

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**MONDAY, 26 OCTOBER 1885**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Monday, 26 October, 1885.*

Question.—Supply.—Adjournment.

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

## QUESTION.

Mr. FERGUSON (for Mr. Hamilton) asked the Colonial Secretary—

If the Humpybong and Sandgate Regatta committee have been allowed the use of the “Otter”;—and, if so, are they allowed to charge for admission to that vessel?

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

The “Otter” has been lent to the committee of the Humpybong and Sandgate Regatta, for use as a flag-ship, on the 9th November. They propose to make a charge of 4s. for admittance on board, as has been usual in several similar cases, and the Government have not raised any objection to their doing so.

## SUPPLY.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into Committee further to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving that a sum not exceeding £12,932 be granted for salaries and contingencies, Public Works Department, said the first items were the same as last year, but in the building branch there was an increase of £200. There was one additional draftsman at £250; three cadets at £50 each, £150; and one foreman of works at £225. There was a decrease of £300 in “temporary assistance,” and a reduction of £125 in the salary of the foreman of works. That arose through Mr. Ferguson, who received a salary of £350, being transferred to the Education Department, and a new officer being appointed at £225. In the bridge department there was an increase of £1,300—an additional draftsman at £250; a cadet at £50; one foreman of works at £250, and three bridge overseers at £250, being

appointed. The last three officers had not, as a matter of fact, been appointed, but they would be required in carrying out the contracts that had been let for a bridge at Mackay across the Pioneer River, a bridge across Ross Creek at Townsville, and a bridge over the Annan River. Those bridges had been let by contract, and the bridge overseers were necessary to supervise the work. The total increase on the whole vote was £1,500.

Mr. ALAND said that perhaps the Minister for Works would inform the Committee when the lunatic asylum at Toowoomba was to be built. Some three months ago that question was asked, and the reply received then was that owing to pressure of business in the Colonial Architect's department and the want of draftsmen it would take about three months for the plans and specifications to be ready. He would like to know whether the plans and specifications were put in hand yet, and when the department was likely to call for tenders? He would also ask the hon. gentleman, seeing that three bridge overseers were to be appointed, whether it was the intention of the Government to send out of the colony for those overseers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. ALAND said he was glad to hear the hon. gentleman say "No," because there had been complaints going about that it had been the habit to import that sort of talent or labour when it was required.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the plans referred to by the hon. member were in hand and as soon as they were finished the department would call for tenders for the work. There was a good deal of work to be done by the department, as hon. members must know, and it would take some time to get it all underweigh. However, he would promise the hon. member that the matter he had mentioned would be proceeded with with as little delay as possible. With reference to the appointment of bridge overseers, he could assure hon. members that after the very severe lecture he had had on a previous occasion in connection with the appointment of a foreman of works, which was made on the recommendation of the Colonial Architect, and after a good deal of persuasion, he was not likely to repeat what he did then, and, except for some very strong reason, he would not appoint anyone outside the colony.

Mr. ALAND said he would accept the assurance of the hon. gentleman in reference to the lunatic asylum at Toowoomba, but at the same time he would point out that the money for that work was voted six or seven years ago, and, although questions had been asked about it every year, the matter had been in abeyance ever since. They were in hopes two years ago that the work would be pressed on then, but really it promised to be as notorious as the Allora court-house.

Mr. BEATTIE said he would like some information with reference to public buildings which had been authorised by the Committee. The Minister for Works had told them just now that it would take a long time to get some of the works underweigh, and no doubt it would at the present rate of progress. Would it not be advisable to employ outside talent for some of the smaller buildings in order that they might be pushed on? He would like the hon. gentleman to inform the Committee when it was proposed to proceed with the new post-office, Fortitude Valley, and the new Custom-house? On inquiry about the matter at the department, he (Mr. Beattie) found that the Colonial Architect was so busy that

even the Colonial Treasurer had said he believed he would be compelled to call for tenders for the Custom-house outside the department of the Colonial Architect, so as to get the plans of the building. He (Mr. Beattie) was told that the Colonial Architect, who was no doubt a clever professional man, was so particular in connection with his plans that he submitted the most minute drawings before tenders were called for the work. If that was the case the preparation of plans would no doubt take a long time, but he was also informed that after the detailed drawings were given to the successful tenderer alterations were made in them nearly every week. If that was true no doubt the Minister for Works would have some difficulty in getting the necessary works which had been authorised by the Committee executed with anything like expedition. Six months ago a promise was made that the Fortitude Valley post-office would be started immediately, and he (Mr. Beattie) accepted that promise and had waited quietly to see it carried out, but no attempt had yet been made to fulfil the promise. Again he would ask whether, if the department was so pressed, it would not be advisable to call for tenders for plans for some of the smaller buildings, from professional men in the colony or out of the colony—he did not care which, so long as the work was done? The Colonial Architect would then be able to get ahead of his work, probably. He would also ask whether the Government had decided to accept any of the tenders sent in for the public offices in Brisbane, for which money was voted last session?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if it was the wish of the Committee that some of the work should be done by private tender he would be willing to comply with their request; but he had some hesitation in incurring any large expenditure in that way. Of course, no provision was made for it on the Estimates. However, he hoped that in about six months the department would be able to get ahead of their work. With reference to the new public offices, tenders had been called for two or three times. As it was a very heavy job the Colonial Architect advised that tenders should first be called for the foundation. That was done; but not a single tender was sent in for the erection of the public offices—whether it was that the specifications were over strict or not he did not know. Tenders were again called for both in Queensland and in the southern colonies, but the only tender received was from a local firm, and that was a long way above the estimate. Fresh tenders had been called for, but with what success he did not know. From information he had received he believed that the contractors looked upon the Colonial Architect as being very particular in connection with his work, and that was probably the reason why tenders were so high as a rule. He did not know whether that was so or not, but he knew there had been a difficulty in getting tenders for the new public offices. It was considered at first that some of the material would have to be got from out of the colony; but the Government came to the conclusion that there was sufficient suitable material in the colony to put up buildings of any description.

Mr. MACFARLANE asked whether the Minister for Works would inform the Committee when tenders would be called for the construction of the bridge at West End, Ipswich.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had been asked whether he would get Mr. Stanley to inspect the place and make an estimate; but he was not aware that there was any intention to call for tenders. Mr. Stanley had inspected the

locality and designed a bridge, but he (the Minister for Works) did not know where the money for its construction was to come from. He was not aware that the Government had made any promise of a bridge there, but he was aware that something would have to be done, because the traffic across the present bridge was somewhat dangerous owing to the frequent shunting of trains across the bridge.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was not referring to the bridge across the Bremer in Ipswich proper, but the bridge at the west end—what was called Little Ipswich—or the One-mile Bridge. The old bridge was built twenty years ago and was now in a very dangerous state. He was given to understand by an hon. gentleman not now present that a promise had been made that a new bridge should be built as soon as possible and that the site had been surveyed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the bridge had been inspected for the purpose of ascertaining whether it could be put in repair or whether a new bridge would be required, and the inspector recommended that a new bridge should be built. He could not say just now what the new bridge would cost. As bridges were under discussion he might as well give hon. members some information on what had been done with the vote for bridges on main roads. The contract price for an iron bridge over the Annan River was £18,414. The bridge across the Endeavour was also an iron bridge. He had come to the conclusion that iron bridges were best for tidal rivers, because wooden piles soon became useless on account of cobra. The sum of £4,879 was required for the bridge over the Endeavour River. The bridge over the Pioneer at Mackay, which was also an iron bridge, would cost £25,548—that was the contract price. He was giving the prices for which the contracts had been let. The bridge across Ross Creek, at Townsville, was to be a swing bridge, to allow sea-going vessels to pass up the creek—he hardly thought the swing necessary himself—and that bridge was to cost £18,091. Then there was the bridge erected across the Tallebudgera to connect the the road in accordance with a promise made by the previous Government to the New South Wales Government. That bridge had been built at a cost of £1,800. Then it was proposed to build a bridge at Clermont, another at Itchell's Falls on the Mary River, and one at Surat across the Balonne. The last was very badly wanted; the present bridge was on a main road and was in such a dilapidated state that the first heavy flood would carry it away. That bridge was not well constructed at first. A bridge was to be built over Gideon Creek, and there was to be one over the Mary River near Gympie. Those were all the new bridges at present under consideration. After providing for the construction of all those, and the repairs of some others, there would be a balance of £70,000 remaining from the vote. The Goondiwindi bridge needed some repairs, and so did the bridge at Warwick, the repairs to which would cost £752. It would take £285 to repair the bridge across Myall Creek, Dalby; and a sum of £234 was required for the repair of another bridge. Hon. members would see that he had not selected any particular locality in which to expend the vote on account of repairs. He had been guided to a great extent by the consideration as to whether the divisional boards were in a position to put the bridges in repair or not. There was another bridge which had been completed over the Boolburra Creek. The divisional board was entirely unable to carry out the work, and the old bridge there had become dangerous. The new bridge was built of iron, at a cost of £1,940, and would be, comparatively speaking,

everlasting. The whole of the new bridges contracted for would all prove to be substantial structures, and it would be a very long time before the country would have to borrow money to replace them.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said the Minister for Works had enumerated tenders which had been accepted for bridges to an amount which left a balance of about £70,000 unexplained. The account for bridges had been in some way muddled up, no distinction being made between the money voted from Loan Estimates and the vote from surplus revenue. Perhaps it was that the Minister had not spoken distinctly, as was sometimes the case with him; but in any case he (Sir T. McIlwraith) had not heard him explain the allotment of the surplus revenue item. The Minister had given some information about the Annan River, Mackay, Ross Creek, and Endeavour bridges, but beyond that he (Sir T. McIlwraith) was unable to follow the hon. gentleman. He supposed, however, that those four bridges accounted for £100,000 of the loan money voted last year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said that what he wanted to understand was what had been done with the amount voted from the surplus revenue left by the late Government. Would the Minister kindly account for that sum?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was a sum of £30,000 voted from surplus revenue, another sum of £15,000 was placed on the Estimates for bridges over main roads, and there was £100,000 on the Loan Estimates, making altogether £145,000 for bridges. The £15,000 was voted last year.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked what was the amount of the contract for the bridge over the Endeavour River?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the contract for the Endeavour River Bridge amounted to £4,879 8s., and that it had to be completed by the 12th August, 1886. He would read out the amounts for the four principal bridges:—Annan River Bridge, £18,414 15s.; Pioneer River Bridge, £25,548; Ross Creek Bridge, Townsville, £1,809; and the Endeavour Bridge, Cooktown, £4,879 8s.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was very glad that the Minister had given so much information about the new bridges. No doubt all the bridges referred to were required; but there was another to which he would invite the Minister's attention. He had understood the Minister to say that in inviting tenders for those bridges he had taken into consideration the divisional boards, and several of the items he had mentioned were for bridges which were connected with streets of municipalities. Some bridges were in divisions, and some were very necessary on the main roads in the interior of the colony. The one he desired to particularly refer to was the one he had before mentioned to the Minister, who, however, said he could not rebuild it at present, as all the bridge money was done. Something like £66,000 of the £145,000 available had been spent on four bridges, and the balance of the money had been absorbed. The bridge he wished to speak of was on a main road, and he alluded, in short, to the Bowen Bridge. The chairman of the Ithaca Division wrote to him some days ago asking him, as the representative of another division, to wait on the Minister for Works and to call his attention to the state of the Bowen Bridge. It was a structure which had been in existence for many years, and from the information he had received it was now in a very dangerous state. Indeed, if something was not done to it soon

there might possibly be an accident. Some day the whole bridge would go into Breakfast Creek, and the whole traffic on the northern road would be stopped. The Minister might fairly send the engineer down to examine the bridge and see if he could do justice to the locality. The Minister himself went out there sometimes, and he might be on the bridge when an accident took place. He hoped that would not happen, because then they would lose the hon. member. He assured the Committee that the people in the district were very anxious that something should be done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was sorry the money had ever been voted, because it was a source of endless trouble to him. He had endeavoured to do his best in fairness to all parties concerned, and whenever the funds of a divisional board were very low he had come forward with assistance. Where a wealthy divisional board was concerned, such as the one the hon. member for Fortitude Valley referred to, he would like to make some terms with them. He was inclined to think that the work was too heavy for a divisional board to undertake altogether, and if the hon. member, who was chairman of the board, was willing to come to some terms he would be very glad indeed to render what assistance he could towards putting the bridge in repair.

Mr. BEATTIE said he could hardly follow the Minister for Works when he said the Government were ready to assist divisional boards when they were not in funds. That was simply holding out a premium to improvident boards to waste money, because the moment they became insolvent or in a state of impecuniosity the Government would help them. The Booroodabin Board always met their expenses; they did not borrow money, and they kept their yearly expenditure within their income. What he wanted to point out was that it would not matter to the Booroodabin Board if the bridge tumbled down to-morrow; but they were anxious that the outside divisions should not suffer. The whole of the revenue that the division received from the southern side of the bridge was £47 a year; and they could hardly be expected out of that to construct a bridge over a tidal river for the benefit of three other divisions outside. They were ready to keep the road in repair, and they had spent £1,200 on it. The people of the northern district would be put to serious inconvenience if anything happened to the bridge, and his division was quite willing to give all the assistance it could.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member was extremely fortunate in being the chairman of a divisional board that only had a few chains of road to keep in repair. It was a very different thing with divisional boards that had a long distance of roads to repair, with only a sparse population. He thought the divisional board the hon. member was chairman of, considering its large revenue and the short distance of roads it had to keep in repair, might very well contribute something towards keeping the bridge in repair.

Mr. BUCKLAND said the bridge referred to by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was in anything but a satisfactory state of repair. Part of it was built by the Government about seven years ago, but the larger part of it was constructed previous to separation. It was now getting into a very bad condition, and had cost the Toombul Board during the present year for temporary repairs over £100, and last year over £190. The Toombul Board last year had a grant from the Treasury of about £70 out of the bridge vote, but since then when he (Mr. Buckland) applied for some of that vote

the Minister for Works informed him it was all expended. He could only say that the Toombul Board, and he thought the Booroodabin Board, would have to take into consideration the construction of a new iron bridge over that creek, for the trusses of the present one were in a very bad state. He believed the Tramway Company were anxious to cross the creek; but he did not think the bridge was at present in a condition to carry the extra weight. He hoped the various boards concerned would be able to arrange with the Government for some assistance in the construction of a new bridge. The traffic was largely increasing, and he believed there was no other bridge, with the exception of Victoria Bridge, that had as much. While on the subject of bridges, he would like to ask the Minister if it was intended to construct a bridge over the Logan, between the Logan agricultural reserve and the Logan Village? The settlers on the north side of the river, although they were within half-a-mile of the railway station, had no means of getting across except in their own boats. He would be glad to know if the Minister had any idea of meeting the board in the construction of a bridge at that point?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had had applications on the subject from the people about the Logan; but there were three divisional boards concerned, and he thought they might contribute towards the expense. There were many bridges, of which he had got a list, which would have to be constructed out of the funds available. It would be utterly impossible to get money to construct bridges all over the colony where they were wanted. There were three boards connected with the bridge over Breakfast Creek, and there were also three boards concerned in the bridge over the Logan. He might inform the hon. member for Bulimba that the Government had already built a bridge over Bulimba Creek, and he supposed the hon. member wanted half-a-dozen more.

Mr. ARCHER said that persons living down here near the seat of government had a great advantage in that respect. They had bunches of divisional boards and municipalities, and could bring a good deal of pressure on the Minister for Works. It should be remembered, too, that with their large populations they could build bridges far easier than many of the larger divisions in which the population was scanty. Some of the boards in charge of the larger divisions had as much as 100 miles of road in one direct line within their boundaries. The divisional board in charge of the division in which he lived and paid rates levied the highest rates that could be imposed by law; but they had a road of over 100 miles in length in a direct line, over which for the greater part the mail coaches had to run, and they had to cross creeks as best they could. The people in the divisions about Brisbane could bear the highest rating, and they must bear in mind that they had a larger population in one of their divisions than in two or three of the divisions in charge of boards having hundreds of miles of road to look after. The Minister for Works was right to take into consideration the money voted for the whole colony, and set himself against the inroads made upon him by people living actually in Brisbane and around it. It should be remembered that about Brisbane was not Queensland altogether.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was very sorry to hear the hon. member's last remarks.

Mr. ARCHER: Which remarks?

Mr. BEATTIE said he was sorry to hear the hon. member's remarks about the people about Brisbane. He could tell the hon. member that

his board had never been near the Minister for Works to make an application of that kind; it was about the last thing they would do. They were too independent for that. They could ask the previous Ministers if the ratepayers of the Booroodabin Division ever went to them, and they would tell them "No." He was glad the discussion had taken place, because by a discussion upon a vote of that kind they got a lot of useful information. He hoped the information given to the Minister for Works would have the desired effect. The Minister for Works had made one or two statements which showed that he knew very little about the localities of which he had spoken. The hon. gentleman, speaking of the case he had mentioned, said there were only a few chains of road. It should be remembered that in those thickly populated localities they really had to make streets, and not roads. He could tell the Minister for Works that the Booroodabin Board had thirty-five miles of streets, not roads, to keep in repair, or to get into repair. They spent as much upon one mile of a road in the divisions around the city as was spent, perhaps, upon fifty miles of roads in outside divisions, because they had to form macadamised roads. He would simply ask the Minister for Works to let his engineer report upon the bridge, and satisfy the people using the same, as to whether it was safe for traffic or not. Some localities laboured under very serious difficulties so far as rates were concerned. The bridge he spoke of was nearly a mile and a-third from the municipal boundary, and the whole of the rates paid upon the road amounted only to £47. There were the hospital buildings and grounds on the road and they paid no rates; the National Association Grounds paid no rates; the Acclimatisation Grounds and Victoria Park, on the same road, paid no rates; and the consequence was that it became a great hardship on the few ratepayers in that locality. Persons using the bridge and living outside the division asked their assistance in repairing the bridge, and said they were selfish when they did not assist them. They would be very glad to assist them, but the fact was they had not the money. They kept the road in good repair for their use, and there was a very heavy traffic upon it; but when they were asked to repair the bridge they simply said that there was no revenue from their rates to meet their wishes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no objection whatever to the engineer reporting upon the bridge. The hon. member knew that the Booroodabin Divisional Board received a considerable revenue from the omnibuses travelling over the road, and they got the Government endowment upon that.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that, at all events, the Booroodabin Divisional Board received a considerable revenue from the omnibuses running on that road.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there could be no question about the importance of the road and the bridge mentioned by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. That road was one of the main outlets of the city; in fact, it was the main outlet for the northern part of the city. The repair of the bridge was a question which would better come before the United Municipality than before the Government. It was not so pressing a matter for that Committee as for the body he spoke of. It was not only the Booroodabin Divisional Board and the boards beyond it that were concerned in that bridge, but the city of Brisbane was concerned in it as much, if not more, than either of those boards. There were 60,000

or 70,000 persons living within ten miles of the Post Office concerned in that bridge. To mention a case in point—there was the Princes Bridge leading into Melbourne from the Emerald Hill side: that bridge was about to be rebuilt. He was not quite certain whether the whole of the cost was to be borne by the municipalities concerned in the bridge; but he knew that, if not the whole of the cost, at all events a very large portion of it, was to be borne by those municipalities that made use of it, and the municipality of Melbourne in particular. The cost of that work would be £130,000. That was a case in point for them, because the people there had a system of local government similar to that they had here. He thought the Minister for Works should be defended from the raids made upon him by the ratepayers in and around Brisbane. He fully sympathised with the hon. member for Blackall in his remarks about boards in the country having 100 miles or more of main road to keep in repair. Some boards, indeed, had 500 and even 600 miles, and their funds for the purpose were anything but large. Although the roads about Brisbane might cost more to make and keep in repair, yet there was a very large amount of ratable property upon which the money could be raised to make them. The Minister for Works was fully justified in exercising great caution in the spending of that vote.

Mr. BUCKLAND said that as the Minister for Works had promised the hon. member, Mr. Beattie, that he would allow the bridge engineer to examine the Bowen Bridge, he hoped that he would also allow him to examine the Breakfast Creek Bridge. He could not say, with the hon. member, that the board with which he was connected had never asked the Government for assistance in bridge-building. They had made two applications for assistance to repair the bridge referred to, and last year they obtained £70 for that purpose. But the income of the Toombul Board was far less than that of Booroodabin. For the present year it would reach something like £2,200, whilst last year it was only £1,200. The population was rapidly increasing and the necessity for improving the bridge was becoming more imperative every day.

Mr. NORTON said he could quite understand that the Minister for Works, having a large sum at his disposal for roads and bridges, would be likely to have pressure brought to bear upon him for particular works, and in some instances not quite fairly. He would suggest to the hon. gentleman that a schedule of the bridges proposed to be dealt with should be laid on the table each session. That might possibly do away with all attempts to influence the allotment of the vote. He had noticed in that morning's paper that a meeting had taken place of certain gentlemen interested in the construction of a bridge at Bulimba, at which they stated their intention to ask the Government to allow them to engage Mr. Daniells as their consulting engineer. In the event of any such application being made, would the hon. gentleman comply with it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was not aware of any application of that kind having been made. Two gentlemen interested in the construction of a bridge over the river at Indooroopilly waited upon him a few days ago and asked that Mr. Daniells might be allowed to inspect their plans. He told them he did not think there would be any objection to that, if it was done at their own cost, and if Mr. Daniells was willing to do it.

