

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 21 OCTOBER 1885

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PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS ACT
AMENDMENT BILL—THIRD READ-
ING.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to :—

By Mr. BLACK—

That an address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be laid upon the table of the House, copy of all correspondence between His Excellency and the Secretary of State for the Colonies referring to the separation of Northern and Southern Queensland, and of any other correspondence on the same subject in which the Government have taken part.

LOGAN VILLAGE TO BEAUDESERT
RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions, namely :—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Logan branch of the Southern railway from Logan Village to Beaudesert, as laid upon the table of the House on 13th instant.

2. That the plan, section, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council for their approval, by message in the usual form.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Logan Branch of the Southern Railway from Logan Village to Beaudesert, as laid upon the table of the House on 13th instant.

2. That the plan, section, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council for their approval, by message in the usual form.

—said it was very desirable that the parliamentary plans of that branch railway should be adopted with as little delay as possible. There were already seven miles of the line constructed from the junction of the South Coast line to Logan village. The length of the section comprised in the plans before the Committee was about 20 miles, and the line would traverse the Logan River district, the average distance from the river being from half-a-mile to 2 miles, so that it would give facilities to the whole of the settlers on the Logan River. The Chief Engineer stated that the works would not be of a very heavy nature, that the gradients would be 1 in 50, and that the sharpest curve would be not less than 8 chains' radius. The estimated cost of the line was £4,000 per mile; but he was inclined to think that was only a guess, as only an approximate sum was put down after the preliminary survey. It was impossible for the engineer to say what would be the actual cost of the work until the permanent survey had been made. In his report on the line, the engineer stated that it would command a considerable amount of traffic, both passenger and goods, and agricultural produce; and that there was a considerable quantity of land at the head of the Logan River which would be available for agricultural purposes if the people had facilities for bringing their produce to market. The whole of the line, with the exception of a very small portion, would pass through private land, and it would, therefore, be necessary to resume about 200 acres; but as the land was not highly improved it was not anticipated that the Government would have to pay a large amount for resumptions. He hoped the Committee would agree to the plans, because

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 21 October, 1885.

Petition.—Pacific Island Labourers Act Amendment Bill—third reading.—Formal Motion.—Logan Village to Beaudesert Railway.—Settled Land Bill.—Federal Council (Adopting) Bill—committee.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Adjournment.

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

PETITION.

Mr. CHUBB presented a petition from the South Brisbane Gas and Light Company, Limited, praying for leave to introduce a Bill to authorise the South Brisbane Gas and Light Company to supply South Brisbane and the surrounding district with gas. He also presented the newspapers containing the notice required by the 251st Standing Order to be given.

Petition received.

the longer they delayed carrying out the work the greater would be the cost of working the small portion from the main line to Logan Village. He moved the motion standing in his name.

Mr. MIDGLEY said that on a previous occasion when the plans, sections, and books of reference of a line in his electorate were laid on the table, he saw there was no probability of any objection being offered to that line, and, therefore, saw no necessity for saying anything on the matter, and yet strange to say, letting well alone was made a subject of complaint. So that he supposed he must say something on the line now before the Committee.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is not necessary.

Mr. MIDGLEY: Yes, it was. In fact, he was subjected to some degree of reproach by the Minister himself, because he did not say something on the previous occasion. He would now say that he felt very gratified that such an important public work was being so promptly undertaken. Those hon. members who were present at the opening of the line to Logan Village would remember that there was a unanimous expression of opinion there by members representing both sides of the House that, until the line was carried further on towards the rich lands that surrounded Beaudesert, it would be an incomplete affair, and might probably be an undertaking that would not pay. He was sure that those who had visited the district of Beaudesert—though every man, or rather, every hen thought her own chickens the best and most promising—would acknowledge that there was no finer district, no richer land in large quantities, to be found anywhere under the range than in that locality; and the probabilities were that when the railway was carried there, there would be such a community of small settlers established and prospering in that district as they had not anywhere in the colony, because it was not so far from Brisbane as to make it impossible for produce carried by rail to pay the producer. He was highly gratified that his electorate received its just share of attention at the hands of the Government, but he would say this: that he hoped the Minister for Works, who had carried out his large promises so readily, would not forget the small one that he made at the opening of the line to Logan Village. The hon. gentleman promised then that, as soon as possible, there should be a survey of a branch line in the direction of Tambourine. Time would show that that line was not one of those which would not pay for the working. It went through rich land and would probably be one of the best paying lines in the colony. At present the line was not complete, and if allowed to remain in its incomplete state it would probably prove a failure.

Mr. BAILEY said he had one remark to make, which was that the people of Brisbane ought to be congratulated upon the rapidity with which feeding lines into Brisbane—and, therefore, feeders for Brisbane—were constructed by the present Government. He only wished that lines in places north of Brisbane were constructed with equal rapidity. He hoped the good time would come for those north of Brisbane as well as it had come for those down here. He was rather sorry to find the hon. member for Fassifern was never satisfied. Having got a good deal more than he ever hoped to get, he wanted a little more still, and he wanted to compromise the Minister for Works at the same time. It was quite time the hon. member let the Minister for Works look a little bit north and see how many lines were wanted there, and how many towns there were that could do with a little of the

feeding system which was making Brisbane, and would make it one of the largest cities in the colonies.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member for Fassifern spoke, not because he had anything to say, but because somebody complained that he had not spoken on a former occasion. It was rather a queer reason to give the Committee for speaking. He (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) had something to say, not in opposition to the line, because he believed it was a line which should be made; but because he could not allow the statement made by the Minister for Works to pass unchallenged—that engineers could not make an estimate of the cost of a line until they had got the permanent survey made. They could if they chose, and when they did make an estimate they should be compelled to abide by it. If the hon. gentleman's statement was allowed to go unchallenged, and to be acted upon, it would come to this: They would never have a statement of the cost of a line until the tenders for its construction were called for, and that House would be asked to commit itself to the making of railways without having the slightest knowledge as to what they would cost. He knew the Minister for Works did not mean all that, but that was the logical meaning of what he said. If the engineer told the hon. gentleman that he could not make an estimate of the cost until the working plans were made, the engineer made a mistake. It would appear that the line and all other lines passed that session—with the exception of those which would cost from £10,000 to £20,000 a mile—were to cost £4,000 a mile. £4,000 a mile appeared now to be the least sum the engineers would undertake to make a line for. Time was—and not very long ago either—when the same gentlemen undertook to make lines over similar country for a great deal less. They should not be allowed to depart from the general estimate which they furnished to former Ministers for Works, now that they had a different Minister for Works to deal with. The country had to pay for the railway, no matter who was Minister for Works, and the engineers should be compelled to make the lines as cheaply as they could; and they never would do so if they were allowed to put down extravagant estimates like that. Taking into account the description of country, the country in the present case was more fitted for railway-making than in the case of the Cooktown extension, which they passed yesterday. The line they passed yesterday was also estimated to cost £4,000 a mile. The country was not in a position perhaps to furnish timber in quantities for railway-making, but, taking other advantages of the country into account to compensate for the want of timber, that line should be made for very much less than £4,000 a mile; but in the present case, where they had a quantity of timber and ballast also, the line should be made for £3,000 per mile. They should not allow the Minister for Works or his engineers to throw money away in making lines more costly than they ought to be made. He was not going to oppose the line; but the Minister for Works ought to watch the engineer more closely than he seemed to be doing at the present time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had stated that the Chief Engineer could not give a correct estimate of the cost of that railway. He said so now. The engineer had only got the preliminary survey, and it was utterly impossible that he could make a correct estimate until he knew the quantities—earthworks, culverts, bridges, etc. He must know the quantities before he could calculate as to the exact amount. He (the Minister for Works) hoped the hon. member for Townsville

would not lose his temper upon that matter. Cheap railways were the hon. gentleman's hobby, and if he would only go and look at some of those he had built he would give up all idea of building railways on gradients of 1 in 25. He was perfectly satisfied the hon. gentleman had done what he had done with a good intention, but they had turned out a complete failure. Some hon. members were extremely anxious to extend the width of gauge to 4 feet 8½ inches; but if they were to keep down the cost of railways they would find that the gauge they had would be competent to do all the work they had to do for many years to come. A great mistake the hon. member made in the working of the department was by going in for very sharp curves and steep gradients. A considerable sum of money would have to be laid out on the Fassifern line in consequence. It was not safe to travel on it now; and he had spoken to the Chief Engineer about it. There was one particular curve on the line, a short distance from Ipswich, where there was a gradient of 1 in 50, and the engine-driver had to get up a full head of steam to get up the gradient, and then he could not get the way off the train before he had to round that sharp curve. He himself had been thrown from one side of a carriage to the other in going round that curve; and he had told the engineer that it would have to be altered. It was all very well for the hon. member to talk about cheap railways, but he doubted very much whether they would be found in the long run to be any cheaper.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that the hon. member for Townsville, when he criticised the speech of the hon. Minister for Works, did not introduce the subject of cheap railways at all. What he did object to was that the engineer declined now to give a correct estimate to the House of the probable cost of a proposed railway, and that the Minister for Works acquiesced in that by saying that it was quite impossible under the circumstances that he could be expected to do so. The hon. member forgot the reason why those plans and sections were submitted to the House. It was based upon the practice in England where the plans, sections, and books of reference of proposed railways were put before the House of Commons and the House of Lords, to receive their approval before the Bills relating to them were passed. Every company that received the sanction of Parliament to construct a railway had to prove their case; and they proved it by the plans and sections, and also by the cost of the line. The reason was obvious—they wanted to show their shareholders that the line which their engineers had undertaken to construct would cost no more than they said. The parliamentary plans submitted for the approval of Parliament were not the preliminary plans, as the hon. gentleman had said. The parliamentary plans were those upon which the cost of the line could be actually calculated sufficient for their purpose. The Minister for Works had initiated a new system. He said great mistakes had been made by the late Minister for Works in the construction of cheap lines. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) was not going to enter into that question, though he could uphold the action of the late Ministry with regard to cheap lines, and he believed the country got more benefit from those cheap lines than would be produced by the more expensive ones. The Minister for Works, having come to the decision that the cheap lines did not suit, was now going to let the Chief Engineer have full swing, no matter what the cost was. The Committee was to lose all control over the railways. The Minister told them it was not their business what the cost of the line was; but he (Sir T. McIlwraith) said

that information ought to be before the Committee. The law enforced it, both in England and here, in order that they might be satisfied that the work could be done for the money. The Minister was initiating a new system, and handing over the control of the public works, not to Parliament, but to the engineers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he maintained that his statement was perfectly correct, that the engineer could not give an accurate estimate until he had all the particulars. No doubt he could give an approximate estimate. He himself was of opinion that the line would not cost anything like £4,000 a mile; and putting that sum down there would not make it more or less. He was not finding fault with the hon. member for Townsville; but he thought the hon. member had made a great mistake, and he was confident that it would be well to keep down the gradients as much as possible, especially on the main lines, even at considerable outlay.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member was wrong in asserting that he did not accuse the hon. member for Townsville. The hon. member had frequently accused him, and accused him unfairly. Only yesterday he had accused him of being guilty of an error, which, if it was made at all, was the Chief Engineer's fault. He (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) had tried to initiate a system of cheap railways; but he was not an engineer, and he could not be held responsible for the engineer's blunders. If any mistake had been made on the railways in the South, the blame must rest with the engineer, who was unhappily opposed to even experimenting on the system. In Queensland, at that time, there were two engineers—one whose hobby it was to make railways as cheaply as possible by means of steep gradients and sharp curves, and who to a great extent was successful, and the other who was opposed to all the first did. When he (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) tried to make the second engineer adopt the system which was carried out in the North, that gentleman did his best to make the system a failure. It had not been a failure in the North. The Central line was constructed cheaply, with steep grades and sharp curves; and also the Northern line, which was the best paying line in the colony, because it was made cheaply. It did the work, and would do the work of the district for years to come. They had saved £4,000 or £5,000 a mile on it, and it was paying 5 per cent. interest.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that when the hon. member for Townsville constructed those lines he instructed the engineers to build them at a certain cost per mile, and the result was they went zigzagging all round the country to avoid any heavy work. The hon. member forgot that in that way he added three or four miles to the length of each section, and when they considered the traffic over the extra distance the cost was really much more. He believed the hon. member for Townsville was endeavouring to do his best in making railways at the lowest cost possible; but he thought it was a mistake to compel the engineer to build a railway at a certain cost.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not like to continue the discussion, but the hon. member made a mistake in saying that he had instructed the engineers to make lines at a certain cost. It was quite the other way. The Northern engineer himself proposed to make lines at a certain cost. He also proposed it years before, and carried it out, and was paid a bonus for having done so. He (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) came to the conclusion, very naturally, that if the engineer for the Northern district could make railways at a certain cost per mile, they ought to be built for the same cost in the South. The hon.

member could not disguise the fact that the Central line was paying better than the Southern line, because it was made cheaper; and the Northern line was paying still better, because it was made still more cheaply.

Mr. SMYTH said he thought the Northern railway was the worst line he had ever travelled on. If that was a sample of cheap railways it was a very bad sample. He had travelled in a train with two luggage waggons and two passenger vans; and when they came to a steep grade the passenger vans had to be disengaged, while two engines hauled the trucks to the top, and then came back for the passengers. There must be very great wear and tear on those grades. It was to be hoped there would be no more cheap lines like it in the colony.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was evident the hon. member for Gympie had not had much experience of railway travelling. He was like the old woman at home who had never been very far from her own dwelling. If the hon. member went as far as New South Wales he would frequently see, on the main line, two engines attached to one train.

Mr. ANNEAR said the cost could be very easily accounted for when they considered the difference in the mode of construction between the Northern and Southern lines. The cost per mile for timber in the North was about £1,500, and in his opinion the saving apparently effected would turn out in a few years to be no saving at all. In the North they went on the system of low-level bridges. The short piles would save a good deal, while throughout the South the system was that of high-level bridges. On the line he constructed from Maryborough to Gympie, all the bridges were six or seven feet above any flood-mark that had ever been known. From what he had heard from persons competent to give an opinion, the Central line and the Northern line, the latter especially, with their low-level bridges and heavy gradients, would in the end be far more costly—in his opinion—than those in the South. The low-level bridge system was a bad one, and it ought to be abolished in favour of the high-level bridge system, which, he was confident, would be in the end far the cheaper of the two.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the report was adopted.

SETTLED LAND BILL.

The SPEAKER informed the House that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, stating that the Legislative Council had passed a Bill for facilitating sales, leases, and other dispositions of settled land, and for promoting the execution of improvements thereon, and now sent it to the Legislative Assembly for its concurrence therein.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Friday next.

FEDERAL COUNCIL (ADOPTING) BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House went into Committee of the Whole to consider this Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—"Federal Council Act to be in force in Queensland from 1st December, 1885, or afterwards on adoption by three other colonies"—passed as printed.

On clause 2, as follows:—

"The representatives of Queensland in the Federal Council shall be appointed by the Governor in Council by commission under the hand of the Governor and the Great Seal of the Colony.

"Each representative shall hold office for the term of three years from the date of his appointment, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained."

The PREMIER said he had a verbal amendment to propose—namely, that after the word "commission" the words "in Her Majesty's name" be inserted. Sometimes a question had arisen whether a commission should be in Her Majesty's name or in the name of the Governor, and as that commission would run outside the colony he thought it better to declare that it should be in Her Majesty's name.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he understood the object of the Government to be to pass the Bill as nearly as possible in the same terms as the Bills that were likely to pass in the other colonies that were in favour of federation. Had the amendment that had been moved been agreed to by the other colonies?

The PREMIER said it had not. It was a verbal amendment that had only occurred to him that day. If it were agreed to he should telegraph to the other colonies informing them of it. He would answer the hon. gentleman's other question in connection with the latter part of the clause.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER said, with respect to making the Bill exactly the same as the Bills of the other colonies, he believed that some of them proposed to make the tenure of office during pleasure. In the draft Bill which he had prepared two alternative proposals were submitted—one as embodied in the Bill before the Committee, and the other was that the representatives should hold office during pleasure. In Victoria they preferred that form, but for the reasons he had given in moving the second reading of the Bill, he thought the other alternative was rather the best. That, however, was a matter of detail that was of no consequence at all. The matter of importance was that they should agree in essentials—that was in bringing the Acts into operation on the same day and on the same conditions. As to the mode of appointment, they were all agreed; the only difference of opinion was as to the tenure of office.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 3, as follows:—

"Every person appointed as a representative must, at the time of his appointment—

1. Be a member of the Executive Council, or
2. Be a member of the Legislative Council or Legislative Assembly, or
3. Have been a member of the Legislative Council or Legislative Assembly at some time within six months before the date of appointment."

