mines requires an appropriation of £115,983 for the service of the year 1885-6, being an estimated decrease of expenditure over the preceding year amounting to £32,130. Of this reduction £19,000 is accounted for by a comparative decrease of expenditure in buildings for the present year as contrasted with the year 1884-5, and a further sum of £19,000 is also shown as saved on roads and bridges; while enlarged appropriation for goldfields and mineral lands, including a provision of £10,000 for loans in aid of deep sinking for gold and other minerals, also for grants in aid to schools of mines to the extent of £2,000, prove that the present increased activity of the mining industry is duly recognised by Government as demanding their special attention and encouragement.

The Railway Department requires an appropriation during the year 1885-6 to the extent of £513,609, an increase on the preceding year's requirements of £64,484, one-half of which sum, or almost £32,000, is claimed by the Southern and Western Railway, £1,000 by the Maryborough and Gympie line, £2,000 by the Central line, and £13,000 by the Northern Railway; while on the Mackay and Cooktown lines the expenditure for the year 1885-6 is estimated to reach £9,200 and £6,870 respectively. As the gross revenue from both these lines is estimated to amount only to £3,000, as against a total expenditure for working expenses of over £16,000, it forcibly illustrates what I have before stated—that in this country, where railway construction is continuously extending, the apparent increased percentage of working expenses to receipts must not be accepted as indicating with certainty a decrease of profit on any of our lines since they have been opened for traffic, nor will such fact sustain an argument against the further and vigorous construction of railways on account of any temporary decline in traffic or apparent unremunerativeness of our railway system.

The Postmaster-General's Department claims an appropriation amounting to £319,869 for the financial year 1885-6, an increase of £22,197 over the requirements for that service for the preceding year, caused chiefly by increased expenditure in country post and telegraph offices, increased cost of conveyance of inland mails owing to the severity of the season and consequent scarcity of fodder in the interior, and also to an enlarged appropriation for foreign mails despatched by other than the Torres Straits route.

Nineteen new postal services were established in 1884, creating an increased mileage of 497 miles. The gross mileage of the postal services in the colony at the end of 1884 represented 422,880 miles.

The Auditor-General's Department requires £5,679 for the service of the year 1885-6, an increase of £134 on the previous year, to cover increased travelling expenses of audit inspectors.

The Interest on the Public Debt accruing during the year 1885-6 amounts to £811,565, being an increase of expenditure under this head on the preceding year to the extent of £79,430, produced

by sales of stock—namely, in London, £2,500,000, and to the Government Savings Bank, Brisbane, £250,000, bearing 4 per cent. interest per annum—a new annual interest charge of £110,000; reduced, however, by the retirement in London on 1st January, 1885, of the 6 per cent. loan of 1864 for £1,019,000, on which six months' interest accrued to that date, or a sum of £30,570, had to be provided during the financial year 1884-5, and thereby decreasing the comparative additional annual provision for full interest on the sale of the portion of our new stock just mentioned to the sum of £79,430.

The appropriation asked for 1885-6 on account of payment for services performed in connection with Trust and other Funds is based on the requirements of the preceding year; the Government Savings Bank showing a small estimated increase of expenditure to the extent of £465 for increase to staff in the addition of junior clerks and expenses of country branches. Departmental Loan Fund Expenditure shows an estimated increase of £9,740 over the year 1884-5, partly caused by an increase of £2,000 in the department of the Hydraulic Engineer, who is now actively engaged in prosecuting tank construction and bore-sinking in the interior districts of the colony.

The Railway Department requires under this head, for the year 1885-6, an appropriation of £56,813 for office staff, construction and surveys in the Southern, Central, and Northern districts of the colony, being an increased loan appropriation for these services on the preceding year of £7,330.

I have now, Mr. Fraser, placed before the Committee my retrospect of the first and my anticipations under the second part of my subject, and I accordingly enter upon the consideration of our present position and the intentions of Government in relation thereto.

During the year which has just terminated we have, notwithstanding the calamitous season, made immense strides in solid and permanent accumulation and prosperity, which has been fully demonstrated by the financial and social statistics of the year, and our present position and the attitude of our various industries may be briefly described as follows:—

The state of our great pastoral industry at the end of 1884 is shown in Tables W and X, from which it will be observed that not only is there an absence of natural increase, but that in most of the sheep districts of the colony there has occurred a very large comparative decrease in numbers during 1884 as compared with the preceding year.

The present condition of the country under pastoral occupation gives rise to much anxiety, for although grass is represented to be fairly abundant over a considerable area of the interior, water is scarce over the whole colony.

The country from Rockhampton westward to the boundary of the northern territory of South Australia, a large portion of the North Kennedy district and the border district from Goondiwindi westward, still suffers severely from the drought. Should the usual rains fall at the end of this month or in September the mortality in stock will not, it is reliably stated, be largely increased. On the other hand, a few more months of drought will be fraught with serious consequences.

It is, however, encouraging to learn that with a thorough breaking up of the drought the demand for Queensland store cattle, both in New South Wales and Victoria, would be unprecedented, owing to the herds in those colonies being smaller than has been the case for many years. The early and rapid recovery of the pastoral interest from its late reverses and

depression is still further assured, on the return of favourable seasons, from the fact reported by the Chief Inspector of Stock, that during the year 1882-3 a very considerable proportion of the large numbers of sheep introduced into this colony borderwise were breeding ewes, and that the latest returns show that the proportion of female to male sheep in Queensland is now much larger than has been the case during any previous period in the past seventeen years.

In the depth of pastoral depression it is pleasing to be able to afford a ray of consolation. Information was only yesterday received by the Chief Inspector of Stock, furnished by an eyewitness who had just arrived from Eyre's Creek, and who had patrolled the whole of the country lying between the Diamantina and the South Australian border, extending from the New South Wales border considerably north of the latitude of Windorah, that the whole of that territory is like a wheat-field, with abundance of water, and that fat cattle are being drafted off to the Adelaide markets in thousands. It is further stated that improvements in the shape of fencing, dam-making, etc., are being carried out all over that district.

The Mining Industry throughout the colony appears to have most encouraging prospects before it for the present year.

During the year 1884 the gross yield of gold exceeded 307,000 oz., and judging by the yield for the past seven months there is a probability of the gross yield for 1885 being at least equal to that of the former year—an expectation founded on the fact that during the six months ended 30th June last 156,153 oz. passed through the Custom House for exportation.

The Under Secretary for Mines reports that Charters Towers so far occupies the first place in this year's yield, and has contributed nearly 80,000 oz. up to the end of July. The prospects of this field were never brighter, and the warden in his last monthly report says that he does not recollect any previous time when so many lines of reefs were turning out rich stone as at present, and that it would be an invidious task for him to point to the excellence of any special mine.

Of a reefing field of such vast extent as Charters Towers it is particularly gratifying to learn these facts, seeing that they dispel all fear as to the most permanent branch of the mining industry.

At Gympie the yield up to the end of July was 50,000 oz., and present prospects lead to a hope of increased yields for the ensuing five months. In the early part of the year several lines of reefs which had previously yielded good returns began to fall off, but they have recently given substantial proof of returning vitality.

At Ravenswood the yield has been about 5,000 oz. to the end of June, but a considerable quantity of valuable silver ore has been raised, and there is every prospect of the latter branch of mining being extensively carried on at Ravenswood when efficient means can be provided for treating the ores.

A very interesting and important feature in mining seems likely to become established on this field, where American smelting works for the treatment of golden stone have recently been erected and proved eminently successful on the first trial. The process is at present very imperfectly understood by local miners, hence the temporary stoppage of the works pending the arrival of another smelter from Sunny Corner. For many years past large quantities of gold have been lost owing to the crude treatment of refractory ores, so that the success of these works is a matter of considerable importance, not only to Ravenswood, but the colony generally.

The Etheridge Gold Field contributed about 12,000 oz. up to the end of June, and of this field it may be safely predicted that were the means of communication more favourable it would prove one of the richest and most permanent reefing fields in Australia; but unfortunately it has long been retarded by the high rates of carriage, cartage, crushing, and living, which are inseparable from a mining district so remote from coastal communication.

Reliable statistics of the mining operations at Mount Morgan are not available, as the parties interested decline to supply information; but sufficient is known to prove that its fortunate owners are reaping a rich harvest.

As regards tin-mining, it may be said of the Herberton district as of the Etheridge—that easier communication would place the industry there upon an established basis.

The system recently adopted of granting loans to encourage deep sinking will no doubt lend material aid to our goldfields, inasmuch as successful sinking at deep levels will prove the permanency of the various fields, and the reverse may arrest the useless expenditure of capital.

The prospects of the sugar-growers this season are reported to be brighter than last year. The price of sugar has gone up and it is probable that there may be a still further advance. The season has been most favourable for the growth of cane, and there will be an increase in the quantity produced, particularly in the North. In the southern portion of the colony there have been severe frosts which cut up the cane, but, fortunately for this industry, the season having been very dry the effects of the frosts will not be so severe as if they had been followed by rain. The estimate of the sugar crop for the present year, 1885-6, amounts to 34,000 tons.

The population of the country continues also to advance. In addition to natural increase, the colony received an addition of 18,620 souls during 1884, being an excess of arrivals over departures by seaboard of 16,920 Europeans, as shown by Table P. The total population on 30th June, 1885, is estimated at 318,850, being an increase of 17,250 on the preceding year.

The expenditure for the year 1884-5 for immigration purposes amounted to £173,611, as shown in Table O.

The general condition of the people of the colony, except in the pastoral districts, may be safely stated to be that of content and prosperity. Our industries are actively employed, and all classes of property have maintained full values. In all the large towns of the colony new buildings and improvements are on every hand apparent; and the ordinary expenditure of Government in this direction is more than emulated by private enterprise.

Nor is this energy in the erection of buildings and other improvements confined to the towns solely. Notwithstanding that the severity of the seasons has, in many instances, tended to restrict and delay improvements in pastoral holdings, yet it is satisfactory to note that in those districts of the colony where agricultural settlement has taken root, the primitive dwellings of the pioneer settlers are rapidly disappearing before the erection of residences possessing the comforts of modern civilisation, and indicating unmistakably the improved pecuniary condition and resources of the respective owners.

Notwithstanding the extremely unfavourable season through which we have passed for all field operations, it is highly gratifying to note that agricultural production has well maintained itself in our farming districts, the quantity of

agricultural produce carried by railway from some of our principal centres of cultivation during the year 1884-5, showing as follows, namely: Ipswich, 7,222 tons, furnishing a revenue to the railway for carriage to destination of £2,725; Rosewood, 3,091 tons, railway receipts £1,472; Toowoomba, 5,819 tons, railway charges £9,779; Warwick and Hendon, 1,757 tons, railway revenue £1,199; and large areas of agricultural lands on our Northern rivers are reported as bearing heavy crops of maize and other products.

During the past year active steps have been taken to provide water in our interior districts, the want of which is at the present time pressing so heavily on the progress of the country; and it may be stated that if timely rain had fallen the quantity that would have been stored through the construction of new dams and tanks would have afforded great relief to a large extent of settlement and maintained continuously open the main lines of communication with the western interior. On the Hughenden and Winton road tanks and dams have been excavated at Manuka and Olio Creek, and on the Muttaborra and Winton road two tanks and dams have been also excavated by the steam scoop plant. On the latter road Bradley's Creek bore has been sunk to 347 feet, and on the former road there are at present in progress of construction a tank and dam at Sheep's Creek, a tank and dam at Stony Warrianna, a tank and dam at Whitewood Ridge, and a bore at Stack's, near Sesbania. On the Winton and Cloncurry road a tank and dam are being constructed at Cockatoo Creek. On the Winton and Boulia road a tank and dam are being excavated at Min Min Creek; and on the Muttaborra and Hughenden road a tank and dam are in process of formation at Rockwood, and another at Horseshoe Bend.

Unfortunately, the severity of the season has caused the tank and dam at Bourke's, on the Hughenden and Winton road, to be abandoned for the present, on account of want of water for camp purposes; and owing to a similar cause the works at Whitewood Ridge, on the same line of road, have not yet been commenced, as contractors allege that they cannot carry out these works during a continuance of the present weather. On the Winton and Muttaborra road a tank and dam at Harriet's Creek are being constructed by the steam scoop plant, and a bore at the Darr River is down 231 feet. A tank and dam have also been constructed at Muttaborra; also at Tueburra, and a bore is being sunk at Acacia Flat.