Mr. NORTON said that, according to the report in that day's paper, it was proposed to ask the Government to allow Mr. Daniells to act as consulting engineer for the Bulimba bridge.

That was a very different thing from merely inspecting the plans. In the event of a request of that kind being brought before the Minister for Works how would he act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman might rest assured that a request of that kind would not be complied with. He certainly would never allow an officer in his department to act as consulting engineer to any private company. The Government would never think of such a thing.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that through the course that had been pursued lately it was abundantly evident that hon. members had done a great wrong to their constituents by transferring the responsibility of passing the votes for bridges from the House to the Government. Only six years ago the entire amount on the Estimates for roads and bridges did not amount to more than they voted last year for bridges alone. Since that time they had passed a law vesting the responsibility for bridges with the municipalities and divisional boards. Formerly, all works of that nature to be done were set out in the Estimates, and sometimes at the end of the vote there was an amount for unforeseen works that might arise during the year. But, as a rule, everything was scheduled to the most minute particulars. In considering those proposed works hon. members were doing their duty to their constituents—and that was the principal part of the work they came there to do. However, that system was found to lead to abuses. In the first place it took up a great deal of their time, and in the second place the constituencies that were nearest the capital always got the greatest number of items on the Estimates—those, in fact, who could interview the Premier oftenest and bring most pressure to bear upon him. The plan that was proposed by the Government and agreed to by Parliament, to suppress the nuisance connected with that system of log-rolling, was the Divisional Boards Act. That introduced a new set of circumstances altogether, and the responsibility was thrown upon municipalities and divisional boards to do the work in the best way they could. They were asked, in substance, to provide for themselves. But two years ago there was a large amount of surplus revenue, and the Government of which he was the head proposed, and the Government which succeeded them agreed, that that surplus should be devoted to certain specific works which were much needed and which could not be provided for out of the ordinary means at the disposal of divisional boards. That was agreed to by Parliament, and although it was in some sense a violation of the principle of local government, still it was one of those violations which were justified by the circumstances of the time—namely, that there was sure to be some hitch occur before the Local Government Act came fully into operation. The present Government got £15,000 on the Estimates last year. They gave no information as to how that money was going to be spent; it was taken completely out of the hands of Parliament. And not only that, but in the last days of the session they asked for £100,000 to be placed to their credit out of Loan Fund for bridges; so that £115,000 was placed at the disposal of the Ministry, or of the Minister for Works, without the slightest supervision by Parliament, because before that money was voted the Government refused, or stated that they were not in a position, to declare on what items it would be spent, and no information on the subject had been given up to the present time. When they were in committee, as they then were, they could get a certain amount of information as to who was responsible for the money actually spent, and he

maintained that they had not been performing their duty as members of Parliament in giving so much power to the Government. The Minister for Works might well come forward and complain that he had been bothered so much with those votes. No wonder! because the real fact of the case was that the Government of which he was the Minister, or Parliament, had put on his shoulders a responsibility that belonged to Parliament itself, and it was not at all surprising that he was so bothered now. He was actually doing the work which Parliament should have done itself, and which they were never justified in handing over to him or to the Government; and the hon. gentleman now found himself in the same trouble that all Governments had been in before. Hon. members were under the delusion that they were working under local government, but the Minister for Works had now let them into the secret. He was in trouble as to how to dispose of the money at his command. He had a fund of £70,000, and numberless claims for a portion of it, and he did not know what to do with it. He had no doubt the hon. gentleman would find a great many suggestions from hon. members on both sides as to how he should dispose of that money, and then he would be in the same trouble that he was in now. The matter was a very serious one for Parliament. He thought that as members of Parliament they had been greatly to blame in letting the power of supervising the expenditure of that money go out of their hands. It was a power that no honest Government should desire—a power that properly belonged to Parliament and not to any Government—namely, the disposal of a certain amount of money without its destination being prescribed by Parliament. That had been done to the extent of £115,000. As he said before, they never dreamt of such a thing six years ago. They then met every year, and voted so much money for such a bridge and so much more for another, but never thought of such a thing as voting a lump sum to the Minister for Works and telling him to do what he liked with it. The result was that the hon. gentleman now came forward and actually pleaded that they should not badger him about that money, because he had been bothered so much about it already. It was a very serious position, and they, as members of Parliament, were very much to blame for having thrown such a responsibility on the Minister, and practically having said, "Do as you like with the money." What were they sent there for? The money was the money of the people who sent them there, and their trust was to see that money was properly expended, and how could they see it was properly expended when, ignoring all particulars, they handed it over to the disposal of the Minister for Works, who was now in so much trouble about it? It was a responsibility that should never have been attached to any Minister. They would see the subject in another way if they looked at the estimates of the Minister for Works. They were asked to vote £12,932. The items making up that sum were reduced, about six years ago, by the change made in the policy of the Government, from about £15,000 to £3,000. That change of policy was that the local authorities throughout the colony should perform their own work, and the result was that the estimate of the department of Secretary for Public Works came to be a comparatively small item—that year it was about a fifth or a fourth of what it had been before. It was then £14,000 odd, and it had crept up—they being under the delusion all the while that they had got local government—until now it amounted to £12,932—only a few hundreds less than it was before, without Parliament having the slightest control over the details of the expenditure. He thought the

attention of hon. members ought to be called to the matter most distinctly, because as long as they voted money in that way to be expended by the department they would spend it. They now paid large subsidies in the course of the year to divisional boards, and at the same time they were expending very nearly as much in the department as they did in 1879, when the Divisional Boards Act was passed. He sympathised with the Minister for Works, but not at all in the way in which he wanted sympathy. He could not admit that the hon. gentleman did not deserve the trouble, because he had brought it on himself; and he did not sympathise with the Ministry, because they also had brought the trouble on themselves. It was a trouble that should never be on the shoulders of any Ministry; and he thought it was a reflection on hon. members that they had not attended to their business in Parliament, when they gave to the Minister, or to the Ministry, a power which they should always retain in their own hands.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had something to ask the Minister for Works in connection with the Colonial Architect's department. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley had complained that the post-office in his electorate had not been commenced although it was promised six months ago; but it was three years since provision was made by the then Ministry for a new post-office at Townsville, and nothing had been done with regard to the erection of that building yet. Hon. members who had visited Townsville must know that the present post-office was in a very unsuitable position. It was at the far end of the town, next to the creek, the town having greatly extended in the opposite direction. It was built in very early times when Townsville was not supposed to have the potentiality of being such a place as it was now. A certain sum was voted then, if not four years ago; an amount had been voted since then, and still the people seemed as far off as ever from realising the new post-office as they were three years ago. The Minister for Works invariably complained that the Colonial Architect was overworked; but he (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) thought that complaint had been made too often—so often that it had no weight now. It was made last year also, and he really thought it was time that tenders were called for that work. He would like the Minister for Works to say what was his intention in the matter? He knew that certain public bodies in Townsville complained that they had communicated with the hon. gentleman on the subject and had received no reply. He hoped the hon. gentleman would not treat him in the same way, but tell him when the work would be commenced?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was a pity that the hon. member for Townsville did not study that interesting publication, the *Government Gazette*, because if he did he would have seen that tenders were called for the work last Saturday.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was thankful to the Minister for Works for the information.

Mr. SALKELD said he would call the attention of the Committee to a matter that was included in that vote. He had been informed by contractors that they declined to tender for public works in that department in consequence of the manner in which inspection was carried on by the foreman or architect. He knew some men who had been Government contractors for years, and one of them had told him that he would decline to tender, not because he had too much other work to do, but because he would not

be worried by the men who went to inspect his work, and who condemned or altered it when they evidently did not understand the work at all. It was a matter which required careful consideration, to see whether the men who overlooked that work were competent to do so or not, as, if they were not, contractors would not go in for Government work but be content with private work, and the Government would be left behind. There was a complete deadlock in the Colonial Architect's department. There were works to be carried out in the various parts of the colony, and the blame was thrown upon the Colonial Architect's department. If the blame rested there, there ought to be a clearing out, as no officer should be allowed to stand in the way of the public interest. If the Colonial Architect could not do the work let them get somebody who would do it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he knew there had been complaints from contractors about the foreman of works, and he had asked them to formulate a charge and he would investigate it to see if it were genuine. Hon. gentlemen must know perfectly well that it was a delicate matter for a Minister for Works to interfere with or dismiss a foreman of works on the complaint of a contractor. He was sure that the Government had no desire or wish that the contractors should be harassed in the least degree; but at the same time they were bound to see that the work was done according to the specification. The complaints were always general. The contractors found fault with this and that, and he had asked them to make some definite charge that might be investigated and brought home, and if he found any foreman or overseer harassing unnecessarily any contractor he would do all in his power to see that it was rectified. It was a delicate thing to dismiss a foreman for looking attentively after the interests of the Government. He could assure hon. gentlemen that the Government had no sympathy with any foreman or overseer who harassed the contractors.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said no doubt what the hon. gentleman said was true. It was a very delicate matter for the Government to interfere in questions of that kind; but it was difficult very often for a contractor to bring a specific charge against an individual who had harassed him. It was within the power of foremen of works or the architects to harass contractors, so that they would rather not have contracts at all than submit to it. The hon. gentleman himself had actually mentioned a fact which seemed to bear out the statement made by the hon. member for Ipswich, when he said that when tenders were called for the new public offices, in the other colonies as well as here, there was only one tender sent in. It was not sufficient to say that contractors were too busy, because the work was not too large. There was not too much work in the whole of that contract. It was not so large as some of the railway contracts in Australia; so that consideration was not sufficient to deter contractors. There must be something besides that, and he thought if the Minister for Works were so inclined he would find there was something more than he was willing to believe, although the contractors were not able to make any specific charge against the foremen of works, or any individuals, of harassing them.

Mr. FOXTON said he did not think there was any desire on the part of the hon. member for Ipswich, or anybody else, that anyone should be dismissed without the fullest possible inquiry. If any complaints were made of the way in which the foremen of works were perform-



ing their duties, their conduct should be made the subject of a most searching inquiry. What the hon. member for Townsville said was quite correct. There might be great difficulty in formulating an actual charge against a foreman of works, other than by the contractor saying that he was hampering him in the performance of his contract. He did not know much of the actual state of affairs, but he knew this: that when the contractor had completed the post-office at Stanthorpe, and the postmaster and telegraph master were ready to move into it, they could not do so for some months, and the general opinion was, amongst men who knew something of the trade, that the building ought to be passed as it stood. No one could understand why it was not, and there was a great deal of local dissatisfaction in consequence. The assumption of the public was that the foreman of works had some reason of his own—some private and spiteful reason—for not passing the building; such matters as that ought to be inquired into. The building had been passed recently.

Mr. SALKELD said the Minister for Works appeared to have gathered a wrong idea from what he said. He did not ask him to dismiss any foreman without inquiry, or at all. All he wished was that a searching inquiry should be made. He would not have taken so much notice of the complaint, had it not been possible that the contractors would have declined in future to tender for Government work. If they did not, it would show that there was something very tangible in the complaints; at least, that was how it appeared to his mind. There was another matter which might be a reason why tenderers were so very chary of formulating complaints. He had heard it spoken of several times, that there were various matters left to the option of the architect or foreman. In some cases they were allowed to use a certain kind of timber or another, or different kinds of material. He did not know why that should be so. If one kind of material was unsuitable, the contractor should be able to use another; but it was not left to the option of the contractor; it was left to the Government officer. What was the reason of that? It was commonly said that if the foreman of works had a hold over the contractor he could make him put in more expensive work. He had heard that stated again and again, and if the contractor complained the foreman would make it as difficult as possible for him to complete his work. The Minister for Works could easily ascertain if that was the case. He had heard something of the case spoken of by the hon. member for Carnarvon. The contractor had suffered a very great loss by not having his contract passed when the work was finished, and there apparently was no reason whatever for not passing the work. He wished it to be distinctly understood that he was not advocating the dismissal of anyone in the Works Department, and he had only mentioned those matters because he did not know how else to bring them under the notice of the Minister for Works. He had a very strong suspicion that any contractor who made a complaint against a foreman of works need not tender for any Government work again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the matter referred to by the hon. member for Carnarvon never came under his notice, and that was the first occasion on which he had heard any complaint made. He could only assure hon. members that the Government had no desire to harass any contractor. It might be that the Colonial Architect was very particular in having the work carried out, and he supposed the only way to remedy that was to remove him; but he could not instruct the Colonial Architect how

to carry out his work. Any matter that was brought under his notice would have his best attention, and would be investigated.

Mr. FOXTON said he did not mean to infer that the matter he spoke of came under the notice of the Minister for Works; but he merely wished to point out that the contractor had suffered very serious inconvenience and loss, and the public also were inconvenienced. He had no doubt that the difficulty arose through some trifling dispute between the contractor and foreman of works, and he was informed that the foreman refused to go up to Stanthorpe to pass the work. He should like to know from the Minister for Works something about the police barracks at Inglewood. The member for Townsville had received a very satisfactory answer to some query he put to the Minister, and he (Mr. Foxton) should be glad to receive as favourable a reply. He did not study the *Government Gazette* for the purpose of finding out what tenders were called for, and he should be glad if the Minister for Works could assure him that tenders had been called for the barracks for which £500 was voted last year. He had communicated verbally with the department, and had also written upon the subject, but up to the present had received no satisfactory answer. He could assure the Minister for Works, if he wanted assuring, that the police barracks at Inglewood were a disgrace to a civilised community. He believed it was quite impossible to keep a man there, the prisoners having to be chained to an adjacent log, and the chain passed through a chink in the slabs.

Mr. SMYTH said complaint had been made of some foreman of works, but he knew of a case where additions were to be made to a telegraph office and the foreman of works was not satisfied with the manner in which the contract had been carried out. The contractor happened to be a great politician—he was a strong party man—and he was able to bring pressure to bear to get his work passed in spite of the fact that the foreman of works was not satisfied with it. There was another matter he wished to bring under the notice of the Minister for Works. There were contractors and there were contractors. There were some who did their work well and paid their men, but there were others who slumped their work and never paid the wages due to the men. The Government should see that a sufficient deposit was put down to ensure the men being paid their money, because he knew of a great many instances in which contractors disappeared without paying their debts. In his own district there was a case of that sort. A surgeon's residence was added to the Gympie Hospital, and the men who had been employed on the work had to do without their money. Why should not the contractor in all cases be obliged to give security to the Government for the payment of their men?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he should advise the hon. member for Carnarvon to read that interesting publication, the *Gazette*, and he would find that tenders had been called and not a single tender had been received for the Inglewood police station. The member for Gympie had referred to some individual who was a great politician and was able to bring pressure to bear to get his contract passed. He could assure the hon. member that since he had been in the Works Office no pressure had been brought to bear upon him by any politician whatever, and no attempt of the kind had ever been made. Indeed, he was never troubled with the passing of the work of contractors; that was generally managed without coming to him at all.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think the charge made by the hon. member for Gympie against contractors would apply to contractors generally, or to those in Brisbane especially. As far as his experience went, the latest as well as the oldest contractors in Brisbane were as respectable men as could be found in the colonies, and they generally performed their work satisfactorily, and did not slum it in any way whatever. He thought there was more in the fact that no tenders had been sent in for the new public offices than the Minister for Works imagined. It was not simply because contractors had too much work to do; they never had that; there must be some other reason for such a state of affairs. The reason he strongly suspected was, as had been stated by the members for Ipswich and Carnarvon, that the contractors were harassed by the foremen of works. It might be, as he had said before, that the contractors were bound to the specification in such a manner by the foremen of works, or engineer, or Colonial Architect, that they were ruined, and still the gentleman who had the superintendence of the work only kept contractors strictly within the specification.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it had come to his knowledge that there were many complaints made by contractors against those who superintended their work. He had interviewed the Colonial Architect and asked him if the foreman of works was not unnecessarily particular about the work, and he assured him that he was not. The Colonial Architect told him that contractors were compelled to perform the work according to the specification, and if the specification was not adhered to, then the Government would have to accept any kind of work forced upon them.

MR. BEATTIE said he thought the hon. gentleman had not got all the information he might have got with reference to that matter. There was one thing he would tell the hon. gentleman, and perhaps he would remember whether it had come under his notice. A certain contractor was doing some work for the Government, and an officer who was no doubt a very particular man, but had not the most amiable temper in the world, came along and saw a dressed stone at which a man had been working for a week, and because something did not please him he took a hammer and broke the stone. It was rumoured that the department compelled that officer to pay for the stone he had broken. Was the Minister aware of that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not heard anything about it.

MR. BEATTIE said he thought it was very likely the hon. gentleman had not heard of that matter. The officer referred to sometimes got up on the wrong side, and appeared to have done so on that occasion, as there was no fault to be found with the stone. Little things like that harassed contractors, and might have the effect of preventing some from tendering for work under the Government. There were as respectable contractors in this colony, as the hon. member for Townsville had stated, as were to be found in any of the colonies, and those men had a name to sustain, and would not be harassed by Government officers.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be granted the sum of £67,050 for Buildings. The amounts comprised in that vote were put down at the request of the various public departments, and all the Works Department had to do with them was to prepare the plans, call for tenders, and get the work done. The

Colonial Secretary's Department came in for a large share of the vote in the shape of police and hospital buildings, and there was also a considerable sum down for the Colonial Treasurer's Department for pilots' cottages, sub-collectors' quarters, custom-houses, etc.

MR. KELLETT said he would ask the Minister for Works whether any action had been taken in reference to the Laidley police barracks and court-house? He asked the Colonial Secretary about the matter some six months ago, and the hon. gentleman was rather astonished that they were not finished, and stated that he thought they were just completed. He (Mr. Kellett) then went to the Works Department and found that nothing had been done in the matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was not usual to commence buildings or call for tenders for them until Parliament had voted the money, and that was the first occasion on which the amount had been put down on the Estimates.

MR. KELLETT said all he knew was that the police barracks were promised a very long time ago. Where the money was to come from he did not know, but he knew it would only cost about £500, and that works of that value had been done before the amount was voted on the Estimates. And, as he had already stated, the Colonial Secretary had expressed surprise that the work had not been done.

The PREMIER said he was under a mistake when he told the hon. member that; he afterwards discovered that the real cause of delay was the difficulty in getting a title to the land. The moment the title to the land was obtained the necessary steps were taken for the commencement of the work.

MR. BLACK said he would like to know from the Minister for Lands what provision the Government proposed to make for the land-office at Mackay? The present land-office was a very small room in the existing court-house which was going to be pulled down in consequence of the land being required for a new gaol. The Mackay district was one than which there was no greater in the colony for land selection, and there was absolutely no accommodation in the land-office for the exhibition of maps. The accommodation at the present time was of the most wretched character. He thought the Minister should take into consideration the necessity of erecting a land-office where people wishing to select could get reasonable information. As far as he (Mr. Black) could see there would be absolutely no land-office in two or three months, because, as he had said, it was proposed to pull down the existing court-house for the erection of a new gaol, and there was no accommodation whatever left in the new court-house for the Lands Department.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said that the present land-office did not, as the hon. member had said, afford any accommodation for the exhibition of maps, but when the new police-office or court-house was finished the old building would be used for a land-office.

MR. BLACK said he understood that the existing court-house was to be pulled down because it occupied the site for the new gaol, for which £1,500 had been voted. There was no doubt that that building, if removed, would supply material for putting up a good land-office, but in its present condition it was utterly impossible to use it for that purpose.

The PREMIER said he was not aware of any change of the kind referred to by the hon. member having been made. He presumed that they would not pull down the old gaol and

construct a new one without consulting the Minister in whose department it was. If they did he should want to know why. He understood when the new court-house was authorised that the old one would do for the land-office, and there was plenty of room there for all that was required.

Mr. FOXTON asked whether any provision was likely to be made for the accommodation of the Customs officer stationed at Wallangarra. There was only one man employed there, and on more than one occasion his whole kit had been stolen from his tent while he was away on duty. Buildings of a permanent nature would have to be erected sooner or later, and it seemed only right that, when officers were employed in such places, such buildings should be erected as would protect their property.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the matter was receiving the attention of the Collector of Customs.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he wished to draw attention to the insidious way in which the estimates of different Ministers were placed before the Committee. They were now called upon to vote, for the so-called Defence Force, the sum of £5,000 which had been slipped into the estimate for Government buildings. The money was said to be for drill-sheds, stores, and armouries. Surely they had spent enough in that direction already—and they had not only to consider what had been voted, but what had been taken from the police to make room for members of the Defence Force—without asking, especially in such times, for such a large sum as £5,000. If hon. members considered the matter they would be startled at the enormous sums paid, directly and indirectly, for the Defence Force, irrespective of the sums paid to officers and men. They had gone in for purchasing vessels, and in one case at least the price paid was very much in excess of the value of the vessel. They were now asked in cold blood—because there was a considerable amount of justification for the action of the Government when war seemed imminent in making preparations for the defence of the colony—to vote £5,000 for drill-sheds, stores, and armouries—the Defence Force was to get that sum in addition to having already taken, improperly and injudiciously, the quarters previously occupied by the police. He hoped the Committee would give careful consideration to the important issue he had raised, because he thought that item of £5,000 was the most objectionable on the estimate.

The PREMIER said that so long as there was a defence force—and he hoped that would be until there was universal peace—the men must be provided with arms, and there must be places to keep them. It was of no use to give them arms unless they were taught how to use them, and those things involved drill-sheds and armouries, for which the vote in question was asked. There were members of the Defence Force in all the principal centres of population in the colony, and also volunteers, and the money was to be spent in those places, not in Brisbane. There were numerous places where armouries were required, but the expenditure would be kept down as much as possible.