The PREMIER said there was some difference of opinion as to the qualification of a representative; but that was entirely a matter of detail. He thought it would be just as well, however, to define that the appointments must be of persons who fell within one of the descriptions given. He would point out, with regard to the third description, that originally it was drawn so as to cover any colony having an elective Upper House; and the provision as to six months was intended to meet cases where, perhaps, desirable persons might cease to be members of the Legislative Council or Assembly through a dissolution, although they might be quite certain of being re-elected almost immediately.

Mr. CHUBB said he did not know whether it had occurred to the Premier, but, according to the clause as it stood, a member of the Legislative Assembly who had lost his seat through insolvency would be eligible to appointment as a member of the Federal Council within six months. Such a thing was hardly likely to occur, but it was possible.

The PREMIER: Read the next clause.

Mr. SMYTH said, in reference to subsection 3, he would point out that a man might contest an election and be defeated by the voice of the people, and then the party in power, if he happened to be on their side, might reward him by giving him a seat in the Upper House. Cases of the kind had occurred before, and such a person would be qualified for a seat in the Federal Council, although he had not the voice of the people.

The PREMIER said the next clause provided that, if a representative was for six months not a member of either the Executive Council or the Legislative Council or Legislative Assembly, or became insolvent, and so on, he should be removed from office.

Mr. CHUBB said that did not touch his objection—that any member of the Legislative Assembly who by reason of insolvency lost his seat would be eligible any time within six months to be appointed a representative.

The PREMIER said the objection was quite covered by the provisions of the next clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4—"Representatives may be removed from office—peremptory causes of removal"; 5—"Resignation of office"; and 6—"Appointments and vacancies to be notified to Legislature by message";—put and passed.

On clause 7, as follows :—

"Each representative shall be entitled to be paid from the consolidated revenue all reasonable expenses incurred by him in and about his attendance at the Federal Council or any committee thereof."

Mr. PALMER asked the Premier, if Parliament was sitting in several colonies at the same time, and members had to attend sittings of the Federal Council, how would that affect the payment of expenses?

The PREMIER said a member would not get paid for attending at both places at once. Wherever he attended he would be paid his expenses for being there.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the clause as worded would place the representatives in a somewhat similar position to the judges. They could charge any expenses they liked. Of course the expenses must be paid; but he thought the term "reasonable expenses" should be defined in some way—a certain sum per week or month.

The PREMIER said he could not suggest any better definition as to the rate of expenses to be paid. The expenses incurred by Ministers when travelling were always paid, but they were not at a fixed rate. It was the same with the travelling expenses of the judges of the Supreme Court. Gentlemen who would be trusted as delegates to the Federal Council might be trusted not to charge an extravagant amount for expenses.

Mr. MIDGLEY said the Premier very often proved that he could clothe Bills in clear and lucid language, but the clause under notice seemed to be verbally laboured and unsatisfactory. The wording of the clause might be improved by making it read that a representative should be entitled to be paid from the consolidated revenue all reasonable expenses incurred by him within, say, £100. The word "about" in the phrase "in and about his attendance" did not look nice, did not sound nice, and was not nice.

The PREMIER said the word "about" had been used in the same connection as it was now used in for a long time. It had the advantage of being a short word, an Anglo-Saxon word, and the word that was ordinarily used to express

the idea it conveyed in the clause. For his part, therefore, he would rather have it remain as it was.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8 passed as printed.

On clause 9, as follows :—

"In pursuance of the provisions of the said recited Act, the following matters are hereby referred to the Federal Council, to the intent that so soon as the legislature or legislatures of another colony or other colonies shall have referred the same matters respectively to the Council, the said Council may exercise legislative authority in respect to such matters, and that the Acts of the Council relating to them respectively shall be in force in Queensland, that is to say :—

The status of corporations and joint-stock companies in other colonies than that in which they have been constituted;

The trial and punishment in one colony of offenders against the laws of an adjoining colony."

The PREMIER said that the hon. member for Mulgrave had asked for some explanation respecting the object of that clause. The 15th clause of the Federal Council (Imperial) Act provided that the Federal Council should have legislative authority in respect to many things which might be referred to it by the legislatures of any two or more colonies. He held that the reference should be made by Act of Parliament. A distinction was drawn in the next clause of the Imperial Act, which provided that the Governors of any two or more colonies might, upon an address of the legislatures of such colonies refer for the consideration and determination of the Council any questions relating to those colonies, or their relations with one another. He (the Premier) thought that reference under the 15th clause must be by Act of Parliament. The view suggested by the hon. member for Mulgrave—and one which was also at first held by Mr. Service, the Victorian Premier—was that the reference should be made by resolutions of the legislatures. On further consideration, however, Mr. Service came to the opinion that it must be by Act of Parliament, and, according to a telegram he (the Premier) had received from Mr. Service, a clause similar to the one now under consideration would probably be inserted in the Victorian Bill. He had also reason to believe that it would likewise be inserted in the South Australian and Tasmanian Bills. He ought, perhaps, to also say that a question had been raised lately as to whether the subject of naturalisation of aliens should be referred to the Council. Having regard, however, to the difference of opinion on the subject of aliens between Queensland and South Australia, it was thought that it would be better not to propose to refer that matter at present.

Mr. SMYTH said he would like to know if the clause, referring as it did to the status of corporations and joint-stock companies in other colonies than that in which they had been constituted, would affect mining companies? As the law at present stood persons holding shares in a mining property in one colony and residing in another could not be reached.

The PREMIER said the clause was not intended to apply to cases of that kind. The 15th clause of the Imperial Act, however, covered the case, as it provided for passing Acts for the service of civil process of the courts of any colony within Her Majesty's possessions in Australasia out of the jurisdiction of the colony in which it was issued. No doubt one of the first things the Federal Council would do would be to deal with the question of the status of, say, a Victorian or South Australian company in Queensland, and their right to hold lands, and with other questions of that sort.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if the Convention considered the form in which the views of the legislatures should be expressed when they referred subjects to the Federal Council? It seemed to him to be a highly inconvenient mode of conveying the opinion of a legislature to the Council by means of an Act of Parliament. He fancied that a message from a legislature to the Council by means of a resolution of both Houses would be much preferable. Did the Convention discuss the matter as to whether it was advisable that a message to the Federal Council should be in the form of an Act?

The PREMIER said his memory did not serve him well enough to enable him to answer that question. But apart from the formal question, he himself thought that, seeing they were delegating their legislative power to the Council, it should be done by Act of Parliament.

Mr. MIDGLEY asked if the two matters mentioned in the clause were the only questions which were to be referred by Queensland to the Federal Council, or were matters to be referred to it from time to time by votes of the Assembly?

The PREMIER said he was afraid the hon. member had not carefully studied the Imperial Act. That Act enumerated several matters on which the Federal Council would always have jurisdiction in the colonies. In addition to them the Council would have jurisdiction over matters that were specially referred to it by the legislatures. The status of joint-stock companies was one matter specially enumerated in the Imperial Act, which also said, generally:—

"Any other matter of general Australasian interest, with respect to which the legislatures of the several colonies can legislate within their own limits, and as to which it is deemed desirable that there should be a law of general application."

That would apply to all other subjects.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 10—"Short title"—

Mr. PALMER said there was one matter with regard to the working of the Council that had not been satisfactorily explained, and that was in reference to the financial part. Clause 26 of the Imperial Act, of course, explained the mode of defraying the expenses of the Council; but, with regard to the expenses connected with any action that the Council might decide upon, what were the means by which the Council could enforce its decision so far as related to collecting the necessary funds? The first colony in which the Council would meet was to be Tasmania. Would that colony have to defray all the expenditure connected with the first meeting of the Council? And, following that, would each colony in which the Council was held have to defray all the expenses incurred?

The PREMIER said that question was intentionally omitted from the Imperial Act. It was proposed to insert a clause in the Imperial Act giving the Federal Council power to deal with money matters, and to authorise the expenditure of money, and require it to be contributed by the various colonies. But that was strongly objected to by Queensland, and also by some of the other colonies, on the ground that it would be inconsistent with the functions of the Council to give them indirectly the power of taxation. If it had power to expend money the colonies might be compelled to resort to special taxation to cover the money authorised to be expended by the Federal Council. If the hon. gentleman would read the correspondence he would see how the matter was dealt with. The result would be that the powers of the Federal Council would be limited. If the Council agreed to any matter

which could not be put into operation in any of the colonies without the expenditure of money, the different Governments would have to decide upon it.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble passed as printed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment.

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

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair and the House went into Committee further to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that £5,625 be voted for Harbours and Rivers, said the estimate was based upon the appropriation of last year, except that there was a foreman shipwright who was formerly paid out of Contingencies and who was now placed upon the Estimates at a salary of £220 per annum. There was also an increase of £50 in the working expenses of the Dry Dock.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he wished for some information in reference to the men who were employed on the Government barges in the Brisbane River. He brought the matter before the Committee last year, relative to the number of hours the men had to work. He had seen a copy of the log for two weeks, and one week showed 80 hours and 15 minutes, and the other 74 hours and 25 minutes. Those were very long hours indeed, particularly as compared with the men on the dredge, who only worked for 50 hours. What made the thing harder still was that the men received no extra pay for the longer hours, and if any were away through sickness for a day that day's wages was taken off. He believed that the men had represented the matter in the proper quarter and had received a reply that it would be attended to. He believed that very lately one of the firemen was sick for three days and that an amount was deducted from his wages equal to his pay for that period, although the man had to work very long hours during the week. If the Government had to employ extra labour when a man was absent through sickness there would be some reason for the deduction, but that was not the case, as it appeared the other men had to do the work among them. There would also be something to be said in favour of such a course if the men were paid extra for overtime, but that was not done. He did not think those things were done with the consent of the Colonial Treasurer, and he would be glad if the hon. gentleman would give some explanation of the matter to the Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the hardship, if there was any hardship, had only arisen of late in connection with the dredging in the South Brisbane Reach, and was chiefly occasioned by the dredging being at such a distance from the place where the silt was deposited. The men in charge of the barges which conveyed the silt from the dredge to the Bay were detained longer than their usual hours of work, but the inconvenience was only temporary and had only been brought under his notice very lately. It was the intention of the department to remunerate the men for the extended hours they had had to work, but at the same time it must be understood that men employed in dredge work must work when the requirements of the department necessitated it. There was no desire to impose upon the men unduly hard

duties, but at the same time they must know that they had to perform their duties the same as sailors on board a seagoing vessel. He must say that, to a certain extent, he deprecated the sentimental consideration which was frequently aired on occasions like the present concerning those men working to an unnecessary extent. From his observation, he could safely say that there were thousands of men in the colony who would be glad of an opening in that department, and who would willingly work longer hours than the men now employed were required to work. He had given the men every consideration, both in their ordinary avocation and when they were sick, and in no case that had come under his notice had they been imposed upon or expected to do unduly heavy work. The department dealt very liberally with cases of sick leave, and, under the new regulations, men of good character who were not more than seven days sick in the half-year would get their pay in full.

Mr. BEATTIE said he agreed with a great deal of what the Colonial Treasurer had said; but the hon. gentleman went a little too far when he stated that the men employed on the dredge should be considered just the same as sailors. As a matter of fact, the sailors in the coasting trade, on the Australasian Steam Navigation Company's boats and on other vessels—particularly those men who belonged to the unions now in existence—worked from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., and if they continued after 5 o'clock they received 1s. per hour extra, and after 7 o'clock 1s. 6d. per hour. He believed that formerly, when the dredge was at work lower down the river, the last barge was loaded at 6 o'clock, and that the men on that barge, having to empty her somewhere near Nudgee or Sandgate, did not get back before half-past 7 and sometimes even 9 o'clock. Where, however, there were cases of hardship and they were properly represented to the department, he believed they would be taken into consideration. He would point out to the Colonial Treasurer that those complaints had occurred lately; that there had been no complaints until some little time ago, when there was some dissatisfaction between the men and the department. If, however, the hon. gentleman had made up his mind to pay the men who were required to work after regulation hours the cause of complaint would be at once removed.

Mr. BLACK said it had been stated that Sir John Coode was to come up here and report upon the harbours and rivers of the colony; and he would like to know whether anything had been done in the matter?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Government had approved of Sir John Coode visiting Queensland as early as possible. They had communicated with him, and he had submitted certain terms on which he would visit Queensland and inspect the harbours at Mackay, Townsville, Normanston, and any other places that might be determined upon. Those terms had been accepted; and it was probable that Sir John Coode would arrive here in November.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he noticed that the salary of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers was £1,200 a year, and that he also received an allowance for travelling expenses to the amount of £500. He did not rise to find any fault with that vote, but he wished to direct attention to the fact that it formed a marked contrast to the amount of salary received by the Portmaster, Captain Heath, who was his equal in every particular in point of education and in scientific knowledge; who had lived in the colony for many years and had the confidence of all who knew him, and who had proved himself worthy of the situation which he occupied. It was a great disparagement to the Portmaster that he

only received £700 a year, while a man who, though equal to him was no better, received remuneration at the rate of £1,700 a year. It required some explanation. When the next Estimates were brought up the great services which Captain Heath had rendered as Portmaster should be remembered, and he should be placed, if not in an equally good, at least in nearly as good a position as the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers. He did not wish to oppose the salary, though he thought it a pretty stiff one. At the same time he wished to draw attention to the difference he had mentioned.

Mr. ALAND said the same speech was delivered every time the Estimates were brought before the Committee. There was always a comparison being drawn between the salary received by the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers and the Portmaster. The salary of one was £1,200, and the salary of the other was £700. If the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers was not worth £1,200 a year the best thing the Government could do would be to "sack" him, and if Captain Heath was fitted for the position why not let him have it and save the colony some £500 a year? Hon. members were always drawing a comparison between those gentlemen, and it was unfair to them to do so.

