

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 9 OCTOBER 1885

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 9 October, 1885.

Federal Council (Adopting) Bill.—Petition.—Noble Estate Enabling Bill.—Question.—Formal Motion.—Grant to the Widow of the late Denis Murphy.—Order of Business.—Adjournment.

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

FEDERAL COUNCIL (ADOPTING) BILL.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith), in accordance with a promise made on the previous day, laid on the table further information respecting this measure. He said that those papers, together with what had been previously laid on

the table, would give hon. members all the information to be contained in the *précis* referred to yesterday. He moved that the papers be printed.

Question put and passed.

PETITION.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN presented a petition from the residents of Townsville over twenty-one years of age, in favour of the Licensing Bill, especially those clauses dealing with local option and Sunday closing; and moved that it be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On motion of the Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN, the petition was received.

NOBLE ESTATE ENABLING BILL.

Mr. FOOTE brought up the report of the select committee, together with the minutes of evidence relating to this Bill, and moved that they be printed.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of Mr. FOOTE, the second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

QUESTION.

Mr. BLACK asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. The number of Polynesians who have arrived into and departed from the colony during the twelve months ended 30th September, specifying the number arrived at and departed from each port?

2. The estimated number of Polynesians now in the colony?

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

1. The number of Polynesians who arrived during the twelve months was 1,751, as follows:—

Brisbane	...	...	...	277
Maryborough	...	...	...	526
Bundaberg	...	...	...	201
Mackay	...	...	...	442
Townsville	...	...	...	211
Johnstone River	...	...	...	72
Cairns	...	...	...	52

They were distributed as follows:—

Brisbane	...	...	...	53
Maryborough	...	...	...	189
Bundaberg	...	...	...	533
Mackay	...	...	...	480
Townsville	...	...	...	137
Herbert River	...	...	...	174
Johnstone River	...	...	...	163
Cairns	...	...	...	52

Total 1,751

The departures during the same period were 2,114, and the districts in which they laboured were:—

Brisbane	...	...	...	131
Maryborough	...	...	...	77
Bundaberg	...	...	...	133
Mackay	...	...	...	1,083
Townsville	...	...	...	248
Herbert River	...	...	...	364
Johnstone River	...	...	...	73

2. The estimated number of Polynesians now in the colony is 10,646, made up as follows:—

Number at 31st December, 1884, as per Registrar-General's records	11,745
Arrivals from January to September, 1885	1,376
	13,121

Deaths reported	936
Departures from January to September	1,539
	2,475

Estimated number in the colony at 30th September, 1885 10,646

Mr. BLACK: Does that include Polynesians holding exemption tickets?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The basis of that calculation is the Registrar-General's return at the end of last year of all the Polynesians then in the colony; and the subsequent calculations are from the reports of arrivals and departures.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By the Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH (for Mr. Foxton)—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, copies of all reports, correspondence, and papers relative to carrying into effect the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act, 1876.

GRANT TO THE WIDOW OF THE LATE DENIS MURPHY.

On the motion of Mr. MACFARLANE, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee to consider of an address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates the sum of £200, to be granted to the widow of the late Denis Murphy, who was killed at the New Railway Station, Ipswich.

Mr. MACFARLANE, in moving—

That an address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates the sum of £200, to be granted to the widow of the late Denis Murphy, who was killed at the New Railway Station, Ipswich—

said it was not necessary to repeat the facts of the case, which were well known to members of the Committee, and he would not take up the time of the Committee, but simply leave the motion in their hands.

Mr. BLACK said he did not know whether the motion was going to pass without any comment whatever from the Colonial Treasurer or the Premier, whose duty it was to give the Committee some information. He did not know whether the Treasury was so full of funds that votes of that sort were to be allowed to pass without any discussion. He was not prepared to give any definite opinion on the subject until he had heard something from the Colonial Treasurer as to what the Government thought of the matter. He was not in the House when the motion was carried, but he certainly thought the Committee were entitled to some information, unless the Government intended to affirm the principle that every widow of every public servant who died in the service of the Government was entitled to something in the shape either of a pension or a fixed sum. If that principle was going to be laid down they would have something tangible to discuss, but at present hon. gentlemen were simply asked to vote £200 for the widow of the late Denis Murphy. He should like to have some information on the subject. Who was the late Denis Murphy, and why was his widow entitled to the consideration of the Committee? For what reason were the whole of the taxpayers of the colony called upon to contribute the sum of £200 to her any more than to anyone else?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said if the hon. gentleman had been in the House when the motion for going into committee was carried last week he would have heard the matter very fully argued indeed. It seemed to be quite unnecessary to go over the ground again, because nothing that could be said would alter the vote of a single member. For his part he intended to vote against the motion if a division was called for, and although he did not intend to offer any factious opposition, he would throw upon hon. members who advocated the passing of such motions the responsibility of disorganising the finances of the country. Those votes

were all of a character, and all equally to be condemned. There was no claim whatever upon the country on behalf of those widows, and he was very sorry to think that anything he might say seemed to have no effect upon hon. members in the way of inducing them to resist such unjust demands upon the public purse. The present case seemed to commend itself to hon. members, because the man on behalf of whose widow the grant was asked was killed in the service of the State; but it had been admitted that the widow was not in indigent circumstances, and, moreover, there were means outside the Treasury, by life assurance and otherwise, by which a man could provide for his family without the intervention of the State. The State, he took it, was in the same position as an ordinary employer, and he was not aware that ordinary employers provided large gratuities for the widows of deceased servants. He was clearly of opinion that all those kinds of motions should be resisted, but anything he had hitherto addressed to the House had not been received in such a manner as to enable him to effect his object of protecting the Treasury. If any hon. gentleman chose to call for a division he should join him most heartily in opposing the motion, but he did not see the slightest use in taking up the time of the Committee by frivolous discussions.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was present at the discussion on the same subject last week. He knew what the result of the division would be then, and knew how hopeless it would be to go to a division now, but he thoroughly endorsed all that the Treasurer had said about the way in which members seemed to have made up their minds to go in bald-headed and put these votes through by force of numbers. Without any argument and without any justification on the part of hon. members, those votes would be forced upon the House, and he said it was unjust towards the taxpayers of the colony and to the people who contributed to the revenue of the colony. The State might just as well insure the life of every man in the colony, and provide for the widow of every man in the colony. There were people outside the Government Service altogether who had done good service to the State, and who had just as much right to have their widows and families provided for by the Government if they happened to die or were killed by accident. He did not think it mattered much whether a man died in his bed or came by his death as the result of accident; the bread-winner was lost—of that there was no doubt. Of course it was a most invidious position to take up in opposing votes of that kind, but he would point out to the Committee that by authorising them and rushing them through in the way in which hon. gentlemen seemed disposed to do they were inviting numberless claims which they would have no justification for refusing in the future. Next session he expected the papers would be full of them, and that there would be a fresh batch every week. Members would be pestered and reminded that So-and-so got this for one widow, and that for another, and the result would be that members would be considered very hard-hearted, very obdurate, and most objectionable, if they refused to introduce such a motion. He intended to give the Committee an opportunity of reconsidering what they did by moving the reduction of the item; and he hoped he would find some hon. members willing to protect the Treasury to a certain extent. He did not wish to appear hard-hearted as far as the individual cases were concerned. The people who had suffered loss had his most sincere sympathy; but he thought it would have been better if those hon. members who knew them and could

vouch for them had put their hands into their own pockets instead of trying to put them in the pockets of the taxpayers of the colony. He had heard a great deal spoken with very kindly feelings on behalf of those people by hon. members who doubtless felt all they said, but he did not see that the country was called upon to pay for their feelings. Next session they would be inundated with those claims, and the Treasury was not in a position to stand it. It was not as if they had a surplusage of revenue which they did not know what to do with, but the Treasurer would have his ingenuity taxed to the fullest extent to provide satisfactorily for the necessary expenditure of the country without going into any of those things. He moved, therefore, that the sum be reduced by one-half.