But while the works I have enumerated will chiefly tend to conserve water when rain visits these districts, Government are fully impressed with the necessity of practically testing the larger question—namely, whether any permanent supply of artesian water can be found within the colony. I need not dwell upon the vast advantages which the solution of this doubt in the affirmative would permanently confer on settlement in the interior of the colony. To prove this matter thoroughly, machinery such as is used in deep oil-well sinking in America is now being constructed, which when completed will be employed under the charge of an experienced well-sinker, who has been similarly engaged in the United States of America and the Sandwich Islands. It is intended to bore to the depth of 2,000 feet to prove the existence of artesian water, and the site for the operation will be selected under the advice of the Government Geologist and the Hydraulic Engineer.

The Government are further negotiating with contractors outside the colony possessed of American well-boring apparatus to sink a shaft at some other site to a depth of 2,500 feet; and the department has, during the past year, imported an improved Wright and Edwards' water auger

capable of boring 1,000 feet, which is now at work at Stack's, near Sesbania, on the Hughenden and Winton road, and is making good progress. A large quantity of artesian well-tubing and general hydraulic appliances have also been imported during the year to enable the department to vigorously prosecute these most necessary works. Surveys for the water supply of Cooktown, Charters Towers, Sandgate, Bundaberg, and other towns have also been provided by the department during the year.

The increase of shipping visiting our ports is a gratifying feature of the year 1884, which, according to Table T, shows that the inward and outward shipping tonnage amounted to 1,844,384 tons inwards and 1,769,878 tons outwards, as against 1,437,824 tons inwards and 1,247,479 tons outwards for the preceding year. The great expansion of the intercolonial trade is a noticeable feature of 1884.

Dredging forms the leading feature in the improvements of our harbour accommodation, and to this Government have given their full attention, with the view of affording as much improvement in this direction as can be done.

The whole of the new dredge plant authorised by Loan is being rapidly pushed forward, as much of the work as possible being executed in the colony, in consequence of which the leading engineering establishments are now fully employed.

The success attending the deepening of the Brisbane River to 15 feet below low water, by which the British-India and similar vessels are enabled to load and discharge at the wharves, has been such that the Harbours and Rivers Department has been instructed to consider the further deepening of the channel to 20 feet below low water, which would allow steamers of the largest class to come up the river.

As soon as the new dredge, building at Maryborough, is completed, which will be in about three months, dredging will commence in the Mary River and Sandy Island Straits, for which service this dredge is specially intended.

Good service has been done in the Burnett River by dredging, and there will shortly be a depth of 9 feet below low water in that river.

The new wharves at Gladstone and Port Alma have been completed and handed over to the Government. These are capable of berthing the largest vessels.

The dredging of the Fitzroy River is proceeding steadily and with good results.

The "Platypus," dredge, has been temporarily removed to Cooktown to clear the entrance to that port, which was blocked up by floods in the Endeavour River. As soon as the work there is completed she will return to Townsville to carry on the much needed improvements.

Table U, dealing with the liabilities and assets of our banks, will also be found full of interest. The note circulation appears to have increased in 1884 to £633,083, or £36,187 over the preceding year. The deposits amounted to £6,322,025 in 1884—an increase of £159,074 over the preceding year, or at the rate of £20 7s. 11d. per head of estimated population—being an average decrease of £1 0s. 10d. *per capita* on the preceding year. At the same time, it will be observed that while discounts and advances stood at £9,338,716 in 1884, or an increase of £985,589 on the preceding year, there appears a reduction under this head of £2 2s. 1d. *per capita* of population.

The Government deposits within the colony represented, on 31st December, 1883, £1,240,785, and on 31st December, 1884, £833,669 respectively, and to that extent affect the average of deposits.

Table Y will be found of interest in noting the overland stock trade of the colony. 3,552 horses, 11,135 cattle, and 556,558 sheep—representing a total value of £336,950—having been imported overland during 1884; while 1,157 horses, 78,406 cattle, and 434,893 sheep—amounting in value to £493,680—were exported borderwise from Queensland.

Table S represents the total Exports and Imports of the colony for the years 1882-3-4. During the last year the exports amounted to £4,180,184, or at the rate of £13 9s. 10d. per head on an estimated population of 309,913—a decrease of £473,696, or at the rate of £2 13s. 11d. per head on the preceding year. This decrease can clearly be traced to the effect of bad seasons on our pastoral industry and consequent diminished production. The exportation of minerals during 1884 shows a value of £1,187,189, or an increase of £181,133 over the preceding year; while gold alone, in dust and bars, exceeded, in 1884, the exportation of 1883 by a value of £224,872. It is also satisfactory to note that the total export of coal for 1884 exceeded the preceding year by 3,132 tons, while Brisbane alone exported during the year ended 30th June, 1885, 6,625 tons.

The Imports during 1884 amounted in value to £6,045,026—an increase over the preceding year of £267,359—or at the rate of £19 10s. 1d. per head of population; and also showing a decrease in value of imports on the year 1883 of 11s. 11d. *per capita*. Exclusive of Government stores and material the total imports for 1883 and 1884 stand at £5,395,685 and £5,768,512 respectively, averaging £18 15s. 6d. for 1883 and £18 12s. 3d. for 1884—showing that shipments to the colony during the year 1884 have not exceeded the legitimate demand for consumption by an increased market, and consequently no probability of any commercial panic or collapse on account of overtrading is to be apprehended from these returns.

At the close of the financial year ended 30th June, 1885, there remained, as I have before stated, an available cash balance of the Consolidated Revenue amounting to £167,061—a sum which of itself would be sufficient to cover any temporary deficiency of revenue during the present year, and which under ordinary circumstances would relieve the Treasurer from the necessity of contemplating fresh taxation; for I have a profound conviction that with the first appearance of the early or latter rain the country, throughout all classes of business, occupation, and settlement, will exhibit an expansion of prosperity such as its inhabitants have never before witnessed. But while I have no fear whatever of the substantial position and future progress of the country, which will go far to enable it to bear—and I hope for a temporary period only—such moderate addition to the burthen of taxation as Government deem necessary, circumstances have appeared which demand special and careful provision being made during the present year, so that the colony may not be found in an unprepared condition; for, Mr. Fraser, we are not only called on to consider a possible disturbance of revenue, chiefly through deferred settlement at the present time on our large territorial estate, but we are also menaced by two external dangers which, while widely differing in character, may be found equally inimical to the future welfare and financial prosperity of the colony.

The more insidious of these dangers is the pest of rabbits, from which the pastoral districts of the neighbouring colony are suffering, and which is gradually extending its ravages towards the Queensland border. It cannot be denied that this is a national danger which, if once allowed to gain footing on our extensive territory, would in all probability speedily destroy what has always been justly regarded as our greatest industry—namely, pastoral occupation and settlement.

Government have deemed that the exigency of the danger admits of no delay or of any half-heartedness being shown in at once taking steps to arrest this plague, and while the Government of the adjoining colony do not as yet appear to have arrived at any determination as to dealing with this serious matter the Government of Queensland intend to act while they deliberate. Accordingly, hon. members will find attached to the Estimates for 1885-6 a Special Supplementary Appropriation, to be defrayed out of the Surplus Cash Revenue balance of the year 1884-5, to the extent of £100,000, to provide for the prevention of the incursion of rabbits, an amount which it is intended shall be expended in fencing out this pest; and I feel assured that this prompt action of Government will be commended by all classes of the community who have at heart the permanent welfare of the colony.

Under the same head of Special Supplementary Appropriation appears a new service to the extent of £50,000, in the shape of Loans in aid of the Establishment of Central Sugar-mills, which it is hoped will not only encourage the extensive cultivation of sugar-cane by holders of small farming areas, but will also afford growers a certainty of getting their cane manufactured at central mills, the erection of which will doubtless be encouraged by these loans in aid. The details of conditions under which these loans are intended to be granted will be fully explained when the appropriation is hereafter moved in Committee of Supply.

It is intended also that the loan for the establishment of central sugar-mills shall be meanwhile defrayed out of the surplus revenue balance of 1884-5.

We have hitherto only considered the internal or social exigencies which affect our revenue, but we cannot disregard a possible external danger, for which due provision should be contemplated. As I have already shown, we expended during the year 1884-5 a sum of £112,379 in our defence preparations, being a charge of nearly 7s. 3d. per head of estimated population, and bearing a proportion of over 4 per cent. to the amount of consolidated revenue received during 1884-5. Unfortunately, no one can say that the signs of war between the mother-country and Russia have wholly disappeared. Relations between these powers remain in a state of suspense, and the cause of friction has not been removed. Under such circumstances it would be the height of imprudence to desist from making due preparation for the gravest consequences; and, indeed, it is not improbable that Queensland may have to concur in united action with the other Australian Governments and Great Britain in the establishment and maintenance of defences at certain strategic points on the seaboard of this great island continent. The people of this country must remember that as they increase in prosperity and accumulation of wealth so they increase in importance to the external world and offer a more tempting prize to foreign aggression. Therefore it is not unreasonable to demand that they be called on to pay an insurance premium, in the

shape of provision for defences, on the profits and possessions in the enjoyment of which they remain secure under the protection of the State.

Under all these circumstances Government consider that an increase of taxation, whereby an expected addition of annual revenue to the extent of about £90,000 may be expected to accrue, may fairly be imposed at the present time, and as it will be carried out without disturbing general commercial relations, without oppressively affecting any special industry, and without being felt as an individual hardship, they confidently expect that it will be cheerfully yielded, in view of our present financial position and responsibilities, by the taxpayers of the colony.

These proposals of Government are as follows:—

We propose to increase the duty on all spirits imported into the colony which now pay 10s. per gallon to 12s. per gallon—the amount which is at present paid on brandies only—and to make no allowance for the under-proof strength of brandies or such other spirits. This step will assimilate our tariff—which now, in regard to spirits, provides the lowest rate of duty levied in any of the Australian Colonies—with the import duty paid on spirits in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania.

In Victoria perfumed spirits pay 20s. per gallon. In New Zealand imported spirits pay 14s. per gallon—perfumed being charged at 21s.—while in Western Australia all imported spirits pay 20s. per gallon.

I do not anticipate, Mr. Fraser, that any valid objection will be raised to the payment of this increased duty, which may be advocated not only on account of the assimilation with the tariff of other colonies, but also from the ease with which it can be collected and from the large results in a revenue sense which such a small additional impost will produce. During the year 1884-5 duty was paid in Queensland on 364,104 gallons of spirits, exclusive of brandy—on which basis an annual increase to revenue of £36,000 would accrue under the proposed change of tariff.

The consumption of foreign rum would doubtless be affected, but the increase on excise would furnish a compensation and an additional incentive to the extension of our local industry of distillation would be forthcoming from this proposal.

It may be advanced that with this additional charge on spirits we tend to discourage consumption, increase incentive to illicit distillation, and reduce revenue. I do not consider, even were the first charge maintained, that the result would be an unmitigated evil, for when we note that during last year, 1884-5, the quantity of spirits which paid duty under Customs and Excise amounted to 516,000 gallons, or at the rate of 1½ gallons per head for every unit of our population, I think it will be admitted that as a people our drinking habits stand in need of reform.

Further, I contend that, if a diminished consumption of spirits ensued from the proposed tariff alterations, not only would a great social amelioration be effected thereby, but any loss of revenue under this head would be amply compensated to the Treasury by increased returns from other articles on the Customs' list, and by other sources of income derived from the increased industry and prosperity of the people. And with regard to any incentive afforded to illicit distillation, the experience gained from the seizure of illicit stills shows that brandy, which bears the higher tariff, has not been specially attempted to be manufactured.

We further propose to remove machinery from the list of articles exempted from duty, and to place it under the classification of articles paying 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty.

The reasons for the exemption of machinery which existed in the past have of late disappeared. Our local foundries and ironworkers are now in a position to manufacture nearly all articles of machinery which are at present used or required within the colony; and articles such as sewing-machines, etc., which are not manufactured locally, may fairly contribute, on importation, to the ordinary revenue of the State. I may further state that the interpretation attached to machinery by importers leads to frequent misunderstandings with the Customs, and undoubtedly is attended not only with direct but large indirect loss of revenue. In a case lately before the Customs, an importer of sugar machinery claimed, as an indispensable adjunct to such machinery, and consequently exempt from duty, a quantity of animal charcoal—a claim, however, which I, on appeal, felt no compunction in disallowing. The value of machinery imported into the colony during the year 1884-5, under exemption from duty, amounted to £285,187, so that from this source an annual revenue of about £14,000 may be estimated to accrue under this proposal.