Mr. BLACK said he was very glad the Government thought fit to endeavour to get Sir John Coode to come up here. He must say that some more modern hydraulic engineer than the present officer was necessary to tackle the difficult question of the improvement of the harbours and rivers in the more northern portion of the colony. He spoke feelingly upon the subject, because for the last six years he had been quietly waiting to see if something would eventuate from the scientific ability of the head of the department of Harbours and Rivers. Almost every year some fresh scheme was laid before the Committee for the improvement of the Pioneer River. As long as six years ago, as would be seen from the report of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, a breakwater was the correct thing. That was commenced, and after some £3,000 had been thrown into the sea it was abandoned. That scheme gave place to a grand railway scheme to connect the town of Mackay with the shipping outside. That was to have been a grand scheme indeed, involving an expenditure of £300,000 or £400,000. For a time that was under the consideration of the department, when it gave place to another scheme for cutting through a point known as East Point. Some very good drawings were drawn up by the department, and it was supposed to have received further consideration. However, that scheme was also abandoned; and last year, when the officer at the head of the department laid his report upon the table of the House, he stated then that he was of opinion that dredging, which had been entirely discouraged previously, was the correct thing; and they were assured that in a week or two they proposed to have plans ready for a new style of dredge which was going to effect the desirable result of improving that river. A non-professional man like himself could not be expected to be prepared to go behind the professional prestige which, no doubt, an able and scientific man such as the head of that department probably was, had gained; but still six years was a long time to wait. He was not only expressing his own views, but also the views of others members representing Northern constituencies, when he said they would like to see some tangible results. He was glad indeed to hear that Sir John Coode was coming up; but it certainly looked as if the Government were doubtful about the scientific ability of the head

of the Harbours and Rivers Department, when they heard that Sir John Coode was coming up to report upon the harbours at Mackay and Townsville. He had thought that some definite scheme had been decided upon for Townsville, and that the works contemplated were certain to be carried out. However, there seemed now to be a doubt about that also, and Sir John Coode having come up to look at Townsville and Mackay would very properly be invited to go round to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and look at Normanton. He would like to have some assurance from the Colonial Treasurer as to whether the plans already under consideration for the dredging of the Pioneer River would be carried out, or whether they would have to wait another year for some new scheme. He was sorry to find that the report of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers was not laid upon the table yet. Last year that officer was six months in arrears with his report, and this year they had not got it up to the present time, and they had therefore no report from that department to take into consideration at all. Where they had a large coast line, and so many harbours and rivers requiring improvement, it was of great importance to the colony that they should have an officer who could travel about a great deal more than the present head of the department did. Month after month correspondence was sent down in connection with the improvements of the harbours and rivers, and all complaints were met by saying that something was going to be done and there was some plan under consideration. Outside Brisbane, and perhaps as far north as Rockhampton, very little was being done for the improvement of their harbours and rivers. He could point out that an immense amount of shipping went annually in and out of Mackay, which, he might incidentally mention, had contributed no less than £165,000 in Customs duties to the general revenue. Mackay should receive a very great deal more consideration than it had received during the past six years.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member for Mackay spoke feelingly, doubtless, because Mackay did not receive the attention its supporters believed it should have received. The hon. member was aware as well as every other member of the Committee that the difficulties which presented themselves to the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers in connection with the improvement of the port of Mackay were very exceptional. It was one of the most difficult questions upon which the engineer could be engaged. The difficulties there were greater than in any other port in Australia. Though not so extensive in character, the difficulties were even greater than the bridging of the Hawkesbury, which was the occasion of Sir John Coode's visit to New South Wales. It was therefore not a matter of surprise to him that Mr. Nisbet should have been very guarded in proposing a scheme for the improvement of that port, especially as he had informed him that he would not ask for any expenditure for the work unless he could pledge his reputation that the result of the scheme proposed would give satisfaction. Any delay in proceeding with the work had arisen from the Government insisting that the proposed expenditure should secure satisfactory results. Hon. members did not seem to bear in mind the immense amount of work there was in Mr. Nisbet's department. They were not circumstanced like the southern colonies, where the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers had to devote his special attention to one port; here that officer had to attend to a dozen ports, all of which claimed immediate consideration. If hon. members would compare the present condition of the port of Brisbane with what it had been

five years ago — when they saw large ocean steamers riding at the wharves which used formerly to lie in the Bay — they would have sufficient evidence of Mr. Nisbet's ability in the administration of his department. As for other ports, the Mary River had been improved, and he had no doubt that with the new dredge just taken over by the Government the improvement of Wide Bay would be very speedily and satisfactorily accomplished. There was also dredging going on in the Fitzroy, and a depth of water was being obtained there which was not anticipated a few years ago. Very extensive harbour works were being carried out at Townsville and Cooktown; and when they considered all those works, and bore in mind that every wharf in the colony had to be designed under Mr. Nisbet's supervision, and that the improvement of every creek and river in Queensland received his personal attention, they must admit that a larger amount of responsibility was imposed on him than on any similar officer in the neighbouring colonies. They should take that into consideration in considering his salary, which was very moderate for the duties he performed. His duties were far more responsible than those of the Engineers for Railways, who received a very much larger remuneration.

Mr. ARCHER said it was not fair to say that the salary of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers was £1,700. The £500 for travelling expenses was not an addition to the salary of the engineer; it was money expended in the Government Service, which would come out of his own pocket if it were not provided for. The remarks of the Colonial Treasurer would be very far from satisfactory to the hon. member for Mackay, who wanted to discover, not what was done at other places, but what was going to be done at Mackay. Was the last scheme proposed to be carried out, or was it to wait for the report of Sir John Coode? If Sir John Coode was in favour of that scheme, would it be put in hand as soon as possible?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he regretted his omission to answer the hon. member for Mackay more explicitly. Tenders were invited for the continuation of the embankment, and would be received in the course of two or three weeks. The construction of the embankment would then be proceeded with; but the construction of the basin or dock would be held over till Sir John Coode had expressed his opinion on it. Sir John Coode had expressed his intention of coming here early in November, and Mackay would be one of the first places he would visit. Of course, the plans prepared by Mr. Nisbet, and all the information the department could afford, would be submitted to him. He (the Colonial Treasurer) might add that Sir John Coode was not invited because of any want of confidence on the part of the Government in Mr. Nisbet's ability; the suggestion had come from Mr. Nisbet himself.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he had not said, nor did he intend to imply, that Mr. Nisbet's salary was £1,700; he had only drawn attention to the disparity between his salary and that of Captain Heath. Captain Heath had no travelling expenses set down; and his salary was £700 a year; while Mr. Nisbet's was £1,200 a year, with £500 a year for travelling expenses.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that when Captain Heath was travelling he received the same allowance as Mr. Nisbet, although it was not put down on the Estimates. The £500 was not Mr. Nisbet's special perquisite; it was put down to cover the expenses of officers of the department moving from port to port.

Mr. ARCHER said there was another thing to consider. Captain Heath's salary was not £700, but £800, and he received £100 as chairman of the Marine Board. He was certain Captain Heath did not pay himself for a single thing when he was travelling. It was understood that all Government officers when doing Government work had their expenses paid.

Mr. CHUBB said he wished to ask the Colonial Treasurer a question in reference to the harbour of Bowen. Last year he asked the same question—it was in reference to a small amount of dredging required there. The Government had built a jetty there, and all that was wanted was a small amount of dredging—some 3,000 or 4,000 yards round the head of the jetty. When that was done any vessel coming to Queensland could lie alongside of it. The work could be done in less than three months, and when once finished it would not require to be done again. Last year the hon. gentleman said a dredge did not then happen to be available for the purpose, but he hoped one might be in the course of the year. He should like to know if there was any chance of getting the work done within a reasonable time?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the matter had not been altogether overlooked. When the dredge, which was supposed to be chiefly employed at Townsville, could be spared from that port, it was intended that she should be employed at some adjacent port so long as the work did not occupy more than two months or so. The "Platypus" was now in dock in Brisbane, and it would be five weeks before she could proceed north again. When she could be spared from Townsville and Cooktown he would promise the hon. member she should be sent to Bowen.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he understood that the "Platypus" was going back to Cooktown to finish the work she had been engaged on there. The Colonial Treasurer certainly promised him that she should, and it would be most unfair to the port to leave the work half finished. The hon. member for Bowen had stated his case very fairly, but after all there was very little trade done at Bowen, and it did not really matter whether vessels could go alongside the jetty or not. At Cooktown a great deal of business was done, and very valuable services had been rendered by the dredge in enabling vessels to enter at low tide. But until the work was completed they could not get out again at low tide, and at present that was impossible because the swinging basin had not been cleared.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it would be interesting to know when the Colonial Treasurer made the promise referred to by the hon. member for Cook. He agreed with the hon. member that it was inadvisable to leave work half finished, but he would remind him that the "Platypus" was bought almost especially for Townsville, and that, at the urgent request of the people of Cooktown, she was taken from Townsville to do work at Cooktown which was not to occupy longer than three months. A great deal more than three months had elapsed since she was taken away from Townsville. As far as promises went, he believed the Colonial Treasurer's first promise was made to Townsville. More than eighteen months ago the hon. gentleman promised him that the "Platypus" should first do her work at Townsville and then go to some other Northern port where her services might be required. With regard to the Northern ports, it was quite useless to draw comparisons, for it was well known that Townsville was the second port in the colony, and the first outside Brisbane. It was therefore the port whose wants should be attended to first. He was very glad to

find that Sir John Coode was going to pay a professional visit to the colony, and he hoped the Colonial Treasurer would get from him a very full and exhaustive report on all the different harbours in the colony. He agreed with the Colonial Treasurer that the office of Engineer of Harbours and Rivers was quite as important as that of any engineer of railways in the colony, and he was certain that the work performed in the office of the former was quite equal to that performed by either of the chief engineers for railways. The salary of the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers was much lower than theirs, but that might be owing to the fact that he came out at a much smaller salary at first. That was hardly fair, seeing the amount and importance of the work he had to do. Taking into account the number of our ports, that officer had done his work very fairly, and he hoped that Sir John Coode's report would be a confirmation of the excellence of Mr. Nisbet's plans. Every hon. member who had been north sympathised with the people of Mackay as far as their harbour was concerned, and unless something was done soon the landing and embarking of passengers there would result in some serious loss of life. He wished for some information as to the future movements of the "Platypus."

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, as he had no wish to be accused of breaking his promises, he would state distinctly what his intentions were with regard to the "Platypus." It was always understood that she should be stationed at Townsville—that being the chief port of the North and the port where the largest amount of dredging had to be done—and that she should only be removed to the adjacent ports when she could be conveniently spared. Her first work at Townsville was to reopen Ross Creek, the mouth of which had been almost blocked up through the extension of the breakwater and the shifting of the sand. When that work had been completed, representations were made that the harbour of Cooktown was quite inaccessible for even the coasting steamers owing to the shallowness of the water, and that the basin of the harbour, even when a vessel got inside, did not allow her to swing. The harbour authorities, on due inquiry, found that those representations were correct, and it was deemed advisable that the work should be done at once. Accordingly the "Platypus" was sent to Cooktown, and she had completed a straight cutting into the harbour. That was a distinct work from the second, which was to make a swing basin at the wharves to enable vessels to swing. The promise was, that if Ross Creek did not get worse than it was at present, and the dredge was not required there, he would endeavour to see that the swing basin at Cooktown was proceeded with. Unfortunately before that work could be commenced the propellers of the dredge were broken, and other parts of her machinery required overhauling; and she had to be brought down to Brisbane to be docked. She was now in the Dry Dock undergoing a thorough overhaul, and would be ready to proceed north in four or five weeks. He could not say whether she would first resume work at Townsville or at Cooktown. He was inclined to think that he should postpone his decision on the matter until he had received a report from Sir John Coode on the harbour works at Townsville. That was the sole reason. It must be distinctly understood, as he had informed the local authorities up north who were anxious to secure the services of the "Platypus," that primarily they must be given to Townsville; and he was glad to say that while she was intended to do the work there she was also able to afford temporary relief to other ports.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if the hon. gentleman could inform the Committee whether Ross Creek was becoming worse than it was when the "Platypus" left, because he had received a communication from the Townsville Chamber of Commerce which led him to think it had got worse?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could only say that Ross Creek was no better. He did not think it was any worse, but it was certainly not in the condition in which the department would like to see it. At the same time, however, it was deemed only right to afford the people of Cooktown some relief by giving them access to their harbour, which was virtually blocked until the dredge was sent there.

Mr. ANNEAR said he saw by the report of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers that the "Platypus" had been in dock and overhauled on two occasions. He would like to know from the hon. the Treasurer if she was made of first-class material, and if her workmanship was of the best order—if it was equal to the dredges that had been made in the colony—in Brisbane and elsewhere?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said if a dredge like the "Platypus" had to be built a better vessel could be turned out in the colony. The Engineer of Harbours and Rivers was decidedly of that opinion. At the same time it must be borne in mind that at the time she was ordered there was no vessel of like construction in the colony; therefore it was deemed advisable—the builders being known to be men who could turn out a dredge of that peculiar construction in a certain time—to import the dredge; but judging from the samples they had had since of dredges of colonial manufacture, the department had determined in future to take the colonial article.

Mr. ARCHER asked if the hon. gentleman could tell them the difference between the cost of the "Platypus" as imported, and what she would have cost if built here, supposing that they had a pattern for her?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said if built in the colony the "Platypus" would have cost 40 per cent. more than she stood the Government in at the present time.

Mr. ANNEAR said, even admitting that she cost 40 per cent. more—which he did not believe—it would be better to build her in the colony. Take the "Octopus" for instance—he had seen the work she did at Maryborough in six months, and even if it cost 40 per cent. more to make her, she would be worth 100 per cent. more in the course of ten years from the work she would do in that time. What had the "Groper" cost since she came to Queensland? He did not mean to compare the "Platypus" with the "Groper"; he knew nothing of the "Platypus," but the "Groper" cost 50 per cent. on her first actual cost to repair and put in proper working order within two years after she arrived in the colony. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. Macfarlane). They had been talking about big salaries, and some hon. members did not take into consideration at all the small salaries of the wage-earning class. They were told it was sentimental to talk about those men. But he had been living on the banks of the Brisbane River for the last few months, and knew that the hopper barges came up the river at 9 and 10 o'clock every night after discharging their loads. He was glad to hear the hon. the Treasurer say that he would recognise the work of those men. He knew that men working for contractors and others generally did their eight hours a day, and he

did not see why men who were working fifteen and sixteen hours a day should not be paid for the extra hours. In travelling up and down the coast—between Brisbane and Maryborough especially—he had come to the conclusion that they had a most efficient dredging plant. He had not been to Victoria; but our plant was certainly far more efficient than that of New South Wales. The people might well congratulate themselves upon having such a plant, and upon the efficient manner in which the work was carried out. They got full value for their money. He was satisfied that the work done by Mr. Nisbet during the time he had been chief of the Harbours and Rivers Department was very efficient indeed. He was very glad to hear the remarks of the hon. the Treasurer in regard to the work to be commenced at Stewart Island flats. He was sure that the dredges they had built were cheaper, and those which they would build in the colony in the future would be far cheaper than importing them. He was also very glad to hear the hon. gentleman say that at last a modicum of justice was to be given to Wide Bay and the Mary River, because they had a harbour there—a place where there was trade. He did not want to call other places in question—Bowen, for instance. An hon. gentleman told him an amusing anecdote about Bowen a few months ago. He said that, when walking about the street, about 9 o'clock in the morning, he met a fisherman, and asked him where all the people were? The fisherman replied, "Oh! the people here turn out about 11 o'clock—you'll see some knocking about then—the few there are." And the steamer that gentleman went there in was the only one that had been at the wharf for two or three weeks. Therefore he did not think Bowen was a place to send their dredges to, when they had ports of such importance as Maryborough, Rockhampton, Townsville, and Cooktown. He hoped the hon. the Treasurer would follow in the lines he had laid down for himself; and if the dredge sent to Maryborough did as good work as the "Octopus" did during the six months she was working there, the people of the Wide Bay district in a few years would have no cause of complaint.

Mr. CHUBB said he could not allow the remarks of the hon. member who had just spoken to pass unnoticed. He (Mr. Chubb) had said nothing in disparagement of the city of Maryborough, of which the hon. member was such a distinguished representative. He had merely advocated the claims of his own electorate, and even if Bowen was all the hon. gentleman had said it was, it was, to a great extent, the fault of the Government whom he (Mr. Annear) supported, who would not give the people there the public works to which they were entitled. If the Government would give them the railway that was voted several years ago, Maryborough would never see the way of Bowen—it would be left far behind. With regard to steamers, larger steamers called at the port of Bowen than were ever likely to go to Maryborough.

Mr. ANNEAR: No, no!

Mr. CHUBB: He had seen the British-India Company's steamers within less than half-a-mile of the jetty at Bowen.

Mr. ANNEAR: I have seen them alongside the wharf at Maryborough.

Mr. CHUBB: Ocean-going steamers?

Mr. ANNEAR: Vessels belonging to the British-India Company.

Mr. CHUBB: He did not speak of small vessels of 200 or 300 tons, but of the ocean-going steamers that traded from Brisbane to London. Vessels like the "Warrego" could go right up to the jetty at Bowen.

Mr. ANNEAR said he was very sorry that he had offended the hon. member. He certainly did not intend to do so. He had no doubt that the Government would be able to defend themselves without wanting him to do it; but in justice to them he must say that what they had done within the last few months in boring, and showing that coal-mines existed in the neighbourhood, would go a long way to lift the cloud that had been hanging over Bowen for many years. He might tell the hon. member that seventeen or eighteen years ago he saw the "Blackbird," the "Omeo," and other steamers of that class moored alongside the wharf at Maryborough.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. member for Maryborough had stated that the men employed on the hopper barges in the lower reaches of the Brisbane River were worked fifteen to sixteen hours a day. He wished to know if that was correct?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was informed that the extra work of the men referred to was, on the average, about two hours a day more than the usual term for work, but if it was late at night before they knocked off they did not commence again so early next morning.

Mr. PALMER said that the whole of the discussion had had reference only to dredges on the east coast. He (Mr. Palmer), however, wished to call the Colonial Treasurer's attention to what would become a most important port in the Gulf of Carpentaria. He referred, of course, to the port of Normanton. Mr. Nisbet had reported on the amount of dredging which would be required there, and he (Mr. Palmer) would like to know what preparations were in progress for the purpose of providing a dredge to carry out the work. The port he spoke of was quite as important as any of those on the east coast, the merits of which hon. members had been discussing. It would become even of more importance when railway construction in its direction was started. It was destined to become an outlet, not only for the large Northern district, but for the whole colony. It was therefore of the utmost importance that early preparations should be made for carrying out the dredging required. The Colonial Treasurer had referred to the fact that a new dredge was in the course of construction. Bearing that in mind, he would place himself in the hands of the Colonial Treasurer, in the hope that he would not allow the port of Normanton to suffer through the rival claims of Maryborough and Bowen.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Harbours and Rivers Department had been considering for some time the propriety of getting a new dredge, in view of the probability of Normanton becoming a very large and important port. In the last report of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers an estimate was given of the amount of work that would be required to be done at Normanton. The dredging would commence at eight miles from the bar, and there would be about seven miles of it altogether. The work would extend over several years, but whether it should be entered on now was not decided. The hon. member for Burke would remember that an appropriation was made last year for the building of a new dredge. This dredge might hereafter do work in the Gulf. The dredge was now being constructed, and he could promise the hon. member that the requirements of the port of Normanton would not be in any way overlooked.

