

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 22 September, 1886.

Customs Duties Bill.—Petition.—Messages from His Excellency the Administrator of the Government—Assent to Bills.—Formal Motion.—Motion for Adjournment—Death of Charles John Houston—the Mayor's Ball.—Question.—Oyster Protection Bill—first reading.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Messages from the Legislative Council—Settled Land Bill—Succession Duties Bill.—Adjournment.

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

CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

The SPEAKER said: I have to inform the House that I this day presented to the Administrator of the Government, for the Royal assent, the Bill for granting to Her Majesty certain increased duties of Customs, and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto, in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty.

PETITION.

Mr. STEVENS presented a petition from certain residents of the Upper Logan, praying for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; and moved that it be read.

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

On the motion of Mr. STEVENS, the petition was received.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE GOVERNMENT.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, conveying the Royal assent to the following Bills:—

A Bill for granting to Her Majesty certain increased duties of Customs; and

A Bill to amend the law relating to refined mineral oils.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By Mr. MURPHY—

That there be laid on the table of the House a return showing—

1. The number and total area of runs dealt with under the Crown Lands Act of 1884, giving area unre-sunned and quantity resumed for selection as grazing and agricultural farms respectively.

2. The quantity of land selected as grazing, agricultural, and homestead farms, giving the quantity for each land district.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

DEATH OF CHARLES JOHN HOUSTON—THE MAYOR'S BALL.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to move the adjournment of the House with a view of calling attention to the facts elicited at the magisterial inquiry held at Townsville in regard to the death of Charles John Houston. I shall read the case as it appears in the papers, so as to make clear the object I have in view:—

"The magisterial inquiry into the death of Charles John Houston, who committed suicide in a most dreadful and deliberate manner at the Imperial Hotel on the afternoon of the 5th instant, discloses a state of affairs which one could scarcely believe could exist in a town the size of Townsville. For a fortnight—from his arrival at the hotel until his death—deceased was allowed to swill himself with champagne, and to spend his money with lavish recklessness. In his evidence the landlord admitted deceased had spent about £43 in drink alone, and that he had signed cheques, which he (the landlord) had drawn to the amount of £140, and that the total sum that deceased drew from the bank during the fortnight was £224 17s. 6d. He would not admit that deceased had been drinking to excess during his stay at the Imperial, because he was not in the habit of getting speechlessly drunk and being carried to his room. Deceased, however, ate but little, and the landlord said that he had occasion to remonstrate with him on account of his drinking, a week after he arrived at the hotel. It appears that deceased was in the habit of ordering champagne, and the landlord would, at his request, introduce him to someone to help him to dispose of the liquor, and failing a stranger, the barmaid or the landlady would join him in the 'social glass.' Mr. A. G. Burdoch, who occupied a room adjoining that in which the suicide, melancholy mad from the effects of drink, terminated his existence, stated in court that he had remonstrated with the landlord and landlady for supplying him with drink, but qualified his condemnation of their conduct by stating his belief that he did not consider they encouraged the deceased to drink, but had merely acted thoughtlessly towards him. Mr. Henry, the police magistrate, and Senior-Sergeant Mathers, who conducted the inquiry, appear determined to get at the truth of the case, and it can well be imagined that the tragic event has not done the reputation of the Imperial any good.—*Townsville letter, September 13.*"

I draw the attention of the House to this matter because of its importance. We are very careful, when anyone does damage to another one, to see that the one who has received damage receives full justice from the law. Now we have a law, passed not later than last year, that prohibits publicans from supplying liquor to their customers to an extent of more than 5s. per diem. That is the amount they may

receive over and above the amount charged in the hotel for board, and so on. Well, it is admitted by the landlord himself that that person, named Houston, spent no less than £43 for drink in fourteen days, which is over £3 per day. Clause 67 of the Licensing Act, passed last year, says:—

"Any licensed victualler or wine-seller who—

(a) Supplies, or permits to be supplied, any liquor to any person in a state of intoxication, or to any habitual drunkard"—

shall be fined £5. Subsection (d) says:—

"Any licensed victualler or wine-seller who—

Supplies, or permits to be supplied, any liquor to any person who is insane, or is reasonably suspected to be insane, whether temporarily or permanently."

Under clause 73 a publican is allowed for accommodation and refreshment to charge the ordinary rate for food, and at a rate not exceeding 5s. per diem for the supply of liquor. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to find out whether, from the Act passed last year, and the action of this publican in Townsville, the responsibility cannot be brought to bear upon the publican for breaking the law in those particulars—that is to say, for supplying a man, while he was drunk, with intoxicating drinks; supplying him while he was insane; because, although the publican says that the man was not speechlessly drunk—I suppose that is a definition of drunkenness—as long as he was able to ask for liquor he was supplied with it—as long as he was able to drink, with the assistance of the barmaid or the landlady or any stranger who could be found, he was supplied with drink at an expense exceeding £3 per day over and above his regular board. The 67th clause of the Licensing Act prevents the supply of more than 5s. worth of liquor per diem. I think this is a case that ought to be looked into. I hope the Colonial Secretary, if he has not had his attention called to the matter already, will look into it, and administer the law, so that cases like this may not occur again. This is not the only case. There have been other cases which resulted in the poor men who came in from the bush being deprived of their hard-earned money, to the loss and injury of their families. The publicans do them a great wrong, and also do a great wrong to the country by men suffering death through such cases. I move the adjournment of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) said: Mr. Speaker,—My attention has not been drawn to the matter which the hon. member has brought before the House this afternoon, except that this morning, I think, I read the same paragraph that he has referred to. I will give instructions to the police magistrate at Townsville to send down a copy of the depositions and all the information he can give upon the matter.

The PREMIER: There is a telegram saying that the publican was fined £5 for supplying the man with drink.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I did not see that.

Mr. DONALDSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I will take advantage of the motion before the House to express a hope that the Government will consent to an early adjournment this evening. It is not generally known, perhaps, that the return ball to the mayor is to take place to-night, and a large number of hon. members of this House desire to be present. I therefore trust that the Government will consent to adjourn at an earlier hour than usual this evening.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I really think that £5 fine is no punishment at all adequate to the offence the publican at Townsville has

committed; at least he should forfeit his license. It is not a singular case. Such things have occurred over and over again; but perhaps none have been so tragic as this one. I consider that a fine of £5 upon a publican who commits such a grave offence as this is no punishment whatever, and the Government should take the matter in hand and see that stern and strict justice is dealt out.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—There is one thing to be said about cases of this kind. There is no doubt that if this man had not obtained the liquor at that house he would have got it at another. I saw the man myself; I believe his name was Dickson. He was pointed out to me at the time when we were in Townsville in the "Lucinda." He was going about drinking from one public-house to another. There is no stopping these men; they will have their drink unless there is some dipsomaniacal institution established for their reception. They will have it, and if they do not get it at one public-house they will get it at another.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said: Mr. Speaker,—There have been one or two instances brought under my notice of persons having died at public-houses under circumstances which have suggested to me that their deaths had been caused by the conduct of the publican in assisting them to drink too much liquor. The depositions taken in the inquiries into such cases always come to me and are carefully perused, and in more than one instance where I have not been able to take any legal proceedings against these publicans, I have caused a copy of the depositions to be forwarded, together with a letter from myself, drawing the attention of the licensing authority to the conduct of these publicans; and I believe the representations I have made have resulted in the deprivation of licenses to these people.

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—With regard to the statement of the hon. member for Cook, that those men who drink such a lot will have it—that there is no stopping them—I would like to know if the Premier or the Attorney-General can tell us whether there is not a way of getting at the men who supply this drink; whether this fine of £5 is the utmost penalty that can be inflicted upon the man who, it appears, allowed this unfortunate man to drink himself to death? I propose that, if we cannot stop men from killing themselves, we should get at the men who supply them with liquor—who poison them—publicans who allow men in such a condition to drink themselves to death, and assist them at their own hotels, by the help of their wives or barmaids, deserve imprisoning. I would very much like to know from the Premier or the Attorney-General whether they cannot be proceeded against criminally, so as to inflict the severe punishment upon them that they richly deserve. I have no idea of being satisfied with the statement made by the junior member for Cook, that such men will have their drink. I would take good care that they should not have it.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The Publicans Act contains very stringent provisions for dealing with cases of this kind. I am sure no one has any sympathy with a publican who conducts himself as this one seems to have done. I have not read the report of the inquiry, but I saw the statement that Mr. Dickson—I believe that is the name—had actually committed suicide while under the influence of drink, after a bout of drinking champagne for a considerable time. I saw by a telegram in this morning's paper that the publican who supplied him had been brought up under the 67th section of the Licensing Act, and fined £5—the maximum penalty under that section. In addition to that penalty the publican

runs a great risk of not having his license renewed, and I, for my part—although the licensing authorities only deal with those matters judicially—have no hesitation in expressing my opinion that in such cases a publican ought to be deprived of his license. I am quite sure that if the licensing justices refused a license in such a case, no court would compel them to do otherwise, and the person who lost his license would have no sympathy from anyone. The publican was apparently liable to other proceedings under the 73rd section of the Act, but whether they could be taken or not would depend on the evidence available. I, of course, cannot express an opinion upon that point, as I have not seen the evidence. I infer from what has already taken place that the authorities at Townsville had their attention directed to the matter and intend to do what is necessary.

Mr. DONALDSON: What about the adjournment?

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Warrego said something about adjourning early this evening. If a large number of the members of the House wish to adjourn, I suppose we shall have to do so; but I think members wishing to go to the ball early might pair off. I intend myself to attend that ball, but intend first to perform my duties in this House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said: Mr. Speaker,—Referring to the matter brought forward by the hon. member for Ipswich, I think the only remedy for dealing with cases of that kind is to confine those who are given to drinking in that way in a lunatic asylum. I believe they are not sane; they have an infatuation for indulging in drink, and are not capable of taking care of themselves. The only practical way of dealing with these cases is to pass an Act authorising their confinement in a lunatic asylum. That would be more effectual than fining the publicans from whom these men get drink. If they are determined to get drink they will get it. I believe my hon. colleague, the Premier, could very soon pass a Bill through this House dealing with cases like this, and authorising the detention in a lunatic asylum of these people, who are not fit to take care of themselves.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—I have listened to the remarks of the Minister for Works with a good deal of amusement. In order to prevent people drinking themselves to death, he would make me pay for them. I don't see the policy of making the public pay for them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I thought you wore a blue ribbon!

Mr. W. BROOKES: I scarcely think the hon. gentleman is sincere. The proper plan is to punish the publican and take his license away. If that won't stop it we must do something else, but the very last thing we should do is to enable a publican to get some hundreds of pounds from a man in a fortnight, and then send the man to a lunatic asylum or some such institution, to be kept at the public expense. That is a funny way of dealing with the matter.

Mr. MACFARLANE, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I am glad that hon. members who have spoken upon this case have supported me in it. I hesitated to bring this matter before the House because of the position I am known to occupy, but when I saw the case reported this morning I could not resist the conviction that it was my duty, if someone else did not do it, to bring the matter before the House. The hon. member for Cook seemed to look more lightly upon the offence than any other hon. member who has

spoken. He seemed to think that if these men wanted drink they would get it, if not in one house then in another. That is very true, and it is the very reason why these men should be protected. A man who has a certain amount of drink is mad; he does not know what he is doing, and would do things he would not think of doing when sober. No man would sign a cheque for the amount of money that man signed for if he had not been mad from drink. If this man Houston, as he is termed in the paragraph—though some say his name is Dickson, but the name does not matter—if he had a friend who would have taken out a prohibition order against supplying him with drink the publicans would not have supplied him; but he had no friend, as he was just in from the country. When men like him come from the country into our towns, and have no friends, the law should protect them. That is why I say it would be better to make the publican shut up his tap than to shut up the man. We can hardly put a man into a reformatory if he is drunk for a day or two. It is far safer to shut up the tap, and then no harm can be done. I hope that since the attention of the House has been called to the matter something will be done to prevent cases of this kind occurring in the future.

Question of adjournment put and negatived.

QUESTION.

Mr. HAMILTON asked the Minister for Works—

1. If plans and sections of the third section of the Cooktown and Maytown Railway by the direct route are ready yet?

2. If plans and sections of the third section of the Cooktown and Maytown Railway *via* Palmerville are yet prepared?

3. Have instructions been sent to Cooktown to forward these plans to Brisbane?

4. Are working plans of the second section of the Cairns and Herberton Railway ready?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

1. No.

2. No.

3. No.

4. No.

OYSTER PROTECTION BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), it was affirmed in Committee of the Whole that it was desirable to introduce a Bill for the protection of oysters and the encouragement of oyster fisheries.

The Bill was introduced and read a first time, and on the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER the second reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

The PREMIER moved that there be granted to Her Majesty the sum of £2,310, salaries and contingencies for the establishment of His Excellency the Governor. The first item of £300 was voted the other day in Committee of Ways and Means. There was no change in the amount of the vote from that of last year.

Mr. NORTON asked how it was that, as His Excellency had both an aide-de-camp and a private secretary, they had messages delivered

to the House by the Premier? He did not see why one of those officers should not deliver messages from the Governor. Was it necessary to vote a salary for the aide-de-camp?

The PREMIER said the salary of the aide-de-camp had already been voted, but of course the question might be asked. It was the practice in many Parliaments for messages to be delivered, not by an officer of the Governor's household, but by a Minister. The practice in this colony, until recently, was for messages to be delivered by an officer of the Governor's household; but in England the practice was that it should be done by a Minister, or, rather by a member of the Privy Council. When the late Lord Beaconsfield was at the head of the Government as Mr. Disraeli, he frequently delivered messages in the House of Commons, appearing at the bar and announcing that he had a message from Her Majesty.

Mr. NORTON said he was under the impression that the new practice was introduced on the motives of economy, and that they were going to dispense with some of the offices in that estimate.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. NORTON: Did the Minister who delivered the message stand humbly at the bar of the House and announce that he had a message from Her Majesty, as the aide-de-camp here announced that he had a message from the Governor?

The PREMIER said the Minister always did that. If the hon. gentleman was curious about the matter he would find, on reference to books of contemporary history, that that was precisely the manner in which messages were delivered in the House of Commons by Mr. Disraeli. He did not think he could follow a better example.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would ask another question. Did the Minister who did the work in the House of Commons that had been done here by the aide-de-camp come to the bar of the House in full dress—with cocked hat and sword? If that was so, he would recommend the Premier to get them, as he would then look much more dignified in delivering a message. But he (Mr. Macrossan), for one, did not like to see the Premier standing humbly at the bar of the House, announcing that he had a message from His Excellency the Governor.