Mr. WHITE said he did not see why the third paragraph on the paper, referring to the £1,000 grant, should not have come first before the Committee in the order of its introduction into the House. The other two items would never have been brought forward if that £1,000 item had not been introduced; and he did not see why it should not have been first on the list. When that £1,000 item was introduced, he was surprised to see the rush of hon. members to the affirmative side of the House. He doubted whether many hon. members had a correct knowledge of the feelings, aspirations, and the influences at work in agricultural and small grazing communities. He had the honour to represent a class of men who were the true nobility in the land—men who possessed an unyielding spirit of independence instilled into them by their early struggles with poverty, habits of persevering industry, incessant toil, and great self-denial. The test was such a severe one that only those whose metal had the true ring could pass through the ordeal successfully. Those were the men who were destined to make this a country of which the people would be proud. But mark the contrast! Here was a specimen of another class, which threatened to make this a country of which we should be ashamed. He had no wish to meddle with the private character of that deceased judge—

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member was out of order. The question before the Committee was the amendment to the motion of the hon. member for Ipswich; the matter the hon. member was referring to could be discussed at the proper time.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Rising to a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I do not think you have any right to interfere with the hon. member. You do not know where his argument is tending; I am sure I do not.

Mr. WHITE said he would certainly oppose each of the items. If the hon. member for Cook had proposed to give outdoor relief to that extent, he would have voted for the amendment.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he hoped the Committee would allow the vote to pass. It was a very small sum; and he would remind the Committee that, considering the amount of compensation paid in connection with the Darra accident, so small compensation ought not to be refused to one who had suffered more than any of those concerned in the Darra accident. Men received from £2,000 to £4,000 for simply being maimed or getting a good shaking; and here he was asking only £200 for a widow who had lost her husband—struck down in a moment while he was at work for the Government. The sum was very small, and it was hardly worth while reducing it.

Mr. FOOTE said that last week he advocated the motion going into committee, but he by no

means committed himself to the whole sum. On principle, he thought that none of those motions should be on the paper; but they were there, and on the principle that it was proper to make the grant to one, it was proper also to make it to another. He thought the amendment of the hon. member for Cook was a very reasonable one, both for that and the following case. When they got to the third case they could deal with it. He would support the amendment.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the argument of the member for Ipswich applied just as much to any other widow in the land as to the widow of the unfortunate Denis Murphy. Every other woman who became a widow had just as good a right to send in a claim to the Government for the loss of her husband, and the hon. members who were prepared to vote for that motion should be prepared to vote for every one of them. He had moved the reduction to endeavour to deter some of those claims from coming in in future. If, next session, he saw that such claims were going to be passed wholesale by charitable-minded members without any attempt at reduction, he really would have to resort to the only way of defeating them—that was to say, obstruction. He was certain it would be the ruin of the country, as those claims would become so large in the end. Moreover, if the system was to be recognised it would take away from the people the necessity of becoming frugal and economical, and providing for their wives and families after their death. If the State was to provide for the wives and families of men engaged in the Public Service, its servants need have no thought for the future, and there would be no incitement to industry; a man's wife would perhaps rather benefit by his death than otherwise in some cases. With regard to the Darra accident cases, he thought a great many people had been paid too much, but because some people had been paid large sums for claims enforced through the courts that was no reason why the Committee should give money away in the wholesale manner proposed. If the person for whom that sum was asked had got judgment for the amount in the court, then he would be prepared to vote the money. It was a very cheap way of securing £100 or £200, or £1,000, to get it voted by that Committee, and he was really surprised that such a majority of the Committee had banded themselves together to vote away money in that wholesale fashion. He was not present when the motion which now stood third on the paper was brought forward or he would certainly have opposed that as he opposed the two smaller items. He knew it was recognised in all civilised nations of the world, as was shown in history, that provision should be made in exceptional cases for the widows and families of eminent men who had done the State very great service, and he recognised that principle, but he failed to see where that argument came in in any one of the cases on the paper. He would be willing to vote a sum of money to the widow of any man who had devoted his life to the service of the State, and in so doing had neglected his own interest.

Mr. WHITE said he rose to a point of order; the hon. member was referring to the third motion on the paper, the proposal to vote £1,000 to the widow of the late Mr. Justice Pring.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was speaking of the late Denis Murphy.

Mr. WHITE: He was not an eminent man.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was arguing that if the late Denis Murphy had been a very eminent man and devoted his whole life to the service of the State and rendered it very good service and had neglected to provide for his wife and family in so doing, then he might have been

entitled to some recognition from the State. But he was no more than any other ordinary citizen—no more than any of the true nobility whom the hon. member for Stanley represented, and out of whose pockets the money to provide for Murphy's widow would have to be obtained. He did not know whether the hon. member for Stanley intended to support the motion.

Mr. WHITE: No.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was very glad to hear it. If the principle involved in the motion were once conceded the State would have to provide for the widow of every man who died in its employ, whether he met his death by accident or by sickness.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought there was a certain amount of inconsistency in the argument of the hon. member who had just sat down, because, holding the views he had expressed, the proper course would be to negative the motion. The hon. member, however, did not do that, but proposed to reduce the amount asked for, which would still be establishing the principle. There was a great deal to be said in favour of the view taken by the hon. member for Cook, that money should not be voted in the way proposed. It might perhaps be, to a certain extent, an innovation on the practice of the House that a Standing Order should be made compelling all those claims to be first submitted to a select committee in order that evidence might be taken and sifted, and that a report, with the evidence, might be laid before hon. members setting forth the reasons why the money should be granted, if the claim was considered good. But although it might be an innovation, he (Mr. Morehead) thought it would be a good thing to adopt that course. As things stood at present, any hon. member who chose to take up the case of a constituent, or rather the widow of a late constituent, brought forward a motion in the House, and made what was really in most instances an *ex parte* statement, upon which the motion was passed by the House and afterwards submitted to the Committee. He thought that if the claim first went through the purging fire of a select committee there would be very much less chance of injustice being done to the taxpayers of the colony. He thought that hon. members very often allowed their feelings to get the better of their judgment, and altogether forgot that the money they so liberally dispensed to one and another was really not theirs, but money which the taxpayers of the colony had to find. Too little consideration was given to the matter in many cases, and he would like to see a system adopted of referring all such claims to a select committee. If in order, he would move that that claim be referred to a select committee.

The CHAIRMAN said he thought the hon. member would not be in order in moving it just now, as there was an amendment before the Committee.