We also propose to increase the duty on timber imported into the colony, and which now pays 5 per cent. *ad valorem*, to 1s. per 100 superficial feet on timber in the log or undressed, and to 1s. 6d. per 100 feet on dressed timber. This moderate impost will not injuriously affect the building trade, at the same time that it will enable the timber-getters and others employed in the timber industry in this colony, who have been called on to contribute increased royalties under the recent Timber Regulations, to retain their position challenged by the competition of outside production.

The total quantity of timber imported during the year 1884 amounted in value to £51,731, producing a revenue of £2,736.

The quantity of hardwood sawn represented 1,830,793 feet, the invoice value averaging 10s. 7½d. per 100 superficial feet, on which the duty represented 6½d. Dressed pine was imported during the same period to the extent of 7,911,336 feet, averaging an invoice value of 9s. 3d. per 100 superficial feet, and consequently contributing to Customs at the rate of 5½d. per 100 superficial feet.

I freely admit that this change will not produce any large results to the Treasury, but acting as a complement to the royalties imposed by the Timber Regulations, an encouragement will be given to lumberers and others employed to prosecute their industries, and thereby contribute to what the State has a right to receive—namely, a fair return from the use of the natural productions of the country. The increased estimate of revenue under this proposal may not be assumed at more than £3,000.

It will be observed, from what I have stated, that the total additional receipts from the Customs are anticipated to yield annually £52,000 towards the amount which I have before intimated as desirable to raise; and immediately the views of Government have been declared, instructions will be issued to the different ports to collect duties under the amended tariff; the amounts of such additional duties to be held in suspense, pending ratification by this Committee of the proposals I have submitted, and further legislative action by Parliament.

In addition to the proposed increase to be derived from Customs, we consider that the breweries of the colony may fairly also be included in the list of contributories to revenue. The manufacture and sale of beer—by which I mean ale, porter, and all other malt liquors or fermented beverage—has now obtained large proportions as a colonial industry, and is consumed to the exclusion of the imported article, on which duty is paid to the Customs at the rate of 9d. per gallon in wood, and 1s. per gallon in bottle.

I am not in a position to state the exact production of malt liquors or beer within the colony, because the breweries being under no control or inspection by Government, and any statistical information applied for being given in the majority of cases with much jealousy, no reliable returns are compiled; but I believe I am well within the mark in saying that the annual production of beer from the nineteen breweries at present working in the colony exceeds 3,500,000 gallons, and it must be remembered that most of this beer is made from imported malt, on which a duty of 6d. per bushel is paid in Queensland, while in Victoria the brewer has to pay 3s. per bushel import duty on the same article. Naturally, the business of a brewer is said to be very profitable, and it is exceptionally favoured in this country, not only from the small duty on malt, but also owing to there being no license fee charged, and no duty paid on the sugar used, being the produce of the colony.

I trust the consideration of a tax on beer will not be obscured with the fallacious idea that if beer be taxed, which is the principal beverage of the working man, wine should be further taxed also, being the beverage of the richer classes.

I hope any sentimental claptrap about the poor man's beverage will be discarded in this debate. We have, fortunately, no distinctions of classes in this new country—every man who applies himself industriously and perseveringly to labour, and practises habits of temperance withal, cannot remain a poor man in a land where comparative independence is within the reach of the diligent worker. It is admittedly unwise to disturb several articles on a tariff list if the required amount of revenue can be obtained without undue imposition from a few, and wine being an article of comparatively limited consumption—already taxed by us to the limit charged in any of the Australian colonies—and let it be remembered that the tax upon wine is considerably heavier in proportion to value than the tax on beer—the amount of increased revenue therefrom would be small, and probably would not compensate for the loss through diminished consumption which would inevitably result.

Government propose to levy a duty by way of excise on all beer manufactured within the colony of 3d. per gallon, which, under the estimate of production I have before given, may be expected to yield an annual revenue of over £40,000. It is intended to collect this revenue by stamps of different denominations, to be issued by the Chief Inspector of Distilleries, and to be affixed to the parcel or package containing the beer issued from the brewery, details of which will be more fully given when the Bill dealing with this duty is before Parliament; this system being deemed the most efficient and economic mode of carrying out the proposal. I am of opinion that this duty of 3d. per gallon will make no difference in the retail price to the public, the impost amounting to less than one-half penny—actually three-eighths of a penny—per pint, or less than one farthing per glass. The Customs duties and Excise duty, as proposed, represent an expected annual increase to

revenue of £93,000, which will not only cover the estimated deficiency as on 30th June, 1886, but as the total estimated revenue for 1885-6 will thereby amount to £3,075,500, will also provide a surplus of £69,000 available for emergent unforeseen expenditure.

I trust, Mr. Fraser, I have made the proposals of Government clear to the Committee, and that such proposals will meet with the approval of hon. members and of the country. We are confronted with a very great responsibility—what has been elsewhere well termed a very great necessity—and the Government here, as elsewhere, feel justified in asking Parliament to provide for a possible emergency. Reduction of expenditure, which is the only alternative, cannot at present be resorted to without entirely dislocating the machinery of administration, without retarding the course of most necessary judicious preparations, and without, in short, disturbing and hindering the public works of the country, the early prosecution of which the people look forward to with confidence.

I contend, Mr. Fraser, that there is not the slightest justification for such a policy of retrogression. This country cannot rest, and its rulers should never contemplate resting, on its march of progress. If additional burthens are for a time necessary to be borne, it is satisfactory to know that the present condition of the people enables them to well sustain this increased taxation without even feeling its incidence. I am confident that the people of this country will at all times respond most fully and patriotically to the exigencies of the State, even should greater burthens become necessary for the welfare of the colony, and that they would much prefer to be called on to contribute to revenue in the manner I now propose than that public progress should be arrested, or that public and private enterprise and prosperity should be interrupted and paralysed by the timidity of their rulers, who would thereby show that they did not recognise the fact that, in calling upon the people to contribute to the necessities of the State, they are only inviting them to invest in and augment the future value of their own great inheritance.

I now beg to move—That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, it is desirable,—

1st. That there be raised, levied, collected, and paid, in lieu of the duties of Customs now levied upon the undermentioned goods, the several duties following, that is to say—

Brandy and other spirits, or strong waters of any strength, not exceeding the strength of proof of Sykes's hydrometer, and in proportion for any greater strength than the strength of proof, 12s. per gallon.

Spirits, cordials, or strong waters, sweetened or mixed with any article so that the strength thereof cannot be exactly ascertained by Sykes's hydrometer, 12s. per gallon.

Timber, logs, 1s. per 100 superficial feet one inch thick.

Timber, undressed, 1s. per 100 superficial feet one inch thick.

Timber, dressed, 1s. 6d. per 100 superficial feet one inch thick.

2nd. That there be raised, levied, collected, and paid upon the undermentioned goods when imported into the colony, whether by sea or land, the duties following, that is to say—

Machinery for manufacturing, sawing, and sewing; agricultural, mining, and pastoral purposes; steam engines and boilers 5 per cent. *ad valorem*.

3rd. That there be raised, levied, collected, and paid upon all beer brewed or manufactured within the colony of Queensland an excise duty of 3d. per gallon.

Question put.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked what was the order of business proposed by the Government following the discussion on the Financial Statement?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said the Customs duties would be taken first. He believed on previous occasions it was customary for the Treasurer to ask the Committee to affirm the resolution on the same evening; but he thought it better on the present occasion to have it put aside until the discussion was concluded.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he was quite aware of what the hon. gentleman had stated, as it was foreshadowed in the Statement. When was the Statement to be considered?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said he supposed it would not be convenient to take it on Thursday; but if it suited the convenience of hon. members the Government would be prepared to proceed with the further consideration and discussion of the Financial Statement on Tuesday next.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that if the hon. gentleman had been a listener instead of a talker he would understand their difficulty in approaching the subject. He had tried hard to listen to the hon. gentleman, but fell asleep at last, and it was only when he got a new book on the American tariff, and dealing with a proposition similar to that put forward by the hon. gentleman, that he succeeded in keeping awake. He did not know whether the Colonial Treasurer might not consider that Tuesday even would be too early. Under ordinary circumstances perhaps it would not; however, this was an exceptional week, and there were exceptional circumstances connected with the Financial Statement which had not only come upon them with surprise, but would probably come with equal surprise upon the country, considering the Statements made by the Colonial Treasurer on previous occasions. The Opposition meant to discuss the Statement thoroughly, and he thought Tuesday would be too soon to give them time to fully consider it. If the Government had made their arrangements for Tuesday he would like that they should know that. They would do what they could if Tuesday was fixed, but he fancied it would be too soon to take the discussion upon the momentous question of the proposed addition to taxation in addition to the Financial Statement. He would like a more definite opinion. The hon. member seemed to be feeling the House as to what would suit them. He should have considered the importance of the debate and the probability of hon. members being prepared to discuss the important questions he had put before them.

THE PREMIER said the Estimates had now been before hon. members for some days, and he did not think that the additional matter disclosed by the Treasurer's speech was so great as to make a week too short a time for the resumption of the discussion. The Government proposed to proceed with the discussion on Tuesday. It would be very unusual to allow a longer time to elapse.

MR. MOREHEAD said the leader of the Government, who, no doubt, was responsible for the fiscal policy which had been announced, seemed to forget that through the Treasurer he had initiated not only additional taxation, but quite new taxation. He had gone off in quite a different direction from anything he had indicated in the past, therefore it was not too much to

ask that the discussion should be postponed even beyond next Tuesday. Of course the hon. member knew that if there was any desire by members on either side of the House to delay the discussion of the propositions it could easily be done. A new departure had been made, which Parliament and the country should have an opportunity of considering in all its surroundings; so he did not think it should be brought on on Tuesday. Of course, if it were and the matter was not ripe, hon. members on his side would know what to do.

THE PREMIER said he thought the good sense of the hon. member would not allow him to do anything in the way of obstruction on so serious a matter as the Financial Statement of the Government. Of course the forms of the House provided that more than one opportunity should be given to members for discussing the propositions. After passing the Committee of Ways and Means they had still to be embodied in a Bill to go through in the ordinary course. He moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not think there was anything in the remarks of the hon. member for Balonne to justify the Premier in his reference to possible obstruction to the Government policy in the future. He did not understand the hon. member for Balonne to say anything of the kind, and there was no reason why such obstruction should be anticipated by the Premier. Of course the Government could fix any day they chose for the discussion of the Financial Statement—they could lead a horse to the water, but they could not make him drink. It had to be discussed, and they would try to be ready by Tuesday; but he would direct the attention of the Treasurer and the Premier to the fact that the financial policy of the Government came before the country now for the first time. It had not been foreshadowed; in fact, a distinctly opposite policy had been foreshadowed in the Queen's Speech, in which not only was there not the slightest reference to the possibility of additional taxation, but strong indications that additional taxation would not be required. Of course it would be their duty to see that the matter was thoroughly discussed.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Thursday.

THE PREMIER laid on the table of the House tables referred to in the Colonial Treasurer's Financial Statement, and moved that they be printed.

Question put and passed.

MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION ACT CONTINUATION BILL—CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Council's amendments in this Bill.

THE PREMIER said the Legislative Council had struck out the clause, introduced on the motion of the hon. member for Warrego, extending the operation of the Marsupial Act to dingoes. When the clause was under consideration the Government opposed it for reasons which seemed good to them, and he did not think any additional light had been thrown on the subject since. It was very important that the Bill should become law, as the Marsupials Act which was amended by it was a very valuable measure, and it would be a great pity to allow it to drop.

It would be a great misfortune, indeed, if in consequence of the two Houses being unable to agree whether the dingo should be included or not, the marsupials should be allowed to continue their ravages unchecked. Under the circumstances, he thought the Committee should not insist on the retention of the clause, and he would therefore move that the amendment of the Legislative Council be agreed to.