The PREMIER said he did not see anything at all undignified in the matter. He did not think dignity depended upon such small things as that. As to whether it was the practice of a Privy Councillor, when delivering a message, to appear in uniform, he was not in a position to say; but certainly, if that was the case, he did not think that part of the practice would be convenient in this colony.

Mr. NELSON said he did not think he would be out of order in referring to Schedule D at that time. The schedules were passed over without a regular vote of the Committee, because they were provided for by Acts of Parliament. The point he wished to direct attention to was this: Was any object gained by constantly stating the amounts at too low a rate? He would refer hon. members to Schedule D. Last year the amount appropriated for municipalities was £55,000, and the actual expenditure was nearly £64,000; and for divisional boards the appropriation was £120,000, and the expenditure over £138,000. On those two items alone there was an excess of expenditure over appropriation of £27,000. Altogether, on that schedule last year, there was an excess of expenditure over appropriation of about £35,000. That seemed to be becoming the established practice, but he

could not see that any useful purpose was served by it. This year the amount asked for was less than the amount spent last year; that surely could not be right. It was not at all likely that local taxation would be decreased, and if it were increased the endowments would be increased also. The system was misleading to the House and to the public, as it led to the idea that the expenditure was less than it really was.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said at the time the Estimates were framed it was expected that the health rate would not be payable for the second half of the year. Had that been so he thought the amount on the Estimates would have been sufficient. It would, however, now probably have to be supplemented by a vote on the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. ALAND said that with reference to Schedule B, "Retiring Allowances," the Colonial Treasurer last year promised to furnish a table showing what the various annuitants had really paid into the fund from which they drew the amounts opposite their names, and also giving a list of prospective claimants on the fund, with the amount they were paying to it. Hon. members ought to have that information; and the Treasurer was certainly backward in keeping his promise on the subject.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would see that the promise was fulfilled. He was glad the hon. member had reminded him of it; the hon. member should have the return on the table in ample time to consider before they got through the whole of the Estimates. However, Schedule B was not under consideration now, nor was any vote likely to come before the Committee in connection with it.

Mr. ALAND said he would like to know when the schedule would be under consideration. They had got to page 7, and the schedules were on page 3. If they went any further, the Colonial Treasurer would bring them up with a round turn; so that they could not discuss those items at all.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the information asked for by the hon. member was very important, and he was sorry the Treasurer had forgotten his promise. With regard to the matter brought forward by the hon. member for Darling Downs, they were to understand from the Treasurer's statement that had his intentions with regard to the Health Act been carried out the subsidies to the divisional boards would have been all right. But the hon. member must have known that there had been a great increase in the value of rateable property, and that therefore there must be a corresponding increase in the endowment. It was a well-known fact that the municipal council and the divisional boards round the city had been making great increases in the rates, and probably the same had been done elsewhere; and the increased endowment involved by that would be far more than the health rate the Treasurer calculated to save.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that from Schedule B he found that no less than three under colonial secretaries were receiving annuities—A. W. Manning, Frederick Rawlins, and H. H. Massie; altogether they drew £1,200. Adding the salary of the present Under Colonial Secretary, £800, they were actually paying for under secretaries £2,000 a year. He did not exactly understand the matter; he believed there was an Act passed by which Mr. Manning received his pension, but he thought that Act ought to be repealed now. He was given to understand that Mr. Manning was quite able to look after himself. He was healthy enough to go about and conduct his business.

The PREMIER said that the country had made bargains with those gentlemen—with two of them under the Civil Service Act, and with the third under a special Act. He did not see how that Act could be repealed now; he never heard of anything of that kind being done, except in cases of misconduct. But he certainly agreed that the Act under which that gentleman drew his pension should never have been passed; but he was afraid it was one of those things which, having been done, could not be undone.

Mr. NELSON said he had a question to ask with regard to an item of interest on the public debt. They knew from the Colonial Treasurer's statement that a sum of £30,000 was passed on the authority of an Executive minute for payment of interest on the last loan on the 30th June. When would that amount be brought before the Committee for its approval, or how was it to come before them? If a transaction of that kind was not to be submitted to the Committee, they might as well give up all control over the public expenditure.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the amount referred to was contained in the schedule showing the interest on the public debt for the current year, where it was correctly set down at £871,565. The amount of interest paid on the last instalment of the loan was charged upon the sale of that portion of the loan. It was referred to in the Auditor-General's Report, in the Financial Statement, and was corroborated by the public accounts, as having been deducted from the gross proceeds of that loan. Consequently it did not require to be voted by the House any more than did the other usual charges connected with the floating of the loan. The Government had been acting strictly according to precedent.

Mr. NELSON said he scarcely thought a precedent for it could be found, and he looked upon the transaction as a breach of trust. If the Executive, by a mere minute, could pay away £30,000 of the public money in that manner, it was hardly worth their while to go through the Estimates at all, because they might vote the whole expenditure for the year in the same way. If such a matter was allowed to pass unnoticed, the House would be giving up its control over the public purse—one of the chief functions that appertained to it.

Mr. NORTON said that if the Executive were to take authority to pay £30,000 as interest on a portion of the loan simply because it realised more than par, they might use the balance to pay the interest on the next portion of the loan, if it did not happen to realise so high a price. It was a very objectionable practice that money should be paid in that way without the House having any voice in the matter. Had the interest been paid out of consolidated revenue—as was usually done—no objection could have been taken to it. The loan was offered, with interest accruing from the 1st January, in order to induce capitalists to give a higher price for it, but that was no reason why a portion of the money so raised should be devoted to paying the interest upon it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not see how the Colonial Treasurer could regard that as a legitimate payment. If the loan had been floated at 99 instead of considerably over par, how would he have acted? The £30,000 was in reality a portion of the £10,000,000 loan sanctioned by the Act of 1884, and the hon. gentleman admitted in his statement that any deficiency on the loan could not be appropriated until the whole of the loan was subscribed for. The hon. gentleman had clearly mistaken the

terms of the Act; and, as the hon. member (Mr. Nelson) had said, they would be losing their control over the public expenditure if they allowed such a transaction to go without protest.

The PREMIER said there was no question that the payment of interest on the public debt was never voted by the House. Interest was payable to the public creditor without any vote of the House; it was authorised by the Loan Act.

Mr. NORTON: Payable out of revenue?

The PREMIER: From consolidated revenue; but that was not the point. The point raised was that the interest ought not to be charged against the loan in ascertaining its net proceeds. That was a matter of opinion. High authority could be quoted for the practice, and numerous instances had occurred where it had been followed. The practice seemed to him to be in accordance with common sense. It was a part of the bargain with the public creditor. The loan was to be paid in instalments extending up to the middle of October, and in the meantime they were to receive 2 per cent. from the Government, and the Government, treating it as part of the transaction, deducted it from the amount. It did not make any difference in principle whether the loan was raised at a premium or not.

Mr. NORTON said he thought it made a great deal of difference. The hon. gentleman was quite right in saying that the interest must be paid whether the authority of the House was asked for it or not; but the particular payment in question went outside the Loan Act, and the Committee ought therefore to have had an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it. When the three-million loan was raised, instead of interest accruing from a date already past, it did not begin to accrue until after the loan was floated—not until the 1st January next following. In the present case, in order to induce capitalists to bid well up for it, it was decided that interest should accrue from the 1st January preceding the sale. Even then the interest, which of course must be paid, should have come out of consolidated revenue, in view of future loan contingencies. Had there been a good balance to credit at the end of the year the interest would no doubt have been paid in the usual and proper way. The Colonial Treasurer showed a surplus on the year's transactions of £45,000; but if that £30,000 had been paid, as it should have been, from consolidated revenue, it would have left him with the miserable balance of £15,000. The hon. gentleman did not do so because, no doubt, he wanted to make the figures look as large as possible.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. gentleman omitted to state that the experiment of selling loans with accrued interest had been a marked success, and had established the desirability of adopting that plan in the future in preference to the old system under which our loans had been placed in an unnecessarily low position in the London market. Up to the last loan, as hon. members were aware, it had been the custom to sell loans with interest not to accrue until three or four months after the loan had been floated. The consequence was that the loans at the time sold necessarily obtained a lower price, and the quotations accorded to them were consequently lower than loans that bore interest from the period they were floated. It was unfair to the other holders of colonial stock that their stock should be depreciated by the fact of quotations of other stock, which did not bear interest for three or four months ahead, being so reduced. It had for a long time been under the consideration of the

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Government the peculiar manner in which Queensland loans had been sold, and he thought they should congratulate themselves that the alteration which had been made at the present time had resulted so satisfactorily. On that loan of £1,500,000 they obtained a premium of over £80,000, and surely if to obtain that premium they had to hold out an inducement to the extent of £30,000, in the form of accrued interest, he thought they were justified in doing so. He did not see the slightest blame attaching to the Treasury in deducting from the £80,000 the £30,000 which had been offered as that additional inducement. He hoped all future loans would be sold equally well. With regard to the remaining surplus of the loan, it went to the credit of the Loan Account. Whether there was a deficiency or a surplus, the Loan Account was credited with the net proceeds. Under these circumstances it had never been the custom to put the charges of a loan on the revenue estimates of expenditure with the view of obtaining a vote of the House. He was not at all prepared to say that it might not be desirable to place all the expenses of selling loans on the revenue estimates. He always thought that too much was charged to loan, and too little charged to revenue. As soon as the revenue could stand it they might very well relieve loan of all expenditure beyond that employed in reproductive undertakings. But the present transaction was one where they could well afford to charge to loan a portion of the surplus profit they had obtained by the manner in which it had been offered for sale.

Mr. NORTON said that the question was not whether the expenses should be charged to loan or not. That had nothing to do with the point now under discussion. What they contended on that side of the Committee was that the £30,000 was not part of the expense of raising the loan, but ought to be placed as a charge against consolidated revenue. As to whether a loan should be floated with interest accrued from a date past, or from a date not yet come, that was a mere matter of policy, because if interest was to accrue from a date past then it necessarily added so much to the value of the loan. If so many months' interest was to accrue before the time the purchaser was asked to deposit any portion of the money, that added to the value of the loan purchased. That was a matter of policy, as he had said; but what they contended on that side of the House was that the £30,000 should have been paid in the ordinary way, the way that interest had always been paid—namely, out of revenue proper, and should have been debited on that account the same as all the rest of the interest charges. As to it not being fair to holders of other colonial stock, that was absurd. It did not matter whether a loan sold at a low rate where interest did not accrue for some time, or at a higher rate where interest accrued from a time past. All that was taken into consideration before the money was advanced, and holders of other debentures knew perfectly well the circumstances under which the price was fixed. It did not affect the credit of the colony in the slightest degree. That was a mere child's argument, and no justification for the action that had been taken. Members on that side of the House were bound to protest most strongly that interest had been paid out of funds raised from the sale of debentures, or that it was charged as part of the expenses of floating the loan.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Treasurer had missed the point that the Loan Act of 1884 was an Act authorising the raising of one sum of £9,980,000. When the whole of that had been borrowed they should have to adjust the deficiency, if there was any, over

the whole of that sum. Meantime, the hon. gentleman had taken possession of £30,000 of that, and said they ought to congratulate themselves on the Government having been so successful. He was quite ready to give the hon. gentleman all the credit he deserved in that respect. But could he guarantee that he was going to be as successful with the floating of the next item of the ten-million loan? Of course he could not give such a guarantee, even though he guaranteed interest from a period before the money was actually borrowed. Now, the contention on that side of the House was that the £30,000 should be retained for the purpose of adjusting the whole of the deficiency after the whole of the loan of £9,980,000 was floated. Instead of that, the hon. gentleman had taken away as interest the £30,000 which should have been paid into revenue, as had always been hitherto done, and properly so. He thought it was a bad practice to begin to pay interest out of the proceeds of loan. They could not delude themselves that it was a proper charge. It was no proper part of the charge against the floating of the loan.

Mr. NELSON said that if any private company were to adopt the practice of paying interest out of capital they would find themselves in the clutches of the law and would be punished for it. Even the companies whose circumstances compelled them to resort to that sort of thing had to get the authority of an Act of Parliament for it. He saw the other day that the Manchester Canal Company had to pass a Bill through the House of Commons to enable them to pay interest out of capital during the construction of the canal. The principle was radically bad to pay dividends or interest straight away out of capital. It seemed to be forgotten that they had a large sum amounting to £1,241,000 at the debit of Loan Account, caused by depreciation of loans for which they had not a snap of the fingers to show. And it was a very curious thing when a case had happened—a most unprecedented case—where they sold their paper at a premium, that that premium, instead of going to counterbalance that large amount of depreciation, should be pocketed by the Treasurer, and used to pay a half-year's interest. Besides, they were not giving credit to posterity, of which they heard so much. They were handing down to posterity an immense debt of £20,000,000, on which there was this large deficiency, and in consideration of which they got nothing at all. Was nothing to be given for that £1,241,000? When a case of surplus did happen, instead of giving posterity the benefit of it, they took the benefit to themselves. It was a most selfish principle to go on. It was like a game of pitch and toss—"heads I win, and tails you lose." If there was a deficiency, that was to be added to the debt. If a loan was sold at a premium, then the Treasurer said, "That is mine," and he took it and used it as revenue.

Mr. STEVENS said that, in reference to the pension-list, he noticed the absence from it of John Bligh Nutting.

The PREMIER said it would be found at page 88.

Question put and passed.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

The PREMIER moved that £1,039 be granted for the Executive Council. The vote was the same as last year.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The PREMIER, in moving that £3,425 be granted for the Legislative Council, said that the only change in the item was an increase of £25 to the salary of the principal messenger for the

year 1884-5. The increase was voted last year, but was not voted for 1884-5, in which year a corresponding increase was made to the messenger of the Assembly. Attention was called to the matter at that time in the Legislative Council and the then Postmaster-General, Mr. Mein, when speaking on the Appropriation Bill, made a statement which, in fact, amounted to a pledge that the omission should be rectified. It was stated in *Hansard*, page 488, vol. 42, that the Postmaster-General said:—

"Since that time during the discussion of the Estimates-in-Chief in the other branch of the Legislature, a strong expression of opinion was made to the effect that the chief messenger of the Assembly should have an increase of £25 per annum. When that was considered he did not happen to be present at the Cabinet meeting, and therefore had no opportunity of reminding the Colonial Treasurer of the sort of understanding arrived at, that the messengers of both Houses should be placed on the same footing so far as salary was concerned. He would take care that the omission was rectified when the additional Supplementary Estimates for the year were prepared."