Mr. ALAND said that he had been expecting to hear something said on the subject of the port of Normanton by one or two hon. members who went all round the Northern district during the recess. From what they told him privately, he

imagined that the dredging business there would be a very expensive operation, and he had an impression that the attention of the Government ought to be directed rather to the question as to whether the port in the Gulf should not be somewhere else. He hoped the Colonial Treasurer would take Sir John Coode up there before expending a lot of money, and without knowing whether it would be uselessly spent or not.

Mr. ARCHER asked when tenders would be called for the extension of the Dry Dock?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the position of matters was this: that the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers was pressing on with the specifications for the work, but could not possibly have them completed for the next six weeks, and possibly not until he had returned from accompanying Sir John Coode to the North. His instructions, however, were to proceed with the work as expeditiously as possible, and to guard against any unnecessary work in the shape of the pumping of water from the dock. It was intended that Sir John Coode should visit Normanton and report on the requirements of the port there.

Mr. ARCHER asked what was to be the length of the Dry Dock when extended?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it would be 450 feet. Its present length was 320 feet.

Mr. CHUBB said he desired to call the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to the mouth of Breakfast Creek as a suitable place for a dock in the event of further dock accommodation being required. He believed that the present dock could not be made wide enough to admit two vessels. Its length, too, would only admit of two vessels of a small size. The suggestion as to the Breakfast Creek site had been made to him, and he repeated it, because it seemed to him a very good place for a dock.

Mr. ARCHER said there was a new item in the vote for a foreman shipwright. Was it the intention of the Government to undertake the work of repairing their vessels?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the foreman shipwright referred to had been employed in the dock ever since it was built, but whereas he was formerly treated as a supernumerary, he was now placed on the Estimates.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was very glad the foreman shipwright had been put upon the Estimates, because he was an expert in that particular business, and it was he who docked the ships. In the line above in the Estimates, there was an item "dockmaster," but he did not dock the ships—it was the foreman shipwright, Mr. Parker, and if the Government had not his services they would be in a difficulty. He was a most efficient officer, and one who attended to the interests of the Government in every particular in connection with the Dry Dock.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he understood the Colonial Treasurer to state that he was informed that the hours of work for men employed on the barges were about two hours more than the ordinary hours.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The ordinary hours of the other men employed.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he did not know what hours the other men worked, but he held in his hand a document showing what hours they had been working lately. On September 28th they worked 14 hours 20 minutes; next day, 14 hours 33 minutes; next, 14 hours 45 minutes; next, 14 hours 40 minutes; next, 14 hours 30 minutes; and the next, a Saturday, 7 hours 30 minutes—more than an ordinary

Civil servant worked on any day during the week. During the next week they worked, on the first day, 14 hours 35 minutes; next, 14 hours 15 minutes; next, 14 hours; next, 14 hours; next, 12 hours; and on the Saturday, 6 hours. The Committee ought to express itself very plainly on the subject of the different treatment which men received in the Government employment, and propose some remedy. He had often heard expressions which seemed to imply degradation of manual labourers' work resented by members on the other side of the Committee, and, he thought, justly so. If they turned to the records contained in the Estimates they would find most outrageous things—exalting clerical work, and work of that kind, above honest labour. Taking the 3rd page of the Estimates of Probable Ways and Means, they would find that they paid £8,191 as pensions to men who were once in the service of the colony as little else than clerks. Not only that, but the treatment of the men in the lower grades of the service by the Government was not uniform, and it should be uniform. What they gathered from that and from other sources seemed to make it imperative that very soon there would have to be a Civil Service Bill brought in to regulate the Civil Service and put it upon a different footing. Take the way in which policemen were treated. No one could affirm that policemen were killed with hard work. They were more likely to die from having nothing to do in many instances. Anyhow, they found that policemen were in such a position that they could make a very comfortable provision, not only for their old age, but for their prime of life. If they turned to page 86 of the Estimates—pensions to policemen—they would find that £4,260 was down for that. The hon. member for Carnarvon told him that the men paid for that, and so they did in a certain way, and some of them had been able to retire in the prime of life and live at home at ease. Whatever policemen were enabled to do in the service of the State, he maintained that railway employes should be enabled to do, and men in the Harbours and Rivers Department also. There were men in the service of the State who drew very large salaries, and who were sometimes sick. They might be away for seven days or seven weeks, or even seven months, and they received every shilling of their salaries. Yet they learned that men in the service of the Harbours and Rivers Department considered it would be a very handsome thing if men who had been in the service of the department for years were allowed seven days in the year for sickness. He knew men who had been in the service of the State for many years, and when they had been sick they had been unmercifully treated and their wages had been deducted. If it was right to deduct those men's wages when they were sick, it was right that that should be done all through the service. Working men in the service of the Harbours and Rivers Department were men just as much as any employed in clerical work, and if it was right to deduct the wages in the case of a man who was receiving smaller wages, it was quite right that the same principle should be applied to other Civil servants employed in higher capacities. He would respectfully suggest that the Government could not do better than take into consideration the importance of dealing with the annuities in regard to the treatment of men employed in the Government Service in different capacities.

Mr. BUCKLAND said there was an item on the Estimates, of £500, for the maintenance and repair of wharves and jetties. He would call attention to the state of the Cardwell jetty. He had occasion to land there lately, and found it to be positively dangerous for people to walk

upon, and also for landing goods. No doubt the hon. gentleman who represented that locality could speak more correctly in regard to the matter than he; but when they were passing the Estimates for repairs to jetties, something ought to be done to the one he referred to, which was perfectly unsafe for passengers after dark.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, with regard to the Cardwell jetty, the Government intended to abandon it, as they did not consider it worth while to expend any money over it. The Custom-house had even been shifted. With regard to what had fallen from the hon. member for Fassifern, he had paid particular attention to his remarks, and could assure him that the employes in the department were more liberally treated than those in similar positions in New South Wales or Victoria. He had read the regulations in force in both those colonies, and the employes here had nothing to complain of.

Mr. CHUBB said the estimate showed that the expenditure on the Dry Dock last year was £880; could the Treasurer tell them the receipts?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, so far as his memory served him, the receipts were £4,000, exclusive of Government work. The amount was published in the *Gazette*. The Government work done amounted to between £2,000 and £3,000.

Mr. PALMER said that reference had been made by the senior member for Toowoomba with regard to the enormous expense attached to dredging the Norman River, and it had been suggested that a fresh survey should be made so as to discover, if possible, a better port for the terminus of a transcontinental railway. If that hon. gentleman would take the trouble to look into the "Votes and Proceedings," and see the numerous reports made by competent men of all the ports known to exist in the Gulf of Carpentaria, he would see quite enough to convince him that there was no port available for a transcontinental railway equal to the Norman River. In fact there was no other river in Queensland with the same natural capacities for shipping. The reports were quite decided—from harbour-masters, from pilots, and from surveyors who had been sent up from Brisbane—and the unanimous opinion of all those men was that there was no river in Queensland equal to the Norman River, let alone in the Gulf of Carpentaria. All those reports were in the "Votes and Proceedings for 1883." Then with regard to the report of Mr. Nisbet, and the expense—the senior member for Toowoomba referred to the great expense attached to making Normanton a port of shipment. If he would refer also to the report of the Engineer for Harbours he would find that the expenditure in the Brisbane River for seven years had amounted to £79,264, for dredging alone. He was quite certain that that did not cover all the expenses, as other dredges had been at work, and that referred only to two dredges. At Rockhampton the expenditure had been £91,663, at Mackay it had been £38,000, and at Townsville, £88,000; whilst at Normanton there had been expended only £1,300. At most of those ports on the eastern coast there were further sums—very large sums—proposed to be expended to make them still further available for shipping. With regard to the Brisbane River, the depth of water in that river in its natural state was nearly one foot less than the depth at the Norman bar in its natural state, so that the Brisbane was in a far worse state at one time than the Norman River was now. There was not the slightest doubt that that port would form the main outlet in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

One gentleman who had reported upon the subject had stated that to make that port available for ordinary steamers they would have to dredge a channel upwards of 10,000 yards in length by 100 yards wide, which would give a depth of 15 feet at low water. The amount of stuff which would have to be removed, according to that estimate, would be 1,000,000 cubic yards. He believed that the average price paid for such work at the ports on the eastern coast was 6½d. per yard, so that the expenditure would amount to about £27,000, or say £30,000. That was less than had been spent at Mackay, where there was a prospect of a further sum of £100,000 having to be expended. He contended that in a few years the Norman River port—when it became an outlet for a railway—would surpass Mackay and perhaps Rockhampton. Therefore, taking all things into consideration, he did not think the Government should allow the report of Mr. Nisbet to influence them so as to prevent them carrying out the necessary improvements to make Normanton a good port.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member need not be at all alarmed, or imagine that the Government had any desire to pass over the just claims of the North. If the Government had not desired to improve the port at Normanton they would not have considered the advisability of asking Sir John Cooze to report upon it. He could not follow the hon. member in his estimate as to the cost of the removal of the obstructions there, because the surveys had not yet been fully completed. It was, however, well to bear in mind that the work would be of an expensive character, though that was not likely to deter the Government from proceeding with it as early as possible. With regard to the question asked by the hon. member for Bowen in reference to the Dry Dock, he might state that from the time the dock was opened in 1882 till the 30th June last—a period of three years and six months—167 vessels had lain in the dock; and the receipts from the public amounted to £5,884 19s. 10d.; and the value of the work done on behalf of the Government was £2,911 18s.; making a total of £8,796 17s. 10d., while the working expenses for the same time amounted to £2,215 14s. 7d. The dock cost £83,000; and at the present time, after deducting working expenses, it was returning interest at the rate of about 2½ per cent. on the outlay.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he could not endorse the statement made by the hon. member for Burke as to Normanton being the port for the whole of the Gulf of Carpentaria. But as the Government had considered it of sufficient importance to project a railway to it from the interior he thought they should also consider the importance of improving it, and of spending more money upon it than they had spent heretofore. He believed it could be made a good port; probably as good as the port of Brisbane.

Mr. MELLOR said that on a previous occasion the Colonial Treasurer had stated that smaller dredges would be supplied for removing obstructions in the smaller rivers on the coast. The Noosa River was a small one, and there was considerable traffic there, but navigation was greatly impeded by a few obstructions. He thought it would be a good thing to get clam-shell dredges for use in the Noosa and rivers like it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers was formerly of opinion that clam-shell dredges were the best class of small dredges that could be built for work such as that referred to, but he had since changed his mind; consequently the second dredge had not been built. He (the Colonial

Treasurer) was informed that a clam-shell dredge would not afford the required relief in the Noosa River.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) moved that the sum of £9,655 be granted for salaries and contingencies for Secretary for Public Lands. There was an increase of £415 over the amount voted last year, which was caused by the employment of three additional clerks—one at £200 a year, and two at £75 a year each—also by an increase to the office-keeper of £65. The increase in the number of clerks was rendered necessary by additional work in the office during the last three or four months, which, as far as he could see at present, was likely to continue. The staff before that had not been equal to the work.

Mr. ARCHER asked if the increase for the item of office-keeper was caused by extra appointment, or if it was an addition to the salary of the former office-keeper?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was an addition to the salary of the office-keeper, Mrs. Collins, who had charge of the whole of the office. When the Survey Department was removed to the new building, the whole of the work devolved upon the one office-keeper, who had to get assistance.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was an additional clerk at £200. Perhaps the Minister for Lands could tell the Committee whether that clerk had been raised a step, or whether he was a new clerk put into the office at £200?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was a clerk put into the office at that salary. He was a man who had been in the service of the Government for fourteen or fifteen years. Previous to getting his present position he was for some years engaged as a Crown lands ranger and bailiff. He was totally unsuited for that work, as he was quite at sea in the bush, and was perfectly ignorant of the value of improvements—a very necessary qualification for a bailiff. They had either, therefore, to dismiss him from the Government Service or to give him an opportunity to come in as a clerk in the department, where a man was required; and he now received a salary which was less than that which he received as a ranger and bailiff, and which was not in excess of that paid to clerks for doing the work he performed.

Mr. NORTON said there was a matter which should be referred to—the item for advertising, £2,700. On a former occasion some reference was made to the matter in committee, and it was said that all advertisements were to be withdrawn from *Figaro*. From the return of advertising in the colonial papers laid upon the table, he noticed that *Figaro* received £52 9s. 6d., and that *Punch* received £30 15s. 6d. He mentioned the matter now because it was during the discussion upon that vote that the matter was spoken of before. The Minister for Lands on that occasion spoke very strongly against *Figaro* receiving the advertisements it did receive at that time. At any rate, the hon. gentleman had since made up for the extra advertisements which *Figaro* used to receive. The Government should not consider what the politics of a paper were in advertising, because the object was to advertise in the paper which had the largest circulation. *Punch* used to have the largest circulation in the colony next to the *Queenslander*. *Punch* and *Figaro* were now issued as one paper, and, he understood, had an enormous circulation in every district in the colony. It was strange that the advertisements should have been almost entirely withdrawn

from those papers and published in papers which were almost unknown. If they took up other papers mentioned in the same return—say the *Evangelical Standard*, for instance—they found that that paper—and, however wide its circulation might be, it had not one-fourth of the circulation of *Figaro*—received £112 odd. Then there was the *Leader*, which received £207 for advertisements. What he wished to point out was, that a paper like *Figaro* was entitled to much greater consideration in the matter of advertisements than papers having a smaller circulation.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could not question the accuracy of the hon. gentleman's statement about the circulation of *Figaro* or indeed about the circulation of any other paper in the colony. He believed he had uniformly given the advertisements to those papers which were most likely to disseminate the information; generally confining the advertisements to papers of the best and highest class in Brisbane and other parts of the colony. He did not recognise *Figaro* and *Punch* in the category of high-class papers. They were not papers that all classes of the community would read. He knew a very great number of persons who would not read *Figaro* at all. It should be remembered that they must keep their advertisements within reasonable bounds; whilst doing that, care was taken that the advertisements were inserted in those papers best calculated to disseminate the information.

Mr. NORTON said it was somewhat remarkable that the hon. gentleman should adopt that tone now after the manner in which he condemned *Figaro* before. It was then with him not a question of keeping the expenditure within reasonable bounds, but a question of the absolute withdrawal of advertisements from that paper. It was a fact that that paper was now circulated in every district of the colony, and he was given to understand that it had the second largest circulation of any weekly paper in the colony. What the hon. gentleman said was correct—that some persons did not consider it a high-class paper; but the object was to get the advertisements circulated as widely as possible. The hon. member himself admitted that, and if that admission were made then the advertisements should be put in the paper which circulated most largely. He might refer to some discussion which had taken place before with regard to other papers. One hon. member in particular very strongly condemned the late Government for not inserting more advertisements in a certain paper. The remarkable fact was that though that gentleman in his private business had a large number of advertisements in nearly all the papers in Brisbane, he still omitted to advertise in that one. It was unfair that *Figaro* should receive so few advertisements in comparison with other papers which had not anything like the circulation.

Mr. HAMILTON said the remarks of the Minister for Lands were very contradictory. The hon. member for Port Curtis spoke of *Figaro* as a paper which was one of those with the largest circulation in the colony; and from what he knew the hon. member had good reason to believe that was true. The Minister for Lands first said he did not question the accuracy of that statement, and in the next breath he said that one of his reasons for not advertising in *Figaro* was on account of its very limited circle of readers. He also stated that he did not recognise it as a high-class paper. Did he mean that he did not believe in the morals of the paper—or what? The great object in advertising, as the hon. gentleman himself said, was to disseminate information to the largest number of people; and since it had been shown that the

circulation of *Figaro* was second only to that of the *Queenslander* amongst the weekly papers, it was evident that by advertising in it, information was disseminated to a far greater extent than by advertising in the other paper whose circulation was less. Therefore, when the hon. gentleman withdrew advertisements from that paper, and gave the lion's share to other papers with a far smaller circulation, the Committee could only look to some reason which he evidently was afraid to give, but which they could readily imagine.