Mr. DONALDSON said the provision contained in the clause which it was proposed to omit was fully discussed when the Bill was before the Committee on a previous occasion. He had not heard any reason adduced in another place why the amendment should not be agreed to. He thought the Premier might have some additional light to throw on the matter when he spoke just now, but the hon. gentleman merely pointed to the fact that it would be a great misfortune for the Bill to be lost by a disagreement with the other Chamber. He (Mr. Donaldson) was of a different opinion. He thought it was desirable in the interest of stock-owners and sheep-owners that they should have such protection as would enable them to exterminate dingoes, where necessary, as well as to kill kangaroos. That there was a difference of opinion among cattle-owners on the subject he was prepared to admit. Many thought that dingoes should not be destroyed, but that they should be allowed to exist and increase to a certain extent. That probably was the opinion held by the majority of stock-owners. But there were some who would tell them that it was desirable to keep the dingoes under, otherwise they would have very few calves, and that in times of drought cattle were in a weak state and unable to protect themselves, in consequence of which a great many were lost. Perhaps that was not known to some cattle-owners, because they remained at home so much as not to know what happened on their runs. On the other hand, there was no owner of sheep who would not say that it was an impossibility to keep sheep profitably on their runs and allow dingoes to run there. All were agreed upon that point. Was it not right, then, that the Committee should afford some protection to owners of sheep in order that they might be able to keep down the dingo evil and save their sheep? There were some parts of the colony, the drier portions, where cattle were giving way to sheep, because it was practically impossible to store water for cattle. To make tanks for them was an utter impossibility. The cost was so great and the reservoirs required to be so large that they would not pay for the expense of making them. And there was the additional cost involved by the cattle treading them in to a very large extent. Consequently country of that nature was being gradually turned into sheep country. In the early days of the colony, when it was easier to stock with cattle than with sheep, the natural water was used for that purpose; but now there could be no doubt that the dry country was being occupied by sheep. Another opinion had been expressed in reference to the dingoes which, he thought, would commend itself to hon. members or squatters who had had much experience, and had lived for years where dingoes and marsupials had existed—and that was that it had been a rather rare occurrence for the dingoes to keep down the marsupial. He was quite prepared to admit that they checked the increase of marsupials to a certain extent, but he contended that the chief cause of the increase of marsupials was that the natives had left off eating them. At the time the aborigines ate them—not only in this colony, but also in the neighbouring colonies—their increase was not so large, but when the natives ceased to use them for food their numbers increased. He did

not think that was generally known to hon. members, but it was known to squatters in the interior, and he wished that there were more of that class of men in the House to assist him in passing the clause objected to by the Legislative Council. He had received many letters since the Bill was before the Committee on a previous occasion, and he would read some of them to the Committee in order to show hon. members that he was not singular in the opinion that it was desirable to destroy dingoes. The first one was a letter from Welltown. In it the writer said:—

"I have to compliment you on being successful in getting the dingo included in the Marsupial Bill, and I and my neighbours have to thank you for the trouble you have taken in the matter. It is a pity the boards had not the power to increase the bonuses to £2 a head instead of the 5s. However, you were fortunate in getting it included at all, and we in this district are jubilant over it. Do you think you could get anyone in the Upper House to move an amendment, with a chance of its being carried, that the bonus be increased to £1 or £2? I believe the Postmaster-General is in favour of it."

Mr. F. West had written to him as follows:—

"I see by the papers that the clause proposed by you for the destruction of native dogs in the Marsupial Act has been thrown out by the Upper Chamber. I think this is a great mistake, and hope you will be able to get the clause again inserted. So far as my experience goes, about twenty-five years, the native dogs have not kept down the marsupials to any appreciable extent. The blacks in the old days did far more towards the destruction of the marsupial than ever the dogs did."

In another letter—from Mr. W. B. Turner—it was stated—

"I regret very much to see that the Upper House have thrown out the clause in the new amended Marsupial Act, *re* destruction of native dogs. I trust, however, that you will be able to get a majority in your House to reinsert it in the Bill and return it to the Upper House for further consideration."

Those were some of the letters he had received. He did not think it necessary for him to read all as it would take up too much time. He had a large number, and if they would be of any information to hon. members he would read them; they were from different parts of the colony to those which he had just read. He thought that what he had submitted to hon. members would be sufficient to show them that he was not singular in his opinion that power should be given to persons interested to destroy dingoes. He might remind the Committee that the clause was entirely of a permissive nature. Unless the board of any district thought it desirable to bring the dingo under the operation of the Bill they would not do so; and they could not do it until they had applied to the Minister for the necessary permission to enable them to pay for the destruction of the dogs. On the other hand, if the board decided by a bare majority in favour of such a course, and a strong protest was received against putting the clause into operation, the Minister had ample power to prevent it being put in force, because, as he had already pointed out, the provision was not imperative. The Minister might, at the request of any board, suspend the operation of the clause. There might be some reason for objecting to the clause if it applied to the whole colony; but the boards in the different districts would, he thought, have sufficient good sense to say whether it was desirable to exercise the power of destroying dingoes or not. He felt perfectly satisfied to leave the matter in the hands of hon. members, and he trusted the amendment made in another place would not be assented to, but that the members of that House would allow it to become law.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was a matter of some satisfaction to him to find that a Bill as it originated in the Assembly was

sometimes received with approval in another place and returned in the shape in which it was submitted by the Government. The hon. member for Warrego had read a number of letters and telegrams in support of the clause, but he omitted to state that the writers of every one of them were sheep men. No doubt the sheep men desired to use the cattle men to destroy their chief enemy, the dingo. They were not satisfied to pay the cost of doing so themselves, and they wanted to compel the cattle men to assist them. Cattle men knew perfectly well that the best friend they had in the country was the dingo. As long as they had native dogs to assist them they could manage to keep their runs fairly clear of marsupials. No doubt the disappearance of the blacks had been the chief cause of the increase of marsupials, but the next greatest enemy the marsupials had was the dingo. Sheep men had a preponderating influence on the boards, and if the clause became law they could compel the cattle men to help them to pay for the destruction of dingoes. On behalf of cattle men, he maintained that they should not be placed in such a position. Sheep men were better able to protect themselves than cattle men were; and to require the latter to help them to clear their runs of dingoes would be an injustice. The difficulty might be got over if the districts were so adjusted as to be separated into cattle districts and sheep districts, wherein there would be no conflict of interest; but as the marsupial districts were now it could not be done. The hon. member asserted that dingoes did not destroy many marsupials, but he had probably been in a district where dogs were not very numerous, nor marsupials either. It had been his (Mr. Dutton's) misfortune to live in a district where marsupials almost ate them out, and where now dogs were more plentiful than marsupials; and he knew, from his own observation, and from his returns of stock, that dingoes did destroy an enormous number of marsupials, and that they did not destroy a very large number of calves. Indeed, so much was the balance in favour of cattle men, that they could afford to lose a small number of calves in consideration of the enormous number of marsupials destroyed. He had seen as many as seven or eight old-man kangaroos killed in one morning by dingoes, and paddamelons, which were much more difficult to deal with, in much larger numbers; he had seen scores of them lying dead in the morning, all killed by dingoes. That was the experience of every man who had been in scrub country, where both dingoes and marsupials were extremely numerous. In the hon. member's district there was very little scrub country, and dingoes were not found in very large numbers. Whether they had marsupials there he did not know, but when he first knew it, in 1862, there were very few indeed, either at the Warrego, the Barcoo, or the Thompson. In some places, where marsupials were extremely rare then, they were now killing hundreds of them every year; and the increase in their number was attributable to one thing, and one thing only—the dingoes had been poisoned off. The sheep men had killed the dingoes to preserve their sheep, and they ought not to ask the cattle men in poor country, such as the Belyando, to help them to pay for their destruction in sheep country. The same thing applied to Peak Downs and Springsure. It would simply be an outrage on all sense of justice and fairness. He hoped the Committee would not dissent from the Legislative Council's amendment.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Minister for Lands remarked he was glad to find that the Upper House had approved of a Bill as intro-

duced in the Lower House. Did the hon. gentleman forget that the particular clause under consideration was inserted in the Bill by a majority of that Committee of over two to one? If the hon. gentleman thought that because the Upper House of twelve members agreed with him that therefore the whole country was on his side he made a very great mistake. The hon. gentleman also assumed that all cattle-owners were opposed to the inclusion of the dingo in the Bill, and told the Committee interesting stories about what he had seen regarding the deaths of paddamelons and old-man kangaroos, leading hon. members to infer that he was a keen observer of the wild animals of the colony. He (Mr. Morehead) had consulted a gentleman who not only knew a great deal more about dingoes, paddamelons, and old-man kangaroos than the hon. member, but who had a very much greater stake in the country, and who was both a sheep-owner and a cattle-owner. He alluded to that gentleman more particularly because his name was mentioned in the Upper House in a way that might lead the public to believe that he was in favour of excluding the dingo from the provisions of the Act. That gentleman was Mr. Tyson, whose name was mentioned by the Hon. Mr. Forrest in another place. He could tell the Committee that after the Bill was introduced, and before it came on for discussion, he had an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Tyson on the matter, and asked him his opinion on it. That opinion was strongly in favour of including the dingo in the bill. Mr. Tyson's experience as a large cattle and sheep owner had taught him that the cattle-owner suffered as much as the sheep-owner from the dingo, if not more. Therefore, he contended that that experience could be fairly set against that of the Minister for Lands. He held that that Committee was not called upon to legislate for scrubby country squatters. Really the whole argument of the Minister for Lands was this: That he unfortunately was the occupant of some scrubby country where dingoes appeared to thrive remarkably well and killed marsupials; and because he happened to be placed in that position, therefore it was better for the colony that the dingoes should be excluded;—that because, in the event of the clause becoming law, what to him and a few others was a beneficial agency would be destroyed, therefore the large majority of run-holders and stock-owners of the colony should suffer great injustice. As had been clearly pointed out by the hon. member for Warrego, the clause was purely a permissive one. If the residents in the district in which the Minister for Lands lived, or in any other small district, were of opinion that it was an advantage to them apparently to preserve the dingo, they could do so under the clause without the slightest difficulty. It was not compulsory, and if the board of any district thought the dingo should be excluded from the operation of the Bill they could do so. He had had conversations with a large number of cattle-owners lately—some of them not very far from the hon. gentleman—and they were strongly of opinion that the Bill was a very fair one. He maintained that if the cattle-owners were polled, or asked their opinion on the subject, a large majority would be found in favour of including the dingo. However, that Committee had already affirmed by a large majority that the dingo should be included, and it was simply a question whether they should or not give way, upon a question of very great importance to the stockowners of the colony generally, to the other Chamber. With regard to the discussion that took place on the clause in another place, there were only two members, so far as he knew, who were at all able to speak with any knowledge

of the subject—both cattle and sheep—and one was in favour of the dingo being excluded and the other was against it. All the other members who spoke against it were owners of cattle, with the exception of one or two lawyers, who only spoke from briefs they had got—letters written to them. They knew nothing about it, only what they were told, and even they were divided in opinion. However, the question was thoroughly talked out on the last occasion it was before the Committee, and they then deliberately came to the decision that the dingo should be included. He did not think anything further that was likely to be said would alter that decision. The facts remained as they were, and he hoped that the Committee would not stultify itself simply at the beck of another Chamber.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the hon. member who had just spoken had taken as his guide in this matter Mr. Tyson.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I did not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Well, the hon. member gave expression to that gentleman's opinion and ideas upon the subject, and quoted them as being incontrovertible; and the reason why he attached so much importance to the opinion of Mr. Tyson was because he was a man of large possessions. But the fact that a man had large possessions did not entitle his opinion to more consideration than that of many other men who did not own one tithe or one hundredth part of the possessions that he did. No doubt Mr. Tyson and other large cattle-owners down the Warrego would be quite willing to get rid of the dingo as there were no marsupials there to do mischief to any extent. It was all open plain country; but it was very different in scrubby country. The hon. member also said that his (Mr. Dutton's) chief object in opposing the clause was because he was personally interested in it. He admitted that he was interested in it. He had country of the kind he had spoken of; he owned cattle in that country, and he decidedly objected to being taxed by sheep men for the destruction of dogs to save them. And he was not the only one. There were hundreds of others in the same position all over the Central district. There were plenty of men in the Belyando district who would feel the operation of the clause as a gross injustice to them. In fact, as he stated the other night, one man there paid more towards the Marsupial Fund than he did to the Government for the land, and such a clause as that under discussion would be a gross injustice to such men. He believed there were also many men in the Maranoa district who, if asked, would express the same opinion that he did, and so would others in a large portion of the coast districts.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman was wrong in saying that he (Mr. Morehead) based his arguments on the fact that Mr. Tyson was a man of large possessions. It was a matter of the utmost indifference to him whether he was a man of large or small possessions; and, as he had stated, his reasons for giving that gentleman's opinion upon the subject were because he had been a closer observer and knew more about the wild animals of the colony than all the members of that Committee put together. His knowledge also of the country from end to end was greater probably than that possessed by any half-dozen members of that Committee put together. Again, with regard to the statement of the hon. member that he (Mr. Morehead) had consulted Mr. Tyson in reference to this matter and had followed his advice, if he would read the records of Parliament he would find that years ago he (Mr. Morehead) advocated the introduction of the dingo into a

Bill of that kind. He simply mentioned the fact that he had spoken to Mr. Tyson on the subject for the reason he had given—because he looked upon him as a more competent expert to give an opinion upon the subject than any other man he knew. And, as he said before, he did not see why they should be called upon to do a great injustice—a great wrong, possibly, to the greatest industry of the colony—because the hon. the Minister for Lands happened to be infested by dingoes.