That pledge had never been kept up to the present time, and on the attention of the Government being called to it, they felt bound to redeem that pledge by placing the amount upon the Estimates for the current year, which was much more convenient than bringing up a special Supplementary Estimate for 1884-5 including that item of £25 only.

Mr. ALAND said he could not see why, because they increased the salary of the messenger in the Legislative Assembly, that therefore the salary of the messenger in the Legislative Council should be increased also. It was a great injustice to the messengers in the Assembly that that rule seemed always to have been adopted because hon. members must acknowledge that the amount of work—and, he was going to say, the amount of intelligence as well—but, at all events, the amount of work done in the Council bore no comparison to that done in the Assembly. The Upper House did not sit one-fourth of the time that the Lower House did, and the hours of attendance there were very short indeed compared with the hours of attendance in the Assembly. The Council usually sat about four hours a week, and perhaps they should be complimented upon the expedition with which they got through their work, and upon their doing it so well. But that was apart from the question. What he really thought was a shame was that as soon as they attempted to raise the salary of an officer of the Assembly, the gentlemen in the Council said, "Our officers must have their salaries increased too." Look at the Sergeant-at-Arms in the Assembly, and the Usher of the Black Rod in the Council! Was it not absurd for those two gentlemen to receive the same salary when the amount of labour done by the latter bore no comparison to that done by the former? He really thought that for the future, when the subject of increases to the messengers of the Assembly was under consideration, they should put their foot down if there was any attempt to raise those of the messengers in the other Chamber.

Mr. FOOTE: Move the omission of the £25.

Mr. ALAND said, in order to get the opinion of the Committee upon the matter, he would move that the item "Increase to salary of principal messenger for year 1884-5—£25"—be omitted.

The PREMIER said the Government felt that they were bound by the promise that was made upon the occasion he had referred to, in 1884, by the then Postmaster-General on the passage of the Appropriation Bill. Of course the Committee were not absolutely bound—legally bound—to accept the item; but he thought they would not be acting rightly if, under the circumstances,

they refused to pass the amount. The increase had already been paid for last year; it was not a proposal to increase an officer's salary for the present year. It was simply keeping a promise made on behalf of the Government in 1884, when the Appropriation Bill was going through the Council. It was not as if it were a fresh increase to the salary of that officer. If it were so he should have something to say on the subject. He did not see why the officers of both Houses should be on the same footing; he never did when he sat upon the other side, and he was not able to see it now. But he thought that in the present case they were bound in honour to allow for the future the increase, which had already been sanctioned.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he quite agreed with what fell from the hon. member for Toowoomba as to the amount of work done by the messengers in the respective Houses. There was no comparison between the amount of work done, not only by the messengers, but from the Chair downwards it was the same. What remedy had they? If they struck out one of those items the result would be that they would have to give in most ignominiously at the end of the session, so as to get the Estimates passed. He quite agreed with the Premier that they ought to vote the salary. He did not see why they should begin to cavil at the salaries of the messengers; but they ought to have cavilled at the higher salaries long ago. It was a paltry thing to begin by cavilling at the salaries of the messengers. He was not accusing the hon. member for Toowoomba of doing anything paltry, because the hon. gentleman was simply speaking of a principle; but it was a paltry thing for the Committee to attempt to economise at the expense to a messenger to the extent of £25. He would certainly reduce the salaries in the Upper House if they could do it, but at present he was sorry to say they could not do it.

Mr. ALAND said he hoped that neither the hon. member for Townsville nor any other hon. member would imagine that he wished to reduce the messenger's salary by £25. Hon. members would acknowledge that he, for one, every year since he had been in the House, had stuck up for the low-paid officers. Of course, in proposing that the amount be taken off, he did not mean that the man should lose that amount. He was under the impression that that £25 had been paid.

The PREMIER: It has not.

Mr. ALAND said he knew those amounts were paid and passed afterwards sometimes, and he thought it might have been so in that case. What he wanted was an expression of opinion, and they had had that now from the Premier, and the hon. member for Townsville, that the salaries given to messengers and other officers of the Assembly were not to be any criterion as to the amounts which they were to pay to the officers in the other Chamber. He therefore was satisfied, and with the consent of the Committee he would withdraw his amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the amendment be withdrawn?

Mr. FOOTE: No.

Mr. NORTON said he thought it rather shabby to begin in that way by attacking the unfortunate messengers.

Mr. ALAND said the hon. gentleman must pardon him for interrupting, but he really did not begin with the unfortunate messengers, and he did not think the matter should be spoken of in that way. He had distinctly stated that he was not attacking the poor messengers to the House

Mr. NORTON said he did not wish to accuse the hon. gentleman of attacking the poor messengers, but practically his amendment had that effect. If he understood the Premier aright, the hon. gentleman explained that a promise was given that the salary would be increased last year.

The PREMIER: The salary was increased last year.

Mr. NORTON: To this extent?

The PREMIER: Yes; the promise of this increase was given in the previous year.

Mr. NORTON said that if the promise was given that the salary would be increased it ought to have been paid at the time. With regard to the question of more importance—the different rate of payment of officers of the Assembly and of the Council—either the officers in that House were very much underpaid or those in the other were very much overpaid. He did not know that the dignity of doing little required high payment; but if so the officers of the other Chamber might not perhaps be paid out of proportion. The officers of that House as compared with those of the other Chamber were greatly underpaid. One point ought to be noticed, and that was that the office of the Clerk of the Assembly was remunerated at a much smaller rate than it ought to be, simply from the fact that their clerk received salaries for other offices. If he received his full salary as an officer only of that House, the assistant clerk would also receive a higher salary than he did now. He pointed that out because the salary of the assistant clerk had not been raised for a number of years, and practically the salaries of the other officers of the House had been raised.

Mr. FOOTE said he was very sorry the hon. member for Toowoomba had withdrawn from the position he had taken up. The position the hon. member appeared to have taken up was that the services of the officers of the two Houses were not to be compared by way of labour, and also that the officers of the other Chamber were not entitled to the same remuneration as those of the Legislative Assembly. He quite agreed that there was no comparison; the services rendered by the officers of the other Chamber were as nothing compared with the services that had to be rendered by the officers of the Legislative Assembly. That was not, however, the point to which he particularly directed his attention. He hoped to see the members of the Committee, in passing those Estimates, do all they could in real earnest to reduce the expenditure, and in no instance, if possible, allow an increase to pass. He noticed that if an increase was started, it did not matter how unreasonable it was, or whether it was promised by those who had a right to give the promise or not—he for one was not going to be bound by any promise given by any Minister in connection with the Estimates. The Estimates came before the Committee to be considered, and seeing the state of the country, and the outward prospects of trade and business; and seeing also that probably the Treasurer would not be able to meet his expenditure during the year, and would very likely have a deficit at the end of the year, and be coming down for fresh taxation next year, they should consider the Estimates most carefully with a view to economy. He expected the Treasurer would be coming down next year for fresh taxation. He looked forward to it as a very natural result. It would be the duty of the House under the circumstances to economise, and to cut down the expenditure wherever they could possibly do so. Of course, he was aware that the small amount in question would be carried,

because even the hon. member who moved the amendment had since repented and said he would withdraw it. He gave the Government fair warning that he intended to direct his attention throughout the Estimates to cutting them down as much as he possibly could. He considered that in a great many instances they were not getting half value for the money they were paying.

Mr. PALMER said the hon. member for Bundamba anticipated that they would have to go in for a little more taxation before long. The hon. member might set his mind at rest and understand at once that there would be fresh taxation. There was the sum of £30,000—which they had been discussing, which was taken out of loan and should have been taken from the consolidated revenue—to be made up, and that was an item which would require fresh taxation. With regard to that little amendment, it would not be at all dignified for the Committee to commence economy in such a paltry matter. The member for Toowoomba had compared the work done by the officers of the two Chambers—the museum upstairs, and the working place here—and he thought it would not be dignified for the Committee to commence in that way. If the hon. member had gone back to the Governor's salary and proposed a reduction there, there would have been something straightforward and manly in that, and the hon. member might have got some support in trying to cut it down. As a promise was made—and he had some regard for a promise made by a Minister in that way—they should not oppose the vote. To attempt to attack a small thing like that would not be dignified.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I am surprised, Mr. Fraser, that you did not call the hon. member to account for speaking so disrespectfully of the other Chamber—a co-ordinate branch of the Legislature.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The PREMIER moved that the sum of £3,585 be granted for salaries and contingencies, Legislative Assembly. The vote was just the same as that for last year.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The PREMIER said he would not make any motion with respect to the next item of £7,000 for expenses of members, as that was now provided for by Act of Parliament. He moved that the sum of £8,064 be granted for salaries and contingencies for the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly. With respect to the salaries of the reporting staff there was no change. In the item of Refreshment Rooms, there was an increase of £30 to the caterer, which was proposed on the recommendation of the Joint Committee. There was a reduction in the amount set down for gas, as they did not expect to use so much during the present session as they had done previously; more had been used than was anticipated, but he believed they were not likely to use so much in future as he understood that the electric light would be again in operation that evening. The item for expenses of keeping the grounds in order, it was proposed to reduce from £500 to £250. Under existing circumstances, that ought to be enough to spend in that way.

Mr. CHUBB said he would like to know how it cost £500 last year to keep the grounds in order. What grounds were there to cost £500 a year?

The PREMIER said he believed that small repairs to the buildings were charged to that vote as well as the expenses of keeping the grounds in order, and that the greater part of the amount had been spent in that way.

Mr. ALAND said he did not think the Committee would object to the moderate amount spent in keeping the grounds in order, but he thought hon. members would like a little more attention to be paid to the back premises. He and other members went on to the verandah of the Refreshment Room after lunch to smoke, and looking down at the back end of the Legislative Council they always saw it in a most disreputable, dirty state; old cases, dirty papers, and other rubbish lying about under the verandah. Some effort ought to be made to keep the back premises clean and tidy.

Mr. GROOM said the vote of £500 did not include the whole cost of keeping the Parliamentary Buildings in order. There were a great many petty, incidental repairs in connection with the buildings which had been paid out of that vote; but in future he apprehended that the Joint Committee in charge of the Parliamentary Buildings would have to make application to the Works Department when they wished to have repairs effected; and he could assure hon. members from a personal experience on that committee, extending over three years, that those buildings, which cost the country £80,000, were continually requiring repairs. The amount of £500 was totally inadequate to carry out the repairs that were really needed. Not long ago a large portion of the dome was in such a defective state that the Committee had to call in the assistance of the Colonial Architect, and when they received his estimate of the cost of the work they found it utterly impossible to carry it out with the £500, and had to make application to the Minister for Works, who provided the means to get the necessary repairs effected. The lightning conductors had also been in a very defective condition, and the building was liable to be struck by lightning during any storm. With regard to the matter referred to by his colleague (Mr. Aland), there was a difficulty about it, as there was no store-room for general rubbish. His (Mr. Groom's) attention had frequently been called to the state of things under the verandah at the back of the Legislative Council, but, as he had said, there was no room provided for the purpose of storing those things. However, it was proposed to call a meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee next week, and if anything could be done in the matter he would not fail to see that the present state of affairs was remedied. As to the vote of £250, he was perfectly sure it would be totally inadequate to carry out necessary repairs to the buildings, and to keep the grounds in order.

Mr. NORTON said there was another matter to which he would call attention in connection with the back premises. He would not refer to any particular portion of them, but would suggest a little more freedom in the use of carbolic acid, and visits from the sanitary carts oftener than once or twice a week. He did not know whose duty it was to attend to those things, but he was sure that they were setting an example in the Parliamentary Buildings with regard to them which was not very creditable nor a desirable one to be followed by the public. So far as the buildings were concerned, he was not aware how the money was expended, but he knew that the lightning conductors had been useless for ages, or, at any rate, for a long time, as there was no connection of the conductors with the ground. He believed a connection had since been made, but the points were not gilded, and, according to the theory of lightning conducting, unless they were gilded they were of no value. At the same time he did not apprehend any great danger from lightning, because if the roof

were struck the electric fluid would be distributed over so large a surface that it would probably do very little harm.

The PREMIER said he might mention that the vote for repairs had not been so very much inadequate, as last year there was a sum of £242 to the credit of it.

Question put and passed.

COLONIAL SECRETARY.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £5,785 be granted for salaries and contingencies, Colonial Secretary's Department. There was an increase of £150 in the vote, an amount granted to the Chief Clerk, Mr. Ryder, while acting as Under Colonial Secretary during that officer's absence.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he would suggest that when any Civil servant got twelve months' leave of absence he should find a person to do the extra work. That £150 might very well be paid by the party getting the leave of absence. If they wanted to cut down the Estimates, that was a very good place to begin.

Mr. FOOTE said he held the same opinion. He did not think the country should be called upon to pay that amount; and he moved the omission of the item "Allowance to Chief Clerk while acting as Under Colonial Secretary, £150."

Mr. SALKELD said that would be very hard on the Chief Clerk, who had additional duties to perform, and was entitled to additional pay; but he thought that, in future, officers who received twelve months' leave of absence, and left the colony, ought to leave their salary too. He could not see any reason whatever for granting leave of absence with full pay. Not a single man of the working classes in the employ of the Government got such a thing; it was only the picked men of the service who got it. It was time they should make a reform in the matter. The habit had crept in like a great many other abuses, slowly at first; and it was time now that it should be put an end to. He could see no objection to allowing Government officers absence without pay, and letting them take their places when they came back, if they wanted to visit Europe, or take sick-leave, or anything of that kind. The present system was very unfair; it was only a few of the best paid and most lightly worked Government officers who got the privilege.

Mr. JORDAN said he hoped the amendment would not be passed, as it would inflict a great injustice on Mr. Ryder, the Chief Clerk, or Mr. Gray, the Under Secretary. The Under Secretary got leave of absence on full pay, and therefore they were bound to pay him fully for the year according to promise. It would be a great injustice to Mr. Ryder if he did not receive the £150, and they could not expect the Under Secretary to pay it out of his own pocket. However, he thought it would be a good thing to indorse the principle that when a Government officer got twelve months' leave of absence, and additional assistance had to be obtained, or additional work was imposed on one of his subordinates, the cost should be paid out of the salary of the officer who got the leave of absence.