Mr. ANNEAR said he took no part in the discussion on the question when it was before the House that day week, but he would give his vote that afternoon with very great pleasure in favour of the sum of £200 being granted to the widow of the late Denis Murphy. It had been stated that Denis Murphy was not a distinguished individual, but he thought that in giving that sum of £200 to his widow they would be doing a just act, and that Murphy was as much distinguished as some of those who were on the pension list of the colony and to whom they had to pay large sums of money every year. By paying that sum of £200 they would have done with the matter altogether. He believed the claim was a very just one. Some hon. members had got very careful that

afternoon. The other night, in about two hours, they voted nearly £50,000 for the Defence Force of the colony with scarcely any debate at all, and what were they getting for it? But that afternoon, when a sum of £200 was proposed to be granted to a widow who had lost her husband while he was engaged in the Public Service, hon. members demurred to it, and cavilled at it, and even proposed to reduce the amount as low as £10. He would vote for the other motions on the paper, and would give his reasons for so doing when they came on for discussion. As he stated just now, he did not speak on the question last week, but he intended to speak on the matter that afternoon. A great deal had been said about the principle of voting money in that way. If hon. members knew the whole facts of the case they would not have said so much that was calculated to hurt the feelings of the living.

Mr. BLACK said he was sorry to find that the question was not being discussed on its real merits. There could be no doubt in his mind that if the vote were allowed to pass it would be one of the most glaring instances of log-rolling that ever took place in that House. He would state plainly—and hon. members must know that what he said was correct—that those two votes, amounting altogether to £400, were the price at which the third vote of £1,000 was to be allowed to pass.

Mr. DONALDSON : Certainly not.

Mr. BLACK said that but for the third vote those two votes of £200 each would never have been put on the notice-paper; in fact they would never have been heard of, and now it appeared that if hon. members would swallow No. 3 they should have as their reward No. 1 and No. 2. He entirely agreed with everything that had fallen from the hon. member for Cook. Nothing whatever had been said to justify the principle on which those sums of money were going to be taken from the pockets of the taxpayers of the country. The hon. member for Maryborough said he would have great pleasure in voting the £200. Well, it was very easy to vote away other people's money. When the third vote was on the paper before he voted with others that it should be allowed to go into committee. The matter was stated by the hon. member for Blackall in such a way that hon. members were induced to refrain from saying anything that might hurt the feelings of the living. But now that they had had time to think over the question they ought to consider what the principle really was on which they were asked to vote those sums of money. He could see the injury the colony was likely to sustain by the thoughtless way in which many of them voted on that occasion. Had that vote stood alone, they might, for various fanciful and sentimental reasons, have allowed it to pass; but when they saw that that vote was to be purchased by paying £400 in addition, it was establishing a principle which he was sure hon. members could not endorse. If the Government were prepared to give a gratuity to the widow of every deceased public servant, let them discuss that question on its merits; but in the present case hon. members knew that the two votes of £200 each were put on the paper immediately after leave had been given to go into committee on No. 3, and £400 was the price which it would cost the country to pass that vote for £1,000. If the hon. member for Cook would carry out his idea he was prepared to support him. Those were cases where obstruction was really necessary, and he was prepared to obstruct No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3, until 6 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said his idea was not so much to block the present vote as to prevent

future claims of the same kind being made. The hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Annear) made an allusion to the pension list, which was no doubt a very heavy one for so young a colony. There was no doubt that many men were drawing substantial sums for services which they had rendered in the past, and which they were quite competent to go on rendering now—people who were drawing public money out of the colony and spending it in London or elsewhere. He did not consider those men were entitled to the money they were getting; but because that wrong existed and the taxpayers were suffering under it, that was no reason why they should seek to cast additional burdens upon the people of the country who were already quite sufficiently taxed. He was very much inclined to accept the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Balonne, and withdraw his amendment to allow it to be discussed.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I find I cannot move my amendment.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would ask the Chairman whether the withdrawal of his amendment would enable that suggested by the hon. member for Balonne to be put?

The CHAIRMAN : It is quite competent for the hon. member to withdraw his motion, but I have grave doubts as to whether the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Balonne can be put.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : We might ask for the Speaker's ruling on the question. In the meantime, with the permission of the Committee, I will withdraw my amendment.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that in order to simplify the question he would move that the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The PREMIER said he assumed that the object of the hon. member for Balonne was to have the case of Denis Murphy referred for inquiry to a select committee. He did not know what there was for a select committee to inquire into. They all knew that Denis Murphy was a man who had been in the employment of the Government for a good many years, and that he was killed by accident while doing his work. That was all there was in the case. It seemed to him that no additional information could be arrived at by the appointment of a select committee. The object of a select committee was to get information on which hon. members might form their own judgment. But in the present case they had all the facts before them, and a select committee could serve no purpose.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that a select committee, besides collecting and collating facts, brought up a report, stated a distinct issue, and recommended awards. He should like very much to see if a select committee could be found amongst hon. members to bring up a recommendation for the expenditure of public money in the reckless way proposed. Having been out of the House for some time, he was at a loss to understand the present position of affairs. He had thought that all claims like that before them had to go through a select committee before they could be submitted to the House. It appeared, however, that a member had simply to get a resolution of the House passed to get a sum of money voted, and all he had to do to accomplish that was to obtain a certain influence in the House, or to be able to command a certain number of votes, without having any evidence taken. That was a remarkably easy way of getting rid of the public money and of trifling with the funds which they were there to protect. Certainly some obstacle should be put in the

way of that kind of business. It was, therefore, very desirable that those matters should be referred to a select committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the remarks made by the Premier did not at all convince him that they would be justified in voting the money asked for. All such claims should be referred to a select committee. Members who knew the facts of the cases said the claims were just, but the Committee generally should be satisfied. The claims should therefore be relegated to a committee to sift the evidence, to find out the exact truth, and to arrive, if possible, at the actual damage or loss sustained. He did not think the Premier, as head of a Government which he supposed did all they could to preserve the taxpayers' money, should object to any step being taken which would bring out to almost an absolute certainty the exact amount which could be claimed against the State. If the principle of dealing with those cases which was now suggested were adopted there would be much fewer appeals to the Supreme Court. Matters of that kind would be relegated to that House, and less substantial damages would be given than were awarded by juries. The recommendations of a select committee, moreover, would not be final, as they would have to be dealt with by the House. The present would be a very good time for commencing the select committee method of dealing with those matters.

Mr. SCOTT said that, as a motion was passed by the House last week ordering that the question of an address to the Governor praying that £200 be granted to the widow of the late Denis Murphy, the committee were bound to take the question into consideration and deal with it. They could not get away from an order of the House. No doubt the Chairman could leave the chair and report progress, but that would not meet the difficulty. It would be a very irregular practice to carry the motion to report progress. The proposition to appoint a select committee should have been made before the order he referred to was made by the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said he was very glad that hon. members were beginning to understand the question at issue. He thoroughly agreed with the hon. member for Cook. What was the difference between a man employed by a contractor in building a railway and a man who was in the Government Service? He found, for one thing, that there were a great many more applications for employment in the Government Service compared with what there were for employment by private individuals. Men looked upon the Government Service as a paradise, and when they got into it they did what was called the "Government stroke." The departments were flooded with applications for employment in the paradise where men could slum their work. And now hon. members were actually going to make provision for "Government stroke" employes in case of any accident happening to them. In his opinion, the men employed by contractors were just as much entitled to have that kind of provision made for them as any in the Government Service. He could not see the difference. All paid taxes. The principle sought to be introduced was a pernicious one altogether. He had always opposed it, and it always would have his opposition. He hoped the three motions would be rejected.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he did not see that any good was to be gained by referring the question to a select committee. All that such a committee could arrive at was that the man was killed in the performance of his duty, and that he had left a wife and four children. Hon. mem-

bers knew all that already. That was the whole case, and the appointment of a select committee would only result in a waste of money. Moreover, no committee would refuse to give the little sum of money asked for the widow of a man who was killed in the service of the Government. He hoped the present Committee of the whole House would come to a decision on the matter.