Mr. ALAND said he thought there was a great deal too much advertising done by the Government. He did not know how many papers were published in Brisbane, but each of them seemed to think it had a right to a certain amount of advertisements. He did not think so. The evening papers of the city, which were read by the majority of the people living in the city, should certainly receive Government advertisements, and the same in the inland towns of the colony. If a more judicious system were adopted by the Government they would certainly do more good by their advertising than at the present time. As regarded *Figaro*, which it had been complained did not get its share of advertisements, though it was said it had a larger circulation than any other in the colony—

Mr. HAMILTON: That was not stated by anyone.

Mr. ALAND: It must be remembered that a very large number of persons who got *Figaro* were also contributors to the other newspapers in the city. Those contributors to *Figaro* who were not subscribers to any other paper were a class of persons who really were not at all interested in Government advertisements. As far as the politics of *Figaro* were concerned, he was disposed to think its politics consisted of abusing the present Premier as much as possible, and everyone who supported the Government. To say it had any politics beyond slanging the present Government was to say what he did not think was true.

Mr. NORTON said he thought that was the explanation of its not getting more advertisements. He would point out to the hon. gentleman that he was mistaken in supposing that *Figaro* was only taken by people who took one of the other principal papers. A great many people in the country took the weekly papers and not the dailies. He knew from what he had heard said by people who had been in all parts of the colony that *Figaro* had a very large circulation, and though its politics might be to "slate" the Premier that was no reason why advertisements should be withheld from it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think there could be any doubt about the circulation of the paper; but he thought it would be contrary to the ordinary principles that actuated human nature, if the Government did give it any advertisements. He would like to ask the Minister for Lands how it was that he asked for £2,700 this year for advertising—the same as was asked for last year—and yet, according to the return which had been circulated that morning, the amount spent in advertising last year was £10,802? What was the amount spent last year by the department?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot say exactly.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Why do you ask for this amount this year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he went by the amount asked last year and the preceding year—£2,700 last year, and £2,500 the year before. He believed the amount was very nearly all expended, if not quite.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he found he had been making a mistake. The £10,000 odd was the amount spent by the whole of the departments, not by the Lands Office alone. From the return he thought the newspapers of the colony had received, generally speaking, a very fair share of advertisements all round. There might be some discrepancy as regarded the paper just now under discussion; but glancing at the return he thought nearly all the newspapers of the colony were represented more or less. Some of them certainly were down for very small sums, and some, in his opinion, for larger than their circulation would warrant. That, however, was a matter solely in the discretion of the Ministers and under secretaries, and one which the Committee could hardly fairly criticise. They might have their own opinion about advertisements not being given to that facetious paper which "slanged" the Premier, but, as he said before, it would be hardly human to expect that advertisements would be given to it under the circumstances.

Mr. HAMILTON said it was evident that the reasons given on the Government side for not advertising in that paper were not the real reasons; and that fact was evidence that their real reasons were so unjustifiable that they were ashamed to give them. The hon. member for Toowoomba gave as one reason for not advertising in "*Figaro*," that since it was a town paper, and the Government advertisements appeared in other town papers of large circulation, it was unnecessary that the same advertisements should appear in a paper which met the eyes of the same readers. That was not so, because *Figaro* had a very large country circulation. In many places inland the only Brisbane paper one ever came across, with the exception of the *Queenslander*, was *Figaro*. Another reason given by the hon. member was that the class of persons who read that paper alone were not much interested in Government advertisements.

Mr. ALAND: I did not give that as a reason.

Mr. HAMILTON: No. He recognised that it was not given as a reason, but only as a pretext. Were the class of people who read the *Evangelical Standard* interested in Government advertisements?

Mr. ALAND: Yes.

Mr. HAMILTON said he had been under the impression that they were interested in something higher. He had never come across that paper in the interior, and very seldom in the city. It certainly had not nearly the circulation of *Figaro*, yet it had double the amount of Government advertisements. Then there was the *Australian*, which was also a religious paper: it only derived £6 a year from Government advertisements, yet it had quite as large a circulation as the *Evangelical Standard*, but it was of a different persuasion. Was that because persons of the persuasion to whom the *Evangelical Standard* administered were interested in Government advertisements, while persons of the persuasion to whom the *Australian* administered were not? That did not satisfactorily explain the fact that one religious paper got £112 last year for advertisements, while the other, which had an equal circulation, got only £6 last year.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had ascertained that the amount expended by the department last year in advertisements was £2,550.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the reason given by the hon. member, Mr. Aland, as to *Figaro*, applied inversely to the *Evangelical Standard*. That paper praised and blessed the Premier, while the other cursed him and held him up to ridicule.

The PREMIER said he was sorry to say that he did not possess a very accurate knowledge of the principles on which advertising was conducted in the different departments. Long ago he made a note to investigate the subject whenever he had time, but he had been so busy that he had never been able to get at it. With regard to the return he was very much surprised to see some of the items—the smallness of the amounts paid to some newspapers and the largeness of others. Reference had been made to *Figaro*, and it had been said that that paper did not get Government advertisements because of its abuse of him. He never saw *Figaro* unless it was shown to him, and that was very seldom.

Mr. HAMILTON: He reads every number.

The PREMIER said that was not the fact. When he used to see the paper, some two years ago, he came to the conclusion that it was a disgrace to journalism and a disgrace to the colony, and that it would be a disgrace to any Government to assist in its circulation. If the character of the paper had altered since then, he should have no objection, for his own part, to give it a share of the advertising if its circulation deserved it. There were plenty of papers that abused him regularly and roundly—what some people might characterise as virulently—but they got Government advertisements, because they were not generally a disgrace to journalism and had a fair circulation. As long as he had anything to do with the Government, he would never be a party to the giving of public money to assist in the circulation of any paper which was a disgrace to journalism and a disgrace to the colony.

Mr. ARCHER said that whilst the hon. gentleman was inquiring into the moral character of newspapers it might be advisable to ascertain whether the *Leader* was or was not a disgrace to journalism and a disgrace to the colony.

Mr. HAMILTON said he never knew before that *Figaro* was a disgrace to the colony, although certainly some of its statements were disgraceful to those persons on whom they reflected. The Premier had made a very poor defence in attacking a paper simply because it did not approve of his policy. He seemed to think that no paper had a right to live which did not praise him and his policy. When the Premier was in Victoria he even attacked the papers there for mildly commenting unfavourably on his conduct to a deputation which interviewed him on some subject. He told the deputation that no papers in this colony would dare to speak of him in such a manner as certain Victorian papers had, and characterised their statements as impudent lies, although as a matter of fact the criticisms in the Victorian papers regarding him were mild compared with those which appeared in the Queensland papers.

Mr. DONALDSON: He did not say that. I was present at the deputation.

Mr. HAMILTON said those might not be the exact words, but they were words to that effect. The hon. gentleman said the remarks made by those papers were lies, whereupon the *Argus* took occasion to say in a leading article that the Premier's language was perfectly uncalled for, and that it might be language worthy only of a bullock-driver.

The PREMIER: They did not say so. The *Argus* is conducted by gentlemen.

Mr. HAMILTON: And also by truthful men. The leading article he referred to went on to state that they were not surprised at the virulence of Queensland politics when they found the Premier of the colony expressing himself in such a manner. That was the opinion of the first paper in Australia regarding him. If

the Premier contradicted him he would look up the paper, and read the article to the Committee.

Mr. DONALDSON said he was present when the deputation to which the hon. member for Cook referred waited on the Premier in Melbourne, and the hon. member's account of it was a misstatement, which he (Mr. Donaldson) wished to correct. What the Premier said was to the effect that such statements as had been made about him in the Victorian papers would not be made in the papers in his own colony, because they would be treated as impudent lies. That was quite different from what the hon. member said, whose misstatement he felt it his duty to correct.

Mr. HAMILTON said that what he had stated was perfectly true—that the Premier said the papers in Queensland would not have dared to make such statements, because they would have been branded as impudent liars.

Mr. DONALDSON: No; that the people would have treated the statements as impudent lies.

Mr. HAMILTON: What he said was a fact. Of course he knew very well that the Premier had simply to smile and every member on his side would laugh. The statements made with regard to the Premier in the papers in Queensland were much worse than any he (Mr. Hamilton) had seen in the papers south, as he could prove, for he had read those papers carefully.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was all very well for the hon. member for Warrego to get up and tell the Committee that he was present at the interview referred to; but men who were not present knew quite as much as he did, from the report of the *Argus*.

Mr. HAMILTON: More.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: He had read that report and also the leader that appeared in the *Argus*, which stated distinctly that the virulence of Queensland politics was not at all surprising from the manner in which the Premier received that deputation.

Mr. DONALDSON: I made no reference to that.

The PREMIER said anyone could always preach a good sermon if he invented his own text. That was the answer to the argument about the *Argus* leader. What had been said by the hon. member for Warrego was quite correct. He had not spoken to that hon. member on the subject since, but he remembered exactly what he did say, because he had determined beforehand what he should say, and he received the deputation for the purpose of saying that particular thing. He had refused to receive them before, but he had something he desired to say, and which he preferred to say in Victoria. He should have written to the *Argus* concerning some of the statements that had appeared there, but was really incapable of writing a letter at the time. He therefore took the opportunity of receiving the deputation in order to make publicly in Victoria a statement to be read by the readers of the *Argus* and other papers in which the statements referred to periodically appeared purporting to be sent by respectable correspondents in Queensland. What he said was exactly what the hon. member for Warrego had stated, but the *Argus* did not even quote correctly from their own report when they made their comment. As he had said, any person could make comments when they invented their text.

Mr. NORTON said that statement was very good coming from an hon. member who had just said the *Argus* was conducted by gentlemen.

The PREMIER: So it is.

Mr. NORTON: When they had purposely misreported?

The PREMIER: No; accidentally misreported.

Mr. NORTON: The hon. gentleman said they made their own facts—that they did not follow the text of their own report. Was that the hon. member's idea of acting like a gentleman? He was sorry for him if it was.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £1,005 be granted for salaries and contingencies in connection with the Land Board.

Mr. GROOM said before the item was passed he should like to take the opportunity of stating that, as a representative, he was not at all pleased with the way in which the Land Board were acting at the present time in connection with the subdivision of runs. He did not mean to say that the board were not doing their duty—far from it; but he said the mode in which evidence was taken just now was eminently unsatisfactory as far as the public were concerned. When the division of the Goondiwindi Run took place, three or four months ago, there was great dissatisfaction with regard to the way in which Mr. Golden's report was set aside; and a subdivision of the run was made which was certainly not in the public interest. The pastoral lessee, without any doubt, got nearly all his own way, and the reason why he succeeded in doing so was because he called all the evidence on his own side and no evidence was called on the part of the Crown in rebuttal or to prove that the commissioner's report was founded upon accurate and correct bases. He would mention another run—Emu Creek—and he was particularly anxious to draw the attention of the Committee to this remarkable fact—that a gentleman in the employment of a mercantile firm was allowed to appear before the board on behalf of the lessee; he called his witnesses, examined them in the ordinary way in which a barrister examined a witness in the box, but there was no cross-examination on the part of the Crown, nor anyone present to represent the Crown or the public. The decision of the board was published in the *Courier* the following morning, and the chairman—Mr. Deshon—distinctly stated that the decision was based on the evidence. If the Land Board's decision was based on the evidence, then he (Mr. Groom) said it was the duty of the Crown to bring their evidence forward, and place it in juxtaposition to that adduced by the pastoral lessee. From his knowledge of Emu Creek Run, he had no hesitation in saying that the division that had been made of it was not in the interests of the public, but that the pastoral lessee had virtually got everything his own way, and consequently that land would be locked up from settlement for the next ten years. The area open to the public was infinitesimally small, and probably would not be selected at all. There were several blocks of land that he knew which were gazetted to be opened for selection on Emu Creek Run on the 10th of November. He knew that applications were ready to be sent in for that land—for every bit of it—in fact, in some cases the applications would have been two or three deep, so anxious and eager were the inhabitants both of Ipswich and his own district—Toowoomba—to select that particular area of land; but, in consequence of the decision of the Land Board, it had to be withdrawn from selection, and he had no doubt was now included in the portion that the pastoral lessee had got, and which would therefore be in his occupation for the next ten years. His particular reason for

drawing attention to this was, that he thought when a lessee employed an expert—and he believed the gentleman who was employed in the case referred to was generally admitted to be a pretty good expert, having intimate knowledge of pastoral country and pastoral matters—when an expert was employed by the lessee, he thought the Government had a right to employ counsel, and the Land Board should allow the witnesses to be cross-examined; also, that the commissioner whose report was before the board should bring witnesses to prove that his report was founded upon a correct basis, and that he had acted honestly in the public interest. Because, as the case at present stood, Mr. Golden's report in both instances had been completely put on one side; virtually, they might as well have had no commissioner at all. As he said before, the board, in delivering judgment, said they were guided by the evidence—that the commissioner had not carried out a certain subsection of the Act; and his (Mr. Groom's) contention was that if the evidence adduced on the part of the pastoral lessee was so overwhelming as to cause the board to set aside the report of the commissioner, and give a decision opposed to the public interest, undoubtedly it was the duty of the Crown to take care to see that public interests were conserved. He was aware of several witnesses who knew the country, and who would have been able to have borne out, almost to the letter, every word of Mr. Golden's report, had they been called and examined; and if they had, probably the division of Emu Creek Run would not have been made in the eminently unsatisfactory way in which it now stood. The matter was all the more important, because when they were initiating a new land law the way in which it was initiated would determine to a large extent whether the Land Act was to be made or marred; and, considering the misfortune of the two cases to which he had referred, he thought an expert should be employed on the part of the Crown whenever a division took place which certainly was not in consonance with the wishes of the public or their welfare. He knew a good deal of the country in his own district, and therefore he could speak very feelingly upon the subject, because he knew a large body of selectors were anxiously waiting for that land to be thrown open. In point of fact, Emu Creek Run and the Eskdale Run—which might possibly share the same fate as Emu Creek—were the only portions of land now left in the district open to selection, and it was for that reason he drew public attention to the matter—in order that the same misfortune might not happen to Eskdale Run. In his opinion a miscarriage of justice had taken place which would tend to decrease the estimation in which the Land Act was held by the public. He desired to be understood as not saying that the Land Board had not done their duty. He should be sorry to convey such an imputation. He held, however, that when the pastoral lessees produced evidence—strong evidence on their side—to prove that the commissioner had made a wrong division it was the duty of the Crown to call substantial evidence on the other side to show that the commissioner was right. The board would then be able to come to a determination on the balance of the evidence. In the particular case he referred to the evidence was all one way. All the witnesses were called on the part of the lessee, and none on the part of the Crown, and a division of the run had taken place which was most unsatisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it appeared to him that the Land Board had made a right division of the Emu Creek Run. The hon. member for Toowoomba had left out of the ques-

tion altogether the fact that the commissioner, in reporting on that run for division, sent in two recommendations. In one, he said the division would have the effect of cutting off from the lessee the whole of the richest parts of the run, and opening them to the public. Having regard to the requirements of the 29th clause of the Land Act, he also sent in an alternate division, which divided the good country equally between the lessee and the public. The area given to the lessee by the first recommendation took all the good rich agricultural land from the run for the resumed portion, and left a larger area of grazing country in the area to be leased. The Land Board thought that probably the lessee would be willing to accept the larger area of grazing country in place of the smaller but richer portion of agricultural land. That, however, the lessee would not agree to, and he protested against the division so made. The matter was then remitted to the Land Board for reconsideration, and the lessee brought evidence to prove that the division was not in accordance with his idea of fairness, which was that he should have a fair or equal proportion of the best part of the run. The evidence given by the witnesses for the lessee, as well as by the Crown lands ranger, who had an intimate knowledge of the country, was against the division made. The ranger's evidence tallied exactly with that of the commissioner, and also with the evidence of the lessee's witnesses. There was, therefore, really no choice left whatever to the Land Board but to carry out the alternate division recommended by the land commissioner in the first instance, and that division was now carried out, with slight alterations on account of the dividing line not corresponding with the surveyed lands. The dividing line was carried along the lines of the surveyed blocks, the lessee in consequence accepting less land than was originally allotted to him in the alternate division. To that extent the new division was in favour of the public, as against the lessee. Objections might be made by the unthinking portions of the public who would not look at the case fairly and squarely as between the public and the lessee, but it was no use appealing to people who would not look at the matter fairly and honestly. If people would look at the matter fairly they would see that the run had been honestly divided according to the terms of the Act. If there was anything wrong it was that there was a defect in the Act itself. It might be said that the board should have taken every part of the good land from the lessee for resumption in the interests of general settlement. To do such a thing would be manifestly unfair to the lessee. He therefore maintained that the division was well and fairly made. He should have liked to have seen the whole of the agricultural land resumed for settlement; but when the lessee objected there was no alternative but to take the course the board had adopted. He agreed that in the conducting of those cases it was desirable to have somebody set to watch in the interests of the State, and to examine witnesses, as evidence was often given that could be upset by careful cross-examination. There was, however, no doubt that the report of the land commissioner would always have its full weight in almost every case. He was an unprejudiced man who carefully examined the runs. The lessees, on the other hand, always took care not to bring witnesses who thought differently from themselves, and to such evidence not very great weight would be attached unless it was shown to be that of disinterested men who had no interest in common with the lessees, and who were not engaged in similar occupations or were friends of the lessees. As to the division made of the Eskdale Run, he was not prepared to say

whether it was a good or a bad one. There was, however, a great deal to be said in favour of the view taken by the Land Board. Those who were acquainted with the country knew that a great deal of the run was flooded land. The richest part of it was flooded from 5 feet to 15 feet in depth in wet seasons, and was only used in times of dry weather. If the selectors were confined wholly to the flooded ground, the result, no doubt, would be that at times their stock would be swept away entirely. The board made such a division as to resume a fair portion of the rich land backed up by higher ridges. They, no doubt, gave the lessee a larger area of good or flooded land than was offered to the public, but that was compensated for by the whole of the area resumed being very much greater than that given to the lessee.