The PREMIER said that the allowance proposed to be made to the Chief Clerk was in accordance with the general rule that when a Government officer got leave of absence his *locum tenens* received half his own salary and half that of his superior officer. That was the general rule, and it was a very fair one. In this case the Chief Clerk had a large amount of work thrown on him, because no extra staff was employed during the absence of the Under Secretary. As to the question of giving leave

of absence on full pay, that was a subject upon which it would be very convenient if some distinct rule were laid down in a Civil Service Act, not on the same lines as the one of some years ago, but an Act distinctly defining the privileges and rights of officers of the Civil Service. The Government had never had time to bring it forward yet, though it had been several times under consideration. It had been the practice to give officers of long standing in the service twelve months' leave of absence on full pay if they deserved it. He did not know that that was a good rule; he thought it would be better to substitute another, either altering the time to six months, or making some clear understanding or rule that any extra expense arising to the department should be borne by the officer receiving leave—except, of course, in cases of sickness or special cases of that kind. But so long as the present rule was recognised, he was sure that no one deserved leave of absence more than the Under Colonial Secretary, Mr. Gray, who had been in the service of the colony a very long time, and whose absence would no doubt enable him to benefit the colony on his return.

Mr. HORWITZ said he thought it was the intention of the Committee to pass the £150 to the Acting Under Secretary; but it was plain that in this case one man could do the work for which they paid two men, so that they could do without one of them, and save £350 a year. They were now beginning to find out where they could cut down the Civil Service. It was clear from what had been said that even taking the lower salaries they could save £350 a year; but, if they calculated according to the higher salaries, they would save £650.

Mr. SCOTT said the Under Colonial Secretary had been in the service for twenty years; and as far as he recollected it had been the practice that all heads of departments occupying a similar position received twelve months' leave of absence on full pay, with someone else to do their work in the meantime. It would be a very hard case indeed if the Chief Clerk were mulcted of that £150 for the extra work he had done during Mr. Gray's absence. He believed Mr. Ryder had done his work very well indeed, and it would be very unfair to deprive him of that £150. It would not be at all right and just.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that when he raised the question he had no idea of refusing the £150 to the Acting Under Colonial Secretary, who was well entitled to the money. The point he raised was, that if an officer got twelve months' leave of absence he ought to pay for the man who did his work during that time. He was glad to gather from the Premier, that when the long-promised Civil Service Bill was introduced, that matter would be attended to.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was now ten years since he first heard the hon. gentleman promise a Civil Service Bill, and it had been promised by every Government since that time. If the hon. member waited for that Bill he would have to wait a long time. Still, the practice in question might be modified, although not at the expense of the present Chief Clerk, who, if he had to do the Under Secretary's work as well as his own, certainly deserved the money.

Mr. FOOTE said he did not think the Chief Clerk performed the duties of both offices. No doubt the Chief Clerk acted as Under Colonial Secretary, and somebody else acted as Chief Clerk. There was always something standing in the way to prevent justice being done to the taxpayers of the colony. There was an officer receiving £800 a year, and yet he was given

twelve months' leave of absence on full pay, and another officer was to have £150 extra for doing his work. If £150 was sufficient to pay that officer for doing the work of the Under Colonial Secretary during his absence, £400 ought to be enough for him when he was present. Such things were a robbery on the taxpayers, and he was astonished to see the people's money wasted, and worse than wasted, in that way. But it was utterly useless to attempt to reduce the Estimates. What had taken place in previous years would take place again, and every shilling on the Estimates would be passed, whether the purpose was good or bad and whether the person concerned was overpaid or underpaid. Such being the case, perhaps the best thing they could do would be to pass the Estimates *in globo*, and let the whole responsibility lie with the Government.

Mr. NELSON said there was a great deal in what the hon. member for Bundamba had said. Last year a great deal of time was spent in discussing the Estimates, with the result that not a single shilling was taken off from beginning to end. But that was not what troubled him. The Committee might make as many reductions as they liked, and it would not matter so long as Ministers had it in their power to spend as much more as they pleased—what was called unauthorised expenditure. In the Colonial Secretary's Department alone, last year, the expenditure was somewhere about £55,000 more than was voted by the House. The actual amount voted was £485,986, while the amount spent was £541,190. The Auditor-General drew attention to the matter in his report, but it was nothing new; it seemed to be the established practice. That was a question of the utmost importance, and bore out what he had previously said about the control over the public expenditure being gradually taken out of the hands of the House. If the Government could do that without the authority of Parliament, it was hardly worth while troubling themselves to discuss the Estimates at any length. Even if the Committee voted a certain amount of money, a Minister in charge of a department could go on spending thousands of pounds more than he was authorised to do; and those amounts were brought in as Supplementary Estimates, and they were then told that it was no use discussing them as the amount was already spent. His attention had recently been directed to the practice of the House of Commons in that respect, and their practice ought to be at once adopted in Queensland. That was, to have a committee of public accounts, charged with the examination of all the accounts as they were submitted by the Comptroller-General and the Treasury Department. That committee had been working since 1862. It was nominated every session by the Speaker, and generally consisted of eminent men, such as Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Salt, and others noted for their knowledge of finance. Looking at the last report of that committee which had reached the Parliamentary Library—the report for 1884—he had been surprised at the minuteness with which they went into every matter connected with the accounts of the United Kingdom—accounts even as small as £2 or £3—and at the way in which they made deductions from the salaries of officers who had committed any breach of the rules established by law. The adoption of such a system here would be of great advantage to the colony. At present they were going on a most loose system, and were giving up one of the most important functions of the House, that of authorising and limiting the annual expenditure—a function which had been handed down from time immemorial, and which, if they did not take care to preserve, might be lost to them altogether. He had noticed that when

the other Chamber made the slightest alteration in a certain class of Bills—alterations which the majority of the Assembly might perhaps approve of and agree to—immediately an immense cry of alarm was raised as if the privileges of the people and of the House were going to be sacrificed. It was vastly more important to prevent any Government from spending more money than was authorised by the representatives of the people. He was not very anxious to discuss the Estimates in full, but he wished particularly to draw the attention of the Committee to the general principle on which they were going. He thought himself that the system which they were pursuing was one that required immediate reformation.

The PREMIER said he did not think there would be a great deal of use in a committee of public accounts. There was no doubt that the public accounts could not be too carefully scrutinised; but here the Auditor-General did all the work a committee of public accounts would do for them.

Mr. NELSON: No.

The PREMIER: Unfortunately they did not get the information soon enough.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: He does so after the money is all spent.

The PREMIER: The committee of public accounts could not do it before it was spent.

Mr. NORTON: They can demand an explanation.

The PREMIER: That explanation was always forthcoming here. As a matter of fact, at present the whole House in Committee of Supply was a committee of public accounts. As to votes having been exceeded, they must necessarily be exceeded sometimes. They could not help that. The hon. member said that the Colonial Secretary's Department spent so much more money during the year than the amount in the Estimates. He understood the hon. gentleman referred to the returns for July.

Mr. NELSON: I am referring to the *Gazette* returns.

The PREMIER: That was what he meant—the *Gazette* returns. But the statement which appeared there was not the expenditure on account of the period for which the Estimates were voted, but the total amount paid out of the Treasury during that period. The two things were not the same thing at all. He had himself been sometimes quite alarmed at the amount of the current expenditure under heads under his own control, but he had found on examination that the amount voted had not been exceeded at all. It happened that, in consequence of some accounts of the previous year not being paid till that year, the amount spent during the twelve months was more than had been appropriated for that period. Unfortunately they did not get the Auditor-General's Report till October. If they got it in the month of July, or immediately after the transactions of the financial year, they would know exactly the amount spent compared with the amount of money voted for the same period.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he thought this would be a good opportunity to get from the Government, pending the introduction of a Civil Service Act, some statement to the effect that in future leave of absence for a long period would not be granted on full pay. If Civil servants required leave of absence they should provide for supplying the additional labour necessitated during their absence. For his part he did not grudge the gentleman who had got the leave of absence in this case, nor did he grudge the

£150 which was to be given to the gentleman who had filled his place, but certainly he thought the £150 should have been taken out of the salary of the other.

Mr. GRIMES said he was glad that this matter had been mentioned. It was high time they came to some understanding about leave of absence. It was only fair that, when there was to be leave of absence for twelve months, Civil servants should go on half-pay, and the other half should be fairly distributed *pro rata* amongst those in the office, who had to do a larger extent of work during their absence. He saw that £150 was to be given to the Chief Clerk. But the absence of the Under Secretary had entailed additional labours on all the rest, from the Chief Clerk right throughout the office, because no additional help had been brought in. If they went on the lines of justice, they ought to increase the salary of every officer below the Chief Clerk. The best plan was to insist on those who went on leave of absence for twelve months taking half-pay, with the understanding that the other half-pay was distributed *pro rata* among those below him in the office.

Mr. FOOTE said he intended to put this vote to a test. Whenever a case of this sort came up then they were told that unless it was passed an injustice would be done to the person on whom the work fell. But so long as they passed the votes so long would the Government continue to allow parties leave of absence for twelve months on full pay. The best way to stop that was to give the Government intimation that the House would not sanction it. Therefore, the best thing they could do would be to refuse the allowance of this £150. The sooner a stop was put to it the better. He failed to see why the taxpayers of the colony should pay for the holidays of well-paid Civil servants.

Mr. KELLETT said he hoped the hon. gentleman would not press his amendment in this case. But it had been satisfactorily proved to him that there was one officer too many in this department. That was plain, if the chief could go away for twelve months and the other officers could do the work. He did not suppose, knowing the Chief Secretary, that that hon. gentleman would have his office badly managed, and that he had the quantum of men to do all the work. Evidently, therefore, there was one officer, with a salary of £800 a year, too many, and he would vote for the reduction of the vote by that £800. But it would not be fair to reduce by £150 the gentleman who had done all the arduous work during the time the other was absent from his duties.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he wished to say a few words about what had fallen from the hon. member for Northern Downs. That hon. gentleman had pointed out that apparently the expenditure last year for the Colonial Secretary's Department was larger than the appropriation. As the Premier had stated, the expenditure for a given period—from 1st July to 30th June—did not indicate the expenditure out of appropriation for the current year. As matter of fact, there was an expenditure last year of £57,000 which belonged to the appropriation of the preceding year.

Mr. NORTON: What is it for?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: £57,000 of the appropriation belonging to 1884-5 had been charged to the first three months of 1885-6, and consequently had increased the apparent expenditure for 1885-6. While a great deal might be said for a committee of public accounts such as existed in England, it was altogether premature to introduce such a committee here. Our conditions were very dis-

similar from the state of the Imperial Exchequer. The Imperial Exchequer dealt with from £80,000,000 to £90,000,000 per annum revenue, and an expenditure correspondingly large. They had therefore highly paid officers to perform the work which was done in our case after expenditure, by the Auditor-General. He did not think any hon. gentleman could say that the report of the Auditor-General showed that the money voted by the House had been misapplied, or that any abuse existed. If they had to deal with a large sum like £80,000,000 or £90,000,000 per annum there might be some excuse for a committee of public accounts. But the House dealt so minutely with every item—every £10 increase even—that a committee of public accounts was unnecessary. If a committee existed their report to the House would be dealt with *in globo*, and there would be none of that minute investigation of each individual increase and each individual vote annually performed by the House. Hon. members spent most of their time in scrutinising the Estimates. Every individual item was commented on. That practice did not obtain in the Imperial Parliament, and consequently a committee of public accounts was actually necessary to deal with the public accounts beforehand, and their decisions were immediately accepted by Parliament—upon the report of the committee. If a committee of public accounts was introduced here, Parliament would have to surrender to a large extent that minute investigation of the Estimates now carried out. He thought it was not necessary that Parliament, at the present time, should surrender that function. They should deal as minutely as possible with the Estimates in the form submitted. But when the revenue of the colony was larger, and the transactions more ramified, it might be matter for consideration whether a committee should deal with the public accounts in the manner suggested, which he thought unnecessary at the present time.

Mr. NORTON said he would ask the hon. gentleman whether that £57,000 which was expended last year was not partly an appropriation from surplus revenue?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Part of it.

Mr. NORTON said that if that surplus revenue had been kept in a separate account, that excessive expenditure last year would not have been shown. It would have been debited to its own proper account. That showed the evil of not taking money which was voted from surplus revenue—special appropriation from the consolidated revenue—and placing it to a special account. The evil of it was shown there. In the balances, as published in the *Government Gazette*, there was an over-expenditure of £57,000 in the Colonial Secretary's Department. A portion of that money was special appropriation of the previous year, and was spent during last year, and separate accounts ought to have been kept. That showed the evil of keeping accounts in that way. It simply had the effect pointed out by the Auditor-General of showing a larger balance at the end of the year than there really was, and of making the expenditure for the year appear larger than it was. The balance unexpended remained in the consolidated revenue, and on that account the hon. gentleman had been able to show at the end of last year a balance of £45,000; but if it had been taken out it would have shown a debit. Those were the two evils of keeping the accounts in that manner. In regard to the committee for the public accounts at home, they did more work than was done either by the Committee of this House or by the Auditor-General. It was true that the Committee of this House was very particular in going into every paltry detail that it chose; but the

committee of public accounts in England did more than that. It took the actual expenditure and went carefully through it, item by item, and when it found that more than the proper sum had been expended it did more than the Auditor-General did here. It demanded an explanation as to where the money had been spent. In some cases—he did not know whether it was always done—it debited the over-expenditure to the person who had expended the money—they absolutely deducted it. So that that committee was quite different from anything here. He was not prepared to say that they were in a position to adopt a system like that; he did not think they would be able to get men to carry out the work without very large expenditure. If it could be done, it would be a desirable thing to do. Not only was it in the public interest that a proper account should be kept, and a proper explanation given of all over-expenditure, but it was necessary for the protection of the gentlemen who were responsible for the money that was so expended, and that was a very important question. At any rate the subject was one that deserved a great deal of consideration.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the argument of the hon. gentleman with regard to the expenditure of supplementary appropriation was undoubtedly correct. That was the effect of the annual expenditure being enlarged by such a portion of the supplementary appropriation as was expended during the year. But, very unfortunately for his contention, the hon. gentleman had selected an illustration which was wholly inappropriate. There was no expenditure whatever in the Colonial Secretary's Department included in the amount of £57,000 which came out of supplementary appropriation. It was all appropriation unexpended from the revenue estimates.