Question—That the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 19.

Messrs. Miles, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Donaldson, Norton, Stevenson, Campbell, Buckland, McMaster, Black, Palmer, Morehead, Lumley Hill, Lissner, Govett, Ferguson, Higgin, and Hamilton.

NOES, 20.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Chubb, Griffith, Sheridan, Bailey, Foote, Macfarlane, Scott, Beattie, Mellor, Smyth, White, Annear, Isambert, Macrossan, Jordan, Salkeld, Horwitz, and Foxton.

Question resolved in the negative.

Original question put.

Mr. BLACK said he would like to get some information from the hon. member for Ipswich as to whether Murphy's widow was in indigent circumstances? Also, how the money, if voted, was likely to be applied? In fact, general information as to her circumstances—which they were entitled to have before voting the money.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he did not hear what the hon. member had said.

Mr. BLACK said he was generally in the habit of speaking very distinctly, but perhaps the hon. gentleman did not want to hear him.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: There was some noise going on here.

Mr. BLACK: He wished to know what was to become of the £200 if voted? How many children the widow had?—whether any means had been adopted by which the children would really receive the benefit of the money, which was evidently what the Committee intended?—whether the widow was in indigent circumstances?—and whether any precaution had been taken that she should get the money rather than, perhaps, some creditors of her late husband—in fact, general information about the whole case that the Committee had not had yet?

Mr. MACFARLANE said the hon. member for Mackay was unfortunately not present when he (Mr. Macfarlane) gave all the information now asked for. The widow had been left with four children, the eldest about fourteen years of age, the youngest about five. The eldest girl had commenced work, but owing to her eyes giving way she had to give it up, and was not now in a condition to work. He believed, however, that it would not be very serious—that she would not lose her sight; and when she got better she would be able to go to work again. The man was only a working navvy, but he was a very steady man, never spending more than was necessary, and he had not left his widow in indigent circumstances—that was to say, she was not left in poverty. The only property she had was the house she lived in, so that she was rent-free. There had been two trustees appointed, and if the money was granted it would go into their hands. She had no debts whatever—no storekeeper's or other bills to meet. Those were the circumstances of the case. The man was killed while at work, and he (Mr. Macfarlane) might say that he never supported any claim of the kind unless where people were killed in the Government Service. He had always opposed such claims under any other circumstances ever since he had been in the House, but he should always support claims when persons were killed

in the Railway service, unless some insurance system was adopted by which some provision could be made for the females of the workmen. He might say that the man who stood side by side with Murphy when he was killed came to him a few days ago, and in talking about the matter even went the length of saying that it was a pity such a claim had been brought forward; and suggested that the Minister for Works should adopt some plan of stopping so much of every man's wages, so that if an accident or a death happened the widows could be paid back the money. Those claims had been coming before the Committee from year to year, and would never be stopped until some kind of insurance fund were established out of which such claims could be met.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was under the apprehension that if the plan were adopted of stopping certain amounts from the wages of men employed in the Government Service, the hon. member for Ipswich would be the first to complain about it. He would ask the hon. gentleman if Denis Murphy was a member of any benefit society?

Mr. MACFARLANE: Not to my knowledge.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman ought to have ascertained that before he introduced his motion. The hon. gentleman had simply tabled the motion because that of the hon. member for Blackall had progressed one stage. It was not because he had any sympathy with the widow at all. He was perfectly satisfied that if the hon. gentleman would get up and speak the truth he would say that he tabled the motion because the House had allowed that of the hon. member for Blackall to go into committee. He had been given to understand that the widow in question was tolerably well-off.

Mr. FOOTE: What do you call "well-off"?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said she had a home, and some means; but that had nothing to do with the question. They were there to protect the public interests, and he maintained that if they were justified in voting away money for the widows of men who had met with accidents in the Government Service they were bound to pay for every accident that occurred, even if the men were employed by contractors. He could not see that because a man happened to be favoured by getting into the Government Service, provision should be made for his family; and he hoped the Committee would vote against all the motions.

Mr. FERGUSON said he quite agreed with what the hon. Minister for Works had said. He could not see what claims any of those persons had more than any other taxpayer in the colony, and he intended to vote against the three motions. He had been asked to bring just such another claim as that before the Committee, where a husband had died leaving a widow and two children; but he declined to do so because he did not believe in the principle. That had happened in two cases, and how could he decline next session if such motions as the present were passed? He could not do so with justice to the widow. It only showed what the Committee would come to if they allowed motions of the kind to pass, and it proved clearly what course they ought to pursue. There were scores of cases quite as justifiable as the present, and he could not see upon what terms they could claim the money any more than officers of any other department; they were always in connection with the Railway Department. Supposing any official in the Post Office fell downstairs and broke his neck, his widow would have as much right to make such a

claim as if her husband were killed on a railway. Suppose an officer died through the Government having unhealthy buildings, which in many cases they had, his widow would have just the same right. It was opening the door to scores of claims of the same kind, and there must be a stop to it. That was quite clear, and the present was the right time to do so. He was in Rockhampton when the hon. member for Blackall introduced his motion that £1,000 should be granted to the widow of the late Judge Pring, and every voice was against it. It would be a most unpopular thing amongst the taxpayers of the colony. He had seen but one man who was in favour of such a motion; and if the Committee were to be led in that way many other claims would come; they should not sacrifice the money of the taxpayers in that way. He would oppose that motion, and both the others as well.

Mr. GOVETT said he would take the same line of action with regard to the motion under discussion as he took in reference to that introduced by the hon. member for Blackall. He intended to oppose them all, and he thought that the Committee would do well to put a stop to them, because there was a spirit abroad that in cases of this kind people should fly to the Government for relief. That sort of thing had been allowed to go on growing, and would do a great deal of harm to the colony. If it were allowed to go on, people would not try to make provision for their widows and see that they were left in good circumstances if they themselves happened to be killed, or died from any other cause. He did not look upon a death by a railway accident as any worse than death through catching a cold, or anything of that sort; it was exactly the same to the widow; and he thought the sooner such claims were put a stop to the better.

Mr. McMASTER said it was possible that, being the youngest member but one in the Committee, he ought not to say anything upon the matter. He voted for the question to go into committee, and must say that, although he was opposed to log-rolling in any form, he had an idea that had the motion of the hon. member for Blackall not been upon the paper to be referred to the committee, the other motions would not have been brought forward. He voted for going into committee because he was not present when the discussion took place, and he wanted to hear what the case of each was. He certainly should vote against the granting of that £200, because, like many hon. members who had spoken before, he thought it was a bad precedent, and one that ought not to be sanctioned. Within the last six weeks two deaths had occurred in Fortitude Valley. The first man left a large family of young children. He was in the employ of the Government, but was a hard-working, honest, industrious man, and the public took up the question, and in three or four days a sum of £50 was collected for his family. In the other case the death occurred through an accident on the tramway. A subscription list was opened, and when it came to him it was headed with a very respectable sum. He therefore thought that the people employed on the Government works in and around Ipswich who had known that man—and there must be many who knew him, as he was in the employment of the Government for nineteen years—would, if asked, contribute a sum almost equal to the £200 asked for by the hon. member for Ipswich. When such motions were brought forward, they were really asked to give money contributed in the shape of taxes by the widows and orphans of other men. He should oppose the three motions on the ground that the Committee should not be asked to vote public money in the manner proposed.