Mr. NORTON asked whether the drill-shed at South Brisbane was ever used? Were there any volunteers there?

The PREMIER said he did not think the shed was quite finished. There were two companies on the south side of the river, he believed—one belonging to South Brisbane and the other to Kangaroo Point.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it appeared that the defence of the item was placed in commission; at any rate, the Minister for Works did not come to the front to defend it. In addition to the sum of £5,000 for drill-sheds, the very next item had reference to something in connection with the Defence Force, because the quarters adjoining the old gaol, formerly occupied by the police, were occupied by members of the Defence Force at the present time. The Government were so ashamed of the enormous cost—they were so cognisant that it was utterly out of keeping with any benefit the country might derive from the expenditure—that they spread, as it were, with a pepper-box, the items over the different pages of the Estimates. With regard to the £5,000 which the Premier said was to be expended over a large proportion of the colony, he would ask where the money was to be expended? in what centres of population? and what benefit they were supposed to derive from the expenditure of that money? He was amazed at the hardness of the Colonial Secretary when he stated just now that it was necessary that the Defence Force should be armed, and that when arms were provided there should be armouries. The hon. gentleman knew very well that if it had not been for the forbearance of the Opposition, who were in full possession of the facts, but were too patriotic to make them known, there would have been such an exposure of negligence on the part of the Colonial Secretary as regarded munitions of war, when the colony was said to be threatened with invasion, as would have put him in a very unpleasant position. From motives of patriotism the Opposition were dumb; but they knew, and the hon. gentleman knew, very well that the colony was in a deplorable state at that time, so far as rifles and ammunition were concerned, owing either to the laches of the Colonial Secretary or the Agent-General at home.

The PREMIER said the walls of the old gaol were pulled down—at any rate they might have been pulled down three times over since the instructions were given—and it was proposed to have a large square there, which would be available as a parade ground, which was absolutely necessary in Brisbane. He could not enumerate all the places on account of which the £5,000 was required, but some of them were—Townsville, Cooktown, Charters Towers, Gympie, and, he thought, Maryborough and Ravenswood. With respect to the charge of the colony having been in a state of danger in consequence of the negligence of the Colonial Secretary—he did not know what particular Colonial Secretary the hon. gentleman meant—he could not charge himself with negligence. There had been a great deal of difficulty in getting munitions of war from the War Office in London; and when the Government pressed the home authorities earnestly they were told that the volunteers in England were not yet armed with the Martini-Henry rifle—the inference being that the first line of defence in the colony must wait until the last line of defence in England had the new arm served out. Although they had not at the time the hon. member referred to got all the arms they would have liked to have, they had been so far supplied that there was no occasion to be alarmed. As to the Agent-General, he had been putting a continual pressure on the War Office to hasten the supply of war material required by the colony.

The MOREHEAD asked if the Colonial Secretary would give some information with regard to the munitions for the "Gayundah" and the "Paluma"? Were those vessels supplied with munitions to any appreciable extent when they arrived in the colony?

The PREMIER said the "Gayundah" had an ample supply when she came out, and he thought the same was the case in respect to the "Paluma."

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that in the list of new buildings to be erected were the names of several places he had never heard of before. He had no idea where those places were, and he would appeal to the Minister for Works, or the Secretary for Public Instruction, for enlightenment on the subject. There were, for instance, votes for police barracks at Kyabra and Mount Douglas, for a pilot station at Port Kennedy, and for police barracks at Wallangarra.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had not the slightest idea where the places referred to were. The requisitions for the votes were sent in to him by other departments. He himself was perfectly unacquainted with the localities the hon. member had named.

The PREMIER said that Kyabra was between Windorah and Thargomindah, and Mount Douglas was between Charters Towers and Georgetown.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the Government had not only provided for police stations for places which were unknown, but had also put a sum of £5,000 on the Estimates for police buildings and new stations, and another of £3,000 for stables and fencing in connection with police buildings. They were thus taking £8,000 over and above the items specified in the schedule. The £5,000 was a new vote altogether.

The PREMIER said the hon. member for Balonne had apparently lost sight of the development which was taking place in the colony. That development necessitated the erection of new police stations. He got from the Commissioner of Police a list of twenty-five new places where stations were required. He could not, of course, undertake to erect all the twenty-five at once, but thought he might build ten at an estimated cost of £5,000. The places he referred to were all over the North and West; three or four stations were lately established on the extreme western border; two or three on Cape York Peninsula; and two or three had to be established in the sugar districts. The item, then, so far from being extravagant, was a very small fraction of what the Commissioner wanted. The other item of £3,000 was a standing amount which always appeared in the Estimates, and was required for the addition of improvements to police stations.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the Premier was unfortunate in saying that he (Mr. Morehead) had not had regard to the development which had taken place in the colony. If that development was to be estimated by the increase in the number of police buildings, he was afraid it was one which was not very much to the credit of the colony, for if it had any meaning it was that whilst the great pastoral and sugar industries were languishing the criminal class was on the increase. He did not know if the state of affairs was in any way attributable to the present Ministry being in power, but the fact remained that the people were being more heavily taxed than before in order to pay for crime.

Mr. SALKELD said the vote contained an item of £5,000 for drill-sheds, stores, and armouries for the Defence Force. In the Estimates for the Defence Department there were also items amounting to £4,000 for accoutrements, ammunition, and stores.

The PREMIER said that was for rifles and ammunition.

Mr. SALKELD said he thought they spent a great deal too much on the Defence Force. The Defence Department, too, was one which annexed buildings and ground belonging to other departments, and, although it had its own estimates, additional items for its use were included in the estimate of the Minister for Works. What was the object of this arrangement? Was it to separate the items so that the total amount voted for the Defence Force might not be realised? With regard to the old gaol site, he held that the buildings still standing undemolished there were a disgrace to the city. He referred to the outbuildings which were standing in the square.

The PREMIER said he thought the buildings had been demolished long ago, and it was to his very great surprise that he learnt, a day or two ago, that that was not the case. However, no difficulty would arise about that.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum of £6,000 be granted for Excepted Roads under the Divisional Boards Act Amendment Act. Hon. members would observe that there was a reduction of £4,000. The grants were confined to three or four divisional boards in the North which had a very long extent of roads to keep in repair and very little funds to do it with. It was quite impossible that the boards could keep the roads in repair without assistance from the Government. That £6,000 would give them about a double endowment—about £4 in lieu of £2. That was another vote that caused the Minister for Works any amount of annoyance. A demand would be made for £1,000, and perhaps, after a considerable amount of correspondence, a cheque would be sent for £500; but before the ink was dry a request would come down for another. He had succeeded in reducing the vote by £4,000.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to know what roads got the benefit of the vote, and whether they were roads excepted within the meaning of the Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said they were the roads from Port Douglas to Herberton, from Cooktown to Maytown, and from Cairns to Herberton. They all came within the Act.

Mr. NORTON said he was inclined to think the hon. member was mistaken. The Cairns road was not an excepted road in his (Mr. Norton's) time, and he did not see how it could be now. The same was the case with the Port Douglas road. Either a mistake had been made in the first instance, or a mistake was being made now. He thought that if the Minister would refer to the Act he would find the Maytown road was the only excepted road as defined by the Act.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he thought the road from Cairns to Herberton had always been considered an excepted road. It went through a scrub, and the wet weather had made it in such a state that it was impossible to get along with pack-horses, and they had to cut a new track at a cost of £500.

Mr. NORTON said that the fact of roads being bad did not make them excepted roads within the meaning of the Act. If they had to get extra money to keep them in order, the Divisional Boards Act Amendment Act should be again amended to make the payment legal.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he thought that road was excepted within the meaning of the Act now. There were no ratepayers along it; it ran through a scrub and over the range. Who was to keep the road in repair unless the Government did? He had travelled recently over the road from Cairns to Herberton, and it

was in a most fearful state. It wanted a good deal more money spent on it, but he did not see where it was to come from unless it came from the Works Office.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the roads spoken of might fairly come within the meaning of the term "excepted" under the Divisional Boards Act. If they did not come under it, he did not know any road in the country that did.

The PREMIER said the Act was specially framed to meet those cases.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had taken specially good care not to create any fresh excepted roads; he had simply followed in the footsteps of the hon. members for Port Curtis and Townsville. When they had considered a road as excepted he had followed the same course. He might mention that by every mail that came from the North he was threatened that if he did not provide more money for those roads they would be shut up and abandoned altogether. About £6,000 had been spent upon them already.

Mr. NORTON said he did not wish the hon. member to mistake his meaning. He did not mean to say that the money ought not to be given for roads like those where there were such difficulties in keeping them in repair. As far as his recollection went, the applications for the roads from Cairns and Port Douglas to Herberton were refused because they did not come within the meaning of the Act; though they got a large amount of assistance, both from the hon. member for Townsville and himself. He might ask how much money had been given for each of the roads?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the Tinaroo Board got £1,500, another board £1,000, another board £700, and the Douglas Board £3,500—making in all £6,700 divided amongst those roads.

Mr. NORTON: There is the balance of the £10,000 left.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is a balance of £3,300, which is a lapsed vote.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. W. Miles), in moving that £30,001 be voted for goldfields, said he did not know how the £1 got into calculation. It was the first time he had observed it. There was an increase of £4,713 on the last year's estimate, and it was made up as followed:—There had been a mining registrar appointed for Rockhampton to assist the warden there when the rush took place to Mount Morgan. His salary was £250. Then there was £50 increase for the powder magazine keeper at Gympie. Then there was £10,000 down for deep sinking. The amount of £5,000 for prospecting for gold was omitted, and there was a decrease in the item "Ration allowances" of £250, and in the item "Contingencies" of £200, and one trooper at £137 was dispensed with, making a reduction of £5,587, leaving the estimate increased by £4,713. The reason for omitting the £5,000 for prospecting for gold was that for all the money expended in that way there had been no result. Something like £4,700 had been expended in subsidising prospecting parties, and with the exception of the discovery of tin, between the Walsh and the Tate Rivers, there had been no return. Under the circumstances the Government thought it desirable to leave the vote off the Estimates altogether. In reference to the reasons which had induced the Government to leave off the vote for "prospecting for gold," he had in his hand a return from which he would read to the Committee.

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There had been twenty prospecting parties altogether. There had been a party prospecting between the heads of the Flinders, Clarke, and Cape Rivers; one in Cape York Peninsula; at the heads of the Barron and Mulgrave, Tate, Mitchell, and Lynd Rivers; the heads of Johnstone and Herbert Rivers; in the basin of the Cape; Daintree and its tributaries; at Hell's Gates, Palmer; the heads of Normanby, Annan, and McIvor Rivers; heads of Einasleigh and Copperfield Rivers; McKinlay Ranges; Stony Creek, Palmer; Freshwater Creek Valley, Cairns; Conglomerate, near Cooktown; Maryborough district; another party in the McKinlay Ranges; and prospecting parties went out from Bowen. But with one exception they had all been unsuccessful, and that one had resulted in the discovery of tin between the Walsh and Tate Rivers. The amount of money paid as subsidies had been £4,187 7s. 7d., which was a large sum, and the Government had come to the conclusion that it was no use placing any money on the Estimates for the purpose of prospecting. He believed it would be far better to reward anyone who discovered a new goldfield than to subsidise prospecting parties. The amount paid in that way for the discovery of Gympie, Charters Towers, the Palmer, the Hodgkinson, and Nebo, was £3,100. Hon. members must agree with him that the old system was much the better of the two. In fact, they had got into a bad system, of which he would give only one instance. A prospecting party was sent out from Bowen, and the men who sent them out paid them £3 a week each and rations. Men who were paid at that rate for going out on a picnic party were not likely to trouble themselves much about discovering gold. Those were reasons why it had been thought advisable to leave the vote off the Estimates this year.

Mr. HAMILTON said he thought the reasons were very unfair ones. What the hon. gentleman had said did not show that the system was bad, but merely that it had not been properly administered. The fact that certain individuals had been paid full wages to go out prospecting was not a condemnation of the system, but a condemnation of the way in which it had been administered. Miners in all parts of the colony could be readily obtained to prospect for rations only until they discovered gold. They would be perfectly satisfied if they got that amount of assistance. There were miners on every goldfield in the colony who would be very glad indeed to go and spend their time and give their experience in prospecting the surrounding country if they were only supplied with the bare necessities of life. Therefore it was rather too much to say that because in two or three instances the system had not been administered properly that the system itself was bad. Even if ten times £3,000 was spent, and one goldfield was discovered like Gympie, Charters Towers, or the Palmer, the expense would be fully justified and the country would gain by the expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that if the system was not bad it was certain that the results were bad. The country had spent £4,187 with no result whatever. Surely the hon. member did not think it wise to continue that system any longer—and the prospecting had been done over the best of the whole country. However, whether it was a proper system or not, the Government were of opinion that the old reward system was a much better one for the country than the system of subsidising prospecting parties. He believed he had given very good reasons why the vote should be omitted from the Estimates.

Mr. HAMILTON said it was absurd to expect that an expenditure of £3,000 or £4,000 would be sure to result in the discovery of a goldfield. Possibly ten times that amount would have to be spent before that result was obtained. But it should not be forgotten that the expenditure of that sum had done good by testing certain country, and the consequence would be that future prospectors would not require to spend their time and labour in going over that part of the country again. Even at the present rate of expenditure, possibly two or three years would elapse before a goldfield was discovered, but if, eventually, a goldfield was discovered, the country would be vastly the gainer by it. The rich Hodgkinson Gold Field was actually discovered in consequence of the £1,000 given to Mulligan and party by the Hon. H. E. King, who was then Minister for Mines. If the Minister would put £1,000 or £2,000 on the Estimates for prospecting it might result in the discovery of another field.

Mr. NORTON said, although, as the Minister had stated, the vote for prospecting for gold had led to no great results, still he believed that some good might yet result from the prospecting that had taken place in different parts of the colony, because it had shown that there were indications of other payable minerals where those miners had been at work. He thought it would be possible to devise some other system of prospecting by which more satisfactory results would be obtained than at present. In Victoria the Government gave considerable assistance to mining by placing sums of money in the hands of the committees of schools of mines for the purpose of subsidising miners. In Sandhurst, for instance, they did so, and the work was carried out under a regular system. He met the chairman of the Sandhurst School of Mines a short time ago, when that gentleman was passing through Brisbane, and he told him something of the system they adopted there, which, he believed, worked remarkably well. Of course, they did not give money to everyone who applied, but when men applied who might be thoroughly trusted to do good work they paid them fair wages, and instead of those men going out into any part of the country they were given a plan showing where reefs were known to exist which had never been tried, and they worked on those reefs in the hope of finding payable gold. Whatever they made they were entitled to themselves; they had every chance of hitting on a good reef, and if they did, so much the better for themselves and for the country. The amount of the Government grant to the Sandhurst School of Mines was £600 a year; and the country was surveyed for a considerable distance—he believed, eighteen miles in each direction—following the course of the reefs which were known to exist. In that way it was expected that real good would be done, and that eventually the area of the gold-mining district would be very much extended. He believed some such system might be adopted here, but they had hardly sufficient information at present to carry it out as successfully as they did in Victoria, simply because surveys had not been made for the purpose. There was no doubt, as the Minister for Mines had said, that the result of offers of reward for the discovery of goldfields had been much more satisfactory than subsidies for prospecting; but when the hon. gentleman said that no good had resulted from prospecting he was mistaken, because, although gold had not always been found in payable quantities, sometimes other minerals, such as tin and copper, had been discovered. He would like to know from the Minister what was being done in connection with the survey of goldfields?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the amount asked to be voted was the same as last year.

Mr. NORTON: What is being done?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are going on surveying.

Mr. NORTON: Who?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: All the surveyors who have been surveying, with the exception of Mr. White, who was surveying at the Palmer, and who, not being satisfied with the remuneration he received, had resigned.

Mr. NORTON: Where is Rosser now?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said Mr. Rosser was at Gympie, but he would finish his labours there very shortly. Maps had been prepared of the Gympie and Ravenswood Gold Fields, and the Charters Towers map would be published shortly.

Mr. PALMER said he understood the Minister for Mines to say that he considered the work of prospecting had been entirely finished in the North, and therefore there was no further use in passing a vote for that purpose. That was a very bold assertion to make.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I said nothing of the sort. What I said was that there had been no result from the prospecting that had been carried on.

Mr. PALMER said, of course, in that case he misunderstood the hon. gentleman, but he would point out that within the last few days they had seen a telegram reporting the discovery of what was likely to be a very payable field at the head of the Carron, which showed at once that there was plenty of room for prospecting still in the North. When they considered the vast extent of their Northern territory, it must be admitted that for a great many years to come it would be a very large field for prospecting. He had always understood that the vote for prospecting was contingent upon a certain amount being subscribed by the local inhabitants, and was under the impression that it had always been distributed on that principle. There were many miners who had passed the best of their lives—in fact, some of them had devoted all their lives—to prospecting; all the money they had ever earned had been spent again in prospecting, being led on by hope; and although they did not always discover payable goldfields, they did good service by opening up a lot of country, and sometimes making other discoveries, such as tin, copper, and other minerals. He wished to refer to the mining surveyor on the Etheridge Gold Field, and hoped the Minister for Mines would bear in mind that the one surveyor on that extensive field, which comprised nearly 900 square miles, was really doing substantial work which would be permanent. That officer had no assistant, and some assistance was really necessary to enable him to carry on the work he was doing in connection with reefs. He hoped the Minister for Mines would carry out the promise made by the department a few weeks ago with regard to giving that officer some assistance, because it was really impossible for him to carry on the work he was doing without it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he was not aware that the surveyor referred to had made any application for assistance. He knew that the hon. gentleman had been all round the goldfield hearing whatever grievances there were, but if application had been made for assistance by that officer he (the Minister for Mines) was not aware of it. He would point out to the hon. gentleman that there was £10,000 down for deep sinking, and he presumed that would have the same effect as

the vote for prospecting. What he had stated with respect to prospecting parties was that there had been a great deal of money expended without any result. They had all been unsuccessful, and it was all very well for the hon. member for Port Curtis to say that there should be some other system introduced. Wherever any party could get money out of the Government they always managed somehow to get it. It was impossible, try how he would, to circumvent them. He had received vouchers for all sorts of things for prospecting parties—for billies, felt hats, leather gaiters, tweed trousers, prepared fish, jams, and soon—and when he refused them he was told that they were for prospecting parties, who were authorised to draw upon the Government. He resisted for a long time, but failed, and it was all very well for hon. members who had not to deal with that money to talk. Of course, if the Minister for Mines chose to be open-handed, and threw money broadcast, the amount would soon go; but he had endeavoured, so far as possible, to get some benefit from it, and he was quite sure that if hon. members could suggest any other method he would be very glad. The Government were perfectly alive to the desirability of discovering new fields.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he sympathised very much with the Minister for Mines on the vote under discussion, but which was omitted; and he, from his own experience, could not blame him for having left it out of the Estimates. The hon. gentleman was quite correct in saying that it had been spent without results. He did not think the system was to blame at all, as they could never adopt any other if they wanted to subsidise prospecting parties. A prospecting party was got up generally on a goldfield, and, upon the recommendation of the warden, the Government subsidised the party to the extent of £1 for every £1 they subscribed or which they found in the way of arms, or horses, or tools for prospecting. He never heard of any vouchers having been sent in for jams and such-like articles; but he believed there had been some misunderstanding between the Minister for Mines—or the Under Secretary for Mines—and the Bowen Prospecting Association, and that was what the hon. gentleman referred to when he talked about the vouchers being sent in for jams. He believed the Bowen people misunderstood the language of the Under Secretary—that they were misled—so that, whatever had taken place in the way of sending in vouchers for articles which should not have been supplied, he thought the Government themselves were to blame through their officers. Whatever parties had been sent out were sent out under the leadership of more or less able men, and all experienced miners. He had the names of several of them who were sent out by himself, and some of whom might have been sent out since by the present Minister for Mines. Amongst them were Messrs. Mulligan, Crosby, Halpin, Mortimore, and several others—all experienced miners, and they were all selected by the wardens of the different fields; the amount subscribed for them was £1 for every £1 subscribed by the Government. He could not see what other system could have been adopted; but it unfortunately turned out that not one of them had found anything worth calling a field. There was one party that went out, he believed, with the intention of looking for tin, although ostensibly they went looking for gold; but they did find tin. That had been the only return for all the money that had been spent on prospecting parties. The hon. gentleman was wrong in respect to what he said regarding the system of awards. It was in existence at present and would remain in existence until the Mining

Act of 1874 was repealed. If a goldfield were found, the Minister was bound by that Act to declare the award, if it came up to requirements. Goldfields had always been found by private persons, sometimes by chance; but, no matter how, the Government had to pay for them, and he thought better results had been obtained by paying prospectors after having found the gold. Even in Victoria, where goldfields were so numerous, and so close together, better results were obtained by paying men for finding gold than by paying them to look for gold. As a rule, prospecting parties were unsuccessful in Victoria. He had never heard of the system mentioned by the hon. member for Port Curtis; but he was certain it would not be applicable in Queensland, or any other district than Sandhurst. How could the Sandhurst School of Arts Committee superintend prospecting in Gippsland, for instance, or in any other place than Sandhurst? The better plan was to pay a reward when the field was found, and he certainly should not attempt to find any fault with the Minister for Mines for having left the vote off the Estimates, after the experience they had had for a number of years. He did not look upon the loans for deep sinking for gold, as prospecting, in the same sense at all; of course, it was prospecting in deeper levels. He should like the Minister for Mines to inform the Committee how much of the £10,000, he thought or knew, would be spent during the present year? Last year the greater part lapsed, the same as a vote that they had under discussion a short time ago for roads, for which there was £10,000 voted, and of which £4,000 lapsed. Had there been any attempt made to spend some of it upon the Palmer Gold Field, which the hon. member for Cook and he had interviewed the hon. gentleman about two months ago? The hon. gentleman promised to submit certain proposals to Mr. Jack, who could not go there.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES said he believed the whole of the £10,000 would be spent. Mr. Jack, and the mining registrars, and the gold wardens, had been instructed to select the shafts which were most likely to turn out successful, and point out the best methods of proceeding to the mine-owners. If all were at work, that £10,000 would be expended before the end of the year, and very possibly the Government would have to come down with a supplementary vote. Seeing that they had given prospecting a trial, and it had not turned out successful, it was best to spend what money they had now in endeavouring to get down deeper, and see whereabouts they would strike payable gold. Unfortunately Mr. Jack had been taken away for the purpose of endeavouring to discover the best place to bore for water, or he would have gone over the whole of the goldfields. It was the desire of the Government to carry out the wishes of the House, and assist those parties who wished to discover payable gold at greater depths. With regard to the payments for prospecting he might say that, since the member for Townsville was Minister for Works, lots of those progress associations had sprung up, their object apparently being to get money out of the Government for all sorts of purposes.