Mr. NELSON said he thought the Treasurer was somewhat wrong when he said the Committee of the Public Accounts of the House of Commons devoted themselves to the estimates for the following year. What they did principally was to investigate the expenditure for the year previous, which was a matter that never came before the Committee of this House at all. They were dependent for that entirely upon the Auditor-General, and the unfortunate thing was that the Auditor-General's Report seemed to be hardly ever read. That officer had always lifted his voice in warning to them, in very much the same way that he (Mr. Nelson) had been doing to-night in the Committee, particularly in regard to giving up the control of public money. They would find that repeatedly in his reports; but nobody ever took the slightest notice of it. His voice was simply like the "voice of one crying in the wilderness." He might as well go out into the scrub and talk to the gum-trees. There was no doubt that the Committee of Public Accounts investigated the accounts very particularly. There could be no question about that if anyone would take the trouble to go into the Library and read those reports. The last one was for the year 1884, and contained a very long account of the expenditure—about 250 pages. Every item upon the accounts was carefully investigated and divested entirely of its official garb, and looked upon in the light of a practical man—in the same way as a commercial man in ordinary business would do. If there was a single item that was not properly vouched and properly accounted for they would report to the House, and the House would make recommendations accordingly. He could quote a case, to show the minuteness of it, which met his eye in that report. It happened that a prisoner was being conveyed somewhere, and he became sick and

was put into a hospital, and the charges of the hospital amounted to £2 17s., which was charged against the gaol vote. But the Committee immediately struck it out and refused to pass it, and ordered the Comptroller-General to recover it from the local authority. That showed how minutely they went into the matter; and the very fact, as the Treasurer mentioned, that their revenue and expenditure amounted to about £90,000,000, showed that these matters required to be looked into very minutely. Even with that large income they did not neglect to scrutinise thoroughly every small item of that sort. That should be a good example to this Committee. Here the Estimates passed, and when they were passed the Committee seemed to have done with them. Nobody ever inquired whether the money had been spent according to orders, or in any other way. With regard to the vote before them, the hon. member for Bundamba might have let it pass. If the hon. gentleman in charge of the department was not able to make out his estimates, he was hardly fit to occupy the position he did. That was the light in which he looked upon it. Moreover, if the hon. gentleman would only give them some assurance that he would carry out the Estimates as they were set down, they ought to be perfectly satisfied. They were nearly £100,000 less than the expenditure last year, which was a great deal to be said to the credit of the department. Last year £541,000 was spent, and this year they only proposed to spend £444,000. If any assurance were given that that would be so, he should be perfectly satisfied to let the vote go.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there had never been any Estimates passed by that Committee which had not been exceeded afterwards. A great deal depended upon the Government. To come to that particular vote, it had been the practice, as stated already, for the heads of departments to get leave of absence for six months or twelve months on full pay, and sometimes on half-pay. He thought it was mostly members of the service under the Civil Service Act who thus got leave of absence. That Act gave members of the service working under it the right to leave of absence for a certain number of weeks in the year, and they allowed the leave they were entitled to under the Act to accumulate and took it all at once. He believed that was how the practice had sprung up of giving leave of absence for twelve months. He thought it was abused a little sometimes, and some officers were allowed leave of absence for twelve months who had not allowed the leave to which they were entitled to accumulate to that extent. He would recommend the hon. member for Bundamba to be satisfied—not with that assurance or with the discussion that had taken place, but, as he said himself, he simply wanted the Government to understand that the practice was not to be continued—he would recommend the hon. member to be satisfied with reducing the vote by 1s. He believed all members of the Committee would agree to that as being an expression of opinion given to the Government.

The PREMIER: I think it is hardly worth while.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman said he thought it was hardly worth while, but he thought himself that it was worth while, as an expression of opinion that the Government would be able to show to any member of the service asking for similar leave. It would not do any wrong to either Mr. Ryder or Mr. Gray. He thought that Mr. Ryder, having done the work, should now be paid for it. As it had been the practice all along, he should not be

made the scapegoat. If the hon. member for Bundamba would do that he would certainly support him.

Mr. KATES said that, on behalf of the general taxpayer, he protested against the additional vote of £150. It was a most glaring and unjust case. Here they had an Under Secretary in receipt of £800 receiving leave of absence, and the country not only lost his services, but they were asked to pay an additional £150. No doubt Mr. Ryder did the work, but the person who ought to compensate Mr. Ryder was the Under Secretary himself, who was now taking his holiday. He thought the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville was a very good one, as it would show the Government that it was the opinion of the Committee that such things should not occur again.

Mr. SALKELD said he was very glad to hear the hon. member for Northern Downs bring before the Committee the subject of the control of the expenditure. The hon. member for Townsville told them that the officers in the Civil Service allowed their leave of absence to accumulate and took it all at one time, and expressed the opinion that many of them got leave to which they were not entitled in that way. He would be very sorry to injure the Chief Clerk in that particular instance, but he hoped the hon. member for Bundamba would accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville, and that it would be carried. One matter he would like to point out, and that was that when the Chief Clerk did the Under Secretary's work he got half the difference between the salaries, but the other clerks, who did the Chief Clerk's work, did not get a penny. That was only in accordance with the way in which things were managed by the Queensland Government—not only the present but other Governments. The gist of the matter was that Ministers were losing control over the expenditure of their departments, and were also losing the control which they ought to have over the chief officers of those departments; and that Committee had neglected to exercise its proper control in the matter. It was time public attention was called to it, and a determined stand made by hon. members who wished to see the Government carried on properly. It was time they put a stop to a lot of things going on that would not bear daylight. There was a lot of favouritism and that sort of thing carried on.

The PREMIER: Give us some instances.

Mr. SALKELD said that a man in the lower grades of the service might be twenty or thirty years in the employ of the Government, and though, he presumed, he got the worth of his services, there was no leave of absence on full pay for him. He had known cases of officers in the lower grades who wanted to get leave of absence without any pay at all, but simply to have the place to come back to, and they could not get it. The situations would not be kept for them. He knew of cases where men who had been a week or a month out of the Government Service had been disgraced after being for many years in the service. He had some facts, in connection with the department of the Minister for Works, on the subject, and would very likely refer to them by-and-by. He hoped the Committee would give a decided expression of opinion in regard to that matter. If a Civil Service Act was required, let the Government bring one in and they would know what was being done. At present everything was done at random, and no one appeared to know what was done. He hoped the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville would be accepted, and carried by the Committee as an expression of opinion against the practice complained of.

Mr. SHERIDAN said that, in the discussion on the item, hon. members had lost sight of the fact that the gentleman who was to get the addition spoken of had not only done his own duties, but the duties also of the Under Secretary. It was forgotten that he had to work very long hours, and did not confine himself simply to 4 o'clock. He was to be found in his office late at night discharging the duties of the office for twice as many hours as the law compelled him to give. That was lost sight of altogether, and hon. members had also lost sight of the fact that no one could better perform those duties during Mr. Gray's absence than Mr. Ryder. He hoped that under the circumstances the hon. member would not press his amendment.

Mr. FOOTE said he did not profess to know the officer under consideration personally. He was speaking about a chief clerk—about a certain officer under the Government. He was speaking about what he considered an abuse of the taxpayers' money. When the Under Secretary did not earn the money he was not entitled to it, and the country should not be called upon to pay the extra £150. He regretted that he could not accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville. He meant to have a substantial motion, and would go to a division upon the subject. Of course he knew that every old Civil servant would vote against the amendment, and many others; because the Civil servants had their friends in the Committee. In his experience for some twelve years past, he always found that the members of the Civil Service had sufficient power in the Committee to carry what they wanted. They looked upon the revenue of the colony as theirs, and only created for them. They simply got everything in their hands and took hold of it, of course in a legal manner. He should stick to his amendment.

Mr. NORTON said that he could not allow the matter to go to a vote without saying a word about the amendment of the hon. member for Bundamba. In that case he did not think it would be fair to vote for the omission of the sum, because the Under Secretary had been allowed to leave the colony with an understanding—in fact, more than an understanding—that he was to receive full pay during his absence; and at the same time it had been the practice to give additional pay to the officer who filled the place of the one who was absent. Now, in that case, he thought it would be rather harsh treatment if the gentleman who had carried on the work were to have his pay cut off, as it was proposed to do. It had not only been the usual practice, but in that instance it had been understood that he would be paid, as he undertook the work and the responsibility of the office; and the responsibility of an office of that kind was far more severe than the actual work. For those reasons he regretted that he could not see his way to supporting the hon. member in his motion.

Mr. FERGUSON said he intended to vote against the hon. member's amendment if it came to a division. The man who performed the work would be the one to suffer, and there was no doubt he had taken the responsibility. He therefore thought the sum on the Estimates was not too much for him to receive. The Under Secretary has been granted leave of absence on full pay, and that could not be altered, he understood. He quite approved of that. He thought that when an officer at the head of a department like that had spent twenty years of the best of his life in the service of the country it was a very small consideration to give him twelve months' leave of absence on full pay. A man who had been so long as that serving the country was incapable of anything else. He

had given the whole of his life to the country, and was unfitted to perform any other duties, and he thought the Government ought to take that into consideration. There was no doubt that the gentleman who received the leave was well entitled to it. Anyone of his ability, and who could perform his duties as he had done, would have done far better if he had had a business of his own, and not wasted the best part of his life in the Public Service. He considered that as the present officer had done the work he should receive the pay.

Mr. FOOTE said, as he had stated before, it was not a question as to whom the allowance was paid. It was a question of principle that was before the Committee. The hon. member for Rockhampton stated that he could not support the amendment, because the Under Colonial Secretary, who was now on leave of absence, had wasted his time in the Government Service. If the hon. member had known that officer as long as he (Mr. Foote) had had the pleasure of knowing him, he would hold a different opinion. He had known him from a boy, almost from his cradle, and knew that he had got on very well in the Government Service—that he had made rapid strides—that he had come to the front very quickly—that he had good friends behind the scenes; and he was fully satisfied that he had done as well in the Government Service as he would have done out of it. The hon. member also said that the Under Secretary was not fit for any other service now. That was a matter of opinion. But the question at issue was, whether they should allow an officer leave of absence on full pay, and then call upon the taxpayers to provide an extra sum of money to have the work done. He did not suppose the amendment would be carried. He had never seen a reasonable vote carried in that Committee, and did not expect to carry his amendment. However, he intended to see who would vote for it and who against it.

Mr. CHUBB said he did not think the hon. member was fair in saying that the Committee never passed a reasonable vote. He (Mr. Chubb) did not consider the amendment a reasonable proposition. He was quite willing that until a Civil Service Act was passed some regulations should be made by the Government respecting the leave of absence to be granted to officers in the Public Service. There were two classes of men in the Civil Service—one class under the Act, by which officers were entitled to four weeks' leave of absence every year, and in certain cases to twelve months' leave, on such terms as the Governor in Council might think fit; and another class not under any Act. Ever since Queensland had been a colony, the practice had been to grant leave of absence for twelve months on full pay, sometimes on half-pay, to officers who were entitled to that consideration, and that practice had been followed in the case of the Under Colonial Secretary. Mr. Gray had been thought deserving of twelve months' leave of absence by the responsible Minister at the head of the department, and that had been conceded to him. According to the usual practice in such cases, the officer next in seniority had been appointed to discharge his duties during the term of his leave, and received some allowance for doing it. He remembered several cases in which the same thing was done. On one occasion, during the absence of the Clerk of the Executive Council, two officers—Mr. Gray and another—did the work between them and divided the allowance. He therefore saw no reason why the present should be treated as a special case; on the contrary, it was in accordance with the usual practice. He thought the hon. member had gained his point in having drawn the attention of the Committee and the

Government to the fact that it was objectionable to give an officer twelve months' leave of absence on full pay, and then pay someone else an extra salary to do his work. He (Mr. Chubb) agreed that there should be some rule defining what leave of absence officers in the Public Service should have, and that it should apply to every officer in the service, and also that the remuneration they should receive while on leave should be fixed and determined. In some banks in Australia the officers were compelled to take certain leave of absence every year, whether they liked it or not; they had at least a month's leave on full pay, and that was only another illustration of the principle which was contended for. It would, perhaps, be better for the Public Service if officers did take their month's leave of absence once a year, instead of having their leave all in a lump. But, at the same time, he saw no objection to a man foregoing his annual right to leave of absence and taking it all at one time. Take the case of judges. There was no law on the subject, but a judge was entitled to one year's leave of absence out of fifteen years. It had, at any rate, been given them up to the present time. The first Chief Justice of the colony, and the present Chief Justice also, had had a year's leave, and he supposed that in course of time other judges would receive twelve months' leave of absence. By the Supreme Court Act judges were only required to serve fifteen years and were then entitled to retire on a pension, but during those fifteen years it had been the recognised practice to give one year's leave of absence on full pay and not long ago a district court judge got leave of absence. So that hon. members would see that this was not an exceptional case, as the same principle was applied all through the Public Service. He did not see, therefore, how they could vote for the omission of the item of £150 as proposed by the hon. member for Bundamba.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the hon. member who had just spoken had stated that that was not an exceptional case. Well, hon. members might be a hundred years on that Committee and object to a hundred different items, and there would always be someone to oppose their objections. He had never yet seen an occasion on which the Committee thought it was fair to make a reduction in a salary. If the present was not a special case, and one in which they should make a reduction, they would never have one on the Estimates now before the Committee. He would like to see some reduction made, and he thought that if they could not begin in that vote there was little chance of making any reduction throughout the whole of the Estimates. They were all complaining of the amount of money wasted, and yet when they had an opportunity like that of showing the sincerity of their statements, they always found some excuse for not doing so. That was not the time to begin, said some hon. members. When should they begin, if not now? He hoped the hon. member would press his amendment and see who was who.

Mr. JORDAN said he was sure the hon. member who had just sat down would not like to see any injustice done to anyone. He was satisfied of that. In the case under consideration the Under Colonial Secretary had received twelve months' leave of absence on full pay. They could not go back upon that. The gentleman who had carried out the duties had been promised £150. The duties of Under Colonial Secretary were very difficult, and few men perhaps, except Mr. Ryder, the Chief Clerk, could fulfil them. An engagement had been made, and the Government would be doing a

palpable injustice and breaking their promise to the Under Colonial Secretary if they were to compel him to pay that £150 out of his own pocket after having promised him twelve months' leave of absence on full pay. He was in full accord with the hon. member for Bundanba that it would not be proper in future to give twelve months' leave of absence on full pay to gentlemen receiving large salaries, but in this case they were pledged to it. But it was news to him (Mr. Jordan), though he had been eight years at the head of a department, that when a gentleman had leave of absence anyone else should be paid for doing his work. That was never the case in the Registrar-General's Department; it was an understood thing that when anyone had leave of absence his work should be done by the others. It was shared among all the officers of the department as far as could be arranged, and no one received pay for doing it. He hoped that the Government, after the expression of opinion which had been given, would accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville—that in future gentlemen wanting twelve months' leave of absence should themselves pay the cost of any assistance which was necessary to do their work.