Mr. NORTON said that if he had been present when the motion was first brought forward he should have voted against it, because it was his rule to oppose all such attacks on the Treasury. The hon. member for Ipswich had not made out a very strong case. The widow and children were not left destitute, and he did not know whether the man's life had been insured.

Mr. MACFARLANE: No.

Mr. NORTON: The hon. member for Ipswich did not know whether the man left any money in the Savings Bank; but he told the Committee that he left a cottage to the widow. Though the widow and family were entitled to their sympathy, it was unreasonable that they should be asked to vote them public money. It was their duty to protect the interests of their constituents, and vote against money being granted in the manner proposed; and he should therefore oppose the motion.

Mr. KELLETT said he meant to do the very opposite, and should give his reasons. When the resolution was first brought forward it was shown that the man was killed in the execution of his duty. He was an old and faithful servant of the State, having been for nineteen years in the service of the great colony of Queensland; and, to his mind, it would be a disgrace to the country and the people generally if the families of those who lost their lives while doing their duty in the service of the State were not looked after by the Government. It was well pointed out the other night that, in the old country, and in Queensland also, he was happy to say, private employers and large companies assisted the families of men who had served them a long time, and were killed in their service. He had known many instances where men had lost their lives in private employment, but he never knew an instance where the employers had not put their hands into their pockets, and also induced others to assist the widows and orphans. It showed a poor, paltry, miserable spirit, to say that the motion was a bad precedent. The word "precedent" was greatly abused in the present case, as he did not think there was any precedent at all in the matter. If they voted money to-day for a specified purpose, that was no reason why they should vote a sum to-morrow for another purpose. If there was any precedent in the matter he thought it was a good one. He was only sorry that the amount was not larger, because when a man had served the State so well his widow and orphans were entitled to more money than was asked for in the motion. The Government should take the matter in hand, and see that Government servants were provided for in a better way; and that better way would be to establish an accident fund to which the men themselves must subscribe. If there were a wiser Minister for Works than the present, he believed such a fund would be instituted without any further delay; and he had no doubt the hon. gentleman would take that into his able consideration, and in his wisdom would, probably before next session, establish such a fund. In the absence of any other provision, it would be a disgrace to them as a Legislature to refuse the sum asked for to the widow of a public servant who had died in the service of the State.

Mr. NORTON said, in answer to a remark which fell from the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. Kellett), that the Government were not in the position of private employers, but they were in the position of a public company. A private employer could do what he liked with his money, but the directors of a public company could not, without the consent of the shareholders, take upon themselves to compensate the relatives of anyone who was killed in the service of the

company. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. McMaster, put the matter very strongly when he said that in voting the sum asked for they would be really asking other widows and orphans to contribute, as taxpayers, towards the money.

Mr. CHUBB said the case before the Committee and the arguments that had been adduced against the motion of the hon. member for Ipswich seemed to be put on a false footing. The hon. gentleman who had just sat down said they were not in the position of private employers. Perhaps they were not; but they were there representing the people whose money had to be expended. The money belonged to the people, and they sent hon. members there to spend their money for them, and put no check upon the way in which they should spend it beyond that they were supposed to spend it in a wise, lawful, honourable, and generous manner. Now, anyone who looked at the past history of that House could not find any fixed or intelligible principle upon which claims of that kind had been dealt with; but they were asked now, all at once, to say, "From this time forth no public servants or their relatives shall receive any assistance." That was what hon. members said. It might be that during the last twenty-four years it had been the practice to recognise the claims of public servants, but now, at that moment, they should stop and say no further claims should be recognised. Hon. members should look at the pension list, and they would find a sum of £250 a year was voted and passed by Act of Parliament—and he did not object to it—to the widow of a member of the Legislature who occupied a very high position. Last year they voted £1,000 to the widow of another distinguished member of that House. There were plenty of instances that could be adduced to support that case, and other cases if necessary, but he would go further, and call the attention of the Committee to an Act which was passed in 1884—the Defence Act of last session. Clause 65 said:—

"When any officer or man is killed in active service, or dies from wounds or disease contracted on active service, provision shall be made for his wife and family out of the public funds."

Where was the distinction in principle between a case of that kind and one of the kind before the Committee? Men were employed in the Defence Force; they were paid high remuneration; they had not much to do while not on active service except to learn the discharge of their duties, and when they were killed or disabled provision was made out of the public funds. He did not say that was an improper position.

Mr. NORTON: There is an agreement in that case.

Mr. CHUBB said, of course, there was no agreement in the case before them, and he said at once that persons who came before the House for relief had no legal claims. They could not demand consideration as a right; but they simply said, "We ask the favourable and generous consideration of the House to these cases." He (Mr. Chubb) said, on principle, they could make no distinction. In past years they had met claims of that kind, and it was too late for them to say that they would not give fair consideration to such claims. Did the Government consult the public, or did the House consult the public, when the yacht "Lucinda" was ordered; or did they consult the public when voting money for various other purposes? He said again, as he had said before, that the Government should institute an accident insurance fund, or compel their employers to insure their lives; but until that was done they could not, in justice, having regard to past precedents, refuse to favourably consider cases of that kind.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said none of the speakers on that question had pointed out any difference between the claims of Civil servants and those who worked upon their own hook—such as miners, carriers, and so forth. Every one of the taxpayers of the colony were servants of the State, and most of them had done good service to the State. Why should their widows and orphans not be provided for? He saw very plainly that those kinds of votes were passed first with a generous impulse which no doubt did great credit to hon. members; but he noticed a great difference in the division that had taken place that afternoon and that which had taken place last week. Hon. members had since had time to think the matter over and see the effect which would be produced if such motions were passed. He had been informed by several hon. members that they had claims to bring forward. He had no doubt there would be a very good crop of them, and he most certainly should bring forward any claim that came under his notice in favour of persons outside the Government Service, who, as he had said, had just as much claim on the State as Civil servants themselves. Men in the Government Service, he presumed, went into it and stayed there because they got better pay, and perhaps had less work to do. It was of their own choice that they went into the service, and they need not remain in it unless they liked. He objected to the way in which Civil servants had been spoken of, which seemed to indicate that they should be treated in an utterly different manner to persons outside the service, and that they should be compelled to insure their lives in order to provide for their widows and families. He did not see that the Civil servants needed such careful wet-nursing and looking after as all that; they were very well able to take care of themselves—as well able as people outside the service. It would very likely be a good thing if they could make every man in the country insure his life, but he did not see how they were going to do that; and why they should fix upon the Civil servants as a class, and not compel any other class to insure their lives, he could not see. Further than that, he did not understand how the Minister for Works could be held accountable for people not insuring their lives. The country was a free country, and men could do as they pleased. Why should not the State provide for those men whom the junior member for Stanley had described, who were industrious and thrifty, and had shown true metal in providing for their wives and families, and introducing civilisation into what had been a wilderness? He saw that some hon. members had cooled down and changed their opinions; and, he thought, quite rightly; he had a respect for men who, when they saw they were going wrong, had the courage to retrace their steps. He could quite understand those votes slipping through under the impulse of kind and generous feelings, but the public outside would wonder where the thing was going to stop. He supposed they were committed to give something, but the amount should be made as small as possible.