MR. FERGUSON said at the commencement of the session the Minister for Mines promised him that Mr. Jack would be sent to the Central district, but he had never been there yet, and he (Mr. Ferguson) would like to know if it was intended by the Minister to keep his promise and send Mr. Jack to the Central district as soon as possible?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES said he had promised the hon. member and the hon. member

for Blackall that Mr. Jack would be sent to the Central district and the Gladstone district as well. Mr. Jack was at present engaged in other work, but there was another geological surveyor (Mr. Rands), and he should be very glad if the hon. member would accept the services of that gentleman.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Minister for Mines did not answer the question of the hon. member for Townsville. When might Mr. Jack be expected to report upon those various fields in the Cook district, which the Minister had promised to send someone to report upon? He should like the Minister to mention some prospective time.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said public money could not be expended unless there was some assurance that the result would be satisfactory. Mr. Jack would visit the goldfields in the Cook district in their turn. When he returned from his present expedition he would go to Gladstone, Rockhampton, and Charters Towers.

Mr. HAMILTON said that was hardly an answer to his question, and he would like to have some definite time mentioned. It might be two years or more before Mr. Jack got up to the Cook district. Moreover, the Minister for Mines stated to the hon. member for Rockhampton that, if Mr. Jack was not available, the services of some other gentleman might be utilised. He had no doubt Mr. Rands was a competent geologist, and that the people in the Cook district would sooner have his services than have to wait a year or two for Mr. Jack. When did the Minister expect that Mr. Jack would finish his present labours?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the hon. member could not expect him to tie himself down to a statement that Mr. Jack's services would be available in a few weeks or a month. He had promised the member for Burke that Mr. Jack would visit the Etheridge, and he intended to have carried out his promise, but Mr. Jack's services were required elsewhere. He was not going to tie himself down by stating any definite time.

Mr. HAMILTON: Can you tell me within six months?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he could not.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the persuasiveness of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer had been too much for the Minister for Mines. It was not fair that the Colonial Treasurer should press Mr. Jack into the work in which he was now engaged. His salary was paid from the Mining Department, and he should not have been employed in work that really had no connection with his duties, while the mining community lost his services during the whole of the time he was so employed. He understood from the Minister for Mines that as soon as Mr. Jack returned he was going up to Gladstone, and then on to Rockhampton. It was rather unfortunate that any delay had taken place, because the work at some mines was held back until Mr. Jack's arrival. With regard to deep sinking at Gympie and Stanthorpe, which had been visited, he would like to know what mines were to be assisted, and to what extent?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said an arrangement had been come to at Stanthorpe with the owners of mines that the Government would contribute £1 for £1, and at Gympie the Government would pay £4 per foot for every foot sunk.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was inclined to agree with the hon. member for Port Curtis, as he thought that Mr. Jack was about on a wild-goose

chase, and the sooner he was recalled the better. That sort of combination with the Waterworks Department was likely to lead to friction, and, judging from the insane sort of way in which Mr. Henderson appeared to be cruising about the country—first to Adavale, then back to Roma, and then on to the Drummond Range—no good results were likely to accrue. If Mr. Jack had been sent out by himself he might possibly have done some good, although he (Mr. Lumley Hill) thought he was quite out of his latitude when looking for water. He did not think Mr. Jack was likely to do much good, or likely to meet with much success. The Government might just as well send out a man with a divining rod to the Western districts to look for water, or, better still, an astronomer or rain-maker. But as for going about with that extraordinary man who presided over their waterworks, the Hydraulic Engineer, he thought it was wasting his time, if Mr. Jack was any good—and he believed that gentleman was, as he knew he bore a good reputation. He (Mr. Lumley Hill) was sure the reputation Mr. Henderson bore in the West was not a good one, so far as the amount of money he had spent compared with the work done was concerned.

Mr. ARCHER said he quite agreed with the hon. member for Port Curtis that it was scarcely a proper thing for the Geologist, who was paid from the vote for Mines, to be sent to do work for another department. But the hon. member never said that Mr. Jack was going on a wild-goose chase. He (Mr. Archer) had not the slightest doubt that Mr. Henderson would be glad of Mr. Jack's assistance. Of course the hon. member for Cook had a down on the Hydraulic Engineer because he was defeated in a dispute concerning some work done by Mr. Henderson; and the hon. member now had the advantage of the engineer in that Committee. But the papers in the matter referred to were all public, along with the hon. member's letter and the certificate of two gentlemen who certified to the truth of Mr. Henderson's report. The hon. member was defeated in an amiable contest as to whether there was a certain amount of water in a place out west, but that was hardly a sufficient reason for making such remarks as he had made about Mr. Henderson. Any man who had been out west during the last three years, and knew the difficulty Mr. Henderson had in taking machinery and men there, and even in carting water for miles to keep his engine going, must admit that it was heart-breaking work; and it was rather hard to judge of his work under those unfavourable circumstances as if it had been done during ordinary seasons. It was not a good time for attacking the Hydraulic Engineer now, seeing that the estimates of his department were not before the Committee. There was no doubt that the papers laid on the table of the House in reference to the matter to which he had alluded showed that the Hydraulic Engineer was right in his statements and that the hon. member for Cook made a mistake.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would just say one word in reply to the statement of the hon. member for Blackall that he (Mr. Lumley Hill) had made a mistake. The hon. member had seen the papers that were laid on the table of the House, and in that respect had an advantage over him, as he (Mr. Lumley Hill) had not seen them. He only wrote one letter on the subject, and that was to the Colonial Treasurer; but he did not confine himself to one statement alone. The hon. member for Blackall had alluded, no doubt, to the statement alleged to have been made with regard to the bore, but there was also a statement in reference to a dam. It was alleged in



the report of the Hydraulic Engineer, which was published in the papers, that the dam was full of water. Now, he (Mr. Lumley Hill) saw the dam himself, and saw that there was only from a foot to eighteen inches of pea-soupy mud in it, and that he could maintain it was never controverted. And gauging his other statement, by the accuracy of that report, he (Mr. Lumley Hill) came to the conclusion that Mr. Henderson's statements about the bore were not much to be relied on, and that from the character of the apparatus he had for testing the bore he could not have tested it to the extent alleged. When, however, his (Mr. Lumley Hill's) letter went in and there was a test made before witnesses, Mr. Henderson, as he (Mr. Lumley Hill) had ascertained, took care to have a different apparatus. The report he referred to was utterly untrue in the main point. He was perfectly ready to make an allowance for the difficulties the Hydraulic Engineer had to encounter in years such as those which the colony had just passed through, but he maintained that that officer was utterly unfitted for the work in the back country. He might be a good hydraulic engineer for making reservoirs at Gold Creek, Enoggera, or other places along the coast, or localities which he had seen before, but, if taken into new country, such as was found in the western part of the colony, he was utterly useless; and the amount of money that had been spent out there was altogether disproportionate to the work that had been done. He (Mr. Lumley Hill) would like to know whether the member for Blackall had read the letter from the chairman of the Kerangoolah Divisional Board, which appeared in the *Courier* the other day, and which showed that the opinion held with regard to Mr. Henderson in that district was not of the highest. He (Mr. Lumley Hill) had abstained from entering into any discussion at the time the water-works estimates were before the Committee, but now that Mr. Henderson was taking a good man in the Government Service away in his train he thought that the sooner that connection was severed the better. He had as great an interest as any member of that Committee in seeing water found in the Western districts, but, as he had said, he thought Mr. Jack should return to his own work.

Mr. ARCHER said he quite agreed with the hon. member for Cook, that the sooner Mr. Jack got back again to his legitimate work the better, and he might state that he had seen the letter which appeared in the *Courier*. With regard to the matter in dispute between the hon. member for Cook and Mr. Henderson, he might say that the hon. member for Cook persuaded him (Mr. Archer) that there was nothing like the quantity of water in the bore that there was stated to be by the Hydraulic Engineer. He (Mr. Archer) believed the hon. member was perfectly serious and was under the impression that what he stated was true. He did not doubt that for a moment, but the dispute was not what sort of utensils the engineer used to arrive at a decision, but what was the decision arrived at; and the result proved that the statement made by Mr. Henderson was correct. He (Mr. Archer) should certainly see in future that he did not act upon the statement of even the most truthful person, without some evidence in support of it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought they were wandering away from the consideration of the Estimates, and he did not wish to prolong the discussion on that matter, but simply to say that whilst hon. gentlemen expressed their regret that Mr. Jack had been taken away from his legitimate work they must surely overlook the great importance of testing the question of finding artesian water in the Western districts. Without Mr. Jack's presence in the Western district it would be utterly

impossible to have that question tested in the manner the Government intended to have it tested. Though he believed Mr. Henderson was a highly competent hydraulic engineer, that gentleman himself admitted that he did not possess sufficient geological knowledge to give him confidence in selecting any site in the West for the scene of operations. Hon. gentlemen should remember that the experiment would be a costly one. It would run into an expenditure of £10,000 or £12,000; but then the advantages to the colony from the discovery of water in the interior would be enormous. All mining operations he regarded as secondary to the great question of testing the Western districts with a view of finding artesian water; and he believed that was the opinion of the large majority of hon. members. It was not a question of the competency of Mr. Henderson, or otherwise; that was a question to be discussed when the Estimates in connection with that officer were under consideration. He had every confidence in Mr. Henderson, and he was in accord with the hon. member for Blackall in understanding the insuperable obstacles which had beset Mr. Henderson during the three years he had been carrying on operations in the interior. He felt it his duty now to insist on the necessity of Mr. Jack's leaving all other matters—and he was glad the Minister for Mines took the same view—to assist the Hydraulic Engineer in relieving the colony from the present scarcity of water in the interior.

Mr. HAMILTON said he agreed that the discovery of water was a most important matter; but why did not the Colonial Treasurer get a geologist of his own for that purpose? The Government Geologist was paid by the Mines Department; and the action of the Government in taking him from that department, and the answers to questions given by the Minister for Mines, showed what the mining industry might expect from the present Government. The Minister for Mines spoke in a pitiful way of the money that had been abstracted from the Government, and tried to prove his liberality to the miners by saying that he had put £10,000 down on the Estimates for deep sinking; but he forgot that what the Government gave with one hand they took away with the other—they gave £10,000 for deep sinking, but they took it out again in the tax on machinery. The Minister for Mines could not tell within six months when Mr. Jack would visit the northern parts of the colony, but he said that not a penny of the money voted could be spent till Mr. Jack did go there; and that was tantamount to saying that though the money was placed on the Estimates it was not going to be expended. He did not agree with the Minister for Mines that a reward for the discovery of gold led to better results than a sum on the Estimates to assist prospecting. As a rule, prospectors were satisfied with finding a payable goldfield, but they did not object to a money reward. Sums placed on the Estimates for prospecting purposes were intended principally for people who believed they could find gold, and were willing to try, but had not the means to do so. The Minister for Mines gave as a reason for not putting more on the Estimates for that purpose that the sum of £4,000 had already been expended with no result. Was that not an absurd reason? If miners were to reason in that way—namely, that because they had been unsuccessful in prospecting for a year or so that it was useless to try any more—no fresh fields would ever be discovered in Queensland. The Palmer would never have been discovered under those circumstances, because it was not discovered till some years after the discovery of Gympie. Whilst objecting to a small amount for

prospecting purposes, the hon. gentleman, the Minister for Mines, actually proposed two or three days ago to spend half-a-million of money—for it would amount to that, including the cost of resuming land—for a mile and a-half of railway in a locality which was connected with town by tramway and omnibus traffic.

Mr. NORTON said he believed Mr. Henderson was anxious to do his work faithfully. Though he was dismissed by the Victorian Government, with many others, during the Berry administration, he had been compensated for the loss of office by that Government, at whose hands he had received every possible amends for the treatment he formerly received in that colony. Though Mr. Jack would, no doubt, be of great assistance to Mr. Henderson, he might remind hon. members that water had been found in New South Wales without the aid of a geologist—artesian water, which in some cases had risen twenty feet above the surface of the ground. Therefore, he thought that if a geologist was required out west the Treasurer should have one of his own. The hon. gentleman compared the importance of discovering water with that of mining discoveries: but if ever there was a time when the value of the mining industry was shown beyond all question, now was that time, and he thought every facility should be given to advance that industry. It was admitted that the discovery of Gympie was of immense benefit to the colony, but the colony was not then in as bad a position as now. At the present time the pastoral, the agricultural, and other industries were in a deplorable condition; but, notwithstanding the drought, the mines had yielded to the country produce of a value that could not be over-estimated. There was this also to be said in regard to the mines: that when deep sinking took place, however dry the season might be, in almost every case the mines would supply the water required for their own use. The expense of supplying them with water would not, therefore, fall on the Government. He could not help thinking that the condition of the colony at the present time ought to teach them that the mining interest was simply in its infancy. A report was spread with regard to the Northern district by the Rev. Mr. Clark, who he was sorry to say was now dead. Mr. Clark was a geologist who lived in Sydney for many years, and he was a gentleman on whose statements everyone who knew him placed great reliance. It was he who pointed out that great discoveries of gold would be made in all parts of Queensland. His statements had been amply verified, and the probability was that greater discoveries than had yet been made would take place. He (Mr. Norton) therefore regretted to hear the Colonial Treasurer saying, after the experience now gained, that the costly work of boring for water was of so much more value than prospecting for gold. In that matter he entirely disagreed with the Colonial Treasurer. The boring for water had simply amounted to experimenting in one or two places. He was talking the other day to a gentleman who had had a good deal of experience with regard to the boring operations in New South Wales, and it appeared that a large number of the very successful bores there were put down without the aid of a geologist.

Mr. STEVENSON said he quite agreed with those who said that Mr. Jack had gone on a very important mission. He knew from having been out west how important it was to find artesian water there. At the same time, he considered that the subject was so important that perhaps the Government ought to have obtained the services of a geologist for the purpose instead of taking Mr. Jack away from the work in which

he was formerly engaged. And, after all, Mr. Jack's mission had been rather a wild-goose chase. As hon. members told the Colonial Treasurer, when the question was discussed on a motion for adjournment, it was simply a case of locking the stable door after the steed was gone. Mr. Jack could not possibly do the work in the state the country was in. Messrs. Jack and Henderson had consequently been simply wasting their time.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. STEVENSON: The Premier said "Not at all," but he (Mr. Stevenson) said "Yes," and if he was wrong he hoped that the Committee would get some information as to what Mr. Jack had done since he had gone away. Had he selected any spot where artesian water was likely to be found, or had he been simply wandering about the country trying here, trying there, and then trying somewhere else? It was a mistake to take Mr. Jack away from good work to send him on a wild-goose chase. He did not see that Mr. Henderson was in any way to blame, or could be reflected upon in connection with the matter. Whether his work had been generally successful or not he (Mr. Stevenson) was not in a position to say. If the hon. member for Cook had any fault to find with Mr. Henderson, or any cases to state in which Mr. Henderson failed to do his duty, Mr. Henderson, on the other hand, might be able to reply. In one case, as had been pointed out, a report by Mr. Henderson had been impugned, but when it was referred to two gentlemen in the district concerned it was corroborated almost to the very letter. But what he (Mr. Stevenson) chiefly objected to was the manner in which Mr. Jack had been sent away to explore for water. The Minister for Mines had promised various members that Mr. Jack would visit their districts and report on their mines within a certain time. Hon. members were led to believe that his reports on the mineral resources of their districts would be made within a certain time, and now they were without any definite information as to when Mr. Jack would be back from the West and available for reporting on the North. He for one had a promise from the Minister for Mines that as soon as Mr. Jack had finished work he was then engaged in he would visit Mount Britton. He told his constituents, through the secretary of the Progress Association, that he had got that promise, but now he found that Mr. Jack had gone West apparently for an indefinite period, and hon. members, being left in the dark, were unable to explain to their constituents the reasons why Ministerial promises were not fulfilled.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that in the case referred to by the hon. member for Normanby, in which the correctness of a report by Mr. Henderson was questioned, all reference to the dam was specially left out. He (Mr. Lumley Hill) was very guarded in his reference to the bore, because he could not see into it. What he said was, that if Mr. Henderson's statement about the bore, which he (Mr. Lumley Hill) could not see into, was as truthful as his statement about the dam, which he (Mr. Lumley Hill) had seen, there was not much faith to be placed in what he said the bore would do. It appeared, however, that the bore turned out better than he (Mr. Lumley Hill) anticipated. Both sides of the Committee seemed to be pretty well agreed that the sooner the "Jack and Jill" sort of partnership was dissolved—Mr. Jack sent off elsewhere, and Mr. Henderson left to find another geologist or to do his own geologising for himself—the better. Mr. Jack, he was informed, was out in the western country on the Diamantina years ago, was utterly at sea, and confessed that he did not

understand the nature of the country at all. It was a very peculiar country, in which a most expert geologist might be at fault. The best man they could get would be one who had got his experience either in New South Wales or South Australia. The debate reminded him of the old rhyme—

"Jack and Jill went up the hill,  
To get a pail of water,  
Jack fell down and broke his crown,  
And Jill came tumbling after."