Mr. FOOTE said that sort of thing had cropped up time and again, and it was always in the future that the amendment was to be made. His opinion was that now was the time. He wished to disabuse the minds of hon. members of the opinion that any injustice was done, or that the House was responsible for any promise that might have been made. It was not usual for Ministers to make promises. When a suggestion came to them they said, "I will put it on the Estimates, and see if I can pass it," but the officer had to run his risk as to whether it passed or not. It was placing the Committee in a false position for the Government to make a promise and compel the House to vote the money. The Committee had the right to refuse its sanction if it thought proper. There was a great deal of talk about injustice to the Civil servants, but there was no word about the injustice to the taxpayers by voting that money for an officer who was already amply paid. He would not accept the advice of the hon. member for South Brisbane; he was going to test the point and see who had the interests of the taxpayers at heart.

Question—That the item proposed to be omitted be so omitted—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 8.

Messrs. Foote, Salkeld, Kates, Macfarlane, Midgley, Campbell, White, and Aland.

NOES, 33.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Macrossan, Chubb, Miles, Rutledge, Sheridan, Dutton, Moreton, McWhannell, Nelson, Lalor, Isambert, Jordan, Adams, Buckland, Pattison, Lissner, Kellett, Wakefield, Govett, Mellor, Ferguson, McMaster, Stevens, Bulcock, Bailey, Grimes, Wallace, Murphy, S. W. Brooks, W. Brookes, Dickson, and Norton.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. ALAND said he was somewhat sorry the hon. member (Mr. Foote) did not take the advice of the hon. member for Townsville. There ought to be some expression of opinion on the question, and in order to give an opportunity for the expression of that opinion he would move that the amount of the vote be reduced by 1s.

The PREMIER said he did not see how any general proposition could be affirmed by moving a reduction on the whole vote. If carried, the amount might be taken off contingencies, or something like that. The hon. gentleman wanted an expression of opinion from the Committee that in future leave of absence should not be granted for twelve months on full pay, as a

general rule; but he did not think the Committee would say that under no conditions should that be done. A man, after being in the service twenty or thirty years, might be incapacitated from ill-health incurred by his services to the country, and it might be a very proper thing to give him twelve months leave of absence; and no one would object to it. But the general principle, he considered, had already been established by the discussion that had taken place, although it was only fair to say that up to the present time it had been the practice to grant leave of that kind.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman was somewhat mistaken. The division that had just taken place would justify any Ministry in doing the same thing over again this year. There was a very large majority against the motion of the hon. member for Bundanba because it was believed that an injustice would be done if the motion were carried; but the motion of the hon. member for Toowoomba, if carried, would have an exactly opposite effect. It would have to be accepted as an expression of the opinion of the Committee, and if any Ministry went counter to it they would be held responsible. The proposition was a perfectly right one, and one which he should support, with the idea of impressing upon Ministers the necessity of using the power they had to grant leave of absence for twelve months very carefully. The Act gave them that power in certain cases, which were carefully defined; but the case in question did not come within the meaning of the Act, and there were many similar ones in which Ministers had given leave of absence. He hoped the Committee would affirm the motion of the hon. member for Toowoomba.

The PREMIER said that if the passing of the motion would have that effect he should have no objection to it. It would be a very great assistance to the Government, in view of the numerous applications which were made for leave of absence, to know that Parliament had expressed a distinct opinion on the subject. But without any amendment of the kind proposed, the debate that had already taken place showed that the Committee had affirmed the conclusion which the Government had arrived at some time ago, that those leaves of absence ought not to be granted except under very exceptional circumstances indeed.

Mr. STEVENS said it would have been better if the hon. member for Bundanba, instead of moving the motion which had just been disposed of, had, at some time during the session, moved a resolution, that in future the Government should not allow any Civil servant twelve months' leave of absence on full pay, nor give some other officer extra pay for doing the work of the absent officer. A motion of that kind would receive a great deal of support, and might probably be carried; but it would be doing a rank injustice now either to cut down the salary of the absent officer, or to prevent the officer who was doing his work from getting the remuneration which he was led by precedent to expect.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the 15th section of the Civil Service Act provided that—

"The responsible Minister of every department may at such times as may be convenient, grant to every officer leave of absence for recreation, for any period or periods, not exceeding in the whole four weeks in each year, and, in cases of illness or other pressing necessity, grant such extended leave, not exceeding twelve months, and on such terms as he thinks fit."

It was all very well for the Chief Secretary to say that the Government had already come to the conclusion that such leave of absence should not be granted. The previous Government came

o the same conclusion, but they forgot it when certain applications were made. The debate that had taken place could not lead either the Government or the country to suppose that the Committee were against granting such leave of absence, because they had actually justified that particular case by voting against the hon. member for Bundamba; but they ought to place it on record—not only that they did not justify that particular case, but that they were opposed to the granting of twelve months' leave of absence on full pay for the future. That conclusion should be recorded in such a way that it could not be mistaken by any future Ministry.

The PREMIER: How are you going to do it?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: By simply affirming the motion of the hon. member for Toowoomba.

Mr. FOOTE said it did not matter whether they put a motion of that sort on record or not, for whatever Ministry might be in power they did just as they liked. They all had their favourites. Whenever this question cropped up in the House and was discussed, they had all seen what usually took place. There was a rush made to protect the Civil servants. The Civil servants, in fact, looked upon the revenue as theirs, and that they had a perfect right to get the greatest possible amount they could out of it.

The CHAIRMAN ruled that the hon. member for Toowoomba could not put his amendment in the form he had proposed it.

Mr. ALAND said he would do it by some other means. He moved that the item for "Postage, fuel, and incidental expenses, £800," be reduced by £1. The Chief Secretary had said that his former amendment would not affirm anything. The Government always said that an amendment would not affirm anything, but the Committee meant by it to express their opinion upon the matter which had been discussed.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he wished to call the attention of the Committee to the huge item of £1,500 for advertising in one department. They had been furnished the other day with a paper which showed that the Government expended £10,000 a year in these hard times in advertising in the Brisbane and other newspapers—of which sum the Brisbane Newspaper Company got £1,500 from all the departments. That was, he maintained, a great deal too much to spend in advertising in times like these, and if members had only the courage of their opinions and voted as they thought on the subject they would go in for reducing this item. It was, he knew, a very tender subject and rather a thorny one for members to grasp. They imagined that newspapers had a great deal of influence with their constituents, and that it was rather dangerous to deal with them. But, for his part, he considered it was really a great waste of the public money. The *Government Gazette* should be nailed up in different places.

Mr. FOOTE: In a coffin.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: In post offices, telegraph offices, and the Works Office, so that contractors should see what contracts were going on. In fact, the *Gazette* could almost be distributed to every elector in the colony for the money spent on Government advertisements. He moved the reduction of the item by £500.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that that amendment could not be moved unless the hon. member for Toowoomba withdrew his subsequent amendment.

Mr. ALAND withdrew his amendment.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL moved that the advertising item be reduced by £500. He would like to reduce it by more, but thought he should have no chance of carrying it if he did. It would be a hint to the Government not to be so lavish in their advertisements. That power of advertising really gave the opportunity of exercising a sort of bribery and corruption business throughout the Press of the colony. He did not accuse the present Government of having done anything of the kind, but any Government might do it and might buy over papers with a plethora of advertisements at the expense of the people of the country. He looked upon those Government advertisements as really money very badly expended.

Mr. FOOTE said he scarcely thought that the departments could be accused of extravagance in the amount of their advertisements. At any rate he was quite sure the Lands Department could not. Land sale took place after land sale, and nobody knew anything about them unless it happened to be in the *Government Gazette* and they were found out in some extraordinary way. Were it not for the charity of the newspapers which condescended to help the Government by quoting the advertisements gratis, the public in many instances would know nothing about those sales. He was positive that the country lost thousands of pounds per annum in consequence of the very bad manner—the very narrow and cheeseparing way—in which lands were advertised for sale. It very frequently happened that very few knew of a land sale taking place.

Mr. GROOM said that, although a newspaper proprietor, he would like to say a few words in behalf of the Press in relation to this matter. Although the hon. member for Cook had stated that £10,000 was spent by the Government in advertising, he forgot to mention that it was in papers scattered all over the country. There were in Queensland eighty newspapers, and if they were to make a calculation as to the amount of money that was given to each—leaving out the metropolitan journals, which received one-third of the whole amount—it would be found in the end that it came to a comparatively small sum. So far as the provincial Press was concerned, the expenditure on advertising was certainly not extravagant. They might take for example the Railway Department—a large department in itself, where a considerable amount of advertising had to be resorted to, and unavoidably so if the department was to be carried on upon what were called "commercial principles," which some hon. gentlemen thought ought to be adopted. A very considerable amount of advertising was resorted to in connection with that department, or there would be a large loss so far as revenue was concerned. The same remarks would apply to the Lands Department. He could inform the Committee that one auctioneer in Toowoomba paid him as much in one quarter as he received from the whole of the Government departments in a year. There was not a private individual who had a piece of land for sale, and put it in the hands of an auctioneer, who did not advertise it more than the Government did. So far as the Minister for Lands was concerned, he had exercised the closest economy; whether that was necessary or not was not for him to say. The item referred to by the hon. member must necessarily be very large. The House last session passed an Elections Act, which purged the electoral rolls for this year, and it was stipulated that the whole of the electors who claimed to have their names inserted in the various electoral rolls should be advertised in both the local newspapers once, in order that parties who wished

to object to them might have an opportunity of doing so. Let hon. gentlemen calculate the number of electors in the colony, and the number of newspapers—eighty of them—in which those electoral lists were bound to be advertised, and see what it would come to in the course of a year. So that, as far as advertising that was concerned, it was utterly impossible for the Government to exercise any discretion in the matter. Speaking individually, so far as the distribution of advertisements on the part of members of the Government was concerned, he was sure that they did not take into consideration the political predilections of any newspaper. The paper circulating in his town, which was supposed to represent hon. gentlemen sitting on the other side of the Committee, received the same advertisements as the *Chronicle*, which was supposed to represent the Government. There was no preponderance given to one over the other. He was speaking of the journals in his district; and there was an equal distribution over the provincial Press generally. He did not think there had been the slightest attempt at partiality, so far as the two principal departments of the Government which ought to be conducted upon strictly commercial principles—the Railway and the Lands Departments, in which there must necessarily be a very considerable amount of advertising—were concerned. He remembered a land sale that took place in his own town, which was advertised in the newspapers only once some three weeks before, and when the sale came on there were only three or four persons who had seen the advertisement, and the result was that town allotments of one rood each were bought up at the upset price of £8 per acre. They had the whole pick of it; corner allotments were purchased by them at £2 each; whereas if the Government had inserted the advertisements two or three times more, at a cost of about 15s., the information would have been scattered broadcast, and the Lands Department would have received twenty times the amount by the increased price of the allotments sold. Therefore hon. members had to take all the circumstances into consideration. He knew that the particular position that the hon. member for Cook wished to take up was, that out of the £10,000 to which he referred, about one-third was spent in the metropolitan journals; so that the Committee could see that there was not very much when it came to be shared amongst the newspapers in the country districts. Certainly the Government did not throw money away unnecessarily upon advertisements in provincial papers.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was quite aware that the bulk of the money was spent upon the metropolitan journals where there was the least necessity for advertising. There might be some excuse for advertising a good deal in the country papers; but he did not see the use of advertising in the metropolitan papers; but still a tremendous amount of money went to them. With regard to what the hon. member for Bundamba said about not enough money being spent in advertising public lands, he saw there was £2,700 down for that, and considering that the Minister for Lands was not supposed to sell land at all, he thought it was a great deal too much. But they had not got to that item yet; he merely mentioned it in reply to what the hon. member for Bundamba said, and he considered it a very liberal allowance. Notwithstanding what the hon. member for Toowoomba had said, the Committee must admit that the Government could hardly help being a little biased in the matter. He had no interest further than protecting the public purse, and he really did not see the use of subsidising newspapers to abuse him. Some of the country papers did abuse

him. Occasionally the proprietor of a paper in his district turned an honest penny by advertising himself as a drunkard by order of the police magistrate under the Prohibition Act. He thought it was hardly worth while contributing to the support of papers of that sort.

The PREMIER said, as the hon. member for Toowoomba had pointed out, there was an unusual demand upon the Government for advertising, in consequence of the Elections Act passed last year. That expenditure must be incurred, and the Government must spend the money. They were required by law to publish the lists, and they could not publish them without paying for them, so that reducing the vote would certainly not have the effect of reducing the expenditure, because the Government were bound to spend the money, and would have to trust to Parliament to sanction it afterwards.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said they might just as well pass all these things as they were, and swallow the whole lot. If they did not pass them, the money would be spent all the same, and it was no use objecting.

Mr. ALAND said he thought that the sum put down for advertising was an amount which they ought to allow to pass, because there was no doubt that a fair amount of advertising was a very good thing; but the advertising ought to be done judiciously. In reference to the electoral lists, he had noticed that the claims put in the electoral district of Drayton and Toowoomba had been advertised in the Brisbane weekly journals. He did not see the necessity for that. If these matters were published in the papers belonging to the electorate, it was all that was really necessary. He would point this out: The hon. member for Cook moved for a return which had been laid upon the table of the House, but had not yet been printed. It was an astonishing thing that returns having reference to the Estimates were generally detained in some mysterious way. Every return which bore upon matters coming before them in the Estimates should be furnished with all possible despatch. There was another return called for by the hon. member for Barcoo (Mr. Murphy). That hon. member had called for a return, and he knew hon. members were anxious to have it before they came to a certain part of the Estimates. He hoped the Government would see that those returns were furnished, so that members in discussing the Estimates might have all the information they wanted.

The PREMIER said the Government were only too anxious to get the returns printed, as they were of very great assistance to the Government as well as to hon. members. With respect to the return for advertising, that was tabular matter and required a good deal of time to set up. The Printing Office had a great deal of work to do at present, and he thought there was no reason for complaint this session as to delay in printing. On the whole, the printing they required was done very quickly indeed, considering the amount to be done and the time in which they had to do it.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. ALAND moved that the amount be reduced by £1.