Mr. KELLETT said he knew as much about the Emu Creek Run as any man in Queensland. He lived on it some years and knew every inch of the ground. He was sorry to have been absent the other evening when his hon. colleague (Mr. White) moved the adjournment of the House, to call attention to the division of that run. That hon. member, no doubt, only spoke from hearsay, and consequently his statements were not as correct as they would have been had he possessed a knowledge of the run himself. He was asked if he would give evidence in the matter, and he said he would. He had no favour or affection for the Mercantile Agency Company, nor for the lessee, whom he had not seen twice in his life. He was asked what he thought of the different parts of the run, and he gave his opinion as well as he possibly could. The hon. member for Toowoomba said there was no cross-examination; but he could assure him that Mr. Golden, the commissioner, cross-examined him upon every point he could think of, both as to the quality of the land and the number of the stock it would carry; and he thought that gentleman was quite as capable of conducting a cross-examination as the gentleman who examined him on behalf of the Mercantile Agency Company. He was asked if he thought it was an unfair division, and if the best part was taken away from the lessee. He said certainly not, and it was against the Act if the best portion of the run was taken away and the inferior part left. The proposition was then made by the lessees to make a straight line through the run, and to ask the board to take whichever side they chose. He said that if that proposition had been made beforehand there would have been no trouble in getting it granted. The proposal was, however, made to the board, and they chose which side they would take. The hon. member for Toowoomba was also wrong in saying that all the land which was surveyed, and could have been thrown open for selection in November, was now not obtainable. The line as near as possible divided the portion that was surveyed.

Mr. GROOM: I said the land was withdrawn, and it is withdrawn.

Mr. KELLETT said it was as nearly as possible equally divided; the lessee had one half of it, and the Crown had the other to throw open for selection when they thought fit. He did not think anything could be fairer, nor did he think that very many lessees would have come under the Act unless there had been a clause in it which said that there was to be an equal division. Had it not been for that the Act would never have passed, or, if it had, no leaseholders would ever have come under it; so that, to his mind, the thing would be an utter absurdity. If it were found that all the best portions were taken away and thrown open for selection, there would have been a very great row in the country at once, and he did not think any Minister for

Lands could stand it. He was perfectly satisfied, from his knowledge of the run, that a fair division had been made, and the board had come to a fair and proper decision.

Mr. KATES said he was sure that all the time and trouble and expense would have been saved if the Government had accepted the suggestion he made last year, which was that the pastoral lessee should divide the land, and give the Government the option of selecting which half they liked. They might then have done away with the seven commissioners at £1,000 a year.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. member for Stanley stated that he was wrong in saying that the lands declared open for selection at Djuan on the 10th of November were withdrawn; as they were still open for selection. He had seen the official notice withdrawing them signed by the commissioner in consequence of the alteration of the boundaries of the run, which took in the lands that were declared open for selection after the 10th November. The hon. gentleman could not get over that fact; if he could he (Mr. Groom) would be very glad. If the information could be conveyed to those selectors that the land had not been withdrawn it would be very satisfactory to them.

Mr. KELLETT said the only information he had was that the land was the property of the Crown now, and he had not the slightest doubt that it would be immediately thrown open for selection. It had been withdrawn because the line ran wrongly; but it had been decided to run it so that it should not interfere with the surveys.

Mr. NORTON said he was a little surprised to hear the hon. member for Toowoomba speak as he had done concerning the action of the Land Board; because, if he did not intend to condemn it, he did so in fact. There was not the slightest reason why that board should have acted unfairly in that case; he supposed there would be nothing to guide them except the desire to do what was right. Therefore he was surprised to hear the hon. gentleman speak as he had done, because he was one of those who advocated their appointment last year.

Mr. GROOM: I advocated local boards.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman supported the board to the very utmost. He (Mr. Norton) did not believe the board would have acted any differently if they had not been members of the board at all, but simply appointed to decide the case. Hon. gentlemen would understand that, probably, at the time the Act was passing, there might have been an idea that all the best lands would have been taken away, and thrown open to the people. The Act was so worded that it was impossible that any other view could have been taken of the matter than that which was taken by the board the other day. He had never been upon the run, and did not know anything about it; but still, from reading the report, it seemed to him that the board acted as fairly as they could with the evidence before them. With regard to the examination of witnesses, he did not see why the commissioner should not examine them just as well as anyone appointed on behalf of the lessee. He quite agreed with what fell from the hon. member, Mr. Kates, when he said it would have been better if provision had been made for the runs being divided by the lessees themselves. He was one to advocate that system when it was proposed, although it seemed to be the opinion of some members that lessees would work some point in their own interests; still if the system had been adopted a great deal of time, trouble, and expense would have been saved.

It was greatly to be regretted that the system as proposed by the hon. member for Darling Downs had not been adopted.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he was glad that the hon. member for Toowoomba had initiated the discussion which he could only second, as it were. He did not know anything about the merits of the particular case mentioned, but he thought the remedy proposed by the hon. member for Toowoomba, and which the Minister for Lands seemed disposed to accept, was one which the House ought not to countenance. The cost of the administration of the Land Act was likely to be, and would necessarily be, very considerable for some time to come. Certain commissioners were adopted at £700 a year each; then they had the Land Board, the members of which received large salaries, and he presumed those gentlemen were selected to fill the positions because of their undoubted competency. They were, he presumed, men of considerable experience in their dealings with land. Well, those men ought to be thoroughly competent to examine and get at the truth without the aid of any outside professional assistance. If they were not competent to fill the positions held by them, and discharge the duties to which they had been appointed, they ought not to fill the positions. He believed that one of the members of the Land Board had had a legal training, having occupied the position of police magistrate, and he ought to have all the qualifications which would fit him to get at the truth of the various matters brought before him. He thought the Committee should express their opinion against the employment by the land courts of professional men to discharge the duties which were supposed to be discharged by the board to the commissioners.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £7,000 be granted for the Division of Runs.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Lands whether the commissioners were appointed for any specified time, and how long would their services be required?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the commissioners were not appointed for any special time, and under ordinary circumstances they would be able to get through their work in fourteen or eighteen months. Of course the work was proceeding very slowly indeed, because in many cases the commissioners were not able to get to the runs. They could only inspect those runs that were on railway lines, or those few isolated spots where there was grass for their horses. In some cases they had to send fodder for their horses by railway, do a week's work, and then get back again to the nearest place where fodder could be obtained. That was unavoidable in the present condition of the country.

Mr. NORTON said the time occupied by the commissioners would depend very much, he presumed, on the number of runs each man had to report upon. If commissioners had to report on a great number of runs they would hardly have time to perform the work properly in eighteen months, and they would have to make their divisions almost entirely upon hearsay evidence.

Mr. PALMER said he inferred from what had fallen from the Minister for Lands that the commissioners' office was not a permanent one, and that as soon as their work was finished their services would be dispensed with?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the offices were not permanent.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if he was to understand that, whilst the seven new commissioners were performing their duties, the

work of the commissioners under the old Act was abolished? The whole of the seven commissioners were new men who had never filled the position before. He would like to know whether they would do the whole of the work of commissioners under the Land Act of 1884? Then, as to the old commissioners, would they work alongside the newly appointed men, doing different work?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the two classes of commissioners were doing different work under the two Acts. The old commissioners in no single case were competent to perform the work of dividing runs. He did not know a single one who was competent to do that work. One man had been appointed as commissioner who was a bailiff and ranger—a very competent man who, he thought, would make one of the best commissioners in the Government Service; but the land commissioners who occupied that position before the present Act came into force were carrying out the work of both Acts. They did the work under the Act of 1876 and the work that had been created so far under the Act of 1884.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the explanation given by the Minister for Lands was what he thought he would elicit. Commissioners under the Act of 1876 still went on with their duties; of course those duties would cease as the Act of 1876 gradually ceased in its operation. They would have no duties to perform, and they would be holding the position under the Government, having their duties gradually, year by year, taken from them. Those seven men were temporarily appointed, simply for the purpose of dividing the runs. What scheme had the Minister for Lands got for permanently working the Act? The hon. gentleman stated that up to the present time those commissioners had been confined to the division of runs, and that that work would cease at the end of eighteen months. What arrangements would be made for carrying out the provisions of the Act after that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that when the work was completed which the dividing commissioners had been appointed to perform, that part of their duties would cease, and the present land commissioners would continue to carry on their work in reference to receiving applications respecting selection, etc., as before, both under the Act of 1876 and the Act of 1884. The seven commissioners mentioned in that vote were especially appointed for the work of dividing the runs.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that no provision was made in the Act for appointing commissioners for the special purpose of dividing runs.

The PREMIER: They are specially appointed under the Act.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not think it was intended that special commissioners should be appointed in a case of that kind. He would ask the Minister for Lands what he had to guide him in coming to the conclusion that the work of dividing the whole of runs comprised in the schedule would be eighteen months; and whether from the experience he had had up to the present time he still anticipated that the work would be finished in that period? How many runs had actually been divided up to the present time in which the division had been agreed to by the Government and the lessee? Were the two cases that had been referred to that evening—the cases of Welltown and Emu Creek—the only two cases in which disputes had come from the commissioner to the board?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he understood the hon. gentleman to ask first how he had ascertained the time required to divide the runs? Well, he had some practical knowledge of the time required to visit and inspect and divide a run, by which he meant the number of blocks comprised in a station, which might be ten or fifteen, or any number from two upwards. The number of runs included in the schedule was 133 in the unsettled districts and 163 in the settled districts. Knowing then what work there was to do and the amount of work that could be performed by the commissioners when they could work, he came to the conclusion that they could complete it in about eighteen months—that was, completing it by sending in their reports. Of course the board would have a great deal to do after the reports had come in. At present many reports had been sent in, but the work was proceeding very slowly. The commissioners in some districts had not been very long at work, as, for instance, those in North Kennedy, Warrego, and Mitchell. But in an ordinary season he thought seven men should do the work in eighteen months.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood that the estimate of the Minister for Lands was only for the work of dividing the runs, and not for such contingencies as might arise in the case of a decision of the commissioners not being accepted by the lessee. Would it take eighteen months simply to divide the runs, without reference to any disputes that might occur with respect to those decisions, and in which the commissioners would be important witnesses on behalf of the Crown? Had the Minister for Lands taken into consideration the fact that after the commissioners had divided a certain number of runs their presence might be required in Brisbane, where their duties would be very different? That time must be subtracted from the estimated period. Had the hon. gentleman taken that into consideration in his calculations, when he arrived at the conclusion that the work of dividing the runs could be completed by seven commissioners in eighteen months?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that was an element in his calculation of the time required to do the work which the commissioners would have to perform. They would not be brought down here for one or two cases; the cases would be dealt with in lots, and not individually. Then, the Land Board was not bound to sit in Brisbane, but could proceed to the most convenient place for holding a court in connection with those matters.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood that, as a matter of fact, if the commissioners were allowed to go on with their work undisturbed, they would be able to finish it in eighteen months. It was not a question with the Land Board or for the Government whether it was desirable that the land should be thrown open in the interests of the public, for settlement; but the cases were to be decided at the convenience of the commissioners. The hon. gentleman had evidently not contemplated that they would have to come to town in cases of dispute. Considering that, did the hon. gentleman not think that he should revise his opinion as to the work taking eighteen months?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he supposed that in many instances the commissioners would have to come to town to deal with two or three cases where there was urgent demand for land; but he thought that in the majority of cases they would not have to do that. Of course, where there was an urgent demand for land by the public, that demand would have to be met, even if it necessitated a longer time for

the division of runs than he contemplated. The time he had mentioned was an estimate arrived at after taking all the circumstances into consideration; but, of course, it was only an approximation. When the Act came into force he estimated that it would require eighteen months to do the work, but the seasons had been very severe, and it could not be carried out as he had calculated. He could not anticipate the continuation of such a severe drought, which made it absolutely impossible for any one to go about the country.

Mr. PALMER said that, considering the time within which lessees were entitled to come under the Act had passed, the Minister for Lands could probably give some opinion as to the number of lessees who had applied to come under the Act, and also as to the number of those who had not so applied? He might also be able to give them the number of runs in the case of which action had been taken in regard to their division, and the number in which the division had been settled satisfactorily.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was rather hard to get at the number of stations that came under the Act, but he could give the number of runs that were brought under the Act in separate blocks. Sometimes there was a whole block of runs held under the name of a bank or corporation, and it was difficult to distinguish the ownership of them. The number of runs brought under the Act—separate blocks—was 4,483 in the unsettled districts, and of those that appeared on the Rent List there were 403 not brought under the Act. In the settled districts there were 245 brought under the Act, and 79 not brought under it. He could not be certain as to the number of runs that had been dealt with for division, but something like four or five had been dealt with by the Land Board, and he knew that a considerable number had been reported upon and the reports received by the Land Board from the commissioners.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would like to ask the Minister in respect to what they had heard just now about the number of blocks being held in the name of a bank or corporation. Some of them they might actually own, but others they might hold as security for loans or grants made to the owners. How did the hon. gentleman propose to deal with cases of that kind? Did he propose that, in the case of a banking company or land company owning a number of blocks in that way, they should divide the whole into two, or would they deal with property which was really their own and the property mortgaged to them separately?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that in the case of a bank or any other corporation holding a number of runs as security for advances they would be required at all events to state their willingness to come under the Act. There were certain stations comprising a number of blocks to be brought under the Act, and there might be half-a-dozen stations and half-a-dozen different owners, though all the runs might appear in the name of a bank or corporation. The bank or corporation would apply that the blocks forming certain stations should be brought under the Act, and that was the way in which the matter was dealt with.

Mr. STEVENSON asked the Minister for Lands if he had acted upon that principle hitherto in dealing with the runs which the owners had applied to bring under the Act already? In the case of a number of runs forming separate stations—would they be treated, notwithstanding whose names they stood in, as one run?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Certainly not. The number of blocks forming a station, and which would be continuous, would be treated

as one run. They could not be separated to be dealt with for division if they stood in the name of one person. If those blocks were dealt with for division they would be dealt with as one run.

Mr. STEVENSON said he would give the hon. gentleman an instance. In the case of one station the whole of the blocks stood in the name of a financial institution. They worked the run by themselves, and it did not stand in their name as mortgagees. They worked it in a *bonâ fide* manner themselves. The adjoining blocks constituted another run altogether, and separate applications had been sent in for that run to be treated as one station. He knew for a fact that the Lands Department had refused to treat those blocks separately. It had been refused over and over again notwithstanding that several letters had been written about it, setting forth that in one instance the station was worked *bonâ fide* by that institution, and in the other the institution had nothing to do whatever with the working of the station, and nothing whatever to do with it further than that they held security for advances made to the owners. That had been explained to the Lands Department over and over again, but they refused the application.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not know of any case of the kind. If it could be shown that a station was only held by one of those institutions as security there would be no difficulty about it. There had been many cases in which men had applied to have a grant of blocks adjoining each other treated as two stations, but that could not be allowed by the Act. Where it could be shown that a station was held by a banking company as security for an advance only, and that a group of blocks belonged to separate persons and formed separate stations, there would be no difficulty in dealing with it.