Mr. DONALDSON said the Minister for Lands just now said that all the documents he (Mr. Donaldson) had were from owners of sheep, and that he evidently argued that it was desirable in their interest that the dingo should be destroyed. In regard to that, he might say that during the last fortnight he had had opportunities of seeing a large number of cattle-owners—in fact, some of them only that day—and out of the whole number he met there was not a solitary one who had thought it necessary that the dingo should be preserved. Even those of them who held the most extreme views said it was desirable that the number should be checked, whilst others admitted that it was quite necessary that they should be destroyed altogether, and they could hardly expect to have an Act passed for their protection only. Therefore the hon. gentleman ran away with a wrong idea when he said that he (Mr. Donaldson) had obtained his information only from owners of sheep. As far as he possibly could, he had made inquiries from all sorts and conditions of men, and as to their opinion upon that particular question. He had heard it stated in that House on more than one occasion that Toowoomba and the Darling Downs was Queensland, and really, with the hon. the Minister for Lands, the Leichhardt was almost the whole of Queensland.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What about the Warrego?

Mr. DONALDSON said the Warrego was perfectly satisfied whichever way the Bill passed, but the provision was necessary in respect of a large portion of the colony; and if any hon. member would look at the map hanging on the wall of that Chamber he would see that in three-fourths of the country it would be necessary to keep the dingoes down, because in a very few years they would all be occupied with sheep. The more rapidly their railways were constructed, the more country would be brought under sheep, and no one would for a moment contend that it was necessary that the dingo should be destroyed in cattle country. Since previously speaking on the subject he had received a letter from Mr. Allan, of Braeside, Darling Downs, whose opinion was worth something. The letter was as followed:—

"17th August, 1885.

"DEAR DONALDSON,

"Allow me to thank you on behalf of my neighbours and myself on the Balonne and Culgoa, and also more especially on account of all those around me at Braeside, on the Darling Downs, for your action in bringing before the House the necessity of including the native dog in the Destruction of Vermin Bill (marsupials or otherwise). It has been contended that the Native Dog Act should meet this. I have tried it both in New South Wales and Queensland, and proved it utterly unworkable."

He might mention that there was such an Act as the Native Dog Act, although it might not be generally known. It had been said the other night that that Act was quite sufficient for the destruction of the dingo, but he thought it had been proved long ago that that Act was perfectly useless. Mr. Allan went on—

"I am on the Culgoa surrounded by cattle men who, strangely, do not always calculate the great losses they suffer by the dingo. If you apply to come under the Act, and your neighbours choose to be antagonistic, the

only course open is to sue each of them for the moiety of the sum expended for poisoning. This means getting at loggerheads with neighbours, and no man can afford to do this; and the Act becomes altogether inoperative. To show how much this evil of dog trouble is felt even in a poor district like the hill country in Rosenthal on the Darling Downs, the people there have among themselves associations who pay 10s. per head for all dogs slaughtered. Consequently on this dog nuisance one cannot, on the Balonne, keep sheep in paddocks in many parts. On the Rosenthal country, above Warwick, the selectors have, as a rule, to shepherd sheep, and yard in dog-proof fences, whereas, if the dingo was kept down by subsidising local funds as in kangaroo-killing, the nuisance would be so nullified that sheep would be able to be kept in paddocks, and much more country be utilised; lands pay better, and consequently more benefit be derived by the State. Mr. Morehead, some years ago, pointed out the great need there was for legislation in this direction. Those around me, and myself, trust you will persevere in the same, and that your efforts will be crowned with success.

"Yours truly,

"W. M. ALLAN."

He might point out that sheep could not be made profitable unless they were allowed to run at large. Not only was it expensive to shepherd them, but when that was done their wool became almost valueless. The success of this country was assured as a wool-producing country if the sheep could only be allowed to run at large, but that could not be done if the dingo was allowed to exist.

Mr. BAILEY said there was another class of men who were interested in the destruction of the dingo, as well as the sheep and cattle men. He could assure the Committee that the selectors had been for very many years great sufferers by the inroads of the dingo, and that in his district they lost hundreds of pounds annually through the existence of that pest. Year after year the selectors had been paying a marsupial tax to free places from marsupials that were scores of miles away from them. They had willingly paid that tax, and it was only a fair thing to ask now that they should derive some practical benefit from the Act. He remembered when there were very few native dogs, but year after year they had increased, and in such numbers that they had now become a perfect terror. Night after night they descended upon the farm-houses, and if they did not plunder the sheep-yards they plundered the fowl-roosts. The selectors, as he had said, had willingly paid their quota towards the destruction of the marsupial, and the least the Committee could do now would be to retain the clause in the Bill for the destruction of dingoes.

Mr. NELSON said he could support the statements of the hon. member. The same thing occurred in the district in which he resided, where the majority of the people were freeholders. As far as the marsupial tax was concerned they did not require an Act, because it was to their own interest to destroy the marsupials. In his own case he had them cleared out long ago, but notwithstanding that he had done so he had been paying the marsupial tax and receiving no benefit from it. The same was the case with selectors and people round about him. The Minister for Lands talked about a monstrous injustice about to be perpetrated if the clause was retained in the Bill, but he (Mr. Nelson) thought that a much greater injustice would be perpetrated if it was left out of the Bill, because a far larger number of people would be affected. The retention of the clause in the Bill would be some little compensation to those people he had referred to, who had been so long taxed for the destruction of the marsupials. At present they were getting nothing whatever out of the operation of the Act, but were simply paying for the killing of marsupials on

Crown lands. After all, the clause as it stood was only permissive, and he thought the Minister for Lands could well afford to be a little more generous. The clause was simply a modification of local government, and allowed people to work their own affairs in their own district by a majority agreeing as to what was the greatest benefit for the largest number.

Mr. MACFARLANE said it was rather difficult for a town member to come to a decision in reference to the Marsupial Bill. The squatters were, as a rule, a very happy family, but latterly they had been divided. Hon. members had, therefore, to judge from what they heard, and to weigh the different arguments to see which was of the most value. The clause as it stood in the Bill would be inoperative in parts until someone put it in force. Even then, the Minister, if he chose, might refuse to meet the wishes of any board in any district if he thought fit; so that clause 5 was, in fact, a local option clause. It was the will of the people, and if it were not beneficial to all parties in the district they would never have it put in force. He could not imagine for a moment that any board would petition a Minister to put the clause into force unless a majority in the district were interested in destroying marsupials. If there were not, he did not suppose they would apply to have it so enforced. That was very reasonable.

Mr. NELSON said there was another point upon which he might satisfy the Minister for Lands, who seemed to be the only person in the Committee opposed to the clause. That gentleman said he would willingly agree to the clause if the districts were altered. They had sufficient legislation already to alter the districts. They could alter the districts at any time, and they would require no more legislation at all; so that what the hon. gentleman wanted was actually provided for already. If any hardship arose when the clause came into operation, the Government had power to alter the districts so as to do away with it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that of course they knew that the Minister in charge of the administration of the Bill could alter the districts, but it could not be done for a very considerable time. He would have to ascertain what the peculiar character of the districts was, so as to adjust them in such a way as to meet all requirements. That could not be done in a day, and probably not in a year. The hon. member for Ipswich said the Minister for Lands would not carry out the provisions of the Bill unless they were acceptable to the majority of the people in the district to which they would apply. The Minister would be guided by the board. If the board requested that the different clauses should be put into operation it would be done, but the boards as a rule were not elected; they were nominees of the Government in nearly every district, and, even when they were elected, the sheep men had such a preponderating influence that they "bossed" the whole thing. The cattle men were ignored altogether, and were absolutely jumped upon by the sheep men, especially in reference to this matter. It was a really serious matter in the opinion of those men who had not an opportunity of protecting their own interests. He could take care of himself very well, and his neighbours could also, because there was only one kind of country to deal with. He could assure hon. gentlemen that if anybody came up there poisoning dogs to get the £2 for the scalps, as the hon. member for Warrego suggested, he would have to be very careful. There were districts, of course, such as the Belyando, which were overrun by marsupials.

Mr. DONALDSON said the hon. Minister for Lands had pointed out that most of the marsupial boards were nominated by the Government. That was quite true, simply because the squatters did not take sufficient interest to have them elected. But they had the power of electing boards. The hon. gentleman had put the matter in a most ingenious way to the Committee, as hon. gentlemen were not generally aware that the boards could be elected. He wished to correct the error that the hon. Minister for Lands had fallen into.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not know what difference it would make. He admitted that they could elect their boards if they chose. But he maintained that where they did elect them the sheep men were so strong that they put their own men on the boards. They were the strongest party in any district. He did not know what men the hon. member for Northern Downs had to deal with, when he talked about their virtuous self-abnegation—who sacrificed their own interests for the general good. He knew that, in his district, men looked to their own interests very keenly, and did not object to killing marsupials at other men's cost; and it was for that reason that he objected to the clause. The hon. member for Warrego said that in his district there was an almost unanimous desire for a clause of this kind to kill dingoes. If so, why did they not do so without the assistance of a Bill? Simply because they wanted Government assistance to do it.

Mr. DONALDSON: They have done so already.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What more had they to complain of?

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was very glad there was one matter, or one feature, that made the Minister for Lands eloquent. He was not eloquent on the Land Bill, but they could touch him up with the dingo. He had made more speeches that night about the dingo than he had ever made before in that Committee. They would always know now how to bring out the hon. gentleman. It was by treading on the dingo's tail. The hon. gentleman said, "I do not know anything about Land Acts; my hon. colleague, the Premier, knows all about them; but when we come to the dingoes, I am all there—I am very fond of dingoes." With regard to the hon. gentleman's remarks that the cattle men would suffer because the majority who were elected to serve on the board were sheep men, he regretted very much to find that there was a majority against his friends in that Committee; but they did not go howling about—they did the best they could. They did not say that it was a most improper thing that the Legislative Assembly should be managed by a majority. But when it came to a majority of a board believing that the dingo ought to be destroyed they really touched the household god of the Minister for Lands, who said, "You may touch anything but the dingo—let the lands go, let everything go, but save, oh! save the dingo." That was the pathetic wail of the hon. gentleman, and he hoped that the Committee would not be carried away by the wail, which was almost as pathetic as that of the animal whose life he was pleading.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he thought the time was drawing nigh when, instead of being asked to do more in the way of helping the squatters to do their own work and get rid of their own nuisances, they should be asked to do less, with the hope of very soon doing nothing at all. He hoped more for a measure proposing to repeal the Marsupials Act, than for its extension

in any other direction. It was giving a very undue assistance to a certain class of men engaged in a certain pursuit in the colony, and not including other men who had nuisances to contend with and who received no assistance whatever. After all, the reason why the matter was so persistently brought forward was that there was an endowment attached to it in various localities. It was Government assistance that made those people who thought they had a pest in the dingo so anxious to have the question settled. He did not know why Parliament should be asked to legislate for the destruction of marsupials or dingoes, or the keeping out of rabbits, and what not, for those jingoes in the bush. They had nuisances in the town. Men engaged in business found them a very serious matter, and they did not get any assistance. There were rats, for instance. That reminded him that the other morning he was selling butter, and got out keg after keg, and at last came to one which turned out to be full of rats instead of butter. They were not his rats; he believed they came from Mary street, or somewhere thereabouts. He had always done what he could to exterminate rats, as they destroyed a great quantity of goods in his store. He did not come with a long face and a pitiful cry asking for help in the destruction of rats; and he thought it quite possible that the cry for help in every direction was being carried too far. The idea of its being local option was all very well; but the people interested might take it into their heads in some districts to make it permissive for the country to pay the cost of stockkeepers and shepherds. Instead of going further in the direction of helping people to get rid of different pests, he thought the pastoral tenants might very well be left to do it themselves.