Amendment put and passed.

Question—That £5,784 be granted—put and passed.

AGENT-GENERAL.

The PREMIER, in moving that the sum of £3,300 be granted for the Agent-General for the colony, said the vote was exactly the same as before, and he did not, therefore, propose to offer any explanation of it unless it was desired.

Mr. GROOM said he took advantage of the vote to call the attention of the Premier to a paragraph in the letter of the London correspondent, which appeared in the *Courier* of that morning, and which attracted his attention when he read it. He would premise what he had to say by stating that the papers on the "Resources and Industries of New South Wales" were prepared in a most elaborate form for the commissioners of that colony at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, and were distributed gratis to any person who would accept them. The New Zealand publication was more elaborate perhaps than any of them, and copies of it were also distributed free to every person who could get access to the Exhibition building. With that explanation hon. members would understand his reason for bringing the paragraph he spoke of under their notice, and under the notice of the Premier. The writer said:—

"By degrees the special catalogues and handbooks at the exhibition are being issued. Amongst those received and published during the last week are a set from Queensland, including:—'Queensland: An introductory essay,' by A. J. Boyd; price, 2d. 'Emigration to Queensland, or how to get to the colony,' price, 2d. 'How to settle on the land in the colony of Queensland,' price, 2d. 'The Commerce and Industries of Queensland,' by Horace Earle; price, 2d. 'The Pastoral Industry in Queensland,' by P. R. Gordon, Chief Inspector of Stock; price, 2d. 'The Charters Towers Goldfield, Queensland: its rise and progress,' price, 2d.; and a series of pamphlets on agriculture and natural history, by Price Fletcher. These are being sold at 2d. each, or bound together in a shilling handbook, under the title of 'Queensland, its Resources and Institutions,' edited by Price Fletcher."

Considering that those publications were printed at the Government Printing Office, and no expense incurred upon them except perhaps the cost of their transit to Great Britain, he did not see why they should not be distributed on the same terms as the publications of the other colonies were distributed. Why should the price of 2d. be imposed upon them? He thought it a species of meanness almost, in a great colony like Queensland, that while the other colonies were distributing similar publications free, they should demand 2d. from the working classes who went to see the Exhibition, for their publications. He was sure the Agent-General, Sir James Garrick, would be only too glad to distribute them free. He also thought that Mr. Randall, their immigration lecturer in England, might have had a supply of them as well, so that he might, at the close of his lecture, distribute them in order that those who came to hear him might take them home and be instructed, as they would be by publications of that kind, concerning Queensland and its natural resources. He might state that he had had a copy of those pamphlets sent to him by the editor, Mr. Fletcher, and he would take that opportunity of complimenting that gentleman and the authors of the different pamphlets upon the very admirable way in which they had treated the subjects upon which they had written. He thought great credit was due to those gentlemen; but it took the gilt off it to find that the people at home attending the Exhibition had to pay 2d. for each of those productions before they could get one to read. Why not give them free, especially, as he had stated, as they were published from the Government Printing Office and must have cost but a very small sum to the Government? The Agent-General, he thought, should be instructed to take off the small fee of 2d. which was demanded for each of the pamphlets and give them free; and he also thought that Mr. Randall, their lecturer at home, should receive a good supply of them for distribution to those who attended his lectures.

The PREMIER said he was really not aware than any charge was made for those papers. They were sent from here with the understand-

ing that they were to be distributed free; and he was sure there must be some mistake about the charge being made for them. He would communicate with the Agent-General by telegraph upon the subject immediately. He thought there must be some mistake about it, because it was very unlikely that the Agent-General would refuse to let anyone have those papers without paying the sum mentioned.

Mr. NELSON said the mistake probably arose from the custom in the Government Printing Office of stating the price of any publication at the foot of it. It did not follow that because the price was marked upon the papers they would be sold. The Estimates were marked at half-a-crown, but he did not suppose they sold many of them.

Mr. SALKELD said the hon. member for Toowoomba must have been misled in some way. His colleague and himself had got some of the pamphlets at the Exhibition, and had seen them given away. There was a whole pile of them there, and he saw them distributed free. He did not think that any exception was made in regard to himself and his hon. friend. They were handed to him by an officer in charge there; he saw others get them as well, and never saw anyone paying for them.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was afraid the hon. member for Toowoomba had been led away by the gospel according to the newspaper. The hon. gentleman really thought that every journal was as truthful as his own. For his part he took all those sorts of things *cum grano salis*. They had in the Committee eye-witnesses in contradiction of the facts stated that the people were charging 2d. for the Queensland pamphlets.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the suggestion made by the hon. member for Toowoomba with regard to the pamphlets being distributed by Mr. Randall was a very good one.

The PREMIER: I have no doubt that is done.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the suggestion was a good one and should be attended to, as well as the distribution of the pamphlets at the Exhibition. He did not think it likely that the Agent-General would do it without being instructed.

The PREMIER: I think it is; and besides, Mr. Randall would look after that.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to ask whether the Government had abandoned the idea of getting immigrants from Europe? They knew that they had sent an agent home specially to establish an agency business in Germany, Denmark, and other countries, with a view of ascertaining whether immigrants could be induced to come to the colonies to work upon plantations. He would like to know if the Government had abandoned all that?

The PREMIER said the Government at present had no agent on the Continent of Europe. The efforts they made and the opportunities offered to persons desirous of obtaining labour were not taken advantage of, as might be seen from the papers which had been laid on the table.

Mr. NORTON asked whether any obstacle in regard to obtaining labour from the Continent had been put in the way by the Government?

The PREMIER said the papers which had been laid on the table showed that obstacles had been placed in the way by the Government of Denmark in consequence of extraordinarily untruthful statements sent from Queensland, and circulated in the newspapers in Denmark; some had also been circulated in the

German newspapers. The papers showed that extraordinary statements were sent from Queensland to Copenhagen, and though the name of the sender was not printed in the papers he knew the name. It was given to him, and he might say that it was quite impossible to discover amongst the Danes of the colony anybody who ever heard of any such person. The letter he sent was published in Copenhagen, and the police authorities there took action upon it, but it was impossible to identify the writer as having been in Queensland.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had not the slightest doubt that the Dane who wrote the letter was the Dane who had the privilege of editing the *Brisbane Courier*—Carl A. Feilberg.

The PREMIER: No; it was not good enough. Question put and passed.

IMMIGRATION.

The PREMIER moved that £7,830 be granted for Immigration. The increases were £75 for the superintendent of the new quarantine station at Magnetic Island, and £90 for the caretaker of the quarantine station at Peel Island. There must be someone in charge of the buildings to do the painting and other necessary work.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that when the "Dorunda" was at Townsville with cholera on board, the quarantine station at Magnetic Island was not in a fit state to receive the immigrants. Was it in a fit condition at present?

The PREMIER said it was; and there was a caretaker on the station; but a great many things would have to be done before it was complete in all respects. A jetty was being erected, a telegraph line had been laid down, and the person in charge of the quarantine station was being instructed how to work the telegraph. In addition to that, there was another matter receiving attention—namely, the demarcation of the part of the island used for a quarantine station. The island was used for picnic purposes, and there was no reason why a great part of it should not be so used. There was a surveyor now on the island, and his report recommending a natural line of demarcation would be in the office in the course of a few days he believed. It was proposed to mark that line off by posts, and take the necessary steps to prevent any person from living quite close to the line, but there was no danger to be apprehended from living at the other end of the island. If a ship were now placed in quarantine at Townsville there would be no difficulty in landing the passengers and giving them proper attention at Magnetic Island.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked what sort of a superintendent the Government expected to get at Townsville for £75 a year—an amount extremely inadequate to support a man. The caretaker of the quarantine station at Peel Island was put down at £90, and living was much cheaper there than at Townsville.

The PREMIER said the man at Magnetic Island got his rations, and had nothing to spend the £75 a year on, except his clothes. The man at Peel Island was a tradesman; the man at Magnetic Island, also, was thoroughly fit for his work. The station at Hervey's Bay had to be kept up, but he did not know that a ship had ever been quarantined there. The late superintendent resigned, and he thought the telegraph officer was leaving there now.

Mr. SHERIDAN said there was a light-keeper living there, a man who had done very good service for the country.

Mr. NELSON said the Committee were asked to grant a very large sum of money to look after immigrants merely on their arrival. He did not

suppose more than 7,000 immigrants would arrive during the year, and that would be an average of over £1 per head. He thought some economy might be practised with regard to the vote.

Mr. MELLOR said the immigration agents at Toowoomba and Ipswich were called wardsmen, but in Gympie the clerk of petty sessions did the work. He did not see why that should not be the case in other inland towns.

The PREMIER said that the wardsmen were in charge of buildings used specially for the reception of immigrants. There must be people to look after those buildings, and to take charge of the immigrants while staying in them. Where buildings were only occasionally occupied by immigrants, as in the case of Bundaberg, it was not necessary to have people in charge permanently. With respect to what was said by the hon. member for Northern Downs, he did not know any item that could be reduced at present, but from the 1st January next the amount paid to surgeons on immigrant vessels would be reduced from £1 to a maximum of 15s. per head. With respect to the other items he was not prepared to say that they could be reduced, but if money could be saved it would be saved.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that some economy might be practised by combining the two immigration votes. There was one on page 86 amounting to £6,075 for Pacific Island immigration, and the vote under discussion was for £7,830. There was a chief clerk in each department—one for the Pacific Island and the other for European immigration. There were three clerks in one department and two in the other, and a messenger and assistant messenger in each department. He thought that, although the cost of Pacific Island immigration came out of Trust Funds, a combination of the offices might have been effected which would have brought about some economy in the expenditure from the consolidated revenue as far as that vote was concerned. It seemed to him that the amounts were pretty high—£6,075 under one, and £7,830 under the other, and he thought that if the Premier had given his attention to the matter some such change as he had suggested might have been effected.

The PREMIER said that was a matter to which he had paid a great deal of attention, and he was quite certain that, as far as the Pacific Island immigration was concerned, no reduction could possibly be made except at the cost of efficiency.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I did not say "reduction," but "combination."

The PREMIER said there was a combination of the two offices when he took office, but it was found absolutely necessary to separate them, because there was really no supervision whatever over the Polynesian Department. All the officers mentioned on page 86 of the Estimates were entirely occupied in attending to the work in connection with Pacific Island immigration. Their time was fully employed and they had to work after hours continually. Of course that work would in the future be somewhat diminished; but at present there was no department of the Public Service in which the officers were harder worked. The work of the Immigration Department had not been properly done for a good while; but there was a new immigration agent there now to whom he looked to introduce an entirely new system into the department, and make it what it ought to be—an office which would always be able to supply to any person desiring it full information as to the labour requirements of all parts of the colony. The central office should supply and receive informa-

tion on that matter. In connection with that subject he would mention a matter which he had almost forgotten, and which he was glad the hon. member had given the opportunity to refer to—namely, that an office had now been established in London—he forgot the name of it—for the purpose of giving information to intending immigrants, and a formal request had been received by the Government to keep that office supplied with full information as to the requirements of the labour market and the rate of wages in the colony. That was one of the duties which ought to be performed by the Immigration Office here. In fact, the new immigration agent had been instructed that his function was not simply to receive applications for immigrants and forward them home, and receive the immigrants on arrival, but that he should also keep a complete record of the labour requirements of the colony—that he should be in communication with all parts of the colony, and get weekly returns respecting the labour market, and let it be known that persons desiring to obtain that information could get it by applying at his office or to his agents in the different parts of the colony. He believed that should be carried out, and had endeavoured many months ago to establish such a system, but he regretted to say that up to the present time the effort had been futile. He had, however, every reason to believe that under the gentleman now in charge of the department a very great change would be effected, and if that were done the office would be fully occupied doing the work.

Mr. SALKELD asked if the fee paid to surgeons was £1 per head in addition to their salaries?

The PREMIER: Those who have been a long time in the service receive £1 per head.

Mr. SALKELD: In addition to their salaries?

The PREMIER said they did not receive any fixed salaries; that was the maximum amount payable to those who had been a certain length of time in the service—he forgot the precise time.

Mr. NORTON asked who were supposed to supply the information regarding the labour market? Was it the clerks of petty sessions?

The PREMIER said clerks of petty sessions were assistant immigration agents, and they would be required to do it. They had been doing it for some time in a perfunctory sort of way. Mr. Okeden, however, understood what was desired, and he thought he also knew how to go about getting the information.

Mr. NORTON said that not only was the information sent down in a perfunctory way, but it was utterly unreliable, and he was afraid that the real difficulty was to get men not paid for the work to do it properly.

The PREMIER said that, in connection with that, he used to receive weekly returns, and for a long time the return every week was that labour was not wanted anywhere. He invited the immigration agent to explain how it was that, although no labour was wanted anywhere, all the immigrants who came into the colony were engaged immediately on arrival? However, he did not get any information on that point of any use to him. The new Immigration Agent had not yet had time to make a formal recommendation on the subject, but from conversations he had with that officer he believed that he understood not only the work to be done but the difficulties in the way of doing it, and how to overcome them.

Mr. JORDAN said he was glad that a system had been introduced for ascertaining what the labour requirements of the colony were. It had often occurred to him that the Immigration

Department on this side was very defective indeed in that particular. He would also like to see a system adopted in connection with the Immigration Department which would afford persons arriving in the colony and looking out for land the fullest possible information on the subject. There should be maps supplied of the various agricultural districts in the colony where land was thrown open for selection, and all necessary information afforded in a systematic manner to persons who wished to settle on the land. But that point was very likely to come before the Committee again in connection with the land-order system proposed in the Land Act Amendment Bill. Many years ago when farmers came to the colony intending to settle on the land they could not get any information. They were left entirely to themselves, and when they propounded their views to people, in a great number of instances they were simply laughed at, and no information whatever was obtainable from the Government. He thought they should adopt some system, such as was in force in the United States of America and Canada, for giving the fullest information on that subject to immigrants when they landed in the colony. He would like to ask the Premier what was being done in connection with the Immigration Depot? It had been complained that immigration depôts in various places, especially in the northern parts of the colony, were in a very disgraceful state; that there was not sufficient accommodation in them for properly separating the sexes, and that they were not provided with necessary conveniences. That had been a scandal in the colony for a great many years—from the very beginning—and it was quite time that it was altered. A long time ago a large sum of money was spent in buying a site for an immigration depôt in Brisbane. He would like to know whether they were to have proper accommodation in the depôts all over the colony, and when it was likely that the new immigration depôt, now being built in Brisbane, would be finished?