He was afraid they would get very little water, and Mr. Jack might as well get back to the mines.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member complained that the members who had spoken on the subject avoided all reference to dams. He could assure the hon. member that those who had not spoken had been very profusely indulging in them while listening to the interminable discussion, which had nothing to do with the question before them. He (Mr. Hamilton) knew nothing about the dispute; but he did know that Mr. Henderson was a good man, and he supposed that was the opinion of the Government. Some time since the hon. member for Port Curtis asked the Minister for Mines when Mr. Jack might be expected in the Port Curtis district, and the answer was that it might be in three or four months. That meant that they could not expect him in the North for about seven or eight months, if then; in fact, that was borne out by the statement of the Minister for Mines that he could not tell within six months when they might have him. At that rate the £10,000 on the Estimates was simply a fraud; because the time would have expired before the money could possibly be expended. The time of the vote expired next June. Four months of the financial year had passed; they could not expect Mr. Jack for another six months—that was ten months; then his report had to come down here and be considered before a penny of that £10,000 was expended; therefore the year for which the money was put down would have expired before a penny of it could be expended in the North. What he would like to know was whether—since the Government had appropriated the best geologist belonging to the Mines Department—they had another officer in whom they had sufficient confidence to report on the desirability, or otherwise, of giving Government aid to those fields in the northern portion which had asked for it. There was Mr. Rosser, the Geological Surveyor in Gympie. He recollected asking Mr. Norton, then Minister for Mines, to give Gympie a geological surveyor; Mr. Jack was asked to recommend someone, and he spoke most highly of Mr. Rosser, whose work in Gympie showed that the recommendation was well merited. Then the Government were giving another man a high salary—Mr. Rands—and he supposed that if that gentleman could not be trusted to make the report he was not fit for the position he occupied. The mines in the North were languishing for that assistance; the mere fact that the Government had promised it showed they thought it desirable that it should be given; and what he wanted to know was whether the Government had any other officers in their employ upon whom they could rely sufficiently to make that report.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the hon. member for Cook (Mr. Hamilton) had got up three times, and each time he had put about 500 questions. The hon. member professed to represent a mining constituency and he was very desirous to stand well with the miners and make them think the Government were neglecting their interests. All

he could say was that the miners would not believe the hon. gentleman; the miners knew very well who was their friend, and it would be a long time before they would count the hon. member for Cook as one. When the hon. member for Burke asked when Mr. Jack would visit certain goldfields, he (the Minister for Mines) was perfectly sincere in his reply. He had no intention of misleading the hon. member. It would be recollected that about that time that mountain of gold, Mount Morgan, was discovered. It caused a great sensation, and they were all anxious that Mr. Jack should go and report on it. In face of that he did not very well see how he could refuse. That was one cause of the delay. Then the hon. member for Normanby asked when Mr. Jack would be back. He (the Minister for Mines) really could not tell. If he had mentioned a day, the hon. member would by-and-by accuse him of breaking his promise. The Government had been abused and accused of injuring the pastoral lessees and driving them from the country, and now they were endeavouring to get water for the pastoral lessees to keep their stock alive they were abused for neglecting the mining industry. He had been very reluctant that Mr. Jack should go away because he was anxious to keep his promises; but the Government had expended large sums of money on boring machinery, and were paying a high salary to a competent hydraulic engineer, and it was thought desirable that Mr. Jack should go for a week or two and assist in trying to discover the best spot for finding water. He thought the Government ought to be commended for that rather than abused. The hon. member for Cook knew very well that the Government were desirous of assisting the miners in every possible way; but it suited the hon. member to abuse the Government in order to curry favour with the miners.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Minister for Mines was not going to get out of answering his question in that way. The hon. member said he had answered the questions three times, but, if so, the Delphic oracle was a fool to him. He (Mr. Hamilton) intended to have an answer to his question, or the Estimates would take a very long time to get through. He simply wanted a plain reply to a plain question. It was no use for the Minister for Mines to get on his tail and go mad because he was asked a question. It was no use to say that the miners knew who was their friend; that had nothing to do with the question he had asked. He had asked him, in the first instance, when Mr. Jack might be expected in the northern portion of the colony to report upon the mines upon which the money was to be expended? The hon. gentleman at first said he could not tell, and then said he might be expected in six months; and he told the hon. member for Rockhampton that if he was not satisfied with Mr. Jack he could have Mr. Rands. He (Mr. Hamilton) then showed that if they were to depend upon Mr. Jack the money would not be expended during the present financial year for which it was voted. He had then asked the hon. gentleman a plain question, as to whether the Government had among their officers any man whom, during Jack's absence, they could send up to report upon those fields? That was a plain question, and he was entitled to have it answered by the Minister for Mines.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he had told the hon. member, as plainly as he could speak, that he could not tell at what date Mr. Jack might be expected to report upon those goldfields. What more could he tell the hon. member? If the hon. member chose to obstruct the business of the Committee he could do so. It was utterly impossible to say the exact date when Mr. Jack would be in the North. He would promise that

there would be no delay. He could not force Mr. Jack about the country and run him by steam power. He could not say when Mr. Jack would be back from the western country, but he believed he would be back in a few weeks, and he would proceed with the business he had got in hand. He could not answer more fully than that. If he said that Mr. Jack would be in a certain place on a certain date and he was not there, the hon. member would accuse him of breaking a promise and a pledge. The Government were quite as desirous as the hon. member, that Mr. Jack should go ahead with that work, and it was to the interest of the Government that he should do so; but to name a certain day when Mr. Jack would be in the North was impossible.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Minister for Mines knew perfectly well that that was not an answer to his question. He had stated that, judging by the hon. member's replies to the hon. member for Port Curtis, there was not the slightest possibility of Mr. Jack getting up north within the next six or seven months, and he wanted to know whether the Government had among their officers any individual whom they could send up in Mr. Jack's absence to report upon those goldfields? He wanted to know if the Government would send up Mr. Rands, or Mr. Rosser, if Mr. Jack could not go up?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the hon. member forgot that it was not the Government only who were to be satisfied as to the mines to be selected for deep sinking. The miners wanted someone sent up in whom they had confidence. What would be the good of sending up someone in whom the miners themselves would have no confidence? The mines most suitable for deep sinking had to be selected, and if they did not send up someone of experience in whom the miners had confidence they had better leave it alone. Probably the hon. member had some friend who, he had come to the conclusion, would be competent for the work.

Mr. HAMILTON: No friend whatever.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said it was not only the Government who were to be satisfied as to the proper shafts to select for deep sinking, but the miners themselves.

Mr. HAMILTON: They were not consulted regarding Mr. Jack.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the hon. member knew very well that several miners thought their shafts the best, and would like to have assistance from the Government to sink them deeper.

Mr. HAMILTON: They will be satisfied if the Government send up another man.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the Government desired to send up the best man they had got. He could give no other answer.

Mr. HAMILTON: I want to know if you have another man of sufficient intelligence to send up there?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will say twelve months. That is an answer. Or sooner if possible.

Mr. DONALDSON said that Mr. Jack was paid by the people of the colony for the position he now held, and, whilst his information might be useful to the miners, it might at the same time be made of great advantage and use to another portion of the community. He certainly quite approved of the action of the Government in sending Mr. Jack out to see if he could not make a discovery that was quite as important as that of gold. That gentleman had been for some three or four years in the employment of the Government, and during the whole of that time

his work had been occupied for a special purpose—that was, in reporting upon goldfields. If there was any one discovery in the colony that would prove of greater value than another it was that of artesian water. Great expenditure had been incurred in procuring machinery, and it was necessary that a skilled person should be sent to the western country to see where that machinery should be tried. It would be in the recollection of hon. members that some time ago, when Mr. Jack reported upon Mount Morgan, he stated that the discovery was something new in gold-mining in the colony, and he also referred to the probability that in the western portion of the country, which had not been prospected for gold, similar discoveries might be made. It was quite possible that Mr. Jack in his travels in the West might find country suitable for that purpose, and it was within the range of possibility that, while boring for water, he might find gold. The people out west contributed largely towards the salary of that officer, and should he discover water in that country he would make a discovery that would be quite as advantageous to the colony as the discovery of gold. It would be a permanent thing, and it would enable the country at present almost valueless to be turned to a better and a higher use than was possible at the present time. They had certainly wandered a good deal away from the subject before them, but he would like to ask the Colonial Treasurer to give them a little more information than he had given upon the doings of Mr. Jack and Mr. Henderson. He understood that reports had been sent in, and he would like to be informed if they had, up to the present time, selected any point upon which they decided to sink for water.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had very little information, beyond what he had received in a letter from Mr. Henderson, to the effect that they had not yet decided upon a locality in which to bore. They intended to start for the Drummond Ranges, and Mr. Henderson expressed a hope that before long they would be able to select some locality, and then Mr. Arnold would be instructed to join them with the machinery.

Mr. FOXTON said that as the hon. member for Cook had got his reply from the Minister for Mines—

Mr. HAMILTON: No, I have not.

Mr. FOXTON: It was scarcely any use touching upon that question again. He would like, however, to refer to the discussion between them so far as the interest of the Government in the mining industry was concerned. He believed that the hon. member for Cook was wrong in his opinion of the Government in that respect. He believed that the Government—especially the Minister for Mines—took a deep and lasting interest in the mining industry. Believing so, he hoped the hon. gentleman would pay some attention to the remarks he was about to make in reference to the arrangements made for deep sinking at Stanthorpe. At Gympie, the hon. member had told them, the Government were paying £4 a foot for deep sinking.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: By way of loan.

Mr. FOXTON said he understood that the whole of those votes were being advanced by way of loan. At Stanthorpe the arrangement made was that the Government should advance £1 for every £1 put into the shaft by the proprietors. He took it that the object of the vote was not to benefit any particular mine or mines, but to benefit the district. Mr. Jack had visited the district he represented, and had reported upon

two particular mines which were representative mines, and selected those as being the mines upon which the Government should spend the money. The consensus of opinion amongst the mining population was that Mr. Jack was perfectly right, and the owners of rival mines were perfectly satisfied with his choice. But, as very often happened in mining, the proprietors of one of the mines had for some time been at the end of their tether, so to speak. They had spent all their money on the mine, which showed their *bona fides*, but they were unable at the present moment to provide pound for pound. The consequence was that the application of the vote was delayed, and some irritation had been caused thereby. He would suggest to the Minister for Mines that as the proceeds of the mine, if there were any, would be a first charge in favour of the Government, the money be advanced not upon the principle laid down, but upon the proprietors showing that they had already advanced a sum equal to the amount which was proposed to be advanced by the Government; that was to say, that the money they had already sunk in that particular mine should count as an equivalent for the Government loan. Such a course would meet with the approbation, not only of the owners of the selected mines, but of the whole mining population of Stanthorpe. Not being able at present to put down pound for pound, those men were in an awkward predicament, and the fact of that mine having been selected retarded the operation of the vote in the district. To adopt his suggestion would really be furthering the object the Committee had in view in voting the money.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that Mr. Jack, the mining surveyor, and the warden visited Stanthorpe, and selected two mines which they considered representative mines. After making the selections the matter was discussed at a meeting of the miners, and the miners agreed to commence deep sinking on Government paying pound for pound. That was the report that Mr. Jack sent in, and he had not interfered with it. He understood the conclusion come to by the miners was a unanimous one.

Mr. FOXTON said he did not doubt the accuracy of Mr. Jack's report. What he said was that Mr. Jack informed the miners that those were the terms upon which the Government proposed to make the advance. In agreeing to those terms no doubt they thought they would be able to raise the necessary funds to continue paying pound for pound. But deep sinking for tin was a comparatively new industry at Stanthorpe, and the men could not get advances upon the prospects which might be got out of the mine. The prospects, he understood, were most excellent.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Have they found a lode yet?

Mr. FOXTON: Yes; two or three.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said Mr. Jack must have been acting under a misapprehension, for the Government gave him no instructions as to what amount was to be paid for deep sinking.

Mr. FOXTON said the hon. gentleman misunderstood him. What he said was that the miners, after conversation with Mr. Jack, were under the impression that those were the terms on which the Government would advance the money. The men themselves, he believed, thought it was to be a grant in aid of deep sinking, not a loan. If it was a loan the Government might fairly make it a loan on the owners showing that they had already expended on the

mine a sum equivalent to what it might be deemed advisable to grant by way of loan, especially as repayment of the loan was a first charge on the out-turn from the mine.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he hoped that whatever the Government did to assist mining they would apply it equally all over the colony—that they would not establish one system at Stanthorpe, and another at Gympie, and a third at Charters Towers; for if they did it would lead to nothing but confusion and dissatisfaction. He did not know what system the Government intended to adopt, but hon. members might make up their minds at once, and call it a grant instead of a loan; and the Minister for Mines knew that just as well as he did. In Victoria, where the system had been tried for some years, there had been only one solitary repayment of £500 out of all the thousands that had been advanced.

Mr. FOXTON: £20,000 has been advanced there by way of loan.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that if the money was to be given away it should be given on one uniform system. He was under the impression that the Government intended to spend one-half the money, or rather, to give it away. Indeed the Minister for Mines had told them that two shafts had been selected at Gympie, and that those shafts were to be subsidised at the rate of £2 per foot.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: At £4 per foot.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Does that mean that the Government will pay £4 per foot and the miners £4 more?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; that is so.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: He would like to know at what depth operations would commence in those mines, because £8 a foot was a very high price for ordinary mining. As to the proposition made by the hon. member for Carnarvon, he thought the Minister for Mines should think very seriously before he adopted it. It simply meant this: That some shafts had been selected which had cost £3,000 each—which would not be a very large sum if they were now sunk 200 or 300 feet—and that the Government were to give £6,000.

Mr. FOXTON: No, no!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The hon. gentleman proposed that the Government should give a sum by way of loan equal to the amount expended.

Mr. FOXTON: No. He was sorry that he had misled the hon. gentleman, as he evidently had. What he said was this: The miners had done certain work, and if they could show that they had already contributed £250 in sinking, the Government should advance £250 by way of loan as the shaft went down.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: What is the depth of the shaft?

Mr. FOXTON said he did not know. They were no great depth at present.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he understood the hon. member for Carnarvon exactly. The hon. member said that the miners had gone on sinking the shafts until they had exhausted their means and were able to go no further, and they wanted the Government to do the work for them. Was not that it?

Mr. FOXTON: Scarcely.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Well, they wanted the Government to lend them money until they got down to sufficient depth to get payable tin.

Mr. FOXTON said that was scarcely a fair way of putting it. Those shafts had been selected by Mr. Jack, the hon. gentleman's own servant, as typical and representative mines, which it would be to the advantage of the country to test. They were not selected by the men themselves. They did not want the money for themselves particularly—as long as it was spent upon any shaft or shafts which would prove the general quality or nature of the lodes in the district, which were at present almost altogether unknown. They had been selected as mines from which the greatest amount of knowledge that would be of value to the district and to the whole colony was likely to be obtained. He had been very careful to speak only of the proprietors of one mine. He should not like to say anything about the others which would damage their credit in the slightest degree; but it had been represented to him that at the present moment one of the proprietors was unable to make arrangements to find the pound for pound required by the Minister for Mines, and consequently was not able to get the benefit of the Government loan, and therefore the intentions of that Committee were not being carried out. He (Mr. Foxton) had merely made the suggestion he did to the hon. gentleman as a means by which he might very easily carry out the wishes of the Committee. Those two shafts had been very properly selected for the purpose—he believed with the approval of every miner in the district.

Mr. SMYTH said one of the mines proposed to be subsidised was at the head of Lode Creek. He visited the place some time since, and there was no sinking done then of any consequence. But lode tin-mining was an important industry. Stanthorpe and Herberton had been very rich in drift tin, the source of which was the heads of the creeks in ranges where the lodes existed. There was a lode at Lode Creek, which Mr. Jack had visited, and another at Mount Marlay. No great amount of work had been done, but various suggestions had been made. That approved of by those appointed by the Government was, he believed, to cross-cut from the creek so as to find the width of the lode, and what it was like, and if they discovered the true lode then they would sink a shaft. He thought the money would be well spent by the Government in opening up the lodes on Stanthorpe. Tin did not fluctuate like copper, but always kept at a fair price, so that he thought £250 spent at Mount Marlay and Lode Creek would be money very well spent.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member was very much mistaken if he thought that tin did not fluctuate. The miners on Herberton and Stanthorpe knew to their cost that it did fluctuate a great deal. He thought himself that it would be much better if the people of Stanthorpe, who had such faith in the district, would subscribe enough money amongst themselves to obtain the Government subsidy. It was work which would certainly benefit the country more or less, but Stanthorpe especially—that place would receive 99 per cent. of the benefit, if any benefit did arise; so that he thought it would be out of place—if those particular miners, who, he believed, were the proprietors of the mines, had exhausted their means—for the people of Stanthorpe to subscribe sufficient to enable them to get the assistance they required from the Government. He did not think that it would be wise for the Government to find the whole amount, because they could find hundreds of places all over the colony to experiment upon on those terms; one place was quite as good as the other. He thought it would be better for the Government—on being satisfied of the *bona fides* of the

people, by their guaranteeing a certain amount themselves—to give them a subsidy of £1 to £1, £2 to £1, or £3 to £1, or whatever the amount agreed upon might be. There would then be some security given by the people who got the benefit of the subsidy.

Mr. FOXTON said he thought the guarantee of *bona fides* was in the people having expended all their means in developing the property. He agreed with the hon. member for Townsville that it would perhaps be better to adopt the same principle all over the colony, and let the Government give so much for sinking a shaft. That appeared to be the intention of the Government with regard to the goldfields—not to require £1 for £1, but simply to pay so much to people for sinking their own shafts—£4 per foot. Those appeared to him to be more favourable terms than had been stipulated with regard to the Stanthorpe mines.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the hon. member for Townsville a short time ago had accused the Government—or himself, at any rate—of not being sincere with regard to the vote for deep sinking—that they would like to see it lapse.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had said no such thing. What he did say was, that he did not believe the Government could spend the money this year, and that a large portion of it would lapse. He believed so still—in fact, more strongly so now than he did before, because it appeared that only two shafts had been selected at Gympie, which, he supposed, would not cost the Government more than £1,000, or £1,200 at the outside, for the year, and two more at Stanthorpe. Where was the rest of the money to be expended? Mr. Jack would not be here until the end of the financial year.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he expected a wider range than that. It would not, he hoped, be confined to Gympie and Stanthorpe. The Government were desirous of carrying out the wishes of the Committee, but it would be impossible to meet the views of all hon. gentlemen. He did not think there were any two holding the same opinion. The hon. member for Gympie had one idea, the hon. member for Townsville another, the hon. member for Port Curtis a third, and the hon. member for Cook a fourth. How was it possible for the Government to agree with all? He should do his best, because he believed it would be beneficial to the country to strike payable gold at a greater depth than they had already.

Mr. HAMILTON said it appeared that the Minister for Mines was trying to stonewall his own Estimates. That was the only conclusion he could come to from the answer he had made to a plain question. The hon. member for Carnarvon said he thought the Government took a great interest in deep sinking, but he could only say that if that was so they had a most peculiar way of showing it. He did not think the Minister was justified in fencing the question he had been asked, or in simply attaching personal motives to him in asking it. He did not know Mr. Rands, but was asking the question simply in the interests of a district that contained a number of mining centres. The residents on those centres had been working year after year in trying to develop the mineral resources of the district, and had hailed with joy the action of the Government in promising to assist them, and they were now wishing, through him, to know when that assistance would be rendered. Some time ago he interviewed the Minister for Mines, and asked him, if Mr. Jack would recommend a competent person to take his place, would he

send him? Evidently the Minister had changed his mind since the reply he then gave him, as nothing had been done. The hon. gentleman had stated that the miners had to be consulted as well as the Government as to the geologist who was to be sent up to report upon the field. He knew perfectly well that that was not the case. The opinion of the miners as to whether it was desirable to send Mr. Jack or anybody else to report upon the field had never been asked. If the miners were told that if Mr. Jack were not sent somebody else would be, he knew, from the expressed opinion of his constituents, that they would be perfectly satisfied. He simply wanted a plain question answered. He could see that Mr. Jack could not be there for eight or nine months, as he had to visit many places before he went to the Palmer. It would take him a month to go there alone, and it would be a month or so before he could send his report, and then another month would be gone before the Government acted upon it. The consequence would be that that financial year, for which the money was put down, would have expired, before his district could get the benefit of that money. He simply wished to know whether, if Mr. Jack could not go, the Government would send Mr. Rands?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he could only inform the hon. gentleman that Mr. Jack would pay a visit to the Palmer as soon as possible. He could not name the particular day.

Mr. HAMILTON: Why not answer my question?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I said within twelve months. I may say, a great deal sooner, if possible.

Mr. HAMILTON asked if, in the event of Mr. Jack not going up within a reasonable time, the Government would send Mr. Rands?

Mr. MACFARLANE said the hon. member for Cook had asked the question seven or eight times, and had had as many answers, but was not satisfied. The Committee had a right to be considered as well as the hon. member for Cook.

Mr. HAMILTON: I want an answer to a simple question.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the hon. gentleman had asked a question it was impossible to answer. He had been told over and over again, distinctly, that Mr. Jack would be sent up as soon as possible. The hon. gentleman was simply taking up the time of the Committee.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was useless the hon. member talking about what he did not understand. He knew nothing about Mr. Jack or Mr. Rands. The hon. member for Cook asked a plain question that could be answered in one syllable. He asked whether the Government were willing to send Mr. Rands to the Palmer district, in place of Mr. Jack. That was a plain question.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Government have no intention of sending anyone but Mr. Jack.

Mr. STEVENSON said that was a very indefinite reply. If so much depended upon Mr. Jack, he would like to know what that gentleman's movements were to be? What instructions did Mr. Jack get when he went out west, and what was he supposed to do before he returned? The hon. member for Port Curtis, on September 30th, asked the Minister for Mines—

"About what date is it probable that Mr. Jack will visit the Port Curtis district to report in connection with deep sinking on goldfields?"

The reply was—

"The Government considered it advisable that before proceeding to Port Curtis Mr. Jack should visit the Blackall district, with a view to select a site for deep boring for water in connection with the Hydraulic Department; it will, therefore, probably be three or four months before Mr. Jack will be able to visit the Port Curtis district."

No one wished to bind the hon. gentleman to a day or a week or a month; but he was evidently unable to give a definite reply. If he could tell them what Mr. Jack's instructions were, perhaps they might be able to come to some understanding themselves, and fix a time when he would be likely to return. The Blackall district was the only one mentioned; did that mean that he was only to look around Blackall for water, and that he was not going out further west, towards Aramac, Muttaborra or Winton, or anywhere that way? What part of the Mitchell or Gregory district was he supposed to visit? If they knew that, they should be able to come to some understanding.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he was unable to answer the hon. member's question. It was agreed that Mr. Jack should go out to select a site to bore for water, and he got his instructions from the Colonial Treasurer. He (the Minister for Mines) could not inform the hon. member when Mr. Jack would return or what his instructions were.

Mr. SMYTH said he thought the Government were quite right in sending Mr. Jack out west. The mining industry was in a more prosperous state than the pastoral industry. The pastoralists were being ruined for want of water, and the Government did quite right in sending out the best man in their employ to discover water. The miners could wait a bit. As for the Palmer wanting to get a geologist, the people there had far better wait for Mr. Jack. When that gentleman visited Gympie the shafts selected by him did not meet with the approval of the persons interested, but generally the whole field confirmed Mr. Jack's selection when he gave his reasons. He had great faith in Mr. Jack; he had read all his reports, and believed him to be the best man, for the work upon which he was engaged, who had ever come to Australia.