Mr. JORDAN said the question had a humorous side, as was shown by the hon. member for Balonne, but it had also a serious side; and such contrary opinions were expressed by persons interested in pastoral occupation as to the desirableness of destroying the dingo or otherwise that one was confused. The hon. member for Logan, he thought, had said something about rabbits in connection with the Bill, and that gave him the idea that by preserving the dingo they would perhaps have an effectual means of keeping out the rabbits without the cost of erecting a fence for that purpose. The hon. member for Wide Bay had pointed out, on the other hand, that agriculturists had to pay for the destruction of marsupials on property occupied by other people, while their own property was infested with dingoes; so that the clause appeared to rather protect the small settlers. There was another point he would mention. When he saw, in the division taken on the clause, a great many tenants of the Crown in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Warrego, he began to think he had made a mistake in voting for the clause; but he did not feel any sympathy with the sweeping out, in another place, of a clause passed by a majority of that Committee; and on that account alone he felt inclined to vote with the hon. member for Warrego.

Question put and negatived.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair and reported to the House that the Committee had disagreed to the amendment of the Legislative Council.

The report was adopted.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with a message intimating that this House disagrees to their amendment; and I propose to offer the following reasons, which,

though I do not altogether agree with them myself, I believe express the opinion of the majority of hon. members:—

Because it is desirable to encourage the destruction of dingoes, and the existing law is inadequate to effect that object.

Because in many cases the dingo is, as well as the marsupial, the natural enemy of stock-owners, and it is therefore reasonable that the moneys raised from them for the destruction of one class of natural enemies should be permitted to be applied also for the destruction of the other.

Because the clause provides sufficient safeguards against any abuse of its provisions.

I believe those are the reasons which the majority of hon. members had for inserting the clause in the Bill; and in the position I hold in this House, I thought it my duty to frame the reasons to be sent to the Legislative Council.

Question put and passed.

RABBIT BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Chairman left the chair, and the House went into Committee to consider the Bill in detail.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that clause 1 stand part of the Bill.

Question put.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What about the preamble?

The PREMIER: There is no preamble.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would not go on until the preamble was postponed. It had been ruled by the Speaker that the words constituted a preamble, and if the Minister for Lands would not move it he would move that the preamble be postponed.

The PREMIER said that, there being no preamble to the Bill, it could not be postponed. The last ruling the Speaker gave and the only ruling given on the subject was that the enacting clause should be considered part of the 1st clause, and that was the practice followed at the time. However, there was no doubt now whatever as to what was the practice of the House of Commons. In the House of Commons, when there was no preamble to a Bill, no notice was taken of the enacting clause, either at the commencement or conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill in committee. He had ventured to assert that merely on *a priori* principles, because he thought that the people there conducted their business on rational principles, and he therefore ventured to assert it though he did not say he knew it. Reference was made in a letter the Speaker read from the Speaker of the Victorian Parliament to something that happened in 1870. It occurred to him at the time that that was rather a long time ago. That was about the time they first began to omit preambles, and he thought he would see what had been the practice in the House of Commons last year. Having a few minutes to spare one night last week he turned up the last volume of the proceedings of the House of Commons, and he found that in every case where the proceedings of the Committee were reported, and where there was no preamble, no notice was taken of the enacting clause. The proceedings commenced with the 1st clause and concluded with the passing of the last clause. On the other hand, where there was a preamble the first thing was "Preamble postponed," and the conclusion "Preamble read and agreed to." There was now no doubt whatever about the practice of the House of Commons; but it was perhaps better that they should have it decided at once if there was any doubt upon the subject, and that it should be referred to the Speaker now. The Speaker had informed him that he had made a similar search, and no doubt he had

come to the same conclusion. He thought it better that, as the question was raised again in committee, it should be referred to the Speaker. The question, as he understood it, was, "As there is no preamble to the Bill, should anything be done with the enacting clause introducing the Bill?" If that was the point of order raised, he would move that the Chairman leave the chair and refer the matter to the Speaker.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I am quite agreeable.

Question put.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Premier had not put the question in the position in which it was left by the last decision of the Speaker. The hon. member tried before to move the 1st clause without taking any notice of the enacting clause. It was then resolved that the matter should be referred to the Speaker, and the Speaker decided that the enacting clause must be passed. He did not decide that the enacting clause was a preamble; what he decided was that in some manner or other it must be put. He suggested it should be made a part of the 1st clause. The 1st clause, therefore, was to commence with the words "Be it enacted." But the Government had printed the Bill in the same way as before, and left the 1st clause to commence in the middle of it with the words "From and after the passing of this Act," etc. They thus violated the decision of the Speaker. The Speaker, so far from retracting the decision given in the House, gave force to it by, the other night—on the 12th of August—intimating to the House that in order to satisfy himself that he had given a right decision in the matter he had communicated with the Speakers of the other colonies, and he read a letter from the Speaker of the Victorian Parliament—Mr. Lalor—in which that gentleman coincided exactly with the decision given by the Speaker of this House, and he went further and intimated that not only was the practice there to keep the enacting clause, when simply an enacting clause, as a preamble, but decided also that it was the practice of the House of Commons. The hon. gentleman asked them to take it for granted, without the matter having been discussed at all—that it was the practice of the House of Commons to omit any reference to the enacting clause. Even if it were so it would not decide the point at all. If it were so, very likely it was done under the authority of some Act of Parliament which enacted that the enacting clause was to form part of the Bill, but they had no such Act as that here.

The PREMIER: They have none in England.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman said they had none in England, but he had heard him making assertions of that kind so often that he paid very little attention to them. There were four lines forming the beginning of the Bill—which were the preamble—where there was not a preamble. They had introduced a new form, by which they got those words at the beginning of an Act without having previously received the sanction of the Committee. The question they should put to the Speaker was not "In what form is it constitutional for us to put those words in when the four lines do not form a preamble—in what method are they to be affirmed by the Committee?" because he held with the Speaker that they must be affirmed by the Committee before they could form a part of the Act.

The PREMIER said that was exactly the question he proposed to put to the Speaker—whether it was necessary for the Committee to pass any resolution at all on the matter.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the question, as stated by the hon. member, was whether it was necessary to postpone it.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had misunderstood him; the question he proposed was, whether it was necessary for the Committee to pass any resolution in respect to it.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—In dealing with this Bill, the 1st clause was moved without any reference to the enacting clause, and the question was put. A discussion followed; and I am directed by the Committee to submit for your consideration the following question:—Whether it is necessary that the Committee should pass any resolution dealing with the enacting clause?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Before you give your decision, Mr. Speaker, I should like to refer to the terms in which you addressed the House the other day. You said:—

“It will be in the recollection of the House that on the 28th July a question arose with regard to practice which was of some importance in relation to the point as to whether the enacting clause of a Bill did or did not form a portion of the preamble, and if it did not form a portion of the preamble, then in what way it could be introduced into the Bill.”

That was the point then, as it is stated clearly by you, and it is the point referred to you now.

“I considered it my duty, in relation to that matter, to write letters to the Speakers of the Victorian and New South Wales Parliaments, and also to Sir T. Erskine May. I have this morning received a reply from the Speaker of the Victorian Parliament, and it is of such importance as to, I think, decide the question definitely.”

That letter goes on to say that when what we call the preamble is simply an enacting clause the practice of the House there is to treat it as a preamble, postpone it, and go on with the consideration of the other clauses. The Speaker of the Victorian Assembly says, in addition to that, that he believes it is the practice in the Home Parliament. It has been stated here that the practice of the Home Parliament is to treat it simply as an enacting clause. If that is the practice at home, there is some authority in an Act of Parliament to enable them to do it, because as a first principle it is essential that every word in an Act should have been passed by the Committee. If we throw out of consideration these four lines, we have not passed an enacting clause at all. The authorities that have been quoted referred mostly to American legislation, and bore out my contention, that there was a general Act providing the machinery by which the enacting clause was added to the Bill. We have no such general enactment, and our Bills leave the Committee just as they are to appear, as printed Acts having the authority of Parliament. I hold, therefore, that if it is the practice of the House of Commons to affix this enacting clause without its having received the sanction of the Committee, that practice is not applicable to this colony. We must either have a general Act enabling us to do that, or stand by our own practice of passing it by a vote of the Committee.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—Since this matter was last discussed I have taken the opportunity of referring to the Journals of the House of Commons for last year to see what was the practice there, thinking it very likely that the practice shown by an entry in 1870, when the new practice was introduced, might not be followed now. As you are aware, it is the practice in the House of Commons to report proceedings in committee, and I found in every case

where there was a preamble to a Bill that the first entry was “Preamble postponed” and the last “Preamble read and agreed to,” while in the case of Bills that had no preamble no such entry was made. Now, it seems to me that as a matter of ordinary reason that should be the proceeding. The hon. member suggests that it may be in consequence of an Act of Parliament dealing with the subject; of course we know very well that there is no such Act. We find also that the Standing Orders of the House of Commons dealing with the preamble in committee are just the same as ours, so that the practice in England is undoubtedly what it ought to be here. As to how these words get into the Bill, I apprehend that, as a matter of theory, they get into the Bill, so far as this House is concerned, on the motion, after the third reading, that the Bill do now pass. As far as the other House is concerned, they get into it on a similar motion being made there; and they finally get into it when the Bill is assented to by the Governor. The enacting clause is the form of words in which the assent of the three estates of the realm to the several clauses in the Bill is recorded. It is just as well that this question should be settled. It is a matter in which one has no right to take any but what he believes to be the proper course. It is not a question of gaining a victory for one party or the other; the question is—What is the right thing to do? We are all interested in seeing that our proceedings are regular and in proper form, and in what I have done I have endeavoured to assist the House to come to a correct conclusion.

The SPEAKER: Since the matter was last before the House, I have received a reply from the Speaker of the New South Wales Parliament; and I this morning received from the Speaker of the Victorian Parliament his opinion, given a little more elaborately than on the last occasion on which I quoted it. I think, in justice to him and to the Speaker of the New South Wales Assembly, I should read their opinions; and I think, when I have done so, the House will have little difficulty in arriving at a conclusion on the subject:—

“Parliament House,
“Melbourne,
“12th August, 1885.

“SIR,

“I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th July last, inviting my attention to a debate that recently took place in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, upon what constituted a preamble to a Bill, and asking for my opinion on the question, and as to what the practice of this Assembly is under similar circumstances.

“In reply, I have the honour to inform you that the practice in our House is to deal with what you term an ‘enacting clause’ as the preamble of the Bill in every respect; and the first proceeding of the Committee is for the Chairman to put the question, ‘That the preamble be postponed,’ and the last proceeding of the Committee before the Bill is ordered to be reported to the House, is for the Chairman to put the question, ‘That the preamble stand part of the Bill.’ These proceedings are followed in all cases where what you style an ‘enacting clause’ is used as well as in those Bills which contain the more lengthy preamble.

“Our practice, I believe, is similar in this respect to that followed in the House of Commons up to November, 1882, when a Standing Order was adopted by which the preamble stood postponed until after the consideration of the clauses of a Bill without question were put. But such a practice cannot apply any more to your House than to ours, as we both have Standing Orders, directing that a question must be put by the Chairman for the postponement of the preamble before the consideration of the clauses of the Bill are entered upon.