Mr. STEVENSON said he would put the case more clearly before the hon. gentleman, and he would make special reference to the case mentioned. He instanced the case of Nive Downs, which the hon. gentleman knew very well, and which the hon. gentleman owned at one time, he thought. That station was held by the Scottish Australian Investment Company. There was a station comprising several blocks adjoining that station, and the Scottish Australian Investment Company held those blocks as security for advances, though they had nothing whatever to do with the working of the station. Several applications had been put in for the different stations, and twice over the Lands Department refused to recognise them as separate stations. He would like a definite answer from the Minister for Lands about that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that if, as the hon. member said, the Lands Department refused the applications for two stations, so manifestly distinct and separate, they were wrong. The matter had certainly not been brought under his notice. In all cases of that kind, distinctly according to the Act, they should be treated separately.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if he was to understand that the commissioners appointed covered the whole of that portion of the colony in which the Act of 1884 came into operation? Were their divisions defined?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not on hard-and-fast lines.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The Minister understood what he meant. Had the colony been divided into seven divisions?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.
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The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Then what were the divisions for the seven commissioners? or, were they simply extra commissioners in addition to those they would deal with when the next item came before them?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that in the district of Warrego Mr. Paul was appointed; Mr. Rule was in the district of Burnett; in the district of Maranoa they had Mr. Palmer; Mr. H. B. Rogers-Harrison in the Leichhardt district; North and South Kennedy, Mr. Gibson; Darling Downs, Moreton, etc., Mr. Golden; and Mr. Edmonds in the Mitchell district. There were not accurately defined districts for each of them—not hard-and-fast lines. They were set to work in the places most accessible in the present condition of things. Some places they could not get at all.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it seemed the districts were not defined, and consequently did not cover the whole of the ground that came under the Act. The Government reserved to themselves the right to order the commissioners to any part of the country they chose—was that so?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That was not according to the law. The commissioners had to be appointed for certain districts. He wanted to understand how the Land Act was to be worked; he could not make it out. They had in the next list twenty-two land commissioners; he could not understand why the work of none of those commissioners could be made available for the division of runs. He could understand that some better men could be got outside that list; but surely it was not necessary to throw aside the labour of twenty-two commissioners who were actually paid for the work and would have very little to do unless they were employed at it. Were the Committee to understand that those seven commissioners were to be confined to the division of runs, and that the other commissioners were not to be employed in that work at all?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the commissioners appointed for the division of runs would be confined exclusively to that work; the other commissioners would be employed in carrying out the executive work of the department.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it seemed to him to be a most extravagant way of going to work. They had twenty-two land commissioners at the present time, many of whom had nothing else to do except as commissioners of Crown lands, and yet for the work of dividing the runs the Government had not been able to avail themselves of the services of any one of those men.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it might seem extravagant to have appointed separate men for the division of runs, but he had considered it an absolute necessity. Many of the existing commissioners were not fit for that kind of work; and moreover, if they were constantly out in the country, moving from point to point carrying out the division of runs, they could not attend to their ordinary work as land commissioners—holding land courts, certificate courts, and so on. The work would be delayed beyond all time, and the lessees would never know when their runs could be divided.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he would like to ask the Minister for Lands whether he was personally acquainted with the commissioner appointed to the Mitchell, or whether that gentleman's recommendations were such as would warrant his being placed in such a position?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he certainly had no very extensive personal acquaintance with Mr. Edmonds, but he had the highest recommendations from those who had known him for a great number of years. He believed him to be a competent man in every respect. He was in Queensland, managing stations, some years ago, and since then he had been employed by the New South Wales Government, dividing runs, for twelve months before he came up here.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the Land Board would have a great deal of work from selectors coming into the districts, and the commissioners would not be able to get away. He could not help thinking the division of the runs would take longer than the Minister for Lands anticipated. If runs outside the schedule were brought under the Act, that alone would keep the commissioners going.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he never anticipated that any runholders outside the schedule would come under the Act.

Mr. NORTON: You said you thought so when the Bill was going through.

Mr. STEVENSON asked how many lessees outside the schedule had applied to come under the Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Six altogether.

Mr. STEVENSON asked how, in cases of disputed boundaries where the owners had come to some arrangements and agreed to exchange, and the transfers had not yet been completed, they would be treated in a division?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied that if the lessees had arranged the boundaries between them it would be accepted.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was not referring to lessees, but to owners—a case, for instance, where two lessees of adjoining runs had mortgaged their runs to the same bank.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that a case of that kind would be treated as if the runs belonged to the two lessees.

Mr. NORTON said that according to the Act, as he read it, the two runs must be treated as belonging to the same owner. The bank was not the nominal owner, but the actual owner, and the division would have to be made as one run. Yet, for all ordinary purposes, the runs belonged to the lessees.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that when they belonged to two people, which could be easily ascertained, they would be treated as separate runs. A bank might take the runs as security for an advance, but the runs did not necessarily belong to the bank for the purposes of division.

Mr. NORTON: Of course they do.

Mr. STEVENSON said he hoped the opinion of the hon. member for Port Curtis was not correct; if it was it would lead to tremendous trouble.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that difficulty had suggested itself to him, and he should like to have a legal opinion upon it. If runs were mortgaged to any banking or financial company they were actually their property, the lessees merely holding the equity of redemption. But it was a matter on which he should like to have a good legal opinion, and now was an opportunity of getting one cheap.

Mr. STEVENSON said that before the Premier gave his opinion on the point raised he would mention that his firm had twice written to the Minister for Lands pointing out that the

case to which he had referred was a separate station, and wishing it to be treated as such; and they had a letter from the Lands Department saying that no mistake had been made, that the department was perfectly correct and that the two stations would be treated as a whole.

The PREMIER said the point was not a new one to him, the Minister for Lands having consulted him upon it some months ago. He gave it as his opinion then that where stations were really *bond fide* separate properties it was the intention of the Legislature, and was quite consistent with a literal interpretation of the Act, that they should be treated as separate properties, although they were nominally held by the same persons as mortgagees. The Minister for Lands agreed that that was the common-sense view of the matter, and he believed the Act had been administered in that way ever since.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that might be the common-sense view of the matter, but common sense and law differed very much occasionally. He wanted to see both the mortgagor and the mortgagee protected in cases of that sort; that the rights of both were recognised by the law, and that they were both standing on sure ground.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that was the method that had been acted on, and there was nothing to complain of. The case referred to by the hon. member for Normanby had not come under his observation, or it would have been corrected at once, because the Premier's interpretation of the clause was the one on which he had acted ever since it was given.

Mr. STEVENSON said the owners had within the last few months received a letter from the Under Secretary stating that the department declined to treat Nive Downs and the adjoining station as separate runs. Another letter had been written to the department pressing the matter, but to that they had received no reply; and he hoped the Minister for Lands would see that a satisfactory reply was sent.

Mr. NORTON said he was glad to hear that the Government were treating the runs in that way; at the same time the Premier must know that it was not according to the law, because there could be only one pastoral tenant in the case mentioned. The Premier knew he was wrong, and that the bank was the pastoral tenant of both runs according to the law. But the law ought not to have been so, and the Government were quite right in evading the law—or, perhaps he should say, turning the corner of the law.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the question might involve awful contingencies if a Government not so nice in their ideas of what should be done got into power.

The PREMIER: The deeds will all be issued before then.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was glad to hear that; it would be an inducement to pastoral tenants to hurry up.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the sum of £11,240 be granted for Sale of Land and Contingencies. There was an increase of £25 to the clerk to the land agent at Bowen, an increase of £15 to a boy in the same position at Toowoomba, and an increase of £75 to the land commissioner at Toowoomba for travelling expenses.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that now was the proper time to bring up the question of the great sales of land all over the

colony. Discussion had already taken place in regard to the large quantities of agricultural land sold by previous Governments—very often to make up for a deficiency in the revenue. Under the present Land Act the Government reserved the power to sell town and suburban allotments, but they were also selling what had been looked upon as reserves, if they were not actually reserves. He believed the Government had sold a large quantity of land at Townsville within the last few months, and now they were about to sell almost all the Government land left in that town. They knew from the experience of Brisbane that too little land had been reserved in the different towns of the colony, and it was time to make reserves in growing places like Townsville. It might be said that the Government were simply taking advantage of the Act to make up for the revenue which they had not hitherto received under the Land Act; but though the Minister for Lands had that power he ought, being an advocate of the non-alienation of land, to apply the leasing principle to townships as well as country districts as much as possible. Many people thought that the Government were taking time by the forelock, and sold town and suburban lands in order that a new Government might have none to sell; but leaving that view out of the question he thought the chief moving power in the matter was the Treasurer. He would ask the Minister for Lands whether he was aware of the fact that after the intended sale of land at Townsville took place there would not be another acre of Government land in the town to sell?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he hardly knew what amount of land was reserved for public purposes in Townsville, except a large area for a botanic garden, of which very little use had been made. On several occasions the Government had been asked to allow that reserve to be cut up and sold, but they would not consent. The land now advertised consisted of a number of isolated allotments, which from their situation were of no service for a reserve or recreation purposes. No doubt from its position and character it was not well suited for the purpose. He certainly thought that sufficient attention had not been paid to the reservation of land in the townships north, and, in fact, all over Queensland and Australia, as far as he had seen. In laying out new townships he had set aside good blocks for purposes of that kind, but attempts were always being made to induce the Government to place reserved lands in the market. There was always great difficulty in keeping men from settling down upon reserves about towns—wherever they could find a vacant piece of land; and public opinion was so strong in those places that there was the greatest difficulty in getting them to shift off at all. They seemed to think that they had a prescriptive right to anything unoccupied if it happened to be in the hands of the Government. The municipal councils and divisional boards had not done their duty in keeping them off. Sometimes people built houses to the value of £200 or £300 on reserves, and it would be great hardship to turn them off without giving them any compensation at all, or to refuse to sell them the land because it was required for purposes of recreation. The hon. gentleman also referred to the action of the Government in offering for selection reserves in different parts of the country. He admitted that they had done so, and he should like to do it to a much greater extent than he had. Many of those reserves were made and held simply in the interests of two or three selectors in the immediate neighbourhood, and were of no value whatever to the public. There had been protests

and petitions against interfering with those reserves, but in every case they emanated from one or two people in the immediate neighbourhood, who wanted the land to run a few cattle upon. They protested vigorously, but he did not think they were deserving of consideration. Where the public were likely to require reserves, he maintained that they ought to be kept, and he intended to take steps to ascertain where they were likely to be wanted in the general interests of the public; but he had paid no attention whatever to the claims of one or two people who wanted a run for their cattle.

Mr. PALMER said he was very glad to hear that the Minister for Lands was so solicitous about granting reserves in the North and in Queensland generally. He could only say that he had applied to the hon. gentleman on several occasions for reserves, and he was always met with an excuse of some kind.

Mr. NORTON said, with regard to the reserve at Townsville, he would point out that it was quite unfit for botanical purposes, and when he was there a few years ago that was the reason given by the leading townspeople why they had spent no money upon it. They then wished either to make an exchange with the Government or to get a grant of land where there was some chance of things growing. He thought if a request of that kind was made that the present reserve should not be sacrificed, because he agreed with the Minister for Lands that they had not half enough reserves in the towns of the colony for the use of the people.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said if the Minister for Lands paid any attention to those who wished to have reserves cut up and sold he would sell every reserve in Brisbane. There were people in Brisbane who wished the Government to sell the Botanic Gardens, and who would like to see Victoria Park cut up into allotments so that they might buy it; so that if the hon. gentleman was guided by that sort of public opinion they would not have a reserve left in Queensland. The land he (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) alluded to at Townsville was alongside the botanical reserve, which was a small area, and could easily be annexed to it. Although it might be unsuitable, as he believed it was, for botanic gardens, still it would be desirable to secure it as, at any rate, one lung of what was becoming a great city. He supposed the hon. gentlemen knew how Townsville was expanding; it had reached the proportions of the second town in the colony, and was likely in the future to become very much larger, and the result would be that in the course of a few years they would have as large a town as Brisbane was now, without any reserve except a small bit of land that could be put in the corner of the botanical reserve in Brisbane. As the hon. gentleman was in favour of reserves in town, would he not be doing the people of Townsville simple justice by withdrawing the land he had referred to from sale—that was the portion already built upon—and add it to the present reserve? He knew that some of the allotments had been built upon, and prices had been fixed upon the improvements; but leaving those out of the question, he thought the hon. gentleman could not do better than withdraw the rest of the land from sale and annex it to the botanic gardens, which even then would not be very large for such a place as Townsville, where at the present time there was no more land to sell.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. gentleman admitted that a good deal of the land he referred to was already built upon, and he supposed the buildings were scattered about all

over it. The allotments that were available to join to the botanical grounds were so small that they would be of no value. He thought it would be much better if another piece of land could be got in some other part of the town—where it would be accessible to the people—to reserve it. He thought the size of the botanic gardens very fair—about fifty acres he believed.

Mr. ARCHER: Twenty.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was more than that. He thought it must be about fifty acres, and if other pieces could be got in other parts of the town he could see the advantage of reserving them, because he maintained that it was better to have half-a-dozen small reserves in such towns as Rockhampton, Townsville, and Maryborough—which would be accessible to a large number of people—than to have one large reserve. With regard to the exchange to which the hon. gentleman referred, what was proposed was that the present reserve should be cut up into town lots and sold, and that other land, three or four miles from town—which was certainly a very good rich piece of country—should be substituted as a reserve; but, as he had said, it was outside the town, where nobody would ever reach it. It was something like the Rockhampton botanical reserve, which was of no value whatever to any persons except a few living in the immediate neighbourhood. In fact, the people of Rockhampton proper derived no more benefit from it than the people of Brisbane did.

Mr. NORTON said he thought there was no truth in the statement which had been made, that a syndicate wished to get possession of the land which the hon. member for Townsville had referred to. Syndicates were not moving yet so far north as Townsville. He thought the best thing the Minister could do would be to secure a piece of land near the town for gardens or recreation purposes.

Mr. ARCHER said the divisional boards had not sufficient power over the reserves which were in their respective districts. They had no power to take possession of those reserves and to see that they were properly attended to. They ought to be able to do that, and, of course, to also recoup themselves by charging small sums for allowing travelling stock to graze on the areas for a day. He was in sympathy with the Minister for Lands when he said that the way in which the public took advantage of improved reserves, by running cattle on them, was shameful. That evil would be obviated if the suggestion he made was adopted, and power given to the divisional boards to provide watering places and ground on which cattle could rest on payment of a decent price for twenty-four hours. Those places were necessities. He could not imagine how colonies like New South Wales and Queensland could have made roads so narrow as many of those by which they were traversed, and he was glad to see that of late that policy had been changed. As to what had been said by the hon. member for Townsville, he (Mr. Archer) thought the Minister might find a place near that town for the purposes of a public garden. He also hoped that the Minister, now that he was laying out a good many towns in the country, would see that they were all amply provided with public reserves.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he would be very glad to accept the hon. member for Townsville's view of the land he had asked to be added to the botanical reserve there if he thought it was practicable. There were, however, too many people who had already built houses on that land, and on account of its general character and irregularity it would not be a suitable addition to the gardens.

The difficulties in the way of the proposal were too great, and the advantages that might accrue from its adoption would be too small to justify him acceding to the request. With reference to the divisional boards, he had taken some trouble to get from them recommendations as to pieces of land in their respective districts, suitable for camping, watering, and other purposes. He had collected the information, and, although he had not been able to act upon it, the recommendations were all ready to be dealt with as soon as he had sufficient time at his disposal.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Minister might select for a public reserve for Townsville a piece of land somewhere along the railway line, and leave the present garden as a park for affording breathing space for the town. He thought a piece of land could be got within a reasonable distance, and on the railway line, and it would become a place to which the people would resort on Sundays. He was quite certain a good piece could be secured within a distance of five or six miles.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there was a piece of land—he did not know how far it was from Townsville—which was set apart as an aboriginal reserve. It lay between the railway and the creek, and he considered it would be a very suitable piece for a botanic garden. He had already marked it to be reserved for public or recreation purposes, or for a botanic garden. There had been many inquiries for it, but he had steadily refused to throw it open. He would see what could be done with it as soon as he could get it surveyed.