The PREMIER said that, as far as regarded supplying information to new arrivals where land was to be acquired, that was a duty which it was proposed to attach to the Immigration Office. As to the immigration depôts, the new depôt in Brisbane was in course of construction; he did not know when it would be finished, but the walls were a considerable height now. He had not heard any complaints about the other depôts. The one at Maryborough was in a very satisfactory condition; a new one had just been finished at Rockhampton; there was a very good one at Mackay; the one at Townsville he had seen recently—it required some repairs, but there was ample accommodation; the one at Toowoomba he had not lately seen, nor the Cooktown one, but no complaints had been received about them for a long time past.

Question put and passed.

LAND DEFENCE FORCE.

The PREMIER moved that there be granted £37,878 for the Land Defence Force. There were some changes in the vote, but to a very small extent, and with one or two exceptions, they arose from additional corps proposed to be formed under the Defence Act. The vote for last year was £35,591. He confessed he was very much alarmed when he saw by the Treasury returns in the *Gazette* for July that the amount expended during that twelve months was £44,000. He wondered how that could have happened, because, so far as he knew, the expenditure had been kept within the vote, as he had promised the House last year it should be. He ascertained, however, on inquiry, that the

amount had not been exceeded, and that though a considerable sum of money had been spent during that twelve months in excess of the amount voted for that twelve months, a great deal more than the amount of excess was on accounts standing over from the preceding year. The actual amount voted was £35,591, and the actual amount expended up to to-day was £35,142, while there were outstanding accounts to the amount of about £200. The reason the amount was so large was that the estimated cost of the encampment was considerably exceeded. It was found impracticable to hold a camp at Rockhampton, and it was consequently necessary to bring the men from there to Brisbane. The cost of that was considerable, and altogether the cost of the encampment exceeded the estimate by £1,000 at least. In the vote for the permanent staff there was an increase of £280, being the salaries of a permanent clerk and two additional sergeant-instructors, the additional instructors being required by the additional corps. There was no change in the Permanent Force and school of instruction, except an additional £100 for the item, "one sergeant and six submarine miners." They were engaged in England, and selected by the War Office at the request of the colony; it was necessary to have skilled men for submarine work. £700 was put on the Estimates last year, as it was thought that would be sufficient; but it was found that their salaries, according to the arrangement made in England, amounted to £800. The next increase was the item of "bands" for the Wide Bay and Kennedy regiments. The number of men in those districts was so large that there was no reason why they should not have bands as well as the Moreton districts. The amount proposed for each band was £155; the bandsmen were paid at the same rate as those of the headquarters band, but their number was not so large. The next increase was in the item "garrison artillery." There were two new batteries proposed, at Bowen and Cairns. They were formed in the first instance as volunteer companies; but they had asked to come under the Defence Act, and there was no good reason why they should not. It was desirable that defences should exist in those seaport towns, and the Government had therefore recommended the Governor to sanction the establishment of those corps on the understanding that the expense should not be incurred until the sanction of Parliament had been obtained. The vote for the engineers was increased by £7 for a quartermaster-sergeant. Under the heading of "Infantry battalions" would be found an increase from £1,644 to £3,286 for the necessary change in the 2nd and 3rd Queensland regiments. It was proposed to form the Wide Bay companies into one regiment, and the companies in the Kennedy and Mackay districts into another. The additional corps necessitated an increase in the amount. Hon. members would see that the vote was arranged somewhat differently. There were now 929 men provided for instead of 854 as before. There was an increase in the mounted infantry vote. It was proposed to form three new companies at Gympie, Bundaberg, and Mackay. They would be particularly useful there, and the formation of the companies had been authorised, subject to the approval of Parliament. That covered all the increase on the vote, for pay, from £19,883 to £22,420, all of which was caused by the establishment of the new companies. Hon. members should understand that that was the precise amount which would be required if every man in the Defence Force attended drill and camp every day. Of course, they knew every man would not; but they were bound to put on the Estimates the maximum amount that would be required if

every man earned all the money he was entitled to earn by the performance of his military duty. Of that £22,000 probably not more than £17,000 or £18,000 would be actually spent. Under the heading of "Contingencies" there was a small reduction—£200 or £300. He should have mentioned that the reason why the expenditure for last year came to more than was anticipated—so near the total amount voted—was that the money that had to be spent for clothing was a good deal more than they expected. Of course, that expenditure would not be repeated every year. Nearly £2,000 more was required for clothing than was anticipated. The amount now asked for would be ample to cover the expenditure for the year. Any reduction in it could only be obtained by disbanding one or more companies; unless they reduced the pay from 6s. to say 5s., or 4s., or less, and that would be in effect disbanding them. The men had engaged for a term of three years, and if the pay was cut down it would discourage them and destroy the force. The estimate had been framed with the greatest care, and it was impossible to reduce it except by saying that some of the companies should be disbanded. If the Defence Force was to be maintained on its present basis that amount would be required to be expended. Hon. members would be glad to learn that notwithstanding the amount spent during the last twelve months the estimate for last year had not been exceeded.

Mr. CHUBB said the Committee had heard from the Chief Secretary a dissertation upon the vote, but the hon. gentleman had not given them his opinion as to the progress of the force during the past twelve months. Something of that kind was certainly expected from him in justification of that very large expenditure. He (Mr. Chubb) was not an alarmist, but the principle he laid down was that if they were to have a defence force at all it ought to be an efficient force, and no reasonable expense ought to be spared to make it efficient. Hon. members had a right to complain of the lateness of the Commandant's report. It was only placed in the hands of hon. members that morning, and he for one had not had time to consider it carefully. Hon. members were quite in the dark on the subject. So far as he had been able to learn, the condition of the Permanent Force was not satisfactory. He would briefly draw the attention of hon. members to the report of Major Grieve, which, like the report of last year, seemed an exceedingly business-like document. He had not the pleasure of knowing that officer, but judging from his reports he seemed to know his business thoroughly well. The Permanent Force, as he (Mr. Chubb) had said, was not in a satisfactory condition. Major Grieve, in his report, said that the average length of service was only seven months. That was a very short time for the members of a permanent force—the military, as it were, of the colony—to be in the service. A table was given of the number of men, the time they had served, the circumstances of their discharge, and so on; and the average length of service with the battery was seven months. The reasons for that short service could be obtained from carefully reading the report. Major Grieve complained that the battery appeared to be a sort of slave to the other branches of the force, and said:—

"The work performed by the men has been a nearly continuous succession of fatigue duties. This is most prejudicial to their efficiency, their smartness, their pride in knowledge of a soldier's work, and, not least, to the estimation they are held in by the general public."

Further than that, the officer said the establishment was not what it ought to be. The report was rather too long to go through in detail, but

there were some matters in it which certainly ought to be referred to. Major Grieve, he noticed, recommended an increase of the establishment—for which no provision was made in the Estimates—by the addition of twenty gunners, two drivers, three artificers, and three non-commissioned officers; and stated that if that was not done the efficiency of the Permanent Force would be very much impaired. The following extract from the report was most instructive:—

“I have the honour to point out and to lay great stress on the fact that all field-artillery material requires most minute and constant supervision, whether used or not, and artificers should inspect all harness, carriages, etc., weekly—repairing, painting, renewing, wherever required. If this be not done, the batteries will collapse if suddenly required for active service, their mobility being seriously impaired.”

Then he complained that the work had to be done by civilian artificers, after vexatious delays, and stated there was very great difficulty in getting done what was required in a reasonable time and at a reasonable price. Then Major Grieve pointed out that certain other persons, including a collar-maker, were required, and he (Mr. Chubb) could quite understand that that should be so, and that those mechanics should be under the command of the officers, so as to be available for duty whenever required. The work should not be put out to tradesmen who were unaccustomed to that particular kind of work. Major Grieve went on to say:—

“The mounted portion of the battery is useless except for fatigues, unless it be intended to form a division of field artillery complete in itself. If this be the case, the sooner its establishment (which must be complete as a unit) is altered and proper equipment provided the better. At present it is inefficient and dissatisfied. No good old soldier of the mounted branches will join the battery unless he be recognised as a mounted man belonging to a distinct branch from the dismounted.”

Then there was a complaint that no artillery officers had attended the whole course of gunnery. He (Mr. Chubb) commended the report to the careful reading of hon. members. They would see from it that a considerably increased expenditure was necessary if the recommendations of Major Grieve were to be carried out; and as far as he could make out, the giving effect to these recommendations was absolutely necessary to the efficiency of the force, but no provision had been made on the Estimates for any increase, with the exception of some £2,000 to cover the increase in the artillery branch of the service—the formation of two batteries in the northern part of the colony. He should like to hear from the Chief Secretary what his opinion was as to the progress made by the force during the last twelve months with an expenditure of £35,000.

The PREMIER said he thanked the hon. member for Bowen for calling his attention to the omission he made, when moving the vote, in not giving some information as to the progress of the force. The commandant's report was not received, for various reasons, until a day or two ago, and there had been not a moment's delay in placing it in the hands of hon. members. It would be seen that the actual available force—the Defence Force proper—on the 30th June was 145 officers and 1,802 non-commissioned officers and men; the Volunteer Force consisted of 31 officers and 829 non-commissioned officers and men, exclusive of cadets. In addition, there were 580 members of rifle clubs, one-third of whom were members of other branches of the force, and 358 members of the Marine Defence Force and naval volunteers. So that, with the police, they had practically an available force of 4,000 men, or without the police about 3,500 men in case of an emergency. He had no hesi-

tation in saying that the Defence Force of the colony was never in any position comparable to what it was at the present time. It was a thoroughly well-disciplined body of men, well officered. The men took a pride in their work, kept well together, and attended drill regularly. Nearly all the companies were full, and some of them beyond the authorised number. So far as that went, the Act had been a wonderful success, as was recognised in all the other colonies. The report of the Commandant gave full information on that subject. He should be glad to give any additional information that members desired. As to what the hon. member said of the Permanent Force, he had read the report by Major Grieve some time ago, and the Government had had his recommendation as to increasing the number of the Permanent Force under consideration before the Estimates were prepared. Major Grieve recommended an increase of twenty-eight men, but the Government did not feel justified in making it at the present time. They considered it desirable to keep expenditure down to an amount not greater than was absolutely necessary. He had no doubt many advantages would follow that increase, but that was one of the many applications made to the Government for further expenditure of money—applications which, under other circumstances, he would have been glad to have acceded to; but in the circumstances of the colony at the present time it was thought best not to agree to any increase that could be avoided.

Mr. FOXTON complained that they had not had the Commandant's report before proceeding with the Estimates. In fact he had not seen it yet, and many members who were anxious to discuss the Defence Force estimate had not had an opportunity of looking over it. He was also very anxious to see the report of Major Grieve in regard to the Permanent Force before he discussed the Estimates. Under all the circumstances, and looking to the reason urged in the earlier part of the evening for adjournment, he suggested to the Chief Secretary the advisability of adjourning.

Mr. NORTON also thought it desirable to adjourn. It was scarcely fair to ask hon. members to go on with this item until they had had an opportunity of reading the report. He had not had an opportunity of seeing it either. As there was no private business for either Thursday or Friday they might probably have the whole of these days for the Estimates.

Mr. SALKELD said he would also like to see the Commandant's report before they went on with the Estimates. In fact, they could not properly discuss them until they had read the report. He suggested that the Defence Force estimate be postponed.

Mr. LALOR said he saw nothing in the Estimates about the Roma defence force, and they had sixty men there.

The PREMIER said the Roma men were in the Volunteer Force, which did not get pay. They only got a capitation allowance. He had been anxious that the Commandant's report should be in the possession of hon. members, and extra efforts had been made to get it out that day, so that hon. members should read it. But he thought it a reasonable request that they should not proceed further until hon. members had seen it. One question occurred to him—would there be time to read it by to-morrow? Of course it was important that some progress should be made with the Estimates before the end of the month.

Mr. KATES said this was a very important and large item. It had been pointed out that it would be necessary for them to be in possession

of the report to be able to discuss the item in a better manner. He thought the Premier should postpone the discussion till Tuesday next.

The PREMIER said that the Land Bill was set down for discussion on Tuesday. It was just a question whether to-morrow would not be the most convenient day, especially as many of these companies were waiting for approval of their formal establishment.

Mr. MURPHY hoped that the same delay would not occur with the report of the Hydraulic Engineer and the returns he had asked for. These would materially assist the House when they came to that portion of the Estimates referring to the Water Supply Department.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could assure the hon. member that the report would be laid on the table of the House before the Estimates in connection with the Hydraulic Engineer's Department were reached; and any other reports to be furnished by the Treasury Department would be in the hands of members before the respective votes came on for consideration. It was desirable that they should proceed with the consideration of the Estimates as early as possible, because, for reasons well known to hon. members, a certain amount should be gone through before the end of the present month.

Mr. SALKELD said that the discussion should be postponed till next week, for many members had engagements for to-morrow. He moved that the Defence Force estimates be postponed.

The PREMIER hoped the hon. gentleman would not move that, for it would postpone them till the end of the Estimates.

Mr. SALKELD said he was aware of that.

The PREMIER said he objected to such postponement. There were several corps that had been established subject to the sanction of Parliament, and it was not desirable that the companies should have to wait. They were doing all their drills, and it would be very unreasonable to postpone their cases until the whole of the rest of the Estimates had been disposed of. As to when hon. members might resume the debate, if they did not desire to go on to-morrow they might take the Divisional Boards Bill and possibly the Defence Force estimates on Friday or early next week.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. SALKELD said, did he understand the Chief Secretary to say that the Defence Force vote would not be gone on with before Friday?

The PREMIER: Not before Friday.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and asked leave to sit again.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SETTLED LAND BILL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the House had agreed to the amendment of the Legislative Assembly in clause 13, subsection (c), which had been insisted upon.

SUCCESSION DUTIES BILL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the House did not insist upon its amendment in this Bill, which had been disagreed to by the Legislative Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that this House do now adjourn. There is no private business on the paper for to-morrow, and we propose to take the Divisional Boards Bill in committee. I hope we may be able to make very substantial progress with it, if not finish it. If any hon. members intend to propose any amendments which will involve increased local taxation, or any increase in the amount of endowment, I hope they will let me know before 1 o'clock to-morrow the nature of them, so that I shall be able to make the necessary recommendation before the House goes into committee.

The House adjourned at three minutes past 9 o'clock.