“You mention in your letter what you appear to consider a difficulty, namely: that May, in his last edition, contains no reference whatever as to the practice of the House of Commons in case of Bills which have no preamble, but simply an ‘enacting

clause.' My interpretation of this apparent omission is, that in the English practice as well as in ours, what you style the 'enacting clause' is always dealt with as the preamble. Looking at the 'Commons Journals,' which I have now got for the session ending 14th August, 1884, I find that no postponement of any preamble appears in the proceedings of any committee, and I think it best to state this, as you allude to the Acts passed in that session. The entries in the Journals of the Commons of proceedings in committee are at all times meagre and unsatisfactory as a reference; but since the Order of 1882, before mentioned, no entry whatever could be made of the postponement of a preamble. However, in the journals previous to 1882, occasional entries are made of the postponement and the passing of those descriptions of preambles which you style the 'enacting clause.' I enclose you a copy of the entries of one Bill—'Commons Journal No. 125, 1870,' page 64: 'Life Assurance Companies Bill—preamble postponed'; page 290, 'Preamble agreed to.' This Bill having become an Act of Parliament, 33 and 34 Vic., chap. 61, you will see on reference to its preamble that it is what you style the 'enacting clause.'

"Your last question is, 'Can the Chairman of Committees certify that the Bill is in all respects the same as that passed by the Committee if the "enacting clause" is not passed?' In my opinion he cannot so certify. The Chairman cannot properly state that the Bill is the same as passed the Committee when any portion of it has not been put to the question in that Committee.

"I have the honour to be, sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"PETER LALOR,

"Speaker.

"The Hon. The Speaker
of the Legislative Assembly,
Queensland."

The Speaker of the New South Wales Parliament writes as follows:—

"Parliament House,

"New South Wales,

"8th August, 1885.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your letter, dated the 29th ultimo, reached me on the 3rd instant, and I trust that the delay which has occurred in answering it, and which was unavoidable on my part, has not caused you any annoyance or inconvenience.

"In dealing with Bills which contain a preamble, our practice in committee has, until lately, been to postpone the preamble on question put, and to pass it with or without amendment, after all the clauses have been dealt with. Our late practice, however, has accorded with that of the House of Commons, since the passing of the new Rules of Procedure.

"Where a Bill has contained the 'enacting clause' without any preamble, we have dealt with it as if it were itself the preamble—that is to say, formerly we put the question before dealing with the clause, 'That the preamble be postponed,' and now it stands postponed without question put, and after all clauses have been dealt with, we cover the 'enacting clause' by putting the question 'That the preamble as read be the preamble of the Bill.'

* * * * *

"I am, dear sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"EDMUND BARTON.

"The Honourable The Speaker,
Legislative Assembly, Queensland."

I may remind the House that our Standing Order No. 28 says:—

"The Chairman shall put the question 'That the preamble be postponed,' which being agreed to, every clause is considered by the Committee seriatim."

I have been of opinion for a very long time—even before the decision given by the Supreme Court of New South Wales some time ago—and have mentioned my views to the officers of the House, that the new Rules of Procedure of the House of Commons do not apply, and cannot be applied by the Speaker, to the proceedings of this House until the House has given its assent to them—until the Standing Orders Committee has brought up a report on the subject, and that has been confirmed by the House. Until that has been done I shall decline in any way to act on the Rules of Procedure in the House of Commons. In accordance

with our own Standing Orders, and in accordance with the practice adopted by the two Parliaments of New South Wales and Victoria, I am of opinion that the clause about which this question has arisen ought to be treated as a preamble and put by the Chairman, in order that when called upon to report he may be able to report that every clause of the Bill has been passed by the Committee.

The PREMIER: Before you leave the chair, sir, I wish to call your attention to the fact that the practice of the House of Commons is, undoubtedly, that where there is a preamble the mode in which it is dealt with is recorded in the proceedings of the committee, and where there is no preamble no mention of it is made in the proceedings of the committee, either at the commencement or the conclusion. That is the universal practice of late years in the House of Commons. However, I do not dispute your ruling to-day. I have before me here a case taken at random of a Bill passed on the 18th August, 1882. It has no preamble. I find the entry that "the House, according to order, resolved itself into Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Bill," and "clauses 1 and 2 agreed to," and so on, the last motion being that "the Bill be reported." In the same number of the "Commons Journal," in the case of a Bill having a preamble, the report of the proceedings begins by saying "Preamble postponed," and ends by "Preamble agreed to." In turning over another volume of the Journals, I found that where there was a preamble—

Mr. MOREHEAD: I think, as you have given your ruling, Mr. Speaker, unless it is the intention of the Premier to dispute that ruling, the question is settled.

The PREMIER: The hon. member asked me for information which I am endeavouring to give him before I sit down. I find one case here in which there was a preamble—the Poor Law Guardians Bill—in which there is an entry, "Preamble agreed to and Bill as amended reported." That is in the same year as the first entry I read, and is dated the 24th of May.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Exactly; but the Standing Order was made in November, 1882, and the precedent you have been quoting is six months before that.

The PREMIER: I have ascertained that the practice of 1884 is identical. Your ruling, however, will be followed in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, and I have no doubt we shall shortly get an authoritative statement as to the present practice of the House of Commons.

The SPEAKER: I may inform the House that I examined the latest Journals of the House of Commons in order to learn what had been the practice during the last two sessions, and the Parliamentary Librarian informed me that the last session's journals were in the hands of the binder. However, we made all the research possible, he holding the Statutes, and I the "Journals," in order to ensure correctness. I found there that in Bills with an enacting clause—as Mr. Lalor observes in his letter—the information is most meagre, and where no amendments are made the initiatory proceedings are not recorded, and it is not stated what has been done with the enacting clause. The question I wish the House to bear in mind is this: Our Standing Orders say that when anything occurs in the House to which the Standing Orders do not apply we are to proceed according to the practice of the House of Commons. Our Standing Orders presuppose that a Bill contains a preamble, and until another Standing Order is passed, my own opinion is that that Standing Order

must remain intact. I may add that when I receive a reply from Sir Erskine May I will take the earliest opportunity of bringing it before the House.

The Committee resumed.

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the Speaker's ruling, the motion must be that the preamble be postponed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the preamble be postponed.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 1 to 9 passed as printed.

On the question—That the preamble do now pass—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that before they had done with the Bill it would be desirable to have some information about the £100,000 put down on the Estimates for keeping rabbits out of the colony. How was it proposed to spend that money? It would be better to have the information now than at the tail-end of the session.

The PREMIER said the Government were waiting for some additional information on the subject, which they expected to get very shortly. Acting on the best information they could get on the question of how to keep the rabbits out of the colony, the Government had come to the conclusion that the only way to keep them out was to erect a fence, wherever it was necessary, along the border. The present intention of the Government was to expend sufficient of the £100,000 in protecting those parts of the border which rabbits were most likely to attack. They might, perhaps, ask the House to vote the money before proceeding with the rest of the Estimates; the item could be taken at any period. He expected further information in the course of two or three days from Mr. Davey, who was last heard of at Bourke, and was then going westward, his intention being to reach the south-western corner of the colony to ascertain where the rabbits were. The Government wanted to know where it was best to begin, and as soon as they knew that, the work of fencing them out would be proceeded with. He should have been glad to have worked in the matter in co-operation with New South Wales, but under all the circumstances he was disposed to think it better that they should act alone on their own responsibility.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What has been the tenor of the communication with the Government of New South Wales?

The PREMIER: There has been none.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Who is Mr. Davey?

The PREMIER said Mr. Davey was a gentleman who had had a very large experience of rabbits in Riverina. It was considered desirable to employ somebody well acquainted with the subject, and Mr. Davey was recommended by Mr. Tyson as one of the most competent men who could be obtained. He had forgotten what Mr. Davey's remuneration was, but it was a very reasonable sum, and they might rely on getting accurate information from him. The information they had got from him so far was reassuring. The rabbits were not so near on the Darling and the Paroo and the country between as they had been thought to be. At the same time that would not induce the Government to relax in any way their efforts to keep them out.

Mr. NELSON said he had seen it stated in the papers that the Government of New South Wales were in possession of information to the effect that the rabbits were within ninety miles of the border, and that they had taken steps in the matter by appointing inspectors for the district.

Mr. DONALDSON said, with regard to the question who Mr. Davey was, he might state for the information of the Committee that he knew that gentleman some years ago. He had at different times written very intelligent letters to the Press in Sydney and Melbourne upon the best methods of rabbit extermination, which were very interesting indeed; and he had every reason to believe that that gentleman would send in a very useful and reliable report.

Mr. JORDAN said it would be satisfactory to his mind if the Committee had some information as to the proposed remedy of fencing out the rabbits. It would be a gigantic undertaking if they had to fence all along the border of the colony—about 1,000 miles in length. If it was to be effectual he presumed it would have to be done the whole distance between seaboard and seaboard; and he would like to have some information as to whether that system of keeping out rabbits had been tried elsewhere, and with what success. It occurred to him that wire fences would not be effectual. He believed that rabbits would burrow under the ground a considerable distance; and how was such a fence to keep them out? If those who knew all about it were of opinion that fencing would be effective, then the question would arise, how much it would cost, and whether there was any hope of good being done by the expenditure of the £100,000 that had been mentioned? If that system was to be carried out, he supposed that they must make up their minds to spend about half-a-million of money.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: For what?

Mr. JORDAN: If they were to fence along the whole border of the colony from north to south, over mountains, across creeks and lagoons, and through scrubs, he supposed that it would cost half-a-million of money. Perhaps the hon. the Premier was in possession of further information upon the subject that he would give the Committee. It was a very important matter, especially if the rabbits were advancing towards the colony so rapidly as had been stated; and whatever was done, it should be effectual, whatever it might cost.

The PREMIER said, as to the effectiveness of fencing, he believed it was generally admitted that without fencing it was almost impracticable to make much impression upon the inroads of rabbits in large tracts of country. When they were confined in that way within certain limits there was some chance of destroying them. That seemed to be the result of the inquiries he had made, and of the discussions of the subject in the Press of the neighbouring colonies and the opinions of the best authorities he had been able to consult. As to the extent of fencing that would be required, it would not be nearly so large as the hon. member for South Brisbane seemed to fear. They need not commence anywhere to the eastward of the Warrego at any rate. He did not think the rabbits were on the Warrego, although they might be coming up in that direction. The nearest place where it was known definitely that they were at present was about 100 miles, or perhaps 90 miles, from the border, to the south-east of Bourke, a place called Cobarr.

Mr. DONALDSON : Near Louth.

The PREMIER : They were not so far north on the Darling as had been stated by some people, so that there was plenty of time for precautions to be taken to keep them out in that direction. What he was afraid of was that they might come up towards the south-western border. He believed that 400 miles of fencing judiciously erected would be sufficient to keep them out at present, and of course they could put fences up elsewhere if they found them advancing in any other direction. As he had said before, the Government had not that accurate information that they ought to have when they asked the Committee to commit itself to such a large expenditure. Speaking from memory, not having the papers before him, he believed he had stated correctly the places where it would be first necessary to protect by fencing. Some people were of opinion that a double line of fencing would be necessary. Of course that would be much more effective than a single line, but he did not know whether it was absolutely necessary. If there was a single line, of course it would have to be carefully watched. As to rabbits burrowing underneath the fences, he believed experience had shown that they did not do so. He had heard stories about their climbing over, but he did not think that was very probable. He had also heard stories about their running up trees, and various other things, but, as a matter of fact, he believed that they would not burrow under fences if they were put a few inches under the ground. He understood that fences of that description were always put six or nine inches beneath the surface, with the part under the ground bent outward in the direction the rabbits were expected to come from. Then when they attempted to burrow and found that obstruction they would go away further, and on again meeting the same obstacle they were easily discouraged, and would go away. That was the information he had received ; of course he had no personal experience on the subject.

Mr. STEVENS said it was generally considered by those who had taken the matter fully into consideration that a double line of fencing from Ballandoon across the Paroo, on the border—say to Hungerford—and thence on towards the Bulloo, would be the best place to commence fencing. Say, to commence at Hungerford and run thence east and west—the distance would be about 200 miles. A double line of fencing would take 400 miles, and the cost would be probably £40,000. The hon. the Premier had stated that he was not sure whether a double line was necessary or not, but he (Mr. Stevens) thought it might easily be shown that a double line would be much safer than a single one and that it was very necessary. For instance, if the first fence were broken down by falling timber, or a stampede of horses, or bullocks, the rabbits would have nothing to check them.

Mr. MIDGLEY : Supposing that they ran the two down?