Mr. HAMILTON said the question before the Committee was not Mr. Jack's qualifications, but how long that gentleman's present engagement would be likely to occupy him. The Minister for Mines might have had the courtesy to ask the Colonial Treasurer to give an answer to the question, as it was from him Mr. Jack received his instructions.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the instructions given to Mr. Jack were to select a suitable locality—a promising locality—in the western part of the Central districts of the colony in which to bore for water, and he was not confined to any particular tract of country. It was desired that he should give Mr. Henderson the benefit of his geological knowledge, and his advice as to the most suitable part of the Western interior where there was a probability of successful sinking. He presumed that Mr. Jack's work would not keep him a very long time. He had been absent now some three or four weeks, and it was hoped that his absence would not extend beyond a further period of the same extent. At the same time, like his hon. colleague, he was not in a position to say when Mr. Jack's labours would cease. He had a very strong opinion upon the matter himself, and he considered that in the interests of the colony the finding of artesian water was one of the greatest questions of the day, and if Mr. Jack was detained for a much longer period than was anticipated, his labours

would be well directed, and he (the Colonial Treasurer) sincerely trusted that they might prove successful.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was quite in accord with the Colonial Treasurer as to the importance of the work engaged in by Mr. Jack, and he was pleased at the information given, but they were not told how much work Mr. Jack was going to do. He believed there was one boring machine out west at present.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Another plant is being sent out west.

Mr. STEVENSON asked if Mr. Jack was going to show Mr. Henderson one, two, or three likely places in which to bore for water? Was he going to return at once, or was he going to stay and see the operation of boring?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He will come back at once.

Mr. STEVENSON: If Mr. Jack found one likely place in the Blackall district would he return at once?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the reason for sending out Mr. Jack was that he might, from the physical features of the country, be able to advise with some probability of certainty as to what were the most likely places in which to bore for water. When those sites had been selected he would return at once and resume his ordinary duties.

Mr. PALMER said, from the speeches of the Minister for Mines they might understand that there would not be any expenditure of that vote unless under the supervision and after the report of Mr. Jack, and if that report was not obtained before the end of the financial year then the vote would lapse and the Northern fields of the colony would derive no benefit from it whatever. If it took twelve months to make a report on Ravenswood, Mount Morgan, and Mount Leyshon it would take more than six months to go up north and report upon deep sinking on the Etheridge and Palmer Gold Fields. No one wanted to detract from the importance of finding water, but this was rather a late period of the year to send Mr. Jack out west, when there were no means of getting about the country and the whole country was almost a desert. If that work had been taken in hand six months earlier much better results would have been obtained.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought hon. members on the other side seemed to have found a mare's nest in reference to the vote lapsing. If the money could not be expended during the financial year, it would in all probability, if the present Government were in power, be again placed on the Estimates. He should like to have heard the Minister for Mines say that he would send Mr. Rands up north. He did not know what that gentleman was doing at the present time, or whether the Government had any confidence in him, but he was receiving a large salary and ought to be employed in some useful work. He thought the Government were perfectly justified in sending Mr. Jack out west, as the want of water was a matter of great urgency. Some remarks had been made in reference to the survey of goldfields. There had been a survey made of the Gympie Gold Field, and a splendid map had been executed by Mr. Rosser. He (Mr. Mellor) would like to have seen a pamphlet published in connection with it, describing the strata and reefs intersected. Indeed, it would be a good thing if such a pamphlet were published about all surveyed fields, as the information would be very valuable to mining communities. He did not see any provision on the Estimates for diamond drills for prospecting for coal, and he

hoped the matter had not been lost sight of by the Minister. The people at Burrum were expecting a diamond drill to be sent there very soon, and hoped the Minister would see that one was sent as soon as possible.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member for Wide Bay and the hon. member for Gympie were perfectly satisfied with the selection of Mr. Jack to go out west, because Gympie had been served, and they had, therefore, no reason to be dissatisfied. But it was very different with members on that side of the Committee, who represented Northern goldfields and Northern constituencies which had not had Mr. Jack's services. He had no sympathy with the selection of Mr. Jack for the particular work in which he was now employed, as he believed it could be done without Mr. Jack. In New South Wales similar work was being done without the aid of any geologist like Mr. Jack. As for boring for artesian water with the idea that it was going to save the country, that was nonsense! Supposing one bore was successful, was that going to save even a small portion of the country? What good would that be to anyone except the stations or roads in the locality in which it was constructed? They required fifty or a hundred bores in the colony. He did not suppose that anyone doubted that artesian water could be found by boring. It had been found elsewhere in Australia, and could be found also in Queensland. He thought the Minister for Mines was not treating the Northern goldfields properly, especially the Palmer Gold Field. He had been asked by the people of the Palmer to see the Minister for Mines about the expenditure of that vote, and he did so two months ago, and from what the hon. gentleman stated he was under the impression that he would be willing to send Mr. Rands to the Palmer if Mr. Jack would recommend him. The hon. member for Cook (Mr. Hamilton) had stated that evening that the people on the Palmer would be willing to accept Mr. Rands if they could not get Mr. Jack. He (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) did not see why the Government should not send Mr. Rands, who was paid £500 a year and also received an allowance for travelling expenses. If that gentleman was not fit to select representative shafts on the Palmer the same as Mr. Jack had done at Gympie, he was not fit to receive £500 a year. If the people were willing to accept Mr. Rands's services he did not see why the Minister should object; he would be a substitute for Mr. Jack, and the arrangement would prevent £1,000 of that vote from lapsing.

The PREMIER said he thought hon. members must see that that discussion was becoming rather absurd. They had occupied two hours and a-half in discussing—what? The fact that Mr. Jack, in whom they all had confidence, had been delayed three months in visiting the Northern goldfields. Mr. Jack might have had a bad cold, or have sprained his ankle by a fall from his horse and have been absent; but because he had not been prevented from visiting the goldfields by accident or sickness, but was doing some important work for the colony elsewhere, hon. members had occupied over two hours discussing Mr. Jack's excellencies, and Mr. Rands's excellencies compared with his. Surely hon. members would see that they were attaching a rather disproportionate importance to Mr. Jack's services; as a delay of three months under such circumstances would not ruin any of the goldfields of the colony.

Mr. ARCHER said he did not think the hon. gentleman was justified in making the remarks he had just addressed to the Committee. He



ought to have said that two hours had been spent in asking a plain question of the Minister for Works.

The PREMIER: Which was answered.

Mr. ARCHER said it had been put to him over and over again, and the Minister for Works gave the answer that Mr. Jack would go north as soon as he possibly could, but the hon. gentleman would not, until pressed by the hon. member for Townsville, answer that the Government did not intend to send Mr. Rands. If he had said that two hours before, the discussion would have been very much shorter. The members on the Opposition side of the Committee were quite prepared to accept the blame for their own shortcomings, but they were not going to labour under the burden of responsibility for the Minister for Works. For his (Mr. Archer's) part he thought the matter had gone far enough, but he did not think that hon. members on his side of the Committee had been at fault; in fact, they had simply done their duty.

Mr. SMYTH said the hon. member for Townsville had stated that the Gympie people had been served, and therefore did not want Mr. Jack. Now, he would tell the hon. member how the Gympie people had been served. When they heard that the Government intended to subsidise them for deep sinking there was one shaft down 820 feet, and they kept sinking away. Why were they not doing that on other fields?

Mr. HAMILTON: So they are.

Mr. SMYTH said that mine was now down 1,057 feet, which was below the depth at which the owners might have claimed the subsidy, and for which they might have had to wait a long time. The sinking was going on in several deep mines, and in the case of the London at Two-mile, which was down about 528 feet, before the owners could claim a subsidy they would have to get fresh machinery and sink an additional 60 or 80 feet. Why could not the people up north do the same? The Gympie people were not jealous of the Northern fields; miners had not come to that yet; they desired to see all fields in a prosperous condition.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the statement of the hon. member showed still further why the Gympie people should be satisfied, but he could not suppose the hon. member was stupid enough to think that the people on the Northern goldfields had stopped working because a subsidy for deep sinking was to be given by the Government. They were sinking away at Charters Towers and other goldfields the same as before. He (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) quite agreed with the Premier that the goldfields would not be ruined by the absence of Mr. Jack for three or four months. The goldfields would get on if there were no geologists in the colony. At the same time, when the Government were about to expend money, each goldfield had a right and was entitled to its share of the expenditure. It was not a question whether the goldfields could get on without a geologist, because they could do that, and the miners knew that themselves; though, of course, they did not despise Mr. Jack and his scientific knowledge, which they knew was very valuable. With regard to the expenditure of the £10,000, it was the people of the Palmer for whom the member for Cook was pleading. The miners on that field were more anxious in the matter than the miners of any other field in the colony; and the Government should be anxious also, seeing that they were building an expensive railway there which would never pay unless the mines were developed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (in reply to Mr. HAMILTON), said that Mr. Rands was employed in reporting on the geological features of the Port Curtis district.

Mr. SMYTH said that the miners in the North should call a meeting, and appoint representative miners to consult with the Government Geologist on matters respecting which they wished for information. He was sure that if the miners on the Palmer or at Charters Towers were to consult Mr. Rands they would be able to come to some decision.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the hon. member for Townsville had warned the Government that if they expected to get any of the money back they were mistaken. If that was the case, was it not the duty of the Government to get the best officer they had to select the shafts most likely to produce good results?

Mr. HAMILTON said that a fresh excuse had dawned on the Minister for Mines for refusing to send Mr. Rands up north. In reply to the remarks of the hon. member for Gympie, he might state that if the Minister for Mines would consult the miners in the Cook district he would find that they would be quite willing to accept the services of Mr. Rands. It was absurd to pay £500 a year to an officer whose advice the Government considered worthless.

Mr. PALMER asked whether any steps had been taken with regard to mineralogical lecturers? It would be remembered that the £2,000 set down for schools of mines was to be applied to the payment of lecturers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the Government had received applications from two gentlemen, but had not yet had time to make inquiries as to their qualifications. It was their duty to get the best professional men for the purpose of lecturing.

Mr. NORTON said he knew one gentleman who showed a great deal of ability, and who had been engaged in matters connected with mines. He did not know whether he was one of the applicants, but he would give the Minister for Mines his name. How many lecturers did the hon. gentleman intend to appoint?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the Government had not decided as to the number. He supposed two or three would be sufficient for all requirements. One of the applicants referred to was a new arrival and had referred him to a member of that House, but on making inquiry he found that he was not acquainted with him.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think that was the gentleman to whom he had referred.

Mr. HAMILTON asked whether the Minister for Mines intended to carry out the promise of assistance he made to the miners of the Tinaroo district in regard to the establishment of a school of mines?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said there was no money for schools of mines now, as the vote was to be applied to the payment of lecturers.

Mr. HAMILTON said there was a sum of £2,000 for six months, because six months of the financial year had gone. The amendment to the motion relating to mineralogical lecturers proposed by the Minister for Mines was to the effect that their expenses should be defrayed out of the money set down for schools of mines; and that conveyed the impression that any money which was left might be expended in establishing schools of mines. Previous to that amendment being carried the Government promised to subsidise a school of mines in the Tinaroo

district. In consequence of that promise, subscriptions were raised; a president, a council, and a secretary were appointed; rules were submitted to the Government; and the institution was started. Now they expected the Government to keep faith with them, and he wished to know what the Government intended to do?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it must be remembered that the motion of the hon. member for Port Curtis was agreed to on account of the fact that lecturers would have a more immediate beneficial effect in the mining districts than the formation of schools of mines. The House had come to the conclusion that the money would be most profitably spent in the payment of lecturers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the promoters of the school of mines at Tinaroo spent £40 or thereabouts in preliminary work. They had been communicated with and informed that the money would be refunded to them.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he wanted to ascertain from the Minister for Mines who the men were who were to survey the goldfields, and for whom there was an item of £1,500? Besides those men, there were four other mining surveyors for whom £1,200 was provided on the Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that one of the surveyors provided for by the £1,500 item would be stationed at Gympie, and the other at Charters Towers.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked what their names were?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said one was Mr. Rosser, surveyor, and the other, Mr. White, draftsman. Mr. Rosser would receive £600 out of the vote, and Mr. White £160. Two other mining surveyors would be employed on the Northern goldfields, and would be paid out of that vote.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the £1,200 item stood for four mining surveyors—one at Gympie, one at Charters Towers, and two for the Northern goldfields, all at £300 each. At which of the Northern goldfields were the two latter employed, and where were the two additional surveyors to be stationed?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said one of the present surveyors was at Etheridge and the other at Ravenswood, and one was required at the Palmer and another at the Hodgkinson Gold Field.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had just returned, after an absence of some two hours, and found that there seemed to be some indefiniteness about the time Mr. Jack was to return. Every member had a right to ask when Mr. Jack was likely to return to his duties.

The PREMIER said that had the hon. member remained in his place he would have heard the question discussed in all its bearings for about two hours and a-half. It was scarcely fair for the hon. member, after having absented himself from the Committee, to return and attempt to have the discussion all over again.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had no desire to create a discussion. He was only seeking for information. He admitted he had been absent for two hours, but it did not appear to him that any great progress had been made whilst he was away. He therefore could not be charged with having caused obstruction. He had a perfect right to inquire into the position of Mr. Jack, and he did not know when he asked the question that it would annoy the Premier so much. It appeared that there had been a debate, and one, too, of an unpleasant nature.

Mr. BROOKES said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down was seeking for information which he would have had if he had stayed in the House instead of going out dining. He thought it was taking a great liberty with the Committee for the hon. gentleman to be away two or three hours, when if he had stayed he would have had all the information he wanted; and then to come and plead that he wanted information.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Where have you been?

Mr. BROOKES said he had heard the debate; at all events he was in possession of the information. The hon. member only wanted to still further take up the time of the Committee. If the hon. member would go out to festivities he could not expect the Committee to be everlastingly going over the same ground for him. He did not object to the hon. member going out to festivities, where possibly he was much better than he would be in the Chamber.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member seemed to have forgotten that there had been no advance made. The hon. member himself had very likely been in some place of seclusion. He did not know what particular place of seclusion the hon. member selected, but he had very great difficulty sometimes in getting in to a division. He (Mr. Morehead) had a perfect right to ask a question relative to the subject under discussion.

Mr. BROOKES said the reason no advance had been made was that instructions had been given on the hon. member's side that no advance should be made. That was the plain English of it.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to know how the hon. member knew that. The hon. member had not been there all the evening, and could not know what had taken place unless he had hidden himself round the corner; yet he came in and reproved another member for having been absent. That was not a very sensible action on the part of an hon. gentleman who occupied his own place so very little. As for the instructions which the hon. member said had been given, that no progress should be made, he would like to know how the hon. gentleman knew that. He (Mr. Norton) did not hesitate to say it was not true. If the hon. member liked to risk making statements of that kind he might please himself.

Mr. HAMILTON said the statement that instructions had been issued to that side of the Committee to obstruct was utterly without foundation.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: It is not worth while denying it.

Mr. HAMILTON said the delay had arisen from the conduct of some of the gentlemen who occupied the Ministerial benches. Certain plain questions were asked, which certain members on the other side, instead of answering, endeavoured to evade. If Ministers had had the courtesy to answer the questions when they were asked there would have been no delay, and they would have been much farther advanced than they were then.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member for Cook was actually an hour and a-half trying to get an answer from the Minister for Mines, as to whether he was going to send Mr. Rands to the Palmer district or not. Because the hon. member in some way introduced the name of Mr. Jack, the Minister for Mines would not give an answer until he (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) put the question plainly. Then, when he could not get out of it, the Minister for Mines was obliged to say that he would not send Mr. Rands. That was what had stopped the business.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be granted the sum of £11,485 for the Railway Department. There were some reductions in the vote owing to the resignations of clerks whose places had been filled up by clerks at a lower salary. There was an increase of £500 for advertising. Hon. members would observe that there was a new office created—that of Under Secretary for Railways—at a salary of £800 a year. The Under Secretary was Mr. Herbert, who was formerly Commissioner for Railways. The Commissioner for Railways was put down at £700 a year. The Government found it was necessary to divide the duties of the office, seeing that the extension of railways throughout the colony rendered it utterly impossible for the Commissioner to attend to the duties. He might say that the railways constructed, and being constructed, extended from Point Danger to the Gulf of Carpentaria. There was quite sufficient for the Under Secretary to do in the way of office work, and the Commissioner for Railways would have liberty to visit the various railways throughout the colony. The duties of the Under Secretary were to conduct the correspondence and supervise the engineering branch: the Commissioner for Railways, of course, supervised the traffic department and the locomotive department, and also the resumption of land for railway purposes. By thus dividing the duties the work was more efficiently done. It had been the practice, whenever additional accommodation was required in the way of sidings, or shed accommodation—such work as that—to instruct the engineer to report on it; and professional men as a rule made the jobs a great deal bigger than was absolutely necessary, having regard to the amount of traffic at the particular place. Where additional accommodation was required the Commissioner had to ascertain what was really the amount of traffic at that particular place. There were no increases in salary, and, as he said before, the only difference was in the two items he had mentioned.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Minister for Works had told them that there was a slight decrease in the vote. He did not see it; on the contrary, he saw a considerable increase in the vote. The hon. gentleman seemed to forget that the vote for the Acting Commissioner for Railways lapsed and he had that £800 to account for. The estimate was about £1,300 more than last year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said there was a slight decrease.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Exactly; but he said there was a considerable increase. There was the item of £800 for the Under Secretary. He confessed that he did not understand what that officer's duties were now; and he would like to understand them. He had tried to understand what his duties would be ever since he had been appointed. The only thing he appeared to have done was to write a speech for the Minister for Works to deliver in that House. If he only had to write a speech for the Minister for Works in moving the adoption of the plans of a railway in that House—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He did not write it at all.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he remembered now it was written by the Engineer-in-Chief, and from that he had come to the conclusion that the little bit of work which he thought the Under Secretary for Railways might have done he did not do, and it therefore appeared that he had really done nothing at all. The Minister for Works tried to make them understand that he had some connection with the Engineer-in-Chief in regard to the construction

of lines, but did the Minister for Works read the Railway Acts? Did he not know that the Commissioner's work could not be delegated, and put on to anybody else's shoulders? Did he not know that the Commissioner had more to do with that part of the railways than any other? So that the Commissioner had really all the work to do; and what did the Under Secretary for Railways do? He was afraid the hon. member had told an awful lot of fibs when giving the reasons why the Government had come to the conclusion that they must divide the department. The hon. member looked it when he was speaking. Did he conscientiously mean to tell them that all that took place—that he had carefully studied the department and found that one man could not possibly do the work? The fact was that they had let the late Commissioner for Railways go home, and then, having put a substitute in his place, the substitute managed to get pretty right in the saddle before the Commissioner came back. The problem then was not how to divide the work, but how to get rid of the man who had come back. They created the billet of Under Secretary for Railways for him, and he believed that officer had done no work up to the present time. The hon. member wanted them to believe that it was necessary to divide the work, but they did not believe it, nor was it believed even by the members on the Government side.

The PREMIER said he did not know what the hon. gentleman's powers of faith might be, but he could say that when he was Minister for Works for a little while, a good while ago, he found even then that it was impossible for the Commissioner for Railways to do all the inside and outside work of the department, and their railways had more than doubled since that time. It was just as necessary that the officer who performed the duties of Under Secretary should be on the spot in that department as in any other, and the work of the department required the Commissioner to travel about. That was why Mr. Herbert was appointed.

Mr. NORTON: Why was he offered the Under Secretaryship of Lands?

The PREMIER: What had that got to do with it? He could not see what that had to do with it. The opinion he had formed a good long time ago was that the work could not be done properly by one person.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was not satisfied with the explanation given by the Minister for Works in reference to the new appointment. It was a strange fact that the chief clerk, who succeeded the late Commissioner for Railways when that gentleman got a year's leave of absence, was promoted to the position of Acting Commissioner for Railways, and the department did not suffer, so far as he was aware, during the year the Commissioner for Railways was away from the work. When the chief clerk was able to do the work during that year, how was it that now they not only required the chief clerk to continue as Commissioner for Railways, but they also needed the late commissioner? The Minister for Works spoke about a division of labour. They knew how the division of labour acted before when the present Under Secretary for Railways was acting with Mr. Statham Lowe. That was a division of labour, but it did not work. He believed such a division of labour would never work, and especially in the Railway Department. Under those circumstances it was plain to everyone that the Minister for Works sent home the late Commissioner for Railways with the intention of getting rid of him. He must have changed his mind after that gentleman came back.

Mr. KELLETT: He did not change his mind.

Mr. MACFARLANE: If he did not change his mind, the late commissioner forced him to take him back against his will. He would like to know how it was that sufficient work could be found for the two officers now when last year one was able to get through the work? It was not plain to him how the change could be beneficial even to the department. There would always be a strain, and he did not believe the change was working well now. It would come to what it had come to before, and one of those gentlemen would have to be dismissed and the other would have to take the whole of the responsibility. That was what happened before, and what would happen shortly again so far as he could learn from the working of the change. Division of labour in cases of that kind did not work well either for the men appointed to the positions or for the departments. He would like to see some arrangement made whereby the department could again be placed under one head.

Mr. NORTON said he did not pretend to know how the separate appointments worked, but he did not forget what took place last year when that vote was under discussion. The then Commissioner for Railways was granted leave of absence for twelve months without asking for it, and there was a suspicion in the mind of every member of the Committee that the Government intended to shunt him after he returned, or whether he returned or not. The Minister for Works certainly spoke very highly of Mr. Herbert, and he said there was not a more honest officer in the Government departments. He (Mr. Norton) quite agreed with him in that. Mr. Herbert was a gentleman for whom he had the highest regard, because he believed him to be a thoroughly straightforward and reliable public servant; but they could not forget the fact that after he left, and during the time he was absent, the department managed to get on very well with only one officer. Nor could they forget the fact, which the Premier had overlooked, that when Mr. Herbert came back, instead of being offered the appointment of Under Secretary for Railways, he was offered that of Under Secretary for Lands—indicating that he was not required in the Railway Department. Yet the Premier told them the work had become so great that it was absolutely necessary to appoint two officers. He did not suppose there was a member of the Committee who did not know the real circumstances, or at least who had not a very strong opinion, which led to that separate office being made. In his (Mr. Norton's) opinion, the late Commissioner for Railways was very unfairly treated, and he had been placed in a false position, simply because the Government had got into a difficulty with regard to him, and did not know how to get out of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had always spoken in very high terms of Mr. Herbert, and he did so now. There was not a more faithful officer in the service than Mr. Herbert, and as an under secretary he was perfectly competent. But it must be borne in mind that Mr. Herbert, from the day he left school, had been in a Government office; and however faithful an officer he might be, he had got into a groove, surrounded with red tape, and was entirely unsuited to carry on the traffic of the Railway Department. The Commissioner for Railways must be a man with some commercial training, as he had to deal with the commercial community. It was perfectly impossible to carry on the Traffic Department on the system administered by the hon. member for Port Curtis.