Mr. CHUBB said there was a difficulty in the way of placing reserves in the hands of divisional boards. The Act said that the Governor might, by proclamation, place reserves in the hands of trustees. Local authorities, however, were individually constantly changing, and there was great difficulty, therefore, in making members of a divisional board trustees. There was ample power to make reserves for all purposes specified. The difficulty was to make the divisional boards or other local bodies trustees.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there was a difficulty of that kind, but it might be got over by placing the reserves under the control of that body however they were composed. Lands of that kind should be placed under the control of some legally recognised body.

Mr. PALMER said he wished to call the attention of the Minister for Lands to an action that was taken by the advice of the Lands Department which resulted in a divisional board suffering a penalty of £50; and the loss of that Supreme Court case had paralysed all action by divisional boards in cases of trespass. The letters which were received from the Lands Department would explain it, and the following was the reply received in answer to an application made by the Hughenden Divisional Board:—

"In reply to your letter of the 10th ultimo, requesting that your board may be instructed as to whether Crown lands within a town boundary come under the control of the board, and if so whether the board would have the power to eject trespassers, or any persons erecting buildings thereon, I have the honour to inform you that divisional boards have no control over lands within town reserves, unless placed specially under their control by this department.

"In the case of Hughenden, the town reserve has specially been placed under the board's control, as will be seen on reference to a proclamation appearing in the *Government Gazette* of the 14th of April, 1893, by which the board has the right to either deal with trespassing or illegal occupation of the reserve, or to request the land agent to take the necessary action on their behalf."

They requested the land agent to take that action, and gave six months' notice to the tres-

passer to quit; but the latter got a prohibition against the bench of magistrates, and, on the advice of the Attorney-General, they understood that they had no case whatever, and it would be useless for them to appear to show cause. On the strength of that advice they did not put in an appearance, and the consequence was that the board had to pay the costs connected with the case. He called upon the then Under Secretary, Mr. Deshon, who said that by clause 90 of the Act of 1876 the divisional board did seem as if they were acting within their rights. The case was, therefore, rather mysterious; the Lands Department was wrong, as the board had simply followed their advice, and had found out that they were powerless to eject trespassers, even the Chinese gardeners, who were a great nuisance to the town. Perhaps the Minister for Lands could explain how that extraordinary action had taken place. The divisional board was helpless now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not know how it was, but, so far as he could understand the case, the board laid the information under the wrong clause of the Act. He believed the Lands Department did recommend them to make use of the knowledge or services of the police magistrate, who was also land commissioner, to effect their object. They tried and failed, and the consequence of that failure was that the board had to pay costs to the extent of some £50, which they coolly asked the Lands Department to refund them. However, the Government would not recognise a claim of that kind.

Mr. PALMER said the natural result would be that the board would not follow the advice of the Lands Department again. They had applied for the £50 to be refunded to them, but of course he could see that the Minister for Lands was not likely to agree to that.

Mr. SMYTH said that when reserves were granted the Government should insist that they were applied to no other purpose than that for which they were granted, and if they were not properly used they should be resumed. In Brisbane there was a block of land between the A.S.N. Company's two wharves, which had been set apart for a market; but the municipality had leased it to persons who had put up very indifferent buildings, which a municipality like that of Brisbane ought to be ashamed of. The place had been reserved for a market; but it was not used, as there was a market at the railway station. The Government ought to step in and resume it.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £6,235 be voted for Bailiffs and Rangers of Crown Lands.

Mr. NORTON asked if the Government intended to appoint any more Crown lands bailiffs?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that two more had been appointed. One would be near Maroochie and the other somewhere in West Moreton. It was not known what number would be actually required; there was a large increase in the amount set down for incidental expenses.

Mr. FERGUSON said there were two Crown lands rangers at Toowoomba: was there work enough for two?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that Toowoomba was the headquarters of the rangers, because it was convenient of access to the different parts of the district. One of the rangers dealt with the district extending towards

Warwick, and the other with the district on the Southern and Western line of railway towards Dalby.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the sum of £2,125 be granted for Survey of Roads.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the sum of £2,732 be granted for Pastoral Occupation. There was an actual increase of £106. To the salary of Mr. MacDonald, one of the draftsmen, a sum of £30 had been added. He had been some years in the department, and the increase was promised last year, but had been accidentally omitted. £25 increase had been given to one of the clerks, as the work in the department was very hard. In fact, in the Pastoral Occupation Branch there was harder work to perform than in any other branch of the department. The record-clerk at Normanton, who was also police magistrate and clerk of petty sessions, received £100 from the department. A messenger had been taken into the office on a small salary.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £7,000 be granted for Reserves. The amount was less this year than last by £900.

Mr. CHUBB asked the Minister for Lands what unfortunate Bowen had done that it should be left off the Estimates this year? It was served the same way last year, although the money was afterwards put on the Supplementary Estimates. The officer who framed the estimate had evidently an edge on Bowen.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was left off the Estimates last year, but it was put on the Supplementary Estimates. He did not know that Bowen was any more entitled to a grant of that sort than other towns of the same size. Take Clermont, for instance, which had about the same population as Bowen. Blackall was even larger, but neither of those towns received grants in aid of reserves. As, however, Bowen had received the money last year, he supposed it would have to get it this year.

Mr. CHUBB said the rents received from conditional selections in the district of Bowen amounted to £6,000 a year, and he thought that was some justification for the vote. The money had been placed on the Estimates in former years, and ought to be still granted.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said Bowen had been left off the Estimates on account of the amount being voted on the Supplementary Estimates last year.

Mr. NORTON said he saw no reason why Bowen should be omitted, that town having received a grant last year; but at the same time he thought that those grants were inequitable. The hon. member for Bowen urged as a reason why the payment should be made to that town that the rents received for additional selections amounted to £6,000 a year. He could not at that moment say what the rents received in the Gladstone district were, but he was quite sure they were as large as that. If that was to be the principle on which votes of that kind were to be voted, then there were many towns just as large which were entitled to assistance as Bowen. If the Minister for Lands would say that that was the principle upon which the grants were to be made he was satisfied. He was sure that the Gladstone people were just as much entitled to such a grant as Bowen, or any other places that were mentioned on the Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could not make any such promise. He knew that a promise of that kind would involve a dozen or twenty similar claims being put forward. The only advantage Bowen had was that it had been on the Estimates before.

Mr. NORTON said then Bowen stood on very slippery ground. It was, however, no argument against a sum being granted to Gladstone to say that if that was done other places would put in a claim. Mackay, he noticed, was to get £100 extra this year. How was that? Really the whole thing was an absurdity. But there was another item to which he wished to draw attention—namely, the absence of any provision for experimental farms. Last year and the year before a sum of £1,000 was voted for that purpose. What was the reason for dropping it this year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the farm was now occupied by a man who was doing duty as Crown lands ranger. The Government did not, of course, intend to keep him there, and as soon as it could be done the land would be thrown open to selection.

Mr. FERGUSON said he noticed that there was nothing on the vote for Queen's Park, North Rockhampton, although the Minister made a promise last year that a sum would be put on the Estimates. North Rockhampton was a municipality now and had a population larger than that of Bowen and Gladstone put together. There was a splendid reserve there. The Minister for Lands had already told them that the present gardens in Rockhampton were only of use to one-half the people, and if that was correct that was the strongest argument that could be advanced in favour of a grant for the Queen's Park at North Rockhampton. It was almost in the centre of the town, although on the other side of the river and in another municipality, and was, as the hon. gentleman knew, a most suitable reserve for the population on both sides of the river. He expected that an amount would be placed on the Supplementary Estimates, as it must have been neglect on the part of the hon. gentleman in not putting it on the Estimates-in-Chief.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would suggest that North and South Rockhampton should "go whacks" in the vote of £600 put down for the Botanic Gardens. There were many other places which had equally as good a claim as North Rockhampton, or as Gladstone, or as Bowen—Port Douglas and Cairns, for instance. There was very little down for places north of Rockhampton, the only places so favoured being Mackay, Townsville, and Cooktown. He would like to see some of the items struck out. He did not care about increasing the number unless his constituents were included in the increased vote. The hon. member for Bowen would get no support from him unless there was also an amount put down for Port Douglas and Cairns.

Mr. ANNEAR said that Rockhampton ought to do the same as was done at Gympie, where the £350 voted on the Estimates was divided between two reserves. He must say that he had a very just cause of complaint, as on that vote Maryborough was playing second fiddle to towns like Rockhampton, Ipswich, and Toowoomba. The amount set down for Maryborough was £500, while each of the other places was to receive £600. He would not speak about the Maryborough Gardens, but leave that to his hon. colleague, who was the founder of them, and knew more about them than he did; but he would say that the Minister for Lands had treated Maryborough very scurvily indeed in that vote.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said he saw that Southport and Cleveland were down for £150 each. He would like to ask why Sandgate, which was a more important place, and a municipality also, was omitted?

The PREMIER said that a great number of claims came before the Government for grants for reserves in townships. The Government were not flush of money, and the most they could do was to propose to continue existing grants, on the strength of which expense had been incurred in connection with many reserves which must be kept up unless the work done was to be lost. The Government, therefore, came to the conclusion to propose grants to those already receiving them, and not to propose any additional ones; and that was the only conclusion they could come to under the circumstances.

Mr. FERGUSON said that was all very well, seeing that Brisbane was well provided for, having grants for six reserves, exclusive of the Botanic Gardens. Last week he was at a place called Mount Coottha, for which a sum of £250 was placed on the Estimates, and he must say that, if anything, the place looked worse than it did the previous year. He would like to know what was done with the money voted for that reserve?

The PREMIER said the money was spent in keeping a person there to look after the fences and keep the roads in repair. He had a note of the number of visitors who had been to the place within the last few months. Within the last six months over 12,000 had visited the reserve passing through the main entrance, and he believed quite as large a number visited it by other entrances. In the month of September 3,220 people visited the reserve by the main entrance alone.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL suggested that it looked bad now on account of the drought. It had been much improved since he knew it, and the money was well spent.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member for Moreton complained that while Southport had £150 for a reserve Sandgate had nothing. The hon. member forgot that Sandgate had a nuisance in the shape of a drain. He should be inclined to support the hon. member for Rockhampton in the request he made, but at the same time he had a request to make for his own constituency which was much more deserving of support. There were half-a-dozen important townships in his electorate, and only one of them had got a Queen's Park. He would be satisfied if £100 were granted for a Queen's Park at Watsonville, Port Douglas, and Cairns.

Mr. FOXTON said he was somewhat like the hon. member who had just sat down, because he had very little sympathy with those who, having already got something, complained that they had not got more. He represented a constituency which was not mentioned in the vote at all. When one place was meted out votes of that kind, other places should be treated in the same manner. He could not quite see the logic of the reasoning which prompted the Government to give to those who had already so much, and refuse those who had got nothing at all. There were two towns in his electorate—Stanthorpe and Inglewood—neither of them were mentioned in the vote, though he saw that Tiara was mentioned. One town in his electorate was at least as important as Tiara, and he would be satisfied with £50.

Mr. SHERIDAN said the Government should use a great deal more skilled surveillance over all those votes, and see that the money was properly expended. If every reserve in the colony was kept in as good order and made as

attractive a place as the Botanic Gardens in Maryborough, there would be very little discussion upon votes of that kind, and the Government would willingly grant money where they knew it was properly expended.

Mr. PALMER said there were some new regulations for the purpose of keeping the Botanic Gardens in order. He knew that several complaints had been made of the way in which drunken men were allowed to go into the gardens and exhibit themselves. He hoped the new regulations would be carried out. As so much had been said on the subject of reserves, he would draw the attention of the Committee to this fact: There were two places mentioned—Cleveland and Southport—both in the southern part of Queensland. With regard to their qualifications for a grant of that kind, he did not think that anyone of the wildest imagination could imagine that Cleveland would ever become a place of importance, yet there was £150 set down for it in the list of reserves. He would not say anything about Southport, because that might become an important place; if Cleveland had been situated in the northern part of Queensland it would not have got 5s., but as it happened to be under the eye of Brisbane it got £150. The whole thing wanted wiping out and starting afresh. He represented the largest district in Queensland, and not only had he not got 5s., but he had not got a reserve yet. He would be satisfied if a portion of the Government estate was handed over to some of the towns in his district.

Mr. FOXTON said that some new departure should take place in reference to that vote. The proper way to gauge the right of any particular locality to a vote of that sort should be the same way as that in which they gauged the right to votes for schools of arts and similar institutions. They should subsidise private subscriptions from the local residents. If that were done a good many places which now had no reserves or grants for reserves at all would get them, and a good many of the grants set down on the Estimates would be greatly reduced.

Mr. LALOR asked what the Government proposed to do with respect to the experimental farm at Yeulba? Were there any men employed there at present?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said they were not going on with it at present. In the meantime, it was used as a bailiff's residence. What the Government eventually would do with it he did not know.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL asked if it had been a success or not. Did they find it would grow anything?

Mr. LALOR said the land was as good as any in the district. He would suggest the water on it should be reserved for the use of the public.

Mr. HAMILTON said he thought it was wrong that large and important districts should be overlooked, while less important districts got all the plums. He would like to know why the experimental farm was going to be abolished. He had heard that they had spent their time growing crops that everyone knew would grow. That was not the purpose for which the farm was intended. If it were properly managed it might be of very great service to the colony. He recollected seeing that vanilla might be a suitable thing to grow in the colony; if so it would pay agriculturists better than the cultivation of wheat and crops of that kind.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the farm was abolished because it could never serve any useful or instructive purpose. It was simply wasting money.

Mr. HAMILTON asked if it was true they had simply been occupied in cultivating potatoes, wheat, and other things they knew perfectly well would grow in the colony?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the experiments had been chiefly confined to those things, and some few others. It was poor sandy soil, and even things that were known to grow in the colony would not grow well there.

Mr. LALOR said that good crops were grown on what the hon. member called poor sandy soil. Some of the best vineyards in the colony were on land of that kind.

Mr. BAILEY said he would like to remark on the great contrast between the treatment of townspeople and country people in the matter of recreation reserves. Contrast the £50 which was down for the Tiara reserve, with the £1,700 for Brisbane. The Tiara reserve was in the centre of a district with a large population; it was a favourite recreation ground for the Gympie and Maryborough people; but they only got that £50, which was not enough to make a proper ground, or even fence it, whilst the townspeople had their fine gardens, nice paths, cricket grounds, and all the rest. The colony was called upon to contribute £1,700 for that, and the country people, who had to pay it, had a miserable £50 doled out to them—not to keep up but to form a recreation reserve for themselves. Country people required reserves for recreation purposes just as much as townspeople, and he hoped the Government would recognise that in future Estimates.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that if Tiara was to have its vote increased there were 150,000 places which would all have to have money put on the Estimates. There was not a single vote for the Western country—Burke, Mitchell, Gregory—where there were scores of towns just as important as Tiara.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Minister for Lands gave as a reason for the abolition of the experimental farm, not that he disapproved of the principle, but the locality—the land was not good. In the neighbourhood of Cairns there was plenty of good land. There were millions of acres in the northern portions of the colony of unequalled richness; but as that part of the colony was not well known the agriculturists did not know yet the peculiar kind of cultivation which would pay. They were actually willing to make experiments on their own account, but they received no assistance from the Government. One individual made a request some time ago to the Minister for Lands for a piece of land, and guaranteed that if it were granted he would spend a large sum every year in merely experimenting with various tropical products from other countries; the request was not entertained.

Mr. BAILEY said that if reserves were dealt with on the same principle as schools of arts he was confident the people of Tiara had so much public spirit that if they were called upon to contribute pound for pound there would be more than £50 on the Estimates. They rather despised that £50, if the truth were known, but if they were called upon to pay their pound for pound the Government would have to put £250 on the Estimates instead of £50.

Question put and passed

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £2,066 be granted for the Botanic Gardens, salaries and contingencies. There was a seeming increase in the item for outdoor labourers, but it was to provide the necessary labour for carrying on the work hitherto voted separately

for the Queen's Park. The number of labourers was increased from eight to twelve. There was an actual decrease in the total vote of £1,566.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving that the House do now adjourn, said the business for to-morrow would be, first, the notice of motion standing in the name of the Minister for Works, the second reading of the Justices Bill, and Supply.

The House adjourned at thirty-four minutes past 10 o'clock.