Mr. FOXTON said a great deal had been said about the difference between the Government and private employers, but he thought the speech of the hon. member for Bowen must be convincing on that point to any person inclined to be at all unbiased in the matter. A great deal was also said about the danger which lay in the passage of that vote, because it would be a precedent. Now, he claimed the vote of any hon. member who used that argument, because they had already a number of well established precedents, and they ought to continue following those precedents until some other provision had been made, such as previous speakers had

sketched out. Last year they voted to the widow of a man who lost his life on the railway in the performance of his duty, not a mere gratuity of £200, but what was equivalent to £2,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was entirely a different case.

Mr. FOXTON said there was not the slightest difference in principle. Denis Murphy, whose case was now before them, lost his life in the performance of his duty in the employ of the Government; and the unfortunate engine-driver, Griffiths, also lost his life while performing his duty. The widow of Griffiths was voted £100 a year, which, capitalised at 5 per cent.—a great deal more than the Government paid for their money—was £2,000. Look at that vote to Mrs. Griffiths, to which the House was pledged during her lifetime, then if precedent was to be of any value, and they were to deal out even-handed justice, the sum now asked should be a great deal larger. An hon. member asked where the money was to come from? But they had nothing to do with that now. The precedent had been established, and why should they make “fish of one and flesh of another”? Until an intelligent scheme was adopted by which they would be relieved from those precedents they were bound to continue them. In that respect he agreed entirely with the opinion expressed by the hon. member for Townsville in the previous debate on the subject; that hon. member said he voted for the motion in order to force the hands of those in authority, and compel them, by the pressure of public opinion, to adopt some scheme for putting a stop to those continual raids on the Treasury. One hon. member admitted having given his vote thoughtlessly for going into committee; but he denied that he (Mr. Foxton), or a majority of those who voted to go into committee, had voted thoughtlessly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was no comparison between the two cases mentioned by the hon. member. One man was killed by his own carelessness, having been warned over and over again to get out of the way of danger; while the engine-driver had been ordered away by the station-master—sent to his death. Griffiths was not in any way to blame; he was bound to go; and his family deserved every sixpence they got.

Mr. CHUBB: They had no legal claim.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was a just claim. The hon. member for Stanley said the Minister for Works ought to compel the men to insure their lives. If he did so the hon. member would be the first to get up and denounce the Minister for Works for his tyranny. It was all very well for members to talk in that way. There was an insurance office in connection with the Colonial Treasurer's Department, and not a single soul insured his life in it. All the machinery was there. If the country was going to be called upon to vote money in the way proposed for the widows of men in the Public Service who had been killed by accident, they might just as well be asked to make provision for the families of those who died a natural death, as they had to be supported just the same. If that was going to be done some action would have to be taken, and probably the object the hon. members had in view could be accomplished by informing all persons in the Public Service that if they did not avail themselves of the opportunity to insure their lives within so many months they would have to put up with the consequences; but the Government that introduced such a system would be bound to get into trouble.

Mr. KELLETT: No.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member said "No," but he would be the very first to kick up a row with them for compelling people to insure their lives, and thus interfering with their private arrangements.

Mr. DONALDSON said he was afraid that that case and similar ones were more likely to enlist their sympathies than their better and sounder judgments. The claim might be looked upon as an equitable one, because a servant of the Government through an unfortunate accident lost his life and left behind him a wife and family. They were entitled to some compensation for his death. Certainly accidents might be brought about entirely by the carelessness of the persons who were killed. Nevertheless, that did not do away with the fact that those depending upon the unfortunate individual who lost his life had been deprived of his services. He knew that that was a very broad question. He thought that the opposition shewn to the motion that evening would have a very good effect indeed. It was high time that all persons in the Government Service, earning a stated salary, should make some provision for the future by insuring their lives. The first thing that any thoughtful private person did was to try and secure some money for those whom he might leave behind at his death. There could be no doubt that considerable laxity in that matter had existed among public servants hitherto—that they took less interest in the subject than they should do. Men in the Public Service who had a sufficiently good income to make some provision for their families by insurance should do so, he thought; and he believed that the fact of that motion being opposed would make such persons more thoughtful with reference to provision for the future, as they would see that the Committee would not be so likely to recognise claims for gratuities as they had done previously. No hard-and-fast rule could be laid down for the guidance of hon. members in those matters, but he thought that all of those claims could be justly considered on their merits. He was, however, of opinion that such claims should be first submitted to a select committee, who would be in a position to examine witnesses and obtain evidence which could certainly not be elicited by any member introducing a motion of that kind in the House, or by any other hon. member. It could not be expected that all hon. members should know the facts of the case; and if the precaution were taken of referring the matter to a select committee for investigation it would clear the way very much for hon. members who did not know exactly what they were voting for. He confessed that he felt very great difficulty with regard to that motion, because they were informed that the late Mr. Murphy was many years in the Government Service, that during that time he was a very good servant, and that as his death was an untimely one they could reasonably take into account the proposal that his wife and family should receive some compensation. The amount of that compensation was a matter of detail, which the Committee were competent to deal with. He really trusted that the Civil servants, or persons in the employ of the Government, would get a little more thoughtful and insure their lives, so that they would not have those claims coming up before hon. members as often as they had done in the past. But the claims would probably become more numerous in the future if some provision for insurance was not made by the persons concerned. He had already remarked that they could not be guided by any hard-and-fast rule in cases of that kind, but he thought it was quite competent for that Committee, if they thought fit, to recognise such claims as had been brought before them. There

had been some eminent men in the world who had devoted the whole of their lives to advancing the progress and prosperity of their country, and there were colonial statesmen who had neglected their private interest in furthering the national prosperity. When men who had neglected their private interest for the public good—who had really done a great many things for the country in which they lived—died, he thought it would be quite competent and just to recognise such cases and make ample provision for the widows and families whom they left behind. That might be said to be departing from the ordinary rule; some people might say that it was making one law for the rich man—or rather for the man who should be rich—and another for the poor man, but he contended that it was nothing of the sort. Any man, in whatever walk of life he might be occupied, might be a good man in his particular position; but their statesmen were men who neglected more of their private interest in doing good for their country than other persons, and for that reason he voted the other night for the motion proposing to grant £1,000 to Mrs. Pring. He felt he was pledged to support that, but with regard to any other claims that had come before them since, he was quite prepared to record his vote for their reduction if he saw it was desirable to do so.