When he (the Minister for Works) went into that department, Cobb and Company's coaches, running over heavy black soil, could keep better time than the Railway Department; and with all he could do, as long as Mr. Herbert remained there, he could not possibly get the trains to keep time. Was that the case now?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not expect anything else from the hon. member, who was one of those heaven-born Ministers who could manage the engineers, traffic managers, station-masters, porters, and everybody. He (the Minister for Works) did not claim credit for so much as that; but this he knew, that they would find no complaints now about overcrowding of the goods-sheds, or laxity of management. If any dispute arose now it was settled there and then. The change that had been made had been beneficial to the Railway Department and to the country as well.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman was somewhat unjust to his predecessors in office. No doubt the goods-sheds were clear now, but that could be easily accounted for, and in quite a different way from that suggested by the Minister for Works. Just before the hon. member for Townsville (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) went out of office there had been a splendid season, and the crops on the Downs were larger than they had ever been before in the history of Queensland. When that hon. member left office the bad seasons had just begun. During that time the farmers did not know what to do with their produce. If there was the slightest rise in the price of maize or hay, there was an immediate rush to every station on the line to get the produce sent away, and there was no wonder that the sheds were crowded. That was worked off in course of time, and since the hon. gentleman had been in office the greater portion of the agricultural produce had gone into the country. Apart from that, the hon. member for Townsville ordered a number of locomotives, trucks, and carriages, to meet the immense increase of traffic on the line, and the consequence was that when the hon. gentleman left office not only had the amount of produce carried on the railway been reduced, but there was a large additional number of locomotives and trucks to do the work with. It was a simple question of arithmetic which a schoolboy might do, and which showed that the criticism of the Minister for Works was slightly unfair. Of course, when the locomotives and trucks were ordered they could not be supplied at once, but they arrived without any unnecessary delay, and when they arrived the block in the traffic was at once relieved. Since then the hon. gentleman had ordered additional locomotives and trucks, and very properly so. With regard to Mr. Thallon, he did not mean to say that that officer had not been a success in the Traffic Department. When he (Mr. Norton) was in office he refused to entertain Mr. Thallon's application to be reappointed to the office of Traffic Manager, not because he thought him unfit for the position, but because there were circumstances connected with the case which, in his opinion, made it undesirable that Mr. Thallon should be reappointed. At any rate he had got a good deal of experience in New South Wales, which, added to his former knowledge of railway matters, made him much more able to conduct the traffic than he was when he first came to the colony. He believed that the management of the Traffic Department under Mr. Thallon had been carried on with a great deal of success. He gave Mr. Thallon every credit for the improvements he had been able to effect; at the same time he could not attribute the whole of those improvements

to him, because, as he had said before, he had means placed in his hands which were not possessed by the gentleman who preceded him.

Mr. SALKELD said the discussion on that matter was confined to two or three members, and it was impossible for members on the cross-benches to catch the Chairman's eye. The Minister for Works appeared to have got quite annoyed about the question, and reminded him (Mr. Salkeld) of the way in which he sometimes received deputations. He would like to know where the salary of the Railway Arbitrator was to be found, and what fund it was paid from? He and other members had looked all through the Estimates and had not been able to find it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the salary was paid from Loan, but he must confess that he could not find it in the Estimates himself. Perhaps that officer got no salary for the present year.

Mr. SALKELD said then it appeared that that officer was entirely out of the control of that Committee in every way. They had nothing to do with him, unless they interfered with the Loan vote. That was not a proper state of things.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Salaries paid from Loan appear on the Estimates—page 89.

Mr. SALKELD said he had looked there, but the salary evidently did not appear in the Estimates. He thought all salaries should be passed by that Committee and not simply paid out of Loan without any reference to them. He wished to draw the attention of hon. members to the matter, because the Railway Arbitrator was a member of the Upper House, and he (Mr. Salkeld) and several other members were decidedly of opinion that no member of either branch of the Legislature, excepting Ministers of the Crown or officials, should receive salaries. He believed that several members of the Upper House had had to resign their seats there because they held Government appointments, and many people could not see why an exception should be made in favour of the Railway Arbitrator.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the information he had got was that the Railway Arbitrator had always been paid from the Loan vote for the railway in connection with which the arbitration took place. If a dispute arose on the land resumed for any particular line of railway he was paid his salary from the vote for that particular line. He had also been informed that the Railway Arbitrator was considered to be in the position of a judge, and therefore it was not thought desirable to put his salary down on the Estimates. Two hon. members opposite, late Ministers for Works, ought to know something about it. However, that was the information he (the Minister for Works) had got—that the salary was £400 a year, and that he was paid from Loan vote.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would like to know, if it was arranged in that way, whether it was a permanent salary or paid for by the job—by the piece, as the work was done?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a permanent salary of £400.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said if it was a permanent salary why did it not appear on the Estimates? He supposed it was thought that it would be hardly decent for the Hon. P. Macpherson's name to appear in full on the Estimates, and therefore it had been smuggled through in some sort of way. He should be very glad to have some explanation from the hon. member for Port Curtis, who was a former Minister for Works, upon the subject.

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The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the explanation given by the Minister for Works, although possibly correct, was hardly a proper explanation at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What! Then the hon. member could not have been very intimate with the duties of his office when he was Minister for Works.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: If the gentleman referred to received £400 a year as a fixed salary, he (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) did not see how he could be paid upon the arbitration cases he decided. The Railway Act provided distinctly that he should be paid out of the consolidated revenue, and not in dribblets of the vote for the railway upon which he arbitrated. How could he be paid out of the consolidated revenue if the amount did not appear on the Estimates? He thought the hon. Minister for Works had made a mistake, and that he would have to consult his Under Secretary or the Commissioner for some other explanation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had the assurance of the Commissioner for Railways and the accountant that the Railway Arbitrator's salary had never appeared on the Estimates. He himself thought it ought.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Is it paid to him? Perhaps it is not.

Mr. NORTON said the salary was fixed by law, and of course it had to be provided for.

The PREMIER: The amount of the salary is not fixed by law.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the amount ought to be on the Estimates, but he did not believe it ever had been. He might say in reply to the hon. member for Cook that he was not in any way to blame for that, as he had nothing to do with the Estimates when he was in office.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said there seemed to be a good deal of laxity in the Works Office still, if a man could be paid £400 year after year, which never appeared on the Estimates, and nobody knew where it came from. It was very strange indeed. He wondered how the books of that department balanced when an expenditure of £400 a year went on, and was never accounted for.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like to ask the Colonial Treasurer what the Railway Arbitrator got, supposing there were no arbitration cases during the year? The Minister for Works had told them that he was paid £400 a year out of the vote for the particular railway that he arbitrated upon.

The PREMIER: It is charged to that vote.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: If the Railway Arbitrator had no cases to arbitrate on, how could the money be charged to any special vote? He wanted the Treasurer, not the Minister for Works, to answer that, because it was his work. He wanted to know where that £400 a year came from. He believed that in some years there had been no arbitration cases.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would like to move a reduction upon the item, but he did not see how he was to do it if it was not there.

Mr. ANNEAR said he wished to make a few remarks upon the office of the Commissioner. In the Estimates there was £800 for the Under Secretary and £700 for the Commissioner. He thought the present Commissioner had been very unfairly treated. When he remembered that they gave £1,000 to each member of the Land Board, he thought that the Commissioner of Railways should receive an equal amount at the very least. Mr. Herbert's office was not required at all. He did

not wish to say a word against that gentleman; but when he was absent from the colony for twelve months the work of the office was carried on by the present Commissioner and by Mr. Thallon, the Traffic Manager, in a very fair manner, and very few complaints were made throughout the colony. Mr. Herbert had been offered the Under Secretaryship for Lands; but he refused, he believed, to take it. Mr. Herbert seemed to "boss" the Government entirely. A new building had been erected as an office for him, and that office could not be built and furnished with stationery of an entirely different character from that generally used for less than £600; and that £600 had been entirely wasted—it was not wanted at all. He believed he spoke correctly when he said that in New South Wales there was a commissioner and a traffic manager, the same as in this colony; but the work was carried on there in a proper manner, and it was not in Queensland. There was a great deal of friction in the department. Mr. Herbert used to reign supreme as Commissioner for Railways in the colony; he was head of the engineers, who used to take their orders from him; but that state of things was altered now. It was the opinion all over the colony that that office ought not to have been made, and that was his sentiment also. He saw an amount on the Estimates which brought under the notice of hon. gentlemen the matter of the ironwork which was supposed to have been made in Ipswich or in Rockhampton. There was some one in the department who seemed to be in the habit of conveying information to the *Courier*. Whenever a question was asked, the whole thing appeared in the *Courier* before hon. gentlemen received any information, a thing which should not be allowed. No answer should go to that paper to fortify it with information which should have been given by the Minister to that Committee first. He also found that a return he asked for could be seen in the newspapers before it was seen by members of that Committee. He wished to ask the hon. gentleman if it was his intention to send out of the colony for that ironwork? He knew that 205 tons of manufactured ironwork had been imported into the colony, and it was of a very defective character, most of it having had to be rewelded and remade. That was a great injustice to the taxpayers of this colony, as they could make ironwork of an effective character, and as cheap as that imported from England. Was it the intention of the hon. gentleman to import any more ironwork of that character for railway rolling-stock?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was not the intention of the Government to import any more ironwork; but he might inform the hon. member that at the time that ironwork was sent for the indent was considerably reduced; but there was a great want of rolling-stock, and it was necessary to import it, because it could not be made here in good time. He could assure the hon. member for Port Curtis, whatever rolling-stock was ordered by the previous Government, after he went into office that he had six Baldwin engines running on the line some months before any of it arrived. The locomotives they had at the time were unsafe to work, and the first thing he did was to order those Baldwin locomotives from America, and they were here some months before those ordered by the previous Government.

Mr. NORTON said he had no doubt they were here before those ordered by the previous Government, but not very long. The hon. gentleman was perhaps not aware that the previous Government considered the advisability of ordering the locomotives from America, and

after full discussion it was decided not to order them, but to wait a little longer and get them from England.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, with regard to the first item, he did not think they had sufficient information from the Minister for Works. So far as his memory served him, Mr. Herbert had twelve months' leave of absence, at a salary of £1,000 a year, and it was generally believed that he was going to retire upon a substantial pension based upon that salary. He did not know whether that pension would exceed or be slightly less than £600 a year. When Mr. Herbert returned to the colony he accepted the position of Under Secretary for Railways at £800 a year. What the duties of that position were he did not know. All he knew was that anyone who had to do with the department would have seen that matters had never been so satisfactorily managed. He had nothing to say against Mr. Curnow's conduct; his work was most admirable so far as the outside public were concerned. He wanted to know, with regard to the Under Secretary for Railways, what his position would be supposing he retired to-morrow. Was he entitled to a pension on the scale of £1,000 a year upon which he obtained leave, or on the scale of £800 a year, and what would be his retiring allowance under the Superannuation Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if Mr. Herbert retired he would retire upon the basis of the salary of £800 a year. Mr. Herbert only had the £1,000 a year for one year, and he did not think the vote had ever been submitted to the House. Hon. members must know very well that within the last two years the work of the department had increased considerably. Something like twenty railways were now under construction, and it would be utterly impossible for the Commissioner for Railways to conduct the whole of the work. Hon. members must bear in mind that the railway system of the colony started from a great many different places. It was not like it was in Sydney and Melbourne, where the whole railway system began at one particular place. There was the railway system at Maryborough, the railway system at Bundaberg, at Rockhampton, Townsville, Cooktown, and Cairns, and there was no responsible head at any of those places. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that the Commissioner for Railways should be free to visit the different centres and report upon the work going on, instead of being tied to his office all the year round.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member was wrong in his facts as far as New South Wales was concerned. Up to the present time there were two railway systems in that colony—one from Sydney, and the other from Newcastle, which were not yet connected. He (Mr. Morehead) gave unqualified praise to the Commissioner for Railways. He had never heard a single complaint against the administration of the high office which that gentleman held, but what he wanted to ascertain was why Mr. Herbert was appointed to an office which apparently was created to enable the Ministry of the day to get out of a difficulty. It was well known that when Mr. Herbert returned to the colony the Government were in great difficulty as to what to do with him. He (Mr. Morehead) was, he believed, right in saying that Mr. Herbert was asked if he would accept the position of Under Secretary for Lands, which he refused to accept because the fact of his drawing the salary of £800 would militate against his retiring on a salary based on £1,000 a year. Perhaps the Minister for Works would tell them what pension Mr. Herbert would be entitled to receive if he retired?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said in case his hon. colleague could not answer the question he would refer the hon. member to a return laid on the table the other day, which was not yet printed, showing the number of the officers who were contributing to the Civil Service Superannuation Fund, and the amount of retiring allowance to which they would be entitled.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not see why he should refer to a document which was not yet printed, when the Colonial Treasurer could give the required information to the Committee.

Mr. KELLETT said he thought the appointment of Under Secretary for Railways was a most unfortunate one. The Minister for Works had no doubt tried to defend it in the best manner he could, but he made a very bad defence. The Under Secretary for Railways at the present moment was simply an obstruction to the department, as he had always been to the public. He did not know whether hon. members knew it, but he might tell them that the Commissioner and the Under Secretary did not speak to one another, and hon. members could fancy what sort of work went on in the Railway Department when that state of affairs existed. Those two officers had to work side by side, and yet, when they wanted anything of one another, letter after letter had to pass between them, and, to his mind, that fact alone was enough to prove to any sensible body of men that the appointment was perfectly absurd. The late Commissioner got twelve months' leave of absence in the hope that the country would never see his face again, and that he would take his pension and retire. While he was away the work of the department went on well; the Acting Commissioner and the Traffic Manager worked hand in hand together; but that Under Secretary was appointed, and now there was nothing but disunion in the department. That state of affairs had lasted too long, and no one knew it better than the Minister for Works himself. Mr. Herbert refused one billet after another, and simply said, "I will go back and boss the railways as I have done for the last seventeen years." He said he must have the position, and he would have it, and he defied the Minister, and he got the position. It was well that the Government should say what they thought, because he could tell hon. members that people outside thought that £800 a year was being wasted, because, so far as the £800 a year was concerned, it would not so much matter if discredit was not brought upon the department and disunion introduced into it, caused by the present Under Secretary alone. He should like very much to see the correspondence which, it was said, went on for weeks between the Under Secretary and the Minister, and he thought it would be well if it was laid on the table of the House. Those were the facts of the case. The present Commissioner for Railways was doing his work well, hand-in-hand with the Traffic Manager, but a new head was appointed to the department and now there was nothing but disunion. He was very much astonished that a man like the Minister for Works, who had often told them that he was a determined man who put his foot down and would not allow anyone to bounce him, should allow Mr. Herbert to do what he liked, and boss both him and the Railway Department, and not only that but also cause discord and disunion among the other officers of the department. Under the present arrangement a person wishing to obtain information was sent from one office to another, and then probably told that it was in the department of the Under Secretary for Railways, whom the public could not go to. He (Mr. Kellett) moved that the vote be reduced by £800, the salary for the Under Secretary for Railways.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he hoped the hon. member would not press his motion. As to putting his foot down he (the Minister for Works) could always put it down in a right cause, but the hon. member must bear in mind that Mr. Herbert was a very old and very faithful public servant—that although he had not managed the Traffic Department to the satisfaction of the public, he was still a valued public servant. He (the Minister for Works) would be the last man to put his foot down in a cause unless it was a just and fair one. Mr. Herbert had been an officer of the Government ever since Separation; there had never been any charge against him of neglect of duty; he had had the confidence of various Governments; and although he (the Minister for Works) was free to admit that he lacked a commercial training, having been brought up in a Government office all his lifetime, he hoped the Committee were not going to erase his salary from the Estimates. The Government had done what they thought was best. Mr. Herbert never asked to retire. Had he done so no doubt the Government would have been prepared to consider his request. At all events if he (the Minister for Works) was going to put down his foot he would do it in some other matter.

Mr. STEVENSON said he hoped that when the hon. gentleman did put down his foot he would have some reasons for doing so—very different reasons from those he had just given for appointing Mr. Herbert Under Secretary for Railways. He (Mr. Stevenson) had as high an opinion of Mr. Herbert as perhaps any member of the Committee, but notwithstanding that he was an old and valued public servant, if there was any truth in what had been stated by the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. Kellett) he would ask whether Mr. Herbert ought to be retained in his present position as Under Secretary for Railways, simply because he was an old and valued public servant? He was sure that every hon. member would require stronger reasons than that to justify that appointment being made and kept open for Mr. Herbert. The Minister for Works, instead of appealing to the hon. member for Stanley not to press his motion, should meet what had been said by the hon. member. If it was true that the Under Secretary for Railways and the Commissioner for Railways were not on speaking terms, then one or the other ought to be removed, because they could not under those circumstances conduct the business of the department in a satisfactory manner. Hon. members knew perfectly well that Mr. Herbert could have retired on a pension of about £600 a year, that he would have been in a position to live in a respectable kind of way, without being appointed to the position of Under Secretary for Railways. They also knew that the Minister for Works had on former occasions, both in that House and out of it, admitted that Mr. Herbert was not fitted for the position of Commissioner for Railways; and, instead of being put in the position of having to submit to the dictation of the Under Secretary, the hon. gentleman ought to have insisted either on his retiring or accepting some other position. It was well known that the office of Under Secretary for Lands was offered to Mr. Herbert, and that he refused to accept it. If he was not fitted for Commissioner for Railways he was not fitted for Under Secretary for Railways. He (Mr. Stevenson) considered that the Government were to blame in the first instance in having taken him from the position of Under Secretary for Works, for which he was very well qualified, and putting him in the office for which he was not qualified. Although Mr. Herbert had always treated him civilly when he had any business to do with the

department, he believed that he had not transacted the work of the Railway Department satisfactorily. The Minister for Works knew very well that there had been a great deal of friction in past times in the working of the Railway Department, and he ought to use every means in his power to make things work well. They believed they had now a good Commissioner for Railways, and nothing should be done to cause discord and dissension in the department. He hoped hon. members would consider what they were doing when they came to a decision on the vote.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he hoped they would. He thought it would be doing impulsively a most unreasonable thing if they struck out the item. It would be a most pointed vote of censure on the Minister for Works and the Government. He endorsed much that had been said as to the present management of the Railway Department, but to treat an old, tried, valuable, conscientious Civil servant in the way proposed would do the Committee lasting discredit. It had been said that Mr. Herbert should have retired on a pension of £600, but if for an addition of £200 to that sum he was rendering good service to the country, the country got his services at a very cheap rate; and Mr. Herbert, instead of manifesting greed and selfishness, manifested generosity and disinterestedness. He maintained that it did Mr. Herbert credit when he declined to take office in another department. He might have felt that he was unfit for the position offered to him, and he might have felt equally convinced that he was thoroughly competent for the position that he now occupied. There was nothing to justify those repeated attacks on Mr. Herbert; they were un-British and unfair. Not a single definite complaint had been made; there was merely a general complaint as to his temper, and as to his being not get-at-able, and unsociable; but a man occupying that position—the most harassing of all the positions of the Civil Service—could not be expected to be as sociable in his intercourse with the public as if he occupied a less harassing or responsible position. He had always found Mr. Herbert disposed to do what was right. It was admitted that he had been a hard-working, conscientious servant, and, after the speech of the Minister for Works, he thought the Committee might have rested satisfied that there was work for Mr. Herbert to do. He was certain that whatever work he had to do he would do it thoroughly and conscientiously. Those attacks on Mr. Herbert should cease, and he should be allowed to enjoy the emoluments of his office the same as other men were—it was painful to him to hear that kind of attack session after session. The Railway Department was well managed now, but that might be attributed to the reasons mentioned by the hon. member for Port Curtis.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Committee had not yet received an answer as to the pension to which Mr. Herbert would have been entitled had he chosen to retire on his return from England; nor had they received a sufficient explanation as to the creation of the office now occupied by him. With regard to the friction said to exist between the Under Secretary and the Commissioner for Railways, he had not come in contact with the Under Secretary since he had received the appointment, nor did he see any reason why anyone should come in contact with that officer, because the work was efficiently done by the Commissioner and the Traffic Manager. His attention was first aroused as to the obstructive nature of Mr. Herbert by the Minister for Works when in opposition, and afterwards since

he became a Minister; and he found that the charges made by that hon. gentleman were perfectly borne out by fact. The Minister for Works must admit that when Mr. Herbert got twelve months' leave of absence it was never intended that he should be reinstated in the Government Service, but that he should retire on the allowance to which he was entitled. It was no high-minded action on the part of Mr. Herbert to take a salary of £800 a year rather than a pension of £600, because he was clearly entitled to the pension. Leave of absence on full pay granted to a Civil servant had almost invariably been the precursor of the retirement by that officer on the pension to which he himself contributed and to which he was entitled. They had a right to hear from the Minister for Works his reasons for creating the new office, and also to hear what pension Mr. Herbert was entitled to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that when Mr. Herbert returned from England he was entitled to no pension whatever. He would not be entitled to a pension until he arrived at the age of sixty years, or became physically incapacitated to perform his duties. The amount of pension he would then have a right to would be two-thirds of £800, or about £600.