Mr. STEVENS said, with reference to that, if the fences were put sufficiently far apart it would be impossible for one tree to knock down the two lines, and if they were not too close together the same mob of cattle or horses would not be likely to knock them down in a straight line. There was a difference of opinion as to how far the fences should be apart. The furthest distance that he had heard mentioned was five miles, and it was suggested that the land between the fences should be let to graziers ; but his own opinion was that fences about a quarter of a mile apart would be better—or even a little less, but not very much so—for the reason he had

already given—that if the mob of cattle or horses rushed the first fence and the second was very close they might go right through in a straight line, and thus leave an opening which the rabbits would probably get through. There was not the slightest doubt in the minds of those who had considered the subject that fencing was the proper mode of dealing with rabbits. By that means they could be confined to a certain area, where they could be destroyed.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he had kept rabbits and knew a great deal about them, and he was quite certain from his experience that they did burrow under fences. Even in the town of Brisbane, on one occasion, he took a great deal of pains to make a rabbit hutch ; but although he had put the palings of his fence several inches into the ground, when he got up in the morning his rabbits were gone, having burrowed away underneath. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Logan that a double line of fencing was the best, because there would be an opportunity of destroying the rabbits by having watchmen who would perambulate between the fences and take steps for destroying them. That would be the most effectual way. As to fencing mountains, it was well known now in the history of the rabbits that they did not ascend mountains. They liked sandy level country, and that was the country they increased most rapidly in. So far as he knew, there was no effectual way of keeping out rabbits except by a double line of fencing.

Question put and passed.

Preamble put and passed.

The House resumed ; the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment, and the third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

ELECTIONS BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee to further consider this Bill.

Clause 62—

Question—That the following words be inserted after the word “ officer ” in the 4th line of the clause—“ and having the elector’s number on the roll written on the back thereof ”—put.

The PREMIER said that matter was adjourned last week for the purpose of further consideration, because a very important question had been raised by the amendment. He had intimated that he had a difficulty in coming to a conclusion as to which was the better plan—the plan that they had now by which the identification of the voter was impossible, or the other system by which, in certain cases, he might be identified. On the one hand they had the disadvantage under the present system, that if a man voted twice it could not be ascertained how the fictitious vote went, and there was no means for the election tribunal to rectify the error. Absence of that facility was of course a disadvantage, although he did not know of any instance where any difficulty had arisen. On the other hand, as was pointed out before, if the ballot-paper was marked the voter could be identified, and in a great many places in this colony it would have the effect of frightening the voter. Voters would be told, “ Mind, the ballot-paper is numbered and we shall know for whom you vote.” He was disposed to think, on the whole, it was better to maintain the present system. He had heard of electors being told—even under the present system—that it would be known for whom they voted ; but he believed, after all, that the present system was the best, although

there were powerful arguments that could be used in favour of the other system.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the admission made by the hon. member that he knew cases in which men had been frightened into giving a vote in the way in which they did not wish to give it, by simply being told that the voting-paper was marked, destroyed entirely his own argument, because, according to the present law, the mere initialling of the voting-papers by the returning officer would frighten certain ignorant persons, and it was those persons only who would be operated upon if the amendment were agreed to. The hon. gentleman seemed to lessen as much as he could the evil that had resulted from personation, but, as a matter of fact, it was known that that was the most common style of personation. It was impossible in any case that the ballot could be challenged in order to adjust the matter. He had known many cases where the election would have been challenged had it been possible to identify the votes which were known to be impersonations. He knew numerous cases. It was a fact that there was no means of identifying these particular votes, and, therefore, of seeing for which candidate they were placed. The hon. gentleman said that in some parts of Queensland where there were very few voters it would be quite possible to know for whom votes had been passed. He did not think that would be more possible if the system were adopted of numbering the ballot-papers, because the knowledge would be confined to the returning officer. He had the power of identifying several papers; but it could be put beyond the possibility of anyone knowing under the Victorian system. There they filled up a ballot-paper upon which a number was written, and unless the scrutineer violated his oath and attempted to find out for whom any particular person voted he would not know, because the corner of the paper and the name were folded up. If the scrutineers could not be trusted under the restraint of the oath only there could be the additional safeguard of actually pasting the corner down, so that neither the returning officer nor the scrutineer would be able to find out. A little gum could be placed upon the corner, so that it would be quite impossible that any evil could result. The advantages were very great, and he would ask the Committee to fully consider them. He believed they would never strike at the root of personation in the colony until they had the remedy of being able to challenge the election and having the persons who personated struck off the roll. He had shown quite clearly that it could be made altogether impossible that any scrutineer or returning officer, no matter how few electors there were, could find out the number underneath the corner of that paper.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman suggested that the number might be at one corner. That was the practice in Victoria; but it was not what the law said. The law said that the number was to be at the bottom of the back, in a conspicuous position. The practice was better than the law. The hon. gentleman suggested that it should be sealed down. There would be no difficulty about that in the large towns; but they had to deal with country places. There were instances where they had to send the ballot-papers 200 or 300 miles, and how were they to get gum-bottles and the other appliances? There might be none there. An hon. gentleman suggested that they could get an adhesive ballot-paper; but where could they get adhesive ballot-papers in such places? Taking an extreme case again, because in those matters they should always deal with extreme cases — taking the case of Gregory: the place of nomination would be, probably,

Winton, where there was no printing press. Probably the nearest printing press would be at Aramac, and he did not know whether they had any appliances there for making ballot-papers adhesive. Then again, it sometimes happened that there were not sufficient ballot-papers, and then the names would have to be written down. How could they get the appliances in such cases? He quite agreed as to the desirableness of doing it if it could be done, but he did not see how it could be in many parts of the colony.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman seemed to have resolved to allow himself to be nonplussed in the matter. The fag-ends of postage stamps could be used. It was absurd to argue the question in that way. The hon. gentleman was really making difficulties of what were really no difficulties at all. They were making a good attempt to strike at the root of personation, and he did not think a better result could possibly happen than that they should have some means of adjusting the votes and striking out votes that had been personated. The way suggested had been tried in England and in Victoria, and no evil results had followed. A member of the Victorian Assembly was up here the other day, and was astonished when he heard that no such provision was made in Queensland. That hon. gentleman had had twenty years' experience in the Victorian Parliament, and had never heard the propriety of so marking the ballot-papers questioned. It was a matter of practice there.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that, in reference to ballot-papers, before he left Ipswich that morning one of his constituents sent him an envelope which would do away with the objection raised by the Premier. It had a number in it, and all that had to be done was to shut it and vote upon the other side. If any one wanted to see the number the envelope would have to be undone. He thought it was rather ingenious when he saw it, but could not say how far it would be successful.

The PREMIER said there was no difficulty where the appliances were obtainable; but there were places where they could not be got.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: You can print on the back of an envelope as well as on a piece of paper.

The PREMIER said he did not think it would be advisable to make every paper in the shape of an envelope. If it could be done at all it should be by sealing down the corner; but he did not see how the appliances could always be obtained. There were plenty of places in the Gregory district where they would not have a bottle of gum, and the question might arise whether, if the number were uncovered, the paper should be rejected? It was the small difficulties they must look at. It was easy to see that a thing was good in itself; but could it be made to work? He would like to see how it would work in the remoter parts of the colony.

Mr. NORTON said he did not see how there could possibly be any difficulty, because in all those distant places they had adhesive stamps. If they could get adhesive postage stamps why could they not get adhesive ballot-papers? The Premier talked about getting gum and appliances, but ballot-boxes were sent some times 100 miles, at election times, because they had none at the polling places. He knew of a case during the last election where a ballot-box was sent seventy miles, and if a ballot-box could be sent surely there could be no difficulty about sending a bottle of gum. Then the Premier raised the objection that there was

no use in using a double quantity of paper. The ballot-papers certainly were twice as big as they need be now. They would double up quite as well if they were half the size. If the gum was put on one corner it would only have to be turned down, and he did not see any difficulty in the matter.

Mr. MIDGLEY said it would be a great pity to lose a chance, which appeared to be almost within their reach, of dealing with a very serious matter, and he had not thought such a simple way out of the difficulty could be found. It would be possible for the Government to supply the form of ballot-paper, something in the shape of an envelope, which could be printed in the locality and sent to the different polling places by post. Now they were so near to solving the problem in regard to personation they ought not to let any little difficulty stand in the way.

Mr. SMYTH said there would be a good deal of bother in the Government circulating all the forms in a large electorate, and it would be better to have them printed somewhere in the district, in accordance with the plan suggested by the hon. member for Mulgrave. The plan proposed would be a very good way of getting rid of personation, and he thought it ought to be adopted.

The HON. SIR. T. McILWRAITH said the Premier must see that it was the sense of the Committee that a very simple means could be devised; and he admitted that the method suggested by the hon. member for Ipswich was better than his own. There might be a little difficulty in turning down the corner so as to conceal the number, but there would be none in the case of envelopes. And there would be no difficulty in keeping the envelopes in stock.

Mr. DONALDSON said it was a matter of detail what form the ballot-paper should take so long as it was numbered. In Victoria it had been found quite sufficient to turn down the corner; and he had seen large numbers of papers come out of the ballot-boxes there, but had never seen a number exposed. Any simple form of paper having the object he aimed at would be accepted, he presumed, the main principle being the desirableness of having a number on the ballot-paper, so as to be able to discover cases of personation.

Mr. FOXTON said he was at first averse to having ballot-papers numbered, but he was now inclined to the other opinion. It might be well to bear in mind that the returning officer was the only one who would have any means of loosening the gum and inspecting the numbers, because under clause 78 the presiding officer must seal up the papers in the presence of the scrutineers, who would also be at liberty to put their own seals on the packet, those seals not being broken till the packet reached the returning officer. He admitted that presiding officers were, as a rule, partisans, but it was not so with returning officers. It would be much better to adopt the suggestion of the hon. member for Mulgrave, or that of the hon. member for Ipswich, than forego the opportunity of preventing wholesale personation. If there should be any difficulty about gum, surely flour could be obtained wherever there were human beings.

Mr. STEVENS said he thought the paper turned down at the corner would be better than the envelope, because if it were prescribed that the ballot-paper should be in the form of an envelope, and anything happened to the bundle of papers sent to an outside district, it might be impossible for the presiding officer to replace them; whereas, if the papers were such that the corners had simply to be turned down, he could write the names on them himself.

Mr. JORDAN said there would be no more difficulty in sending gum with the ballot-boxes than there was in sending sealing-wax, pens, and pencils. It would be better to have plain pieces of paper, for the reason mentioned by the hon. member for Logan. The returning officer would be careful to impress on the presiding officer the necessity for having the corners turned down; and in case the putting-on of gum had been accidentally omitted, to see that the papers were gummed before being used. By that simple means they would be able to detect personation and preserve the secrecy of the ballot.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put and passed.

The PREMIER said he had desired they should go into committee that evening to discuss the matter more fully after the discussion they had before, in order that they might arrive at a conclusion upon the subject. He thought it was clearly the wish of the Committee that an attempt should be made to carry it out. He did not propose to go further with the Bill that evening under the circumstances. He hoped by the time they went into committee again upon the subject he would be able to submit to the Committee the necessary amendments to that and the following two or three clauses to give effect to it. At the present time it appeared to him that the best plan would be to have the number put in the corner of the paper and have the corner sealed down. He did not know that ballot-papers could be prepared in that way in the country districts, and it might perhaps be necessary that in such cases the Government should prepare the ballot-papers and send them to the returning officers to be used at an election. It would have to be provided how the number was to be put on and how the ballot-paper was to be sealed, so that the number could not be discovered, and they would have to provide stringent provisions against any attempt being made to discover the number. It was desirable that they should have some time to consider those things, and he proposed to move that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again. If it was practicable to do it, they might be able to make some progress with the Bill on Thursday evening; if not, they could then postpone it. He moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Thursday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: I move that this House do now adjourn. In the event of our having time to go on with Government business, as I hope we shall, on Thursday, the Elections Bill will be first on the paper, and next the Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Bill.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Will it be convenient for the Government to say what action they are going to take with regard to the amendments in the Elections Bill given notice of by Mr. Chubb?

The PREMIER: The Government do not propose to support them.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: They are not going to support them?

The PREMIER: No. They would have the effect of a prohibition of any appeal against an improper election.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 10 o'clock until Thursday next.