Mr. KELLETT said he should not have spoken again on that question had it not been for the remarks that had fallen from the hon. Minister for Works. It was quite evident to everybody that he was trying to get out of it, but he had got out of it in a very lame way indeed. He did not know whether his hon. friend the Colonial Treasurer had been speaking to him specially on that subject, but if he had not he (Mr. Kellett) could not understand the action of the Minister for Works. The hon. gentleman had gone entirely out of his way in opposing the motion, and had been going round the back benches to try to influence hon. members to talk till 6 o'clock so as to talk the matter out. He thought that was an unseemly thing for a Minister of the Crown to do. The hon. gentleman had gone round to the back benches trying to mislead young members like the hon. member for Fortitude Valley; and he (Mr. Kellett) thought the intelligence of that Committee would see that a vote of censure should be passed on the Minister for Works, because it was not fair, seeing the position of strength that he held, that he should go touting in that way. It was enough for him to give a nod to let members know "that the next time you come to me I will not do much for you if you pass this motion." That was quite enough; a nod was as good as a wink, and the hon. gentleman had no occasion to go round to tell members in so many words what he would do. If those were the tactics of the hon. gentleman the session was likely to last a very long time; for it would be the duty of every member worth his salt to stop there for Friday after Friday for six months, if necessary, until the motion was carried. There were some hon. members behind him who had got their backs up in consequence of the action of the Minister for Works, and when they once got their backs up it would take a long time to get the hump off again. They would see the matter out, no matter how many Fridays they devoted to it. Hon. members should not be blinded to the real merits of the case. The man was killed while doing his duty, and whether he was careless or not had nothing whatever to do with the question. Carelessness in that case meant excess of zeal, and a readiness to risk life in what the man considered to be the performance of his duty.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that one or two matters had been referred to in the course of the debate which ought to be seriously considered. The matter to which he would chiefly refer was with regard to the facilities afforded to employes in the Public Service for getting their lives insured. It was very easy for hon. members to say that the Government ought to introduce a system of life insurance so as to protect the country from claims of that character being made by widows and relatives of deceased public servants. But it was a statement much easier to be made than to be carried into effect. If it was contended, as it seemed to be by some hon. members, that the Government should themselves become the assurers of their employes, the Government would be placed at a great disadvantage. An attempt had been made by Government, in former years, to open a life assurance, but it had been practically inoperative; it had never done anything like the amount of business transacted in life assurance by outside companies. There was every facility now for employes in the Government Service being insured by outside companies at a very much lower premium than the Government could possibly charge them in order to make the business self-supporting. The Government, in fact, were not in a position to undertake such a responsibility. They could not charge the premium which would make the fund self-supporting, in competition with the very great facilities which were given, particularly at the present time, by the life assurance companies who were competing in that line of business. Nor did he see how the Government could insist upon their employes being insured with some of the outside companies. In many cases their lives would not be accepted.

Mr. FOXTON: There is no examination for accident insurance.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the argument he was contesting was for life insurance, not accident insurance, and it was not necessary to say more than that was not a kind of business which the Government could take up. With regard to the question before the Committee, he did not share the opinion of the hon. member for Carnarvon, that the argument of the hon. member for Bowen was conclusive, that because a special concession had been made to the Defence Force, therefore it should be made to every other branch of the Public Service. It was never intended, when the Defence Act was framed, that other members of the Public Service should claim privileges which had been specially given as an encouragement to men to enrol themselves in the Defence Force of the colony. Without wishing to take up the time of the Committee longer, he would state that his opinion was this: that if they assented to those claims at the present time they ought absolutely to accept the position of making a grant of money to the widow of every man who died in the Public Service. Without wasting time in wrangling over such paltry matters, they ought to accept the position fairly with all the responsibilities entailed by it. He, as Colonial Treasurer, was not prepared to accept that position. Those were cases where private benevolence should step in. He respected hon. members for the sympathy they showed for the suffering, but they should show that sympathy in a practical form, and put their hands in their own pockets without being liberal with other people's money.

Mr. McMASTER said he should not have spoken again but for the statement of the hon. member for Stanley, that the Minister for Works had gone round the back benches touting, and particularly the young and innocent member

for Fortitude Valley. He could assure that hon. member that he was possessed of a pair of good lungs, and was prepared to sit not only till 6 o'clock, if he saw a raid being made on the public funds, but till 6 o'clock in the morning. He could also assure the hon. member that he had a mind of his own, and that he was not to be influenced by the Minister for Works, or the hon. member for Stanley, or any other hon. member, unless they could show him that their arguments were just and reasonable, and could convince him that his own opinion was wrong and theirs right. The hon. member had said it would be a disgrace for the Committee to say that they would not pay that money to the widow of a deserving servant of the Government. He should like to know from the hon. member who introduced the motion something about the man who was killed. It appeared that Murphy had been a very industrious, respectable man, otherwise he would not have left his wife in possession of a cottage, and almost free of debt. He must have been very sober and industrious to have saved sufficient out of his 6s. 6d. a day to have erected the cottage. The Minister for Works had said that Murphy had also a deposit in the Savings Bank, and that being so, it was all the more to the man's credit. All that showed that Murphy was a worthy servant, no matter whether of the Government or of a private employer. Seeing, then, that Murphy had been so long in the Government Service, and was so industrious, he (Mr. McMaster) would ask whether he was not also a member of some friendly society? In these days great facilities were afforded to every man to make provision, in view of his death, for his wife and family. Industrious working men could join the Oddfellows or some other friendly society by paying small sums into them, and at their death their families were cared for. It was probable—judging from his industrious character—that Murphy was a member of some friendly society, and in that case his widow must have got some assistance at his death. The widow in that case must have got his funeral expenses, besides a further sum of money. It was also the custom of those societies when a member died—certain hon. members were talking, and unless they ceased their conversation he could not continue his remarks. At the same time, if they thought they could bamboozle him they were mistaken. He was saying that, as a rule, the friendly societies not only paid a certain sum, at the death of a member, to his widow, but generally got up a subscription amongst themselves for her assistance in addition. They also made appeals to the general public, and the consequence was that, as a rule, the widow got far more than would be given in such a case by that Committee. One hon. member had made a remark about Griffiths, the engine-driver who was killed. Now, he (Mr. McMaster) maintained that Griffiths was a hero, inasmuch as he risked his own life, when he might have saved it, in an attempt to save the lives of other people. Like an Englishman, or Scotchman, or true Briton, he stood to his post in the moment of danger, and boldly endeavoured to save the lives of those he was in charge of. In his case and that of Murphy's there was no analogy. He (Mr. McMaster) was saying nothing against the man Murphy. He was simply opposing the proposed vote because he thought a mistake would be made if it were carried. Were they to virtually ask other widows and orphans to contribute or to allow Parliament to hand over their earnings to widows and orphans who were probably in far better circumstances than themselves? He did not mean to say that no case could come before the Committee in which they would not be justified in granting

a sum of money. Widows and children whose bread-winners might be killed or who might die in the active service of defending the lives and properties of the people generally ought, for instance, to be protected. They would be perfectly justified in maintaining the wives and orphans of those who went boldly into danger to protect the properties and lives of the people. The Committee, however, had no right to vote away the people's money in the loose way proposed. Being the custodians of the public revenue they ought to spend it wisely and judiciously, and not to vote it away carelessly and recklessly. They had to remember that they were not voting away their own money, but the money of people who had to work hard to maintain themselves and their families owing to their natural bread-winners having been taken from them.