Mr. KELLETT said they had had a very mournful address from the hon. member for Fassifern. The hon. member said he was very much affected at the way in which Mr. Herbert was spoken of. Nothing he had said, however, relieved him (Mr. Kellett) of his responsibility as a member of the Committee. The hon. member for Normanby had made a remark, as to the truth of his (Mr. Kellett's) statement. No one had ever heard him bring forward a statement in the House that he could not prove the truth of. The statement he had made as to Mr. Herbert had not been contradicted, and the Minister for Works was perfectly aware of the truth of it. No private employer ever continued in his employ two head men who were always at loggerheads with each other. No merchant in Brisbane would keep two head clerks who were not on speaking terms for twenty-four hours. He would lose no time in deciding the question as to which he should let go. As soon as Mr. Herbert came back and found the Commissioner for Railways in the position he had thought he should occupy for ever, he refused to communicate with him except by letter. He did not agree with the hon. member for Fassifern in regarding the amendment as a want of confidence motion. That hon. member would be just as ready as any other to move a vote of want of confidence in the present Ministry, and he need not imagine that he was going to block the present motion under the pretence of saving the Government. The work of the Railway Department was carried on well by the Commissioner in the absence of Mr. Herbert, and for doing the work of two men well whilst occupying the position of Acting Commissioner his salary, strange to say, was reduced now from £800 to £700 a year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed there was some friction between the Under Secretary and the Commissioner for Railways. As a rule, there was friction between all the officers of the department. The former Minister for Works had declared in the House that the officers of the Railway Department were conspiring one against the other. That was not the case, but they were still more jealous of their individual dignity than they might be. But the Railway Department was not the only one in which there was friction, and he could say that, for himself, he got on very well with the officers. The work was done satisfactorily, and he supposed that all



would come right in time. No work was left undone, and there was ample work for Mr. Herbert as Under Secretary in the form of correspondence in connection with the many railway contracts which were going on, and also for the Commissioner, the principal of whose duties ought to be outside in visiting the various railway systems in the colony. It was often very necessary that matters needed to be inquired into in the country, and the presence of the Commissioner on those occasions was very beneficial. Mr. Herbert had a peculiar temper, and some little allowance should be made for him, because whilst he thought himself best adapted for the position of Commissioner for Railways the Government were of a different opinion. He (the Minister for Works) had tried to sympathise with Mr. Herbert, because although he was getting the higher salary he would much rather be in the position of Commissioner than of Under Secretary for Railways.

Mr. MOREHEAD said Mr. Herbert might well exclaim "Save me from my candid friend!" That gentleman was not likely to thank the Minister for Works for the way in which he had defended him. The Minister had indeed admitted every charge that had been made by the hon. member for Stanley. It had been dragged out of him that there was a certain amount of friction in the Railway Department, and between the Commissioner and Under Secretary; also that Mr. Herbert was a man of sullen temper and of various other peculiarities. It was only the other night that he (Mr. Morehead) called attention to the fact that there was friction between the heads of the Postal and Railway Departments, and the Colonial Secretary said he would soon put a stop to anything of the kind. The Minister for Works admitted that the department was mismanaged, and that the appointment of Mr. Herbert had thrown it into such a muddle that the Commissioner and Under Secretary were not on speaking terms. As the hon. member for Stanley had said, if a man in ordinary business found that two of his clerks at the heads of different departments were not on speaking terms he would very soon get rid of one of them. That was the course the Minister for Works should take if he were true to his duty, and the one he should get rid of was Mr. Herbert. The hon. member could not deny that when he recommended leave of absence for Mr. Herbert on £1,000 a year it was with the hope and belief that his place in the Railway Department would know him no more for ever. The £1,000 was put on the Estimates so that his pension would be on the higher scale. Mr. Herbert was evidently master of the situation. He would not take this; he would not take that; he would do nothing but go back into the Railway Department, and back he went. Like the old man of the sea, he had the Minister round the neck, and the Minister could not get rid of him. Mr. Herbert had been an incubus on the State ever since he had been connected with the Railway Department. He had done all he could to prevent the department moving smoothly. He had quarrelled with every subordinate, and he had made it his duty and business to quarrel with the outside public. It was well known that when Mr. Herbert was Commissioner for Railways, if a man had a dispute with the Railway Department, no matter who the Minister was, he never got his rights, and why? Because Mr. Herbert so procrastinated and annoyed him by his correspondence that he found it better to put up with the loss than have any further trouble with the department. Things had been very much changed since; the Commissioner's yea was yea, and his nay, nay. The Minister for Works must remember that some years ago, at what the junior member for South

Brisbane would call a festive gathering at Roma, when Mr. Herbert's health was proposed, one gentleman, who had extensive dealings with the department, said he had not the least doubt that, when Mr. Herbert died, dissection would show that instead of the bowels possessed by ordinary human beings there would be nothing but red tape. That struck him as a particularly graphic way of describing Mr. Herbert's deficiencies. It was that that raised the public feeling against him and made the Minister for Works desirous of getting quit of him. But the Minister could not get quit of him; the Minister was the servant, and the head of the department the master. Mr. Herbert would not even speak to the Commissioner for Railways. He (Mr. Morehead) would like to see the correspondence between the Minister for Works and Mr. Herbert requesting him to speak to the Commissioner for Railways. There was no reason for the existence of the Under Secretary for Railways. The work went on better without him, even when it was very much greater. If the hon. member for Stanley pressed the matter to a division, he (Mr. Morehead) would certainly vote with him.

Mr. HAMILTON said he was in a quandary with regard to the vote. The Government were wrong in appointing two officers to do the work for which one was sufficient; but Mr. Herbert was not to blame for that. The Government, in the first instance, deprived him of his position for insufficient reason, as they had virtually admitted by appointing him to another office where he had the same work to perform; and it would be wrong to punish Mr. Herbert for the fault of the Government. The hon. member for Stanley said there was great friction between Mr. Herbert and Mr. Curnow, but it would not be fair on an *ex parte* statement of any hon. member—who, no doubt, stated what he believed—to dismiss one of the oldest officers in the department. If it were true, some other punishment would meet the case. The matter was worth inquiring into by the Minister, and no doubt he would act when he had obtained all the evidence. Personally he had no reason to be favourably prepossessed regarding Mr. Herbert. He had had several interviews with that gentleman, and they had not favourably impressed him, because he did not get what he wanted; but subsequently it struck him that Mr. Herbert was right and he was wrong. He had noticed that many other gentlemen, who were prejudiced against Mr. Herbert before they knew much of him, became his strong supporters after they had been closely connected with him. If he recollected aright, he had heard the hon. member for Townsville speak hardly of Mr. Herbert, but, after that hon. member had been intimately connected with him as Minister for Works, he was one of his strongest supporters. He believed the hon. member for Port Curtis was also strongly prepossessed against Mr. Herbert, but he had heard that hon. gentleman, since he was Minister for Works, speak of Mr. Herbert in the highest terms, and the same was the case with many officers of the department. Their chief complaint was that he interfered too much in matters of detail, which should be left to the heads of the various departments over which he presided. He (Mr. Hamilton) intended to oppose the amendment.

Mr. KELLETT said the last speaker stated that an *ex parte* statement made by an hon. member should not be taken much notice of; but the Minister for Works had acknowledged the truth of the statement he (Mr. Kellett) had made. Nobody could deny it, and he did not see how the hon. member could call that an *ex parte* statement.

The Minister for Works could say nothing in favour of Mr. Herbert beyond that he was an old public servant and had a bad temper. He (Mr. Kellett) did not wish that Mr. Herbert should be put out of the Government employment. He did not wish to do him any harm.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If you take his salary off the Estimates you do.

Mr. KELLETT said it did not follow at all. The Premier had said he would not allow any friction to take place in his department. What did he think of it now? They had two officers who had a great deal of business with each other, and they found they did not speak to each other, and only communicated by letter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not allowed in the department.

Mr. KELLETT said they did not speak, and the Minister for Works said they were not allowed to write letters to each other—how did they communicate with each other? If those officers would go out into the back yard after office-hours and fight it out nobody would object to that. He should certainly move the amendment he had proposed.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member for Stanley must not imagine that he impugned the veracity of his *ex parte* statement that there was friction, but it had not been stated who was to blame for the friction, and it was contrary to fair play that such action as was proposed should be taken before some inquiry was made and the officers in question called upon to explain.

Mr. MIDGLEY said that in another matter he would defer to the opinion of the Committee, but it was quite possible that in a thin Committee they might do what they would regret to-morrow.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No fear!

Mr. MIDGLEY said that if he thought there was no fear of the amendment being carried he would say no more. The hon. member's ground of objection was that the two officials mentioned did not speak to each other. Was it for that Committee to enter into a matter of that kind? They had no more power to make those gentlemen speak to each other than they had to make them kiss each other. It was quite possible that the work could go on very well even though those gentlemen did not speak to each other. The work of the Opposition appeared to go on very well even though the hon. member for Balonne and the leader of the Opposition had a falling out. They did not even get their dinners together and did not speak to each other.

Mr. STEVENSON: That is not true.

Mr. MIDGLEY: Well, in the House. The Opposition was apparently a house divided against itself, and yet the work of the Opposition got on very well.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he rose to correct the hon. member for Fassifern—

Mr. MIDGLEY: And chastise him!

Mr. MOREHEAD: No; he was too small. The hon. member was utterly wrong in the statement he had made with regard to himself and the leader of the Opposition. They were never better friends than they were at present. He had not the least doubt that the hon. member and the Premier were good friends, although the hon. member elected to sit on the cross-benches and occasionally pitched into the Premier. The contention of the hon. member for Stanley, however, had not been met by the hon. member for Fassifern. The contention was that not only was it inadvisable

that two officers occupying such prominent positions as the officers mentioned occupied should be on such unfriendly terms, but that the sum of £800 could be very well dispensed with, as the work was done last year without any apparent necessity for an Under Secretary for Railways at all. That was the argument used. He would like to hear from the Premier some expression of opinion as to how that friction was to be overcome. The plan proposed by the hon. member for Stanley was that one of those gentlemen should be got rid of, and there being nothing for the other to rub against, the friction could no longer exist. That was a radical plan certainly, but it was a plan that would commend itself to most sensible men except, perhaps, the Minister for Works. He hoped the hon. member for Stanley would persist in his amendment. He remembered, and he believed the Minister for Works, the Premier, and the Colonial Treasurer remembered, a similar case in another department a good many years ago. An under secretary and a surveyor general occupied rooms on opposite sides of a passage not wider than one of the seats in that Chamber and they used to communicate with each other by letter, in consequence of strained relations. It was calculated that some thousands of letters per annum passed between those distinguished potentates, he might call them. However, one was appointed to the position of geological surveyor, and the friction ended. Hon. gentlemen in the inner circle would know to whom he referred. Why did not the Government make Mr. Herbert a geological surveyor, or send him as a commissioner to the Exhibition, or send him there as an exhibit?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Make a water-borer of him.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Yes; they might make a water-borer of him and send him out in the place of Mr. Jack, who had been so largely discussed that evening. Something should be done with him. They might send him as a Continental lecturer to induce the unsuspecting Germans to come out and work on the Mackay plantations. He had not such a bad opinion of Mr. Herbert as to think that he was not fit for something, but he appeared at present very like Lord Palmerston's definition of dirt—matter in the wrong place. He ought to be moved out of his present position, and as a matter of economy, seeing they had got efficiency for £800 a year before, he would support the amendment of the hon. member for Stanley.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had no wish to see Mr. Herbert dismissed from the Public Service; yet the public ought not to be compelled to pay him £800 a year for bringing disunion into the Railway Department. When, last session, the Minister for Works was asked why he had given twelve months' leave of absence to Mr. Herbert, he answered that it was to get rid of him from the department. On hearing that, he (Mr. Stevenson) defended Mr. Herbert, and expressed a wish that he should not be dismissed from the Public Service, because the Government were to blame for having taken him out of a position for which he was fitted and put him into one for which he was unfitted. It was evident that either the Under Secretary or the Commissioner must leave the department, and he hoped it would not be the Commissioner. Mr. Herbert was simply preventing the Commissioner from doing work which he could do much better than Mr. Herbert.

Mr. KELLETT said that, as it seemed doubtful which of those officers was to blame for the dissensions, he might state that his information was to the effect that the Commissioner for Railways did not wish to have any dissensions, and

that when Mr. Herbert came back from Europe he wished to be on friendly terms with him; but that gentleman refused. That was his information, and it exonerated the Commissioner for Railways from all blame in the matter.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the Under Secretary was very like a square peg in a round hole; he had not been able to find his proper position in the Government Service. It would have been a great gain to the country if Mr. Herbert could have retired on a pension of £600 a year, notwithstanding what had been said by the hon. member for Fassifern. He understood, however, that Mr. Herbert was not entitled to a pension, because he was not sixty years old, nor was he at present incapacitated. He had never been capable yet he was not incapacitated. Hon. members did not wish absolutely to have Mr. Herbert dismissed from the Public Service, but could not the Government find a square hole to put him into?

Mr. MOREHEAD said Mr. Herbert himself elected to be the square peg in the round hole. When the division was made in the office, Mr. Herbert was offered his choice of being either Under Secretary for Lands or Commissioner for Railways. He was recommended to take the former, but he refused and took the commissionership, and put himself into a position which he was unable to fill. No exception, therefore, could be taken to the strictures which had been made on his management of the department.

The PREMIER said he did not know whether the hon. gentleman asked the question for information, but questions had been asked and answered over and over again that evening, and then, an hour afterwards, another member got up and asked the same question. As had been said that evening before, when Mr. Herbert returned from England the office of Under Secretary for Lands was vacant and it was intimated to him that he might have it, but he preferred not. He (the Premier) did not know that the Government could compel him to take it, or that they had any right to find fault with him for not doing so. He did not propose to defend Mr. Herbert. That gentleman, and the work he had done, were so well known that he did not require any elaborate defence; but when hon. members stood up and made repeated attacks on him it was necessary to say something, because otherwise it might be thought that the Government were not sensible of his services. They were perfectly sensible of them, and were satisfied that he required no further defence.

Mr. STEVENSON said he objected to the Premier saying that he had made any attack upon Mr. Herbert. He had not done so. He had a very high opinion of that gentleman, but not as Under Secretary, or connected in any way with the Railway Department. He would have nothing whatever to say against him if he was put in any other position; but he had a very strong objection that the public should suffer from his being in the position he now occupied, where, according to the admission of the Minister, a great deal of friction took place between him and the Commissioner for Railways. He contended, to go back to the first point, that the department could not possibly be managed satisfactorily as long as the Under Secretary and the Commissioner for Railways were in the position they were at the present time. Mr. Herbert had elected to put himself into the position of Under Secretary for Railways, for which the Minister for Works and the Premier knew perfectly well he was not fitted. Last session the Minister for Works admitted that Mr. Herbert was unfitted for the position, and that he had sent him home in the hope that he would

retire from the Public Service altogether; and how could he justify appointing him as Under Secretary? It was all very well for the Premier to try and rush the Estimates through; but the matter was a very important one, and he thought it was time that they adjourned, so that they might resume the discussion to-morrow.

The PREMIER said he had stated on a previous occasion that no friction between officers in the Public Service should be allowed to prejudice the public interest, and he had every reason to believe that any friction that did exist in the Railway Department did not interfere in the slightest degree with the public interest. Of course the moment it did so, it would be time to remove the cause of friction—it would be absolutely necessary to do so. The hon. member had said that the matter ought to be thoroughly discussed. The fact of the matter was, there had not been a single new word said upon the subject for more than an hour. Anything that had been said since was only a repetition of what had been said before. Of course they might go on for twenty-four hours, but if, after an hour, hon. members failed to say anything new, he thought it was time to come to a decision—unless it was intended deliberately to obstruct business.

Mr. STEVENSON said the reason was because they could not get a satisfactory reply.

The PREMIER: On what?

Mr. STEVENSON: Did the Minister for Works deny that he allowed Mr. Herbert twelve months' leave of absence because he admitted that he was not fit to fill the position he then occupied? The hon. gentleman admitted that last year, and how could he now say that he was fit to hold the position of Under Secretary?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Commissioner is very different from Under Secretary.

Mr. STEVENSON: Would the hon. gentleman explain what the work of Under Secretary was?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have explained it twenty times.

Mr. KELLETT said the Minister for Works did not wish to explain it because he could not. He had tried to explain it, but was not able to do so. He was pretty well satisfied that the hon. gentleman himself knew that Mr. Herbert was not fitted for the position of Under Secretary. It would give him (Mr. Kellett) no pleasure to see Mr. Herbert removed from the Public Service, but he should certainly like to see him out of the Railway Department. He did not care how much better an appointment he got—if he got £1,000 a year—so long as he was out of the Railway Department; and unless the Minister would say that he would find him employment in some other department he should press his amendment. The Minister for Works knew as well as he did that it was impossible for the two men to work together satisfactorily. Not only did the country lose £800 a year directly by it, but it lost a great deal more by the cliques that existed in the department, which, he was fully satisfied, led to the loss of thousands to the country. If the hon. gentleman would promise that he would endeavour to find some more suitable and congenial employment for Mr. Herbert he should have great pleasure in withdrawing his motion.

Mr. STEVENSON said the Premier had complained that nothing fresh had been said for the last hour, and he would endeavour to give him something fresh now. He would ask the Minister for Works whether that was the first time that there had been friction with Mr. Herbert in the Railway Department? Did

not Mr. Thallon resign and go away to another colony entirely through Mr. Herbert; and did not the Minister for Works, by bringing Mr. Thallon back and putting him in his former position as Traffic Manager, admit that Mr. Herbert was in the wrong? Could he explain that? Could he explain how it was that, after that, he had placed Mr. Herbert in a position where not only would there be friction between him and the Commissioner for Railways, but also where he could annoy Mr. Thallon if he thought fit? The thing was perfectly absurd—no answer could be given to it. How could the two men work together now any more than they could before?

Mr. MOREHEAD said that in vol. xlv. of *Hansard*, page 1732, he found the following:—

"Mr. NORRIS said he thought the Committee were entitled to know whether Mr. Herbert would resume his position or not. Surely the Government had had time to consider the matter! It was twelve months since Mr. Herbert got twelve months' leave of absence without asking for it, and if the Government had not yet had time to consider what they proposed to do, then they ought to begin to do so. The other night the hon. member spoke of the Government as an economical Government; but in the present Estimates there was a commissioner for railways at £1,000 a year, and an acting commissioner—an entirely new appointment—at £500. If the Government intended to get another commissioner, the Committee had a right to know. They ought certainly now to be in a position to know pretty well what they were going to do. It was no use shirking the matter. If they were going to get rid of Mr. Herbert why did they not say so? Did they intend to appoint the Acting Commissioner in his place or get a new commissioner from somewhere else? The Committee had a right to get from the Government the fullest information that they could give.

"The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would point out to the hon. member that the very fact that the Government had reappointed Mr. Thallon as Traffic Manager ought to enable him to draw his own conclusion that Mr. Herbert would not go back to the Railway Department.

"Mr. NORRIS: I do not want to draw conclusions at all; I want to hear from you.

"The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Why did not the hon. member draw his own conclusion? What was the use of bringing Mr. Thallon back if Mr. Herbert was to resume his position, when it was he who drove Mr. Thallon away? Mr. Herbert was a good and faithful servant of the Government, and they were prepared to recognise that. He would be provided for in another position."

He thought that was enough to show how much the promises or statements of the Minister for Works were to be relied upon. He gave a distinct promise twelve months ago that Mr. Herbert should be employed somewhere else, and there was good reason for it.

The PREMIER: He is not put back in that position.

Mr. MOREHEAD said there was a printed record, which showed what was the value of the promise made by the Minister for Works. He had appointed two men who did not speak to each other.

The PREMIER: They will very soon have to.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it would have been better if the hon. gentleman had taken up that position before. It was one of the grossest pieces of breach of faith which had occurred in that or in any other Assembly. He hoped that the hon. member for Stanley would go to a division on his amendment and give them an opportunity of recording their belief in the policy of the Minister for Works as expressed last year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he distinctly denied that there was any breach of faith. He stated then that Mr. Herbert would have no business transactions with the Traffic Manager, nor had he.

Mr. MOREHEAD: There was not a word said about business transactions at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He does not come into contact with him at all.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 6.

Messrs. Kellett, Morehead, Black, Stevenson, Lissner, and Lumley Hill.

NOES, 15.

Messrs. Griffith, Miles, Norton, Dickson, Moreton, Sheridan, Midgley, Hamilton, Bailey, Mellor, Dutton, McMaster, Wakefield, Rutledge, and Brookes.

Question resolved in the negative.

Original question put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, said the first business to be proceeded with at the later sitting would be the motion of the Minister for Works for the approval of the plans of the South Coast railway, and Supply would follow.

The House adjourned at thirteen minutes past 12 o'clock.