Mr. FOXTON said after the treat the Committee had had in listening to the aldermanic discourse of the hon. member there was no occasion for him to say that he had good lungs. He (Mr. Foxton) was surprised, however, that the hon. member did not make his lungs last eleven minutes longer in accordance with the instructions he got from his worthy monitor, the Minister for Works. He was sorry the Minister for Works was not now present, for when he went round the back benches, and put up members such as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley — good-lunged men—to talk until 6 o'clock, he should remain and listen to their performance. It was evident that the question before the Chair was to be talked out in accordance with the resolve of the Minister for Works. As an ardent supporter of the Ministry, and as one who looked with some degree of interest on the Estimates for Works, which had yet to be passed, he did not hesitate to say that the Minister had made a grave mistake in teaching his supporters how to obstruct. If the matter could not be talked out now there was a time when it could be talked out. The Minister for Works,—he was sorry the hon. gentleman was not present to hear what he said—he hoped he would read it,—need, not imagine that because it was now ten minutes to 6 o'clock he was going to stifle discussion, burk the question, and not submit to fair and free argument. There were certain items on the hon. gentleman's Estimates which would give rise to very serious comment on the part of those whom he had so studiously instructed in the art of obstruction; and they might be talked out, but not in the interests of the Minister for Works.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Here he comes!

Mr. FOXTON: He was only sorry the hon. gentleman was not present to hear what he had said before. He (Mr. Foxton) had no compunction in talking, because he saw it was resolved that the matter should be shirked and burked by the Government.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. FOXTON: He could only say in reply to the hon. the Premier that he (Mr. Foxton) saw the Minister for Works go to the back benches and heard him ask the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and others to talk it out; and he contended that when the Minister for Works took up that position, in a matter which affected his own department, the Government were responsible for it; at any rate the Minister for Works was. He had a word or two to say with regard to the remarks of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, who had made a great deal of the difficulty there would be in inaugurating a scheme of life assurance. The whole of the hon. gentleman's argument applied to life assurance pure and simple, not to accident assurance; and, as he (Mr. Foxton) interjected at the time, there was no medical examination of candidates for accident assurance. It had not been contended

during the present debate that the widow of a Government employé dying a natural death, or not being killed while in performance of his duty, should receive compensation. The principle had been laid down by those who advocated this vote, that a man must lose his life by accident or violence in the performance of his duty to entitle his widow to receive consideration. Eight shillings per annum would be all the expense required to insure the payment of £100, or 16s. for £200, the sum asked by the resolution before the Committee. There was nothing so very difficult or extraordinary in that. He had said all he had to say on the subject. He had no intention of talking the matter out, and hoped the Committee would go to a division on it at once.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman was entirely mistaken in supposing that the Government had any intention of shirking the question. By the last division the motion of the hon. member for Balonne was negatived by a majority of one. He (the Premier) voted against that motion simply on the ground that he thought the matter ought to be disposed of at once one way or the other. He did not think there was any use referring it to a select committee, and hoped it would be determined at once.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he was very pleased that the discussion had taken place. It would give the ratepayers of the colony an opportunity of judging how their money was being squandered if the vote was carried in the way in which it had been proposed. He had voted for the motion of the hon. member for Blackall about three weeks ago with the hope that the amount would be considerably reduced in committee, but immediately after that they found two hon. members who had opposed that motion each coming forward with a similar motion. If that sort of thing was to go on they did not know where it would end. Furthermore, there were other widows and orphans in the colony who were taxpayers, and he would ask, was it fair that they, who were in some cases left in worse circumstances than those for whose benefit this claim was made, should be asked to contribute towards the cases now brought forward? In reference to the remarks of the hon. member for Carnarvon, to the effect that the hon. the Minister for Works went round the back benches and asked members to talk it out, he (Mr. Campbell) could, so far as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was concerned, exonerate the Minister for Works on that point, because he was sitting next to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, and the hon. gentleman never said anything of the kind in his hearing.

Mr. FOXTON: I heard him myself; we all heard him.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The hon. gentleman might have said it to some members on the back bench, but certainly he never said anything of the kind to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. He did not know whether it was himself (Mr. Campbell) or the hon. member for Cook who suggested that the matter should be talked out. He believed it was the hon. member for Cook who suggested it to him, and he quite fell in with the idea; and he, for one, was prepared to stop there until 6 o'clock in the morning and assist in talking it out.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had no doubt the Minister for Works was guilty of a great many offences, but in the present case he believed he had been saddled with an offence which he (Mr. Lumley Hill) had committed, for he had suggested that the matter should be talked out. He had done that kind of thing before. He remembered when the claim of Dr. Hobbs came before the House, about seven years ago, he and one or two others stopped it going through

the only means they had at their command—obstruction. He believed it had been made all right for the vote to go through; but he considered that Dr. Hobbs had not the slightest claim upon the country, and he was very glad to see that when the same claim came before the House recently, members had come round to his way of thinking, and it was summarily disposed of. Obstruction seemed to be the only way in which those jobs could be got rid of or thwarted. He looked upon the whole of those claims as jobs, and hon. members could hardly have looked forward to the seed they were sowing for themselves in supporting such claims. He was very glad to hear that the hon. member for Aubigny called attention to the fact that two members who had voted against one claim that came before the House a few weeks ago, immediately after it was passed each came forward with a little job of his own. Every hon. member could find plenty of those jobs, which might appeal very keenly to the sympathies of individual members of the Committee and about which a very good tale might be made, but why should burdens of that kind be placed upon other widows and orphans amongst the general taxpayers of the colony? He certainly thought that at least cases of that kind should go through the formality of a select committee. The case of Dr. Hobbs did go before a select committee and it was sifted a little in select committee; but here, the hon. member for Ipswich brought forward this claim, although he did not know whether the widow had any money in the Savings Bank; whether her late husband was a member of a friendly society or not. In fact, he knew very little about it, and coolly asked that £200 should be given slap off; but he (Mr. Lumley Hill) did not intend to let it pass if he could possibly help it.

The PREMIER said it was understood last night that the House would not sit after 6 o'clock that evening, and the question had better be settled at once whether they would meet again after tea. He thought it was only fair that the arrangements that had been made should be carried out. He did not like to move the Chairman out of the chair in a matter of that kind, but perhaps the hon. gentleman in charge of the motion would do so. He did not think it would be possible to get a House after tea, and he thought it would be advisable for the hon. member to move that the Chairman leave the chair and obtain leave to sit again.

Mr. MACFARLANE moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed; the House resumed, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Friday next.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

The SPEAKER said: I would like to put the House right in regard to a statement which I understand has been made to the effect that the motion of the hon. member for Blackall ought to have been placed first on the business-paper for to-day. I desire to point out that the motion of that hon. member, when carried, was, "That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole"—consequently it was placed on the notice-paper every day, but Government business took precedence of it; whereas the two motions proposed by the hon. member for Ipswich, and the hon. member for Wide Bay distinctly affirmed that "the House, on the 9th October, shall go into Committee of the Whole." Consequently they stood first on the notice-paper. I wish to point this out in order to show that there has been no irregularity on the part of the officers of the House in arranging the business paper. It has been done precisely in the ordinary way in which the business of the House is conducted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. On Tuesday, after formal business, and the consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendments in the Victoria Bridge Closure Bill, which are of a formal nature, we propose to take the Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Bill in committee, and then to proceed with Supply. With regard to the Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Bill, I take this opportunity of saying that the Government propose to withdraw the 6th clause, relating to the erection of buildings on less than sixteen perches of land. We propose to substitute for that a provision prohibiting future subdivision of land into smaller areas than that; so that the Bill will not affect purchases which have been *bona fide* made before the passing of the Act. The clause is in print and will be in the hands of hon. members, if not to-morrow, on Monday morning.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 6 o